QRME

Cooperating Music Teachers' Experiences Mentoring Student Teachers from Multiple Music Teacher Preparation Programs

Erin J. Zaffini
Longy School of Music of Bard College
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

UNC GREENSBORO

Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to examine how cooperating music teachers who work with multiple music preparation programs (a) perceived their role as mentors, (b) described the training and communication they received from the partnering colleges and universities about their role, and (c) described the extent that the communication and training influenced what they did to enact their roles as mentors. Three cooperating music teachers served as participants: one high school band and general music teacher, and two middle school band and general music teachers. Data were collected through interviews, meetings during student teaching observations and cooperating teacher journals, and the author derived themes from the data. Cooperating teachers perceived that their experiences serving as mentors for multiple preparation programs did not influence their philosophies for mentoring student teachers. However, the levels of training and communication they received from their partnering schools did influence their work as mentors. Two cooperating teachers believed their ability to serve in their roles would improve if music education program coordinators better communicated the preparation of preservice teachers prior to student teaching, along with the expectations of student teachers and themselves.

Keywords: cooperating teachers, preservice music teachers, mentoring, university supervisor

Introduction

Early career music teachers cite their student teaching experience among the most influential experiences within their teacher preparation programs (Conway, 2002; Draves, 2013). Cooperating teachers, those who host and mentor student teachers in their final semester of preservice preparation, are valuable stakeholders in the field of music teacher education. Although cooperating teachers play many roles, including "Providers of feedback, Gatekeepers of the Profession, Modelers of Practice, Supporters of Reflection, Gleaners of Knowledge, Purveyors of Context, Convenors of Relation, Agents of Socialization, Advocates of the Practical, Abiders of Change, and Teachers of Children" (Clarke, Triggs & Nielson, 2014, p. 163), cooperating teachers lack a conception of their roles in teacher education (Clarke, Triggs & Nielsen, 2014; Goodfellow, 2000; Zeichner, 2002). Furthermore, there are few examples of research regarding the preparation of music cooperating teachers for their roles as mentors (Draves, 2013).

Authentic-Context Learning in Teacher Education

Studies about the influence of authentic-context learning—preservice field experiences that take place in school-settings (Paul, 1998)—have flourished in music teacher education. The number and quality of authentic field experiences in the classroom influenced preservice teachers' identity formation and initial teaching performance (Austin & Miksza, 2009; Broyles, 1997; Haston & Russell, 2011; Paul, 1998; Paul, Teachout, Sullivan, Kelly, Bauer & Raiber, 2001; Pellegrino, 2019; Powell, 2011). Preservice teachers who participated in authentic-context experiences improved pedagogical knowledge, lesson plan writing, classroom management skills, and creativity in the classroom (Haston & Russell, 2011), increased confidence in teaching

abilities (Baughman, 2020; Schmidt, 1998) and increased connections between coursework and real-world teaching (Pellegrino, 2019).

Student Teaching and the Cooperating Teacher

Student teaching, one form of authentic-context learning, played an important role in teacher development (Conway, 2002; Draves, 2013; Schmidt, 1998). It developed preservice teachers' communication and lesson planning skills, classroom management and instructional pacing (Juchniewicz, 2014). Perhaps equally important has been the role it played on preservice teachers' commitment to enter the profession. In a study of 152 preservice music teachers, Kelly (2015) learned that student teaching reinforced preservice teachers' commitment to teach. Preservice music teachers in Bartolome's (2017) study also developed increased confidence in their chosen career path.

Cooperating teachers were often viewed as the most important contributors to student teacher development (Conway, 2002), so important that Abramo and Campbell (2016) developed a conceptual framework for cooperating teacher selection, development and assessment. They have served as models for effective practice (Matsko, Ronfeldt, Nolan, Klugman, Reininger & Brockman, 2018) and helped develop preservice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008) and reflection skills (Stegman, 2007). Indeed, cooperating teachers viewed modeling and reflection as essential practices while mentoring student teachers (Abramo & Campbell, 2019).

The Working Relationship Between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers

Experts have made a plea to better connect what has been taught in universities to student teaching experiences (Conkling, 2007). Such connections seemed necessary, since working relationships between cooperating teachers and college supervisors may have been impacted by

the level of communication between both university and K-12 stakeholders within partnerships (Greene, 2015; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011). Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) learned that two cooperating teachers for physical education were negatively impacted by a lack of communication with university supervisors about their role within teacher preparation. The researchers suggested that cooperating teachers receive mentor training and role clarification from university supervisors.

In their study of a "failed triad" (p. 407) of a cooperating math teacher, a university math professor and supervisor, and a student teacher, Bullough and Draper (2004) learned that the working relationship between the cooperating teacher and university supervisor was strained through a lack of communication, differing goals for student teaching, and disagreement about best practices in mathematics pedagogy. As a result, the student teacher became "stuck" (p. 417) between the demands of the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor left the triad. The researchers recommended that university supervisors and cooperating teacher mentors acknowledge differences in approaches and partake in professional development together in areas such as mentoring and supervision of preservice teachers (p. 419).

The Preparation of Cooperating Teachers for Mentorship

There has also been literature about cooperating teachers' experiences as mentors in light of their preparation for the role. While cooperating teachers' mentoring and preparation experiences have varied, a lack of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers often has inhibited mentor preparation (Abramo & Campbell, 2019; Greene, 2015; Handcock, 2013). In a study of three cooperating music teachers who mentored for the same college, Greene (2015) learned that cooperating teachers were ill-prepared to give student teachers feedback. Like cooperating teachers in studies conducted by Handcock (2013)

and Hamilton (2010), they desired mentor training, more information about the duties and expectations as cooperating teachers, and information regarding the preparation of their student teachers. Teachers in Abramo's and Campbell's (2019) study asked for additional guidance from teacher educator programs about the goals of student teaching, since most "create their own mentor strategies, pedagogies and modes of [student teacher] evaluations" (p. 180).

Using Ravitch and Riggin (2012) as a guide, Abramo and Campbell (2016) constructed "four notions" (p. 117) that might serve as criteria for selecting and assessing cooperating teachers, as well as for offering cooperating teacher professional development. Specifically, the ideal characteristics of cooperating teachers were: (a) a working knowledge of educational theory and practice, (b) an understanding of the importance of context within education, (c) understanding the narrative's role within the process of learning to teach, and (d) the ability to model and practice critical reflection into his or her own teaching practices (pp. 120-124). In light of these notions, Abramo and Campbell noted the need for music teacher educators to help provide professional development for cooperating teachers who have not demonstrated all of these attributes, or perhaps those who might not have viewed their own practice as mentors within the framework.

Purpose

With the importance placed upon student teaching and the role of cooperating teachers on teacher development, there has been a need for further exploration into the communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers and the training that cooperating teachers receive to serve in their roles. Cooperating teachers with experience mentoring student teachers from different preparation programs might conceivably have experienced various levels of communication and preparation for their roles from each university. As a university-based

supervisor, the three cooperating music teachers I collaborated with also mentor for other teacher preparation programs. My desire to learn of their experiences as mentors, along with the lack of literature pertaining to cooperating teachers for multiple preparation programs, led me to this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine how cooperating music teachers who work with multiple music preparation programs (a) perceived their role as mentors, (b) described the training and communication they received from the partnering universities about their role, and (c) described the extent that the communication and training influenced what they did to enact their roles as mentors. Three research questions were used to guide the present study:

1. How do cooperating music teachers who work with multiple music teacher preparation programs perceive their role?

2. How do cooperating music teachers describe the extent to which they received communication and training from universities about their role?

3. How do cooperating music teachers describe the extent to which communication and training influenced their practice as mentors?

Method

Participants

Three cooperating music teachers working with music education students from multiple Northeastern universities were participants in the study. Teachers were purposely selected for this study because of their extensive experiences as cooperating teachers for multiple teacher preparation programs within the same state. Three different music education faculty worked as university supervisors for the teachers: a part-time adjunct, a full-time lecturer, and a full professor.

Each cooperating teacher had more than five years of experience working with student

teachers from different programs. Out of the three music educator preparation programs served

by the cooperating teachers, all three teachers have served as a cooperating for one preparation

program for at least five years, and the other two programs between two to four years. One

teacher was a high school band and general music teacher and the other two were middle school

band and general music teachers. All three participants were identified by pseudonyms.

Design, Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to beginning the IRB-approved research, I read a description of the tasks associated

with this study to the three cooperating teachers. I also gave the teachers a copy of the study

procedures and a description of what their participation would entail. The cooperating teachers

signed Institutional Review Board-approved consent forms that informed them their participation

within the study was voluntary and that they could discontinue participation at any time without

penalty. After consent forms were signed and submitted, the study commenced.

Using a case study design (Yin, 2017), data collected were recorded individual 60-minute

teacher semi-structured interviews (Glesne, 2016), email correspondence between the researcher

and participants, notes from meetings with the cooperating teachers during student teacher

observations and visits, and cooperating teachers' six-week reflection journals about their

experiences as mentors. Interview topics included teachers' experiences working with different

supervisors, challenges and successes of mentoring student teachers from multiple programs, and

preparation to become a cooperating teacher. Journal entries were open-ended. For six weeks,

teachers wrote weekly reflections about their preparation and experiences as cooperating

teachers and about their experiences working with the universities and faculty supervisors within

the programs. Other data were supporting documents used by cooperating teachers, specifically

(a) universities' student teaching handbooks, (b) student teacher observation forms, and (c) evaluation tools used to assess student teachers at the end of placements. I employed Saldaña's (2016) process of coding, and category and theme formation to interpret all the data. While reviewing the data, I labeled it with codes, and then combined codes that could be placed in the same categories. The categories were then reviewed and combined into larger themes.

As a supervisor of student teachers who has worked with all three teachers in this study for two semesters, I have acknowledged the potential for bias in this study. My work with these teachers allowed me an insider's view into the preparation of teachers and work with the cooperating teachers that helped me frame findings and discussion later in this study. To help establish validity and reliability, I used multiple data sources to triangulate data for the study to establish themes that arose from the data. To strengthen trustworthiness, I conducted member checks with all three cooperating teachers by sharing interview transcripts, and analytical thoughts and drafts of my findings and paper to ensure that I was representing participants accurately within the study. I invited a trusted colleague and advisor to conduct an external audit of the study to further ensure that the research protocols, coding, thematic analysis and findings were completed and true to the data. The two themes that emerged within the data were (a) the perceived role of the cooperating teacher, and (b) communication between cooperating teachers and university supervisors.

Meet the Cooperating Teachers

Charles. A music educator of 41 years, Charles had taught Pre-K through middle school general music, middle school music theory, orchestra, and band. At the time of the study, Charles was teaching high school band, guitar and world drumming. He had served as a cooperating teacher for approximately 30 student teachers since the mid-1980s. He believed that most student

teachers identify with teachers they have had themselves. He viewed himself as a safety net for

student teachers, and believed they learn best when given many opportunities with students.

Charles served as a cooperating teacher for two preparation programs that placed student

teachers in two seven-week placements in different schools.

Bob. At the time of the study, Bob was in his 15th year of teaching music and taught

middle school general music and band. Previously, Bob taught elementary general music and

band. At the time of data collection, he team-taught with James, another teacher in this study. He

has been a cooperating music teacher for seven student teachers from three programs over seven

years. Of the programs he worked with, one program had semester-long student teaching

experiences that were divided into two different placements, a second program required one

placement for an entire semester of student teaching, and the third featured a one-year internship

at one school. For Bob, hosting student teachers has been a balancing act between meeting the

needs of his students and those of his student teacher. Bob viewed his role as a mentor was to

allow student teachers solo opportunities to teach something all on their own so that they may

experience more pedagogical growth and learn from mistakes.

James. A music teacher for 12 years, James has taught fourth and fifth grade band, and at

the time of this study, was currently a band and general music teacher at a middle school. He

worked with Bob, another cooperating teacher in this study, through team-teaching. He has

served as a cooperating teacher for eight student teachers over eight years, with no experiences

serving as a practicum teacher. James believed that student teachers genuinely try their best, but

sometimes they are unable to take and implement his feedback for improvement. James

employed a "hands-off" approach to mentoring student teachers. He allowed student teachers to

develop lessons and select their own repertoire for performance, while still providing guidance

and meaningful feedback. At the time of the study, James had mentored student teachers from the same three preparation programs as Bob.

Results

Results of this study have been organized by themes found within the data. The two major themes that arose from the data were: (a) the perceived role of the cooperating teacher and (b) communication between cooperating teachers and university supervisors.

The Perceived Role of the Cooperating Teacher

Meeting the Needs of Student Teachers

All three cooperating teachers believed that regardless of their observed differences in the preparation of student teachers from the various programs, their role as mentors was to cater to the needs of individual student teachers. Charles explained his approach to working with different student teachers. "I treat every student teacher the same. Where they came from is not a factor for how I mentor them. I just want to know where they are and their goals." Bob explained that differences in the preparation of student teachers did not affect his role as a cooperating teacher, and that his role was to help push them forward in their practice:

> You can see differences in the level of preparation for teaching. As far as the musicianship of student teachers, it varies with the individual, not the program. I don't know that my role or experiences would be different if they were all coming from the same institution or not. I just try to help them where they need help.

James believed that his experiences as a student teacher were very positive and helped shaped his teaching to what it is today. He ascertained that his experiences were what student teachers need today. "I give each student teacher the same opportunities that I had when I was a student teacher, which was a lot of teaching and freedom to make mistakes." While this freedom

was important to James, he also shared the difficulty he had with finding a balance between

meeting the needs of his student teachers and those of his students:

> We [James and Bob] had three student teachers from three schools, from October until
>
> May. You don't know what the student teacher is going to be like and what experience your
>
> [middle school] students are going to have. It's a disservice to the student teacher to jump
>
> in and interrupt but it's also a disservice to your students if they're getting poor instruction.
>
> It's a balance.

Charles also mentioned student teachers' need to make mistakes while supporting them

along the way. He mentioned that in light of the "reality check" that student teachers go through,

he viewed his role as being that of a safety net so as to help them through the challenging times

that often occur with student teaching:

> I call it the nightingale approach where they have this vision of how they were
>
> going to come in and shape and change minds and be able to stand up and speak
>
> and the students would sit around them in a semi-circle and take in all the
>
> knowledge, and then the students walk out and their lives have changed. Then student
>
> teachers find out that this doesn't happen. It's actually a lot of hard work. Maybe they
>
> realize that this isn't for them. So, my role, first, is to provide a safety net for them. We
>
> don't want them crashing and burning. I'm still going to allow them to make mistakes from
>
> time to time, because that's how they learn.

All three cooperating teachers acknowledged that while student teachers' pedagogical skills might

be developed to various degrees, they were responsible for helping them to improve.

Inducting Teachers and Service to the Profession

The cooperating teachers also noted that their roles supported the induction of new teachers and that mentoring allowed them to give back to the profession. Bob viewed mentoring in light of his own experiences as a student teacher. "I had great experiences with my cooperating teachers and great relationships after I had left. I felt like it was a good way to give back, to help perpetuate the future of the profession." Charles noted that he began taking student teachers after a colleague of his advocated for the need to support and give back to the profession:

> At one school, the director of music felt strongly about us having student teachers. He said, "It's our way of giving back to the profession. We're going to start accepting these." I was not opposed, I just had never given any thought to it and since then it has been a pretty wonderful experience for the most part. The words that the director said kept ringing in my head, "It's our way of giving back."

James pointed out that his role was not only to induct teachers into the profession, but to do so in as realistic way as possible to best meet their needs:

> Taking a student teacher is a commitment to give up some control of your environment and I don't take that commitment lightly. You give up control to make sure that the student teacher doesn't become a glorified secretary who gets coffee and makes copies, which I've heard from some people.

All three cooperating teachers agreed that although the work of being a mentor was often challenging and time-consuming, giving back to the profession made it all worthwhile.

Communication between Cooperating Teachers and University Supervisors

The second major theme that emerged from the data was that of communication between cooperating teachers and university supervisors. A lack of communication was cited as the most frustrating part of the cooperating teachers' experiences as mentors.

"I Don't Know What the Parameters Are."

For James and Bob, communication between themselves and university supervisors influenced their experiences as mentors. Both cited a lack of communication from the university supervisors regarding certain aspects of their role as cooperating teachers and they expressed a desire for clarification of the colleges' expectations of them. For Bob, the only communication with the university supervisors were the brief discussions that took place during supervisors' student teacher observations. As a result, he was unsure of the specific tasks and responsibilities that he was supposed to be giving his student teachers. "I only interact with college supervisors during observation visits. I don't know how much I'm supposed to give a student teacher to do. Should they be grading things? I don't know what the parameters are."

Bob and James explained they would benefit if they received additional communication from university supervisors about the programs' standards and benchmarks for student teachers. Bob liked to observe interactions between his student teachers and supervisors, as it provided him with information that helped inform his own work as a cooperating teacher. "I like seeing the communication between the supervisor and the student teacher, so that I know what the supervisor is looking for. I get that sometimes and I don't other times. That's a useful thing for me to know."

James mentioned he would benefit from additional communication about the standards that the preparation programs set for student teachers:

> We're told we're going to have forms to fill out, but not much about the student's requirements, and how to guide them towards meeting them. I don't know much about the student's requirements, so I'm not sure if they're progressing towards what the university has identified as their standards.

James further explained the differences between his experiences with working with various college supervisors and claimed that the college supervisors influence much of the communication he received. In one example, he explained the communication about supervisors' observations of student teachers. "An organized supervisor keeps you informed. For others, it's more of a surprise, like, 'By the way, I'm coming tomorrow for an observation.'"

For Bob, the quality of the opportunities to interact with supervisors differed during observations. He recalled two experiences with two different supervisors, and how the interactions helped or hindered his work as a mentor:

> One supervisor dozed off during an observation. There was no conversation about the student teacher after, or it was brief. The other supervisor from the other school is very hands-on during post-observation conferences. The conversations between the student teacher, that supervisor, and myself are filled with specific feedback.

When asked what could be done to improve communication, Bob and James desired more information about their roles, the student teacher preparation program, and colleges' standards for successful student teaching. In this study, none of the cooperating teachers were offered mentor training from any university to assist them in fulfilling their roles. Bob was open to training offered by the universities to learn more about cooperating teacher expectations and student teacher preparation before the partnerships commence. James echoed this sentiment, noting that learning colleges' expectations for lesson planning would assist him in performing

his duties. "One thing that none of the schools do, that would be helpful, is tell us what a lesson

plan in their program looks like. It would be nice to know exactly how each institution formats

their lesson plans."

Bob had similar experiences, and shared that for one preparation program, he learned

about the expectations for student teachers in the middle of a placement, at a time when he was

to complete a mid-placement evaluation. "I feel like the evaluation is the first time where I'm

really seeing what the expectation from the university is for the student teacher. At that point, I'm

seeing what they're really looking for." James also made suggestions for how communication

could be improved. "I'd like to have a list of what it takes for students to pass their student

teaching experience, and colleges' expectations of us during their placement."

"I don't evaluate student teachers. They may be here for six weeks, but at the end of the

placement, I'm not responsible."

Discussion also included the cooperating teachers' ability to communicate their feedback

about student teachers' progress. Although James and Bob each have had student teachers from

multiple preparation programs, in many instances, they did not volunteer for such roles, but were

assigned student teachers from their district music coordinator. Therefore, they were not the

official cooperating teachers of record for many of their student teachers' placements and were

not given opportunities to formally evaluate student teachers. James highlighted how this

affected his duties as a mentor:

> The high school director will send the student teacher to me for once a week for a semester
>
> or five to seven weeks. They're not assigned to me from the college. So, one college asks
>
> me to evaluate the students; the others have never asked.

Bob voiced similar frustrations and challenges, and described what he is allowed to communicate back to the preparation program. "It's frustrating that the communication from the programs gets filtered through the music coordinator. Sometimes it doesn't make its way here. I don't evaluate student teachers. They may be here for six weeks, but at the end of the placement, I'm not responsible."

James explained that while he is happy to mentor, having student teachers assigned to him by his district music coordinator takes a toll. "Many times I haven't agreed to take a student teacher and I am given one, which is a commitment. You give up control of your class. I don't like to do it so that I'm oversaturated by it."

"After they would observe and have a conversation with the student teacher, I would have a different conversation with the student teacher after they left."

James and Bob both articulated that there were differences between them and the university supervisors in how they would approach the preparation of student teachers in the college setting. Yet both clarified that they are rarely given opportunities to communicate their ideas. When asked what he would change, Bob mentioned the need to further prepare student teachers to be responsive to what is happening in the classroom:

> The thing that I think college prep programs tend to focus on a lot, is having a student teacher be really prepared with a plan when they walk in to teach a lesson, which is great. It's important. But the thing they are missing most of the time is the ability to react on their feet and deviate from that plan when something doesn't go the way it's supposed to. I just think that there needs to be better preparation for that aspect of teaching. Ultimately, you have to deal with what you're seeing and hearing.

James also noted different opinions on the preparation of student teachers. He explained that he was asked one time for feedback from a university supervisor, but that he held some reservations on expressing his views:

> One school asked me for feedback on their program. I remember Sean [the university supervisor] asking. It wasn't in a form that we filled out. It was sort of just him asking. But, it also kind of makes you feel like, "I don't want to tell you what to do to change your program. I don't know enough about the program to make those suggestions." That's kind of presumptive of me.

The topic of communication also arose in conversation with Charles, although it pointed more to a disagreement between himself and one university supervisor about how best to teach. Unlike James and Bob, Charles handled disagreements with the university supervisor a little differently. Charles explained one situation in which a university supervisor's views on teaching did not align with his own:

> There was one supervisor who had philosophical differences on how to approach teaching. It didn't affect our friendship at all. After they would observe and have a conversation with the student teacher, I would have a different conversation with the student teacher after they left.

In this case, Charles chose not to communicate the different feedback he had given his student teacher once the university supervisor had left after the scheduled observation.

Discussion

A Need for Communication and Guidance to Fulfill Roles

Teachers in this study experienced varying levels of communication from the university supervisors, which influenced their overall experiences as cooperating teachers and the working

relationships with university supervisors. Of particular concern was the lack of communication and support for the cooperating teachers to fulfill their perceived roles. Although teachers viewed themselves as inductors into the profession who must meet the needs of their students and student teachers, it appeared that the lack of sufficient communication between the cooperating teachers and the university supervisors and preparation programs poorly equipped them for such roles. Since Bob and James received little guidance regarding cooperating teacher expectations and student teacher standards—perhaps due to the manner in which the district music coordinator passed along the communication received from university supervisors—they were forced to rely on their own recollections of student teaching when fulfilling their roles. Additionally, while both teachers agreed that meeting the needs of student teachers was a priority, a lack of knowledge about preparation program standards caused them to guess what specifically needed to be addressed. Like cooperating teachers in other studies (Abramo & Campbell, 2019; Greene, 2015; Handcock, 2013; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011), both expressed a need for more communication with university supervisors, and guidance and professional development to help fulfill this need.

So Much to Say, but Not Being Heard

Of additional concern was the lack of opportunities given to James and Bob to provide feedback on student teacher performance and the preparation programs curricula as a whole. It was clear that both held strong opinions about what student teachers needed in the realistic setting of the classroom and that these needs were not being sufficiently addressed in preparation programs prior to student teaching. Yet the lack of opportunity to communicate these needs to program supervisors indicated that future student teachers may continue to struggle within these same areas. Interestingly, even when James was directly asked what he would change about

preparation programs, he mentioned he felt ill-equipped to make such curricular

recommendations because he was unaware of current curricular offerings, further reinforcing the

need for improved communication between university programs and cooperating teachers.

Unlike James and Bob, Charles's experiences with communication with program

supervisors was different. The only problems he cited were disagreements he had with one

college supervisor about best practices in the classroom, which resulted in Charles instructing his

student teacher to do the opposite of what the university supervisor had requested earlier from

the student. While similar disagreements led to a failed triad in Bullough and Draper's (2004)

study, this was not the case here. Perhaps this was due to the friendship between Charles and the

supervisor, although also of concern in this situation was the lack of communication between

Charles to the university supervisor. Similar to James and Bob, Charles clearly felt that his

philosophies and approach better served the needs of his student teacher. Yet, he chose not to

share this information with the supervisor, therefore increasing the likelihood of continuing to

address the needs of future student teachers in the same manner. While it is not necessary for

both the cooperating teacher and the university to agree about everything, such disagreements,

when not acknowledged and discussed in a professional manner, might often place the student

teacher in the middle, causing them to feel torn about which directives follow. Ultimately, such a

scenario could be a disservice to the student teacher, as a lack of communication about differing

goals and expectations might not only undermine both the cooperating teacher and university

supervisor but might inhibit the overall pedagogical skill development of the student teacher.

The Induction of Student Teachers into the Profession: Sending Mixed Messages

All of these occurrences surrounding the lack of communication between cooperating

teachers and university supervisors point to a greater issue that needs to be addressed: the

sufficient induction of music educators into the profession and the message that university

supervisors and cooperating teachers send to student teachers. This study shows that when a

student teaching triad suffers from a lack of communication between university supervisors and

cooperating teachers, student teachers receive different messages about how best to teach, and

they are forced to reconcile these differences for themselves. When cooperating teachers and

university supervisors fail to communicate expectations for student teachers, differing

philosophies of music education, or feedback on student teacher performance, we fail to present

a unified front on teacher preparation. In doing so, we demonstrate to our student teachers that

they are being inducted into a profession that is wrought with a lack of communication, and,

perhaps, does not value the importance of preK-12 schools and preparation programs equally. In

a time when collaboration is key for optimizing student teacher success and induction, this

widens the divide between cooperating schools and university preparation programs.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

As a university supervisor for one of the programs discussed in this study, the

communication problems shared by the cooperating teachers were new to me. I was unaware that

the cooperating teachers lacked a conception of their roles, student teaching standards, and

desired more preparation to serve as mentors. Had this study not taken place, I might still be

unaware. To improve the perceived lack of communication regarding program standards,

university supervisors should give cooperating teachers' access to student teacher evaluation

tools before the commencement of student teaching. This could open up a dialogue about student

teacher assessment to provide cooperating teachers with clarity about student teaching standards.

In addition, faculty at colleges and universities might consider offering specialized training for

cooperating teachers in the role and duties of mentoring student teachers. This training could

include an in-depth examination of university program requirements and student teacher assessment, as well as a detailed discussion about the duties that cooperating teachers are to fulfill. A handout of information learned in training could be made accessible on universities' preparation program websites, and university supervisors could hold weekly or bi-weekly "check-in" meetings with cooperating teachers to answer questions and ensure that cooperating teachers possess the knowledge to feel confident in their roles.

Similarly, cooperating teachers should make efforts to reach out to university supervisors to inform them of their specific needs for further communication within the partnership regarding student teacher expectations and assessments for growth and development. To foster such a dialogue, university supervisors should establish a supportive, open and collaborative partnership between themselves and cooperating teachers to ensure that cooperating teachers feel welcome to reach out for assistance. As a result, communication within partnerships might be enhanced, and the overall working relationships among stakeholders might improve as well.

The communication breakdown that Charles experienced, resulting from differing philosophical views, poses another problem that often undermines either the cooperating teacher or the university supervisor. In addition, student teachers might also find themselves caught in the middle trying to please both, with little time and energy left for true growth throughout their student teaching placement. While it is certainly healthy to have differing philosophical viewpoints at times within a school-university partnership, a dialogue regarding these views should take place prior to the commencement of student teaching. University supervisors who offer training for cooperating teachers might choose to include a discussion regarding different philosophies of teaching, as well as steps to take within the partnership to help ensure that differing opinions do not poorly influence the growth of the student teacher.

Perhaps the most surprising result of this study was Bob's and James's frustration that they were mentoring student teachers yet were not listed as the cooperating teachers of record for one of the universities because student teachers were formally assigned to their district music coordinator. University supervisors should keep a closer eye on who is ultimately mentoring student teachers so as to confirm cooperating teachers' willingness to serve in this capacity, as well as allow them opportunities to give feedback about student teacher progress. In instances such as this, perhaps the district music supervisor could co-mentor the student teacher alongside the cooperating teacher. This might help promote a fair distribution of the workload for everyone involved in the partnership, as well as improve the likelihood that accurate feedback regarding student teacher progress is reported to the university supervisor. If college or university supervisors should choose to assign student teachers to different cooperating schools in this manner, it is important that any cooperating teachers who do work with student teachers are given the same opportunities to communicate student teacher progress and development.

This study focused on the viewpoints of cooperating music teachers who served as mentors for multiple programs. The results are limited in their ability to be generalized to other cooperating mentor teachers. Additional research into the viewpoints of other cooperating music teachers who serve for multiple programs might benefit the profession by providing additional insights. In addition, in light of the lack of communication shared by the cooperating teachers and its apparent influence upon mentor experiences, further research about the factors that influence the efficacy of cooperating teachers for multiple preparation programs could be conducted to provide music teacher educators with additional ways to support cooperating teachers.

References

Abramo, J. M. & Campbell, M. R. (2016). Four notions on the qualities of cooperating music teachers. *Arts Education Policy Review, 117*(2), 117-129. doi:10.1080/10632913.2016.1061257

Abramo, J. M. & Campbell, M. R. (2019). What cooperating music teachers say about educative mentoring: A focus study research project. *Research Studies in Music Education, 41*(2), 171-188. doi:10.1177/1321103X18773106

Austin, J.R., & Miksza, P. (2009). *Trying on teaching.* Paper presented at the Society for Music Teacher Education Biennial Symposium, Greensboro, NC.

Bartolome, S. (2017). Comparing field-teaching experiences: A longitudinal examination of preservice and first-year teacher perspectives. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 65*(3), 264-286. doi:10.1177/0022429417730043

Baughman, M. (2020). Mentorship and learning experiences of preservice teachers as community children's chorus conductors. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 29*(2), 38-52. doi:10.1177/1057083719876116

Broyles, J. (1997). Effects of videotape analysis on role development of student teachers in music (Doctoral dissertation). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 58*(03A), 823.

Bullough, Jr, R. V., & Draper, R. J. (2004). Making sense of a failed triad: Mentors, university supervisors, and positioning theory. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *55*(5), 407-420. doi:10.1177/0022487104269804

Clarke, A., Triggs, V., & Nielsen, W. (2014). Cooperating teacher participation in teacher education: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, *84*(2), 163-202. doi:10.3102/0034654313499618

Qualitative Research in Music Education 3(1)

Conkling, S. W. (2007). The possibilities of situated learning for teacher preparation: The

professional development partnership. *Music Educators Journal*, *93*(3), 44—48.

doi:10.1177/002743210709300319

Conway, C. (2002). Perceptions of beginning teachers, their mentors, and administrators

regarding preservice music teacher preparation. *Journal of Research in Music Education,*

50(1), 20—36. doi:10.2307/3345690

Draves, T. J. (2013). Transition from Student to Teacher–Student Teaching: The Capstone

Experience. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *23*(1), 50-62.

doi:10.1177/1057083712474935

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2012). *Teachers as learners*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.). New York, NY:

Pearson.

Goodfellow, J. (2000). Knowing from the inside: Reflective conversations with and through the

narratives of one cooperating teacher. *Reflective Practice*, *1*, 25–42.

doi:10.1080/713693136

Greene, J. (2015). *Looking big at cooperating teachers in music education: Examining narrative*

authority within a college community. [Doctoral dissertation, Boston University].

Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/2144/16311

Hamilton, J. (2010). *Cooperating teachers: An investigation into their needs and training as*

mentors and supervisors of student teachers (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from

ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3416990)

Handcock, S. Y. (2013). *Cooperating teachers' perceptions of support needed to mentor teacher*

candidates effectively (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and

Theses database. (UMI No. 10110426)

Haston, W., & Leon-Guerrero, A. (2008). Sources of pedagogical content knowledge: Reports by preservice instrumental music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *17*(2), 48-59. doi:10.1177/1057083708317644

Haston, W., & Russell, J. A. (2011). Turning into teachers: Influences of authentic context learning experiences on occupational identity development of preservice music teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *59*(4), 369-392. doi:10.1177/0022429411414716

Johnson, I. L., & Napper-Owen, G. (2011). The importance of role perceptions in the student teaching triad. *Physical Educator*, *68*(1), 44-56.

Juchniewicz, J. (2014). An examination of social intelligence development in preservice music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *23*(2), 21-32. doi:10.1177/1057083713475628

Kelly, S. (2015). The influence of student teaching experiences on preservice music teachers' commitments to teaching. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 24*(2), 10-22. doi:10.1177/1057083713506120

Matsko, K., Ronfeldt, M., Nolan, H., Klugman, J., Reininger, M., & Brockman, S. (2018). Cooperating teacher as model and coach: What leads to student teachers' perceptions of preparedness? *Journal of Teacher Education, 71*(1), 41-62. doi:10.1177/0022487118791992

Paul, S. J., Teachout, D. J., Sullivan, J. M., Kelly, S. N., Bauer, W. I., & Raiber, M. A. (2001). Authentic-context learning activities in instrumental music teacher education. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *49*(2), 136-145.

Qualitative Research in Music Education 3(1)

Paul, S. (1998). The effects of peer teaching experiences on the professional teacher role

    development of undergraduate instrumental music education majors. *Bulletin of the*

    Council for Research in Music Education, 137, 73-92.

Pellegrino, K. (2019). Becoming music teachers in a supportive string project community.

    Journal of Music Teacher Education, 28(3), 11-27. doi:10.1177/1057083718803638

Powell, S. R. (2011). Examining preservice music teachers' perceptions of initial peer-and field-

    teaching experiences. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *21*(1), 11-26.

    doi:10.1177/1057083710386751

Ravitch, S. M. & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason and rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide*

    research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schmidt, M. (1998). Defining "good" music teaching: Four student teachers' beliefs and

    practices. *Bulletin of the Council of Research in Music Education, 138,* 19-46.

Stegman, S. (2007). An exploration of reflective dialogue between student teachers in music and

    their cooperating teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 55*(1), 65-82.

    Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/4494331

Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks,

    CA: Sage.

Zeichner, K. (2002). Beyond traditional structures of student teaching. *Teacher Education*

    Quarterly, 29(2), 59–64.