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PEDAGOGY

Cooperating Teachers' Participation and Beliefs Regarding Teacher-Educator Functions

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Abstract

The student teaching experience is a significant learning opportunity for preservice teachers (Clarke et al., 2013; Matsko et al., 2020). This field experience requires preservice teachers to work closely with a cooperating teacher (CT), who serves a fundamental role within teacher preparation programs, providing the classroom context and K-12 teaching experience for teacher candidates. An extensive body of literature provides compelling evidence that CTs lack appropriate preparation to support student teachers, resulting in inconsistent and potentially ineffective supervision during the student teaching experience (Clarke et al., 2014; Matsko et al., 2020). Therefore, teacher preparation programs should support and prepare CTs for their significant roles in supporting preservice teachers' training.

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Physical education teacher education (PETE) literature documents that physical education CTs (PECTs) facilitate the transfer of knowledge learned in PETE programs into practice within K-12 school environments (Richards et al., 2014). Unfortunately, most PETE faculty are limited in supporting PECTs during the preservice teacher's transition from theory to practice. Therefore, CTs can draw on their own experiences as student teachers to inform their supervisory style and practice (Amaral-da-Cunha et al., 2019). Ultimately, this results in a wide variance in how CTs participate and engage during their supervisory experience. PECTs' unawareness of how to supervise is untenable if the intention is to provide the best preparation for the next generation of physical education teachers. For PETE programs to provide high-quality and meaningful support for PECTs, a comprehensive understanding of how PECTs engage during the student teaching experience is essential.

Clarke and colleagues' (2014) review of six decades of CT literature identified 11 teacher-educator roles CTs might engage in during the student teaching experience. The 11 identified teacher-educator roles are presented in Table 1 and offer potential avenues for thinking differently about how CTs might participate during the cornerstone student teaching experience.

While these 11 teacher-educator roles are identified as possible roles that CTs partake in, it is unclear whether PECTs are aware of these specified roles, participate in them, or believe these teacher-educator roles are important to participate in. Suppose physical education teacher education (PETE) programs are to provide and create professional development opportunities and training programs to prepare and inform PECTs. In that case, they first must identify how PECTs participate in these roles and their beliefs about the importance of these teacher-educator functions identified by Clarke et al. (2014).

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework was informed by the socialization theory, specifically occupational socialization, and the influence of teachers' beliefs on behavior. Together, these theories support one another and provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena, establishing a framework-specific philosophy.

Table 1
Summary of the 11 Teacher-Educator Roles

Teacher-Educator Role	Definition
Role 1: Provider of Feedback	Providing information regarding aspects of the student teacher's performance or understanding
Role 2: Gatekeeper of the Profession	Providing both formative and summative assessment of student teachers, the latter of which plays a significant role in student teachers' entry into the profession
Role 3: Modeler of Practice	Modeling teaching practice for student teachers
Role 4: Supporter of Reflection	Encouraging and engaging student teachers in reflective practice
Role 5: Purveyor of Context	Providing context for the student teacher as well as the often-hidden dimensions of K-12 teaching
Role 6: Convener of Relation	Building and maintaining a working relationship with the student teacher
Role 7: Agent of Socialization	Socializing student teachers into the teaching profession
Role 8: Advocate of the Practical	Providing first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day workings of a classroom, a dimension of teaching that is important to successful classroom practice
Role 9: Gleaner of Knowledge	An increase in one's own professional knowledge because of the interaction with student teachers
Role 10: Abider of Change	Making changes in day to day duties, responsibilities and educator role to accommodate the student teacher who is to be a part of or taking a leadership role in their classroom environment
Role 11: Teacher of Children	Being a K-12 teacher

Occupational Socialization

Socialization refers to how people learn the norms, customs, and ideologies central to their culture through interactions with one another and social institutions (Billingham, 2007, as cited in Richards & Gaudreault, 2016). A subset of the socialization theory is occupational socialization, which seeks to understand the ways new employees acquire the skills, knowledge, and dispositions required to become productive members of the workplace environment (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). As a subset of occupational socialization, teacher socialization is a "field of scholarship which seeks to understand the processes whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers" (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Teacher socialization theory describes the induction into teaching as a blend of one's childhood school, the mini apprenticeship of student teaching, and learning while doing (on-the-job training). Teaching comes with socialization processes for those who are – or learning to become –

part of the teaching profession (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). Socialization theory explains how student teachers learn their roles as teachers from mediated entry into the profession. Similarly, PECTs may mediate their conceptions of supervisory roles based on memories of receiving supervision and learning to teach when they were student teachers. Therefore, the occupational socialization theory can be applied to CTs, who hold onto their experiences as a preservice teacher and, as research suggests, can gain new insights about teaching and learning as a CT, even if they are not formally enrolled in a PETE program.

Teacher Beliefs

For teacher education and professional development programs to succeed, teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning should be considered (Verloop et al., 2001). Research on teacher beliefs is complicated due to a lack of agreement in defining the construct of 'beliefs' and different perspectives on the relationship between knowledge and belief (Jones & Carter, 2007). The literature distinguishes teacher beliefs from teacher knowledge, but this distinction remains somewhat arbitrary because knowledge and beliefs are intertwined in a teacher's mind (Lombaerts et al., 2009; Pajares, 1992). Pajares (1992) proposes that teacher beliefs are often supported by subjective experience rather than by empirical data or evidence-based knowledge. The definition of beliefs used in this paper comes from Haney et al. (2003), who define beliefs as "one's convictions, philosophy, tenets, or opinions about teaching and learning" (p. 367). As such, teacher beliefs may include subjective theories about how students learn, what a teacher should or should not do, and which instructional strategies work effectively.

For that reason, understanding teachers' beliefs enables teacher education programs to influence teachers' views of teaching and learning, and this process plays a role in supporting the program's goals for their teacher candidates. To conceptualize the merging of teacher socialization and teacher beliefs, one must envision the construct of teacher socialization, which seeks to understand how a teacher enters the profession while also envisioning teacher beliefs, potentially influencing the nature of teachers' actions.

Over the past 70 years (1950-2021), substantial research has worked to identify how CTs engage as members of the student

teaching experience. However, there is a lack of literature identifying how PECTs participate in the student teaching experience and their beliefs about their participation. Therefore, this study aimed to identify how PECTs participate in 11 teacher-educator roles and their beliefs about engaging in these roles. Together, these findings offer PETE programs an understanding of how to prepare PECTs for their supervisory roles.

Methods

This study is part of a larger project exploring the relationship between the beliefs and experiences of PECTs and was approved by the researcher's university's institutional review board. The current study design used a phenomenological research approach to describe PECTs' perceptions and lived experiences of beliefs and participation in 11 teacher-educator roles. In a phenomenological study, the researcher gains insight into the phenomenon of interest by interviewing knowledgeable participants (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, this study explored the lived experiences of PECTs to understand the nature of their beliefs about their roles and whether they participate in 11 teacher-educator functions.

An interpretive perspective guided this research paradigm. The interpretivist worldview suggests that meaning is made through human interaction and that the social world is "produced through meaningful interpretations" (Pascale, 2011, p. 22, cited in Jones et al., 2014). Interpretivist positions are founded on the philosophical belief that reality is socially constructed and fluid. Thus, what we know is always negotiated within cultures, social settings, and relationships with other people (Crotty, 1998). From this perspective, validity or truth cannot be grounded in an objective reality.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Based on the literature review and suggestion for further inquiry into 'participation in teacher education,' the 11 teacher-educator roles identified by Clarke and colleagues (2014) were refined to a semi-structured interview guide. The individual interviews consisted of open-ended and in-depth questions about PECTs' perceptions and lived-experiences on the description, usage, and benefits of their beliefs and how they participated in the 11 teacher-educator roles as PECTs. For example, the PECTs were asked about their participation

or engagement in providing feedback. Specifically, the type of feedback and how much feedback they provided their student teacher(s). Another sample interview question included asking if they engage as gatekeepers of the profession. Specifically, if they play a role in whether student teachers enter the teaching profession and believe PECTs should engage as the profession's gatekeepers. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their answers and allow a natural flow of conversation to direct the discussion and explore the PECTs' thoughts, feelings, and experiences in greater depth (Patton, 2002). The interviews ranged between 45-90 minutes via telephone.

Participants

The range in the number of participants to be interviewed was informed by Creswell (2013), who, from his numerous reviews of qualitative research, indicated phenomenology research ranges from three to 10 individuals. Therefore, interviews concluded once the researcher established that data saturation was achieved. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013), when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). Failure to reach data saturation impacts the research's quality and hinders content validity (Kerr et al., 2010). Upon completing the second round of reading the data, it was determined that five interviews were appropriate for the research quality.

A purposive sample of the five PECTs for the study was based on their willingness to volunteer and their unique demographic information. Of the 118 PECTs who participated in the first phase of the broader study, 75 volunteered to participate in this supplementary study. The PECTs selected included those that had different levels of education (bachelor's, master's, doctorate), a differing range in the number of student teachers supervised (one to 20+), and varying amounts of years of teaching experience (five to 40). Three of the PECTs in the study supervised students from at least three different universities in the same state at which they taught. Table 2 represents the demographic information for the five PECTs interviewed for the study. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities.

Table 2
Summary of Demographic Characteristics

PECT (Age)	State	Grade Level	Degree Earned	Years of Experience	Number of STs	CT Training Received
Taylor (28)	CO	Elem.	Bach.	5	1	No
Linda (62)	HI	Elem.	Mast.	40	20	Yes
Dave (46)	ID	Middle	Mast.	19	14	Yes
Brett (47)	NY	Elem.	Ph.D.	19	19	Yes
Kim (32)	CO	Elem.	Bach.	8	2	No

Epoche

Phenomenological researchers seek to describe and understand truth without bias. Requiring researchers to participate in an epoche process to be mindful of one's own experiences related to the phenomenon being studied (Moustakas, 1994). To be aware of one's own biases, a researcher must acknowledge personal judgments before and during data collection. The authors involved in this study shared and discussed their experiences with CTs and the student teaching experience. The authors talked about their experiences during their student teaching experience and working closely with a PECT. The epoche process continued during data analysis as the authors routinely questioned and challenged the sources of the themes as they emerged.

Data Analysis

The researchers implemented Moustakas' (1994) approach to data analysis. Once interviews were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed, and the transcriptions were read numerous times. The data were analyzed through a deductive approach. The data were systematically examined to determine whether the participation and beliefs of the 11 teacher-educator roles were supported or should be rejected. The first stage of analysis involved reading the interview transcripts numerous times to become familiar with the data. Next, the analysis comprised deductive coding, which included the predefined set of codes known as a 'codebook' (i.e., the 11 teacher-educator roles), and assigning those codes to the qualitative data. The analysis includes highlighting keywords and phrases, coding, and grouping these into related categories. Before the conclusion of

data analysis, the intercoder agreement was established to ensure the independent coders agreed on the coding of the data.

Rigor refers to establishing the credibility and trustworthiness of data. For this study, it was demonstrated through attention to and confirmation of information discovery (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The criteria include credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. All five participants were provided a copy of their interview transcript and asked to question and confirm the congruency between their remarks and the research interpretations. All participants who participated in the member-checking process confirmed the findings and agreed with the data interpretation, and the essence of their remarks was captured. The process of member checking with the participants promoted validation, which established the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2013).

Results

During each interview, PECTs were asked how they participated in each of the different teacher-educator roles and their beliefs about the 11 teacher-educator roles. Each teacher-educator role is presented separately with specific interview data to exemplify the participant's beliefs and unique experiences of serving as a PECT during the student teaching experience.

Providers of Feedback

All five PECTs provided examples of providing feedback to their student teachers. When asked how she provides feedback for her student teacher, Taylor mentioned that she would "Observe the teacher candidate teaching classes and provide feedback." Linda also shared an example of how she delivered feedback:

> I would sit with the student teacher, I'd say, "Okay, these are the kinds of things I see. And these are the things I need you to work on, and I want you to think about X, Y, and Z. Let's see if we can improve your teaching by doing these things."

In the same way, Dave provided several examples of how he would give his student teachers feedback, and the type and amount of feedback would change depending on the student. For example, he shared one experience of having to give repeated feedback to one student teacher who was having trouble grasping teacher movement:

> One student teacher struggled with having students behind them while they were instructing, so he constantly had kids making faces and disrupting him. I repeated a million times, I would say, "All right, you have to have your back against the wall. It will make a huge difference, or your classes will keep being distracted." (Dave)

Brett shared an example of providing feedback to a student teacher who was having a hard time positioning themselves appropriately in the teaching space, "I repeated to him a million times, 'You have to keep your back against the wall. It will make a huge difference.' It took a lot of feedback with him." When asked whether they believed providing feedback was necessary, the five PECTs unanimously agreed it was an essential part of their responsibility. Kim said, "I believe if a lesson falters, the CT should provide immediate feedback to achieve success".

Gatekeepers of the Profession

The five PECTs each mentioned how they assess student teachers throughout the placement. Four PECTs noted that while they understand their assessments of student teachers are important, ultimately, they do not have the final say in whether the student teacher will enter the teaching profession. During her interview, Linda shared her experience of recommending that one of her student teachers should not pass, but rather the PETE program had the student teacher placed with a new PECT partway through the placement and ended up passing under the new PECT:

> Really, their grade is given by the university professor. One [student teacher] was pulled from me halfway through her experience because she was not going to pass with me. She ended up passing but under someone else. So, they passed her. I didn't pass her because she wasn't making the changes necessary with me.

When asked to describe the roles and responsibilities of a PECT, the five PECTs mentioned assessing the student-teacher. Brett stated, "It is our job to make sure the student teacher is ready to teach in a classroom. We can submit the evaluation with recommendations."

Modelers of Practice

Without a doubt, *Modelers of Practice's* role was the most cited role that PECTs participated in, and they believed that other PECTs should participate. All five PECTs discussed how they model their teaching for their student teachers. Linda shared different examples of how she had modeled her teaching for her student teachers:

> The student teacher would teach the lesson. Then I would teach the second lesson and take their lesson and tweak it. Show them how they could do it differently.

In the same way, Kim and Brett described their depiction of being a *Modeler of Practice* for their student teachers, which goes beyond just the teaching portion of being a PE teacher:

> I also believe it is my duty to model the passion, responsibility, love, and drive it takes to be an effective teacher in physical education settings by "walking the walk and talking the talk." I think it is important to model being a professional. (Kim)

> I think it is important to model being a professional. How do you speak when you're at work? How do you talk to parents or students? How do you speak to your colleagues? How do you dress? I think it is important to model it [teaching]. (Brett)

When asked if he believed PECTs should participate as a *Modeler of Practice*, Dave said, "Cooperating teachers need to model what a seasoned teacher looks like for the student teacher to gain a professional perspective. Most people learn from others, modeling good practices."

Supporter of Reflection

During interviews, the PECTs described their experiences of providing meaningful opportunities for their student teachers to reflect on their teaching. Interestingly, each time the PECTs were asked to talk about the role of Supporters of Reflection, all responses were followed or accompanied by the role of providing feedback as well.

> Sometimes they [student teacher] would teach all three lessons, but while we're transitioning from class to class, I would say, "Have you thought about this? Why were you doing this? How does that meet your objectives?" Or make suggestions for ways they could improve their lessons. (Linda)

> You also need to make sure that you're setting up that student teacher to be successful, by plenty of reflection time, plenty of those conversations at the end of the day, tons of feedback. (Kim)

Brett referenced supporting the student teacher's reflection process with "Daily reflection with the student teacher, helping them create and deliver effective lessons, and reflect on the learning as a result." In the same way, Linda said she is intentional about "Engaging them in discussions to reflect on the lessons they teach." as often as she can.

Gleaners of Knowledge

When discussing the role of the *Gleaners of Knowledge* during the interviews, the five PECTs mentioned that they always learn something new from supervising student teachers. Interestingly, this role is not something that the PECTs actually "do;" instead, it results from their participation. The PECTs shared examples of how they gleaned new knowledge from their interactions with the student teachers. Kim described being a PECT as a "cool" opportunity for her and her student teacher because they are learning something new:

> It can be a really cool opportunity for not only the student teachers to learn but also for us. I learn and refine a lot of my practices when trying to teach someone else.

Likewise, Dave mentioned how he had taken ideas and activities his student teachers used and would implement them when he taught even after the student teacher was gone:

> I think that there's going to be a good handful of things I'm going to learn from them [student teacher] or a different spin on something that I do already, and I'm going to say, "Hey, wow. This was cool. That's a great way to teach that ..." but it's

really refreshing to see, hear, and experience a different way to do something.

When asked about her experience as a *Gleaner of Knowledge*, Linda shared that, "Occasionally, a student teacher knows a topic that is new, and it's fun to learn something from them."

Purveyors of Context

Similar to the *Gleaners of Knowledge*'s role, the role of *Purveyors of Context* is a role that does not require PECTs to "do" anything; instead, PECTs innately embrace this role due to the nature of their position as PECTs. During the interviews, all five PECTs described how they provide the context and environment for the student teaching experience. For example, Brett shared the expectations for his student teachers in terms of providing the context by which the student teachers engage throughout the entire school day beyond the classroom:

> That expectation follows them [student teacher] as well, I say "I have to be here at 7:00 so you're here at 7:00. That's my expectation of you, because I want to show you what the context of this really is". I don't want them to become a lazy lump and bypassed because they didn't learn the work ethic in student teaching . . . (Brett)

Kim explained her function as a *Purveyor of Context*, "My responsibility as a cooperating teacher is to provide a safe and rigorous environment to allow the student teacher to experience what a physical education classroom and school environment feel like."

Conveners of Relation

When discussing the role of fostering relationships with the student teachers, all five PECTS shared experiences and indicated that one PECT's role is to cultivate this relationship. The PECTs shared examples of the fantastic relationships they fostered while working with student teachers and described some challenging relationships that arose with some student teachers they mentored. Brett shared an example of how he supported student teachers beyond lesson planning and teacher reflection:

> The poor girl was a mess. She sat here and cried in my office, trying to tell me that she couldn't student teach and could I help her? She just cried and looked at the floor. I didn't know what to do, so I just waited for her to finish crying. We had a nice conversation. I talked with our university supervisor . . . we found a solution right away, but this is also what we [cooperating teachers] do. (Brett)

Linda mentioned that a PECT's responsibility is to "build a professional relationship that allows constructive criticism." Some could argue that the development of a relationship between the PECT and a student teacher is inherent to the student teaching context structure.

Agents of Socialization

All five PECTs mentioned that they play an integral role in socializing their student teacher into the profession and provided multiple examples of how they do this. For example, during her interview, Kim shared ways she encouraged her student teachers to participate in different realms of the teaching profession beyond the walls of the gym:

> For my student teachers, if I had before and after school clubs, my expectation was they were there because a big part of being a PE teacher is doing some kind of extracurricular with their kids. We do early release professional development with the district, so I always have my student teachers come with me. I think it is important though for them to understand what they're getting themselves into.

Taylor explained that one of her goals when supervising a student teacher includes ensuring they experience the "unknowns" or the things not always taught in a teacher preparation program:

> While mentoring teacher candidates in classroom management, teaching, planning lessons, dealing with behaviors, and discipline is important, I also want them to experience all the other things you don't learn about in college like -recess duty, dealing with parents, staff, comrade, etc.

Brett gave examples of the types of experiences he tries to provide his student teachers: "I inform my student teacher about things outside of the classroom, such as fundraising, district, and state "happenings" and help them see the entire picture of the teaching profession."

Advocates of the Practical

During interviews, the five PECTs described their experiences of helping the student teachers know the day-to-day routines of being a PE teacher as an *Advocate of the Practical*. During his interview, Brett discussed that when student teachers come to his school, they get to experience the "real world' happenings of the life of a PE teacher:

> I give them everything from how the kid reacts to knowing the other teachers in the building, the administrators, the custodians, and introducing them to secretaries, and everything that you would need to when you walk in the gym for your real job.

Linda and Kim also described how they are *Advocates of the Practical* and what it truly means to fulfill the role of a PE teacher in today's K-12 schools:

> We go over the rules of the school. What the procedures are for going to lunch and recess, and bigger school community things, as well, as how to manage kids. We discuss different ways to start your own classroom. (Linda)

> I think is important for cooperating teachers to help student teachers understand the workload and what it really takes to be an effective teacher in a building. (Kim)

When asked to describe the role of *Advocates of the Practical*, Taylor said, "Many things go on outside of the gym, and it is important we allow them to experience all areas of being a teacher."

Abiders of Change

All five PECTs shared experiences of adjusting their day-to-day tasks and teacher roles to accommodate having a student teacher

in their classroom. The PECTs were not cynical about their day's changes when supervising; they just adjusted their day. Examples included using their planning periods to look over student teachers' lesson plans or rearranging the curriculum taught for the student teacher's EdTPA assessment. Brett shared how he makes changes to his day to work with his student teacher:

> . . . if you look in the background, I'm actually doing twice as much work, because every planning period that I have is speaking with them and working with them to help them get better.

Linda mentioned designating time each day to reflect with the student teacher, which they would not do if they were not supervising a student teacher, "I plan for daily meetings with student teachers reviewing the day's lessons."

Teachers of Children

Teachers of Children's role was similar to the *Convener of Relation*'s role in that PECTs did not do anything different or add a new function to their list of duties when serving as a PECT. Due to the nature of being an educator, all PECTs are *Teachers of Children* by trade. When asked about this role, four of the five PECTs were confused about how the *Teachers of Children's* role was considered a teacher-educator role. After an explanation, the PECTs came to understand the role. For example, Linda said, "I teach Kindergarten through Grade 6 and not K-12." Similarly, Brett explained, "K-12 sort of threw me off because I am specific K-5." Overall, it was apparent that PECTs do not consider the *Teachers of Children* as a role or responsibility of a PECT because it is something they already do.

The 11 Teacher-Educator Roles

Taylor, Linda, Dave, Brett, and Kim provided detailed examples of how they partake in the 11 identified teacher-educator roles. Furthermore, all five PECTs expressed a belief that PECTs should participate in the teacher-educator roles in some capacity. To summarize, Linda indicated all of the teacher-educator roles are necessary for PECTs to engage during the student teaching experience, stating:

> As a mentor teacher, I believe my roles are to support teacher candidates in refining their teaching techniques, support planning/lesson design practices and classroom management strategies, reflect and engage in the school. . . We need to do it all.

Equally, Dave concluded his interview by saying, "I believe CTs should participate in these roles because they have been vetted. Modeling, providing feedback, and different forms of assessments are all important. Just the tip of the iceberg." Brett stated, "I believe CTs should participate in these educator roles."

Discussion

The PECTs in the current study provided examples of their participation within these roles, which support previous research on CT's roles and responsibilities (Clarke et al., 2014; Rajuan et al., 2007). The five PECTs confirmed that they participate in numerous teacher-educator roles during the student teaching experience, and they believe PECTs should participate in these roles. This study also found that the level of education and amount of student teachers supervised did not impact how the PECTs participate or their beliefs about how PECTs should engage throughout the student teaching experience. These findings seek to answer the call of Clarke et al. (2014), who made a claim that "without a clear understating of how CTs participate- or are expected to participate- in teacher education, it is difficult to know how best to support that work" (p. 164.). This study attempted to theorize Clarke et al. (2014) work and empirically support previous literature surrounding CTs.

Understanding teachers' belief structures is critical to improving teacher education programs and teaching practices (Pajares, 1992). Richardson (1996) stated that "attitudes and beliefs are important concepts in understanding teachers' thought processes, classroom practices, change, and learning to teach" (p.102). Understanding PECT's beliefs about serving in the PECT role can help PETE programs identify PECT supervisory practices. For teacher preparation programs to support knowledge transfer from theory to practice, they need to recognize CTs' beliefs (Verloop et al., 2001). Thus, PETE programs should be aware of PECTs' beliefs about the 11 teacher-educator roles to ensure the PECT's beliefs of their role align with

the PETE programs' beliefs about expectations of PECTs. Below, the 11 teacher-educator roles are discussed individually and then jointly.

The 11 Teacher-Educator Roles

Providers of Feedback: Conclusively, the PECTs in this study believed they and all other PECTs should provide feedback to their student teachers. This finding supports Clarke et al. (2014), who stated, "Providing feedback is clearly one of the most significant elements of CTs work with student teachers, and this provision is not only expected but also largely defines the work of the CTs" (p. 175). Acknowledging PECT's delivery of feedback opens a discussion about understanding how PECTs are delivering feedback. For example, is it verbal or written? How much feedback is the PECT giving their student teacher? Is the feedback being provided appropriate for the student teachers' developmental phase? Is the PECT giving the student teacher the correct type of feedback that promotes reflection on the student teacher's part? Beck and Kosnick (2002) found that preservice teachers in their study often cite a need for more explicit feedback from CTs to negotiate this decision-making process. Similarly, Shantz and Ward (2000) conducted a study in which they asked preservice teachers to complete questionnaires about their field experience. The respondents articulated a need for more positive, constructive feedback from CT. From the current study, we can say that PECTs deliver feedback. However, further investigation into the type, amount, and delivery of feedback is needed to understand how PECTs participate as *Providers of Feedback* fully.

Gatekeeper of the Profession: While the PECTs report that they engage in this role and believe it is important, it is unclear how much weight the PECT's evaluations of the student teachers hold in their passing the student teaching experience. Moreover, it is unknown if PECTs completely understand how to deliver the summative assessments on behalf of the student teacher. Clarke et al. (2014) suggested further investigation into the role of *Gatekeeper to the Profession*: 1.) Are CTs knowledgeable enough for summative evaluation? 2.) Are the tools that are available sufficient for summative evaluation? and 3.) Are CTs' summative evaluations discerning enough to ensure that individual differences and performance standards are recognized and accurately reported? While the present study did not seek to answer these three questions, it supports the implications of this

study that continued efforts of how PECTs are evaluating and assessing student teachers be explored.

Modelers of Practice: It is a firmly held expectation that the student teaching experience is an opportunity for student teachers to observe the modeling of teaching practice (Clarke et al., 2014). Beyond observing the PECT within the gym's four walls, the student teachers may see their PECT in staff meetings, leading parent-teacher conferences, or supervising during lunch or recess duty. CT's participation in teacher education as a modeler of practice is an important aspect of their role and is expected by teacher preparation programs (Clarke et al., 2014). However, it is unclear from the findings in this study if the modeling practice by PECTs is aligned with the affiliated PETE program. A high level of continuity of these expectations would require PECTs to fully understand the PETE programs' philosophical underlings of teaching and learning, teacher dispositions, and engagement to parallel the PETE program's desires.

Supporters of Reflection: Clarke et al. (2014) stated, "The expectation that CTs ought to encourage and engage student teachers in reflective practice is evident in virtually every university's 'Teaching Practice Handbook'" (p. 178). The current study highlights the involvement of PECTs in helping their student teachers reflect. The data support work by Stegman (2007), who documented strategies that enhance reflections for CTs in guiding student teachers: offering suggestions and observations from personal experience, providing supportive commentary, advice, and insight, recommending instructional and participatory strategies, and validating thoughtful lesson preparation. These strategies are similar to the interviews' responses on how PECTs encourage reflective practices for their student teachers. Nevertheless, it remains unknown if PECTs appropriately direct student teachers through a reflective process that is meaningful to their development as a novice teacher. The suitable type and amount of reflection practices remain unknown; however, it is evident from the results of the present study that PECTs engage their student teachers in reflective practice and believe it is crucial for their role as a PECT. Further investigation into the reflective practices of PECTs is warranted to understand how PECTs engage in this role fully.

Gleaners of Knowledge: The role of *Gleaners of Knowledge* is one of only a few roles in which PECTs do not do anything to partake

in the role. The five PECTs identified themselves as *Gleaners of Knowledge*, which supports previous literature in that CTs have an increase of new knowledge during their time working closely with the student teacher. One of the biggest motivators for serving as a CT is increasing one's professional knowledge because of student-teacher interaction (Clarke, 2006). With a better understanding of the exact types and ways PECTs gain new knowledge when serving in this role, there is a case for arguing that serving in this role could be compensated with some professional development or continuing education credit, dependent upon numerous factors at the associated university.

Purveyors of Context: Arguably, one of the most important roles of a CT is providing context for student teachers because, without context, there is no student teaching experience. The five PECTs mentioned providing 'real-life experiences' for student teachers throughout the interviews. Supporting preservice learning in a K-12 setting is vital to student teachers gaining the necessary skills for a smooth transition into the profession. CTs have an essential job in managing that context and introducing student teachers to the obvious and often hidden dimensions of teaching as appropriate to and considering a student teacher's stage of readiness (Clarke et al., 2014). The current study did not ask any specifics about the PECTs school contextual setting, rather just demographic information. Therefore, further exploration into the contextual environments and settings important for student teachers to experience the most diverse cultural, political, and social-economic contextual setting for student learning is needed. Once identified, PETE programs could use contextual environments to identify placement sites and PECTs that can provide the settings ideal for the transfer of learning.

Conveners of Relation: One of the aspects of the CT role not often mentioned in a 'Student Teaching Handbook' is the relationship formed by the CT and student teacher during the student teaching experience. *Convener of Relation* is partially a result of working closely with the student and a role that PECTs can intentionally foster throughout the student teaching experience. During the interviews, the PECTs described their different negative or positive relationships with their student teachers. Stewart et al. (2017) state that the CT advises and offers guidance, leadership, and possibly even

friendship to their student teacher. Thus, supporting the notion that CTs do create some type of relationship with their student teacher. Likewise, Clarke (2006) reported that CTs felt that establishing a personal connection with the student teacher was important to establish and maintain throughout the placement to be an exemplary mentor. It would be beneficial for PETE programs to add information about the innate relationship between the PECT and student-teacher interaction to the 'Student Teacher Handbook' to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the PECT role.

Agents of Socialization: The *Agent of Socialization* role is a multifaceted involvement providing abundant learning opportunities for the student teacher. Literature suggests that CTs significantly influence student teachers and how they participate in and distinguish the teaching profession, with research highlighting the socialization process that occurs during field experiences. Noteworthy, all five PECTs recognized their role as an *Agent of Socialization* and declared the importance of this role during the student teaching experience. Similarly, all PECTs were able to detail how they are mindful of providing or encouraging their student teachers to interact within different schools or community settings. "CTs are powerful agents of socialization, and they must be aware of the messages that they communicate (both implicitly and explicitly) to student teachers and how these messages impact student-teacher learning" (Clarke et al., 2014, p. 182). It is unclear what type of socialization instances PECTs provide their student teachers that are the most beneficial in the socialization process. Further investigation to understand the complex role of PECTs engaging as *Agents of Socialization* is required.

Advocates of Practical: The data determines that PECTs agree to participate in the *Advocates of Practice* role and believe it is important for PECTs to engage. PECTs shared how they help with lesson planning and assist the student teacher in classroom management. Supporting literature identifies practical elements that may include but are not limited to helping the student teacher adapt to their classroom placement, lesson planning, pacing and transitions of the lesson, and classroom management (Moore, 2003). CTs carefully guide student teachers in the school classroom's practicalities (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Rajuan et al., 2007). The CT provides the platform to bridge the gap between knowledge and skills learned through

PETE programs and the practical application of methods during the student teaching experience (Christenson & Barney, 2011). PECTs link theory and practice for student teachers in connecting to "real world" teaching. Thus, it provides student teachers the opportunity to know what it is like in the physical education classroom.

Abiders of Change: While PECTs are the superior and in charge of their classroom and students, they change their day-to-day duties, responsibilities, and teacher roles to accommodate the student teacher. The idea that PECTs make changes to their day-to-day schedules was evident in the interviews. For example, Dave shared that he often used his plan period to help the student teacher plan a lesson or reflect and provide feedback; he is, in turn, using his designated plan time to assist and support the student teacher. What is clear from the current study is that PECTs are aware of their changes during their days when they supervise a student teacher and believe it is an essential role for PECTs to partake. While CTs relish the opportunity to work with student teachers, there are unspoken and often hidden dimensions of their work that they quietly and patiently accept. They do so without bother despite the impact it may have on them (Clarke et al., 2014). For example, emotional tolls such as frustration, annoyance, distraction, loss, and/or relief that working with a student teacher can have on CTs often go unrealized (Hastings, 2004). Further inquiry into identifying how PECTs make changes to their day may provide a more comprehensive understanding of PECTs' engagement in this role.

Teachers of Children: Of the 11 teacher-educator roles, the only role that did not materialize from the interviews organically was the role of being a *Teacher of Children*. This confusion may manifest because most of the interview questions asked PECTs to share their PECT supervisory role experiences and did not think it was as relevant as the other roles when working with a student teacher. Due to the nature and expectations of a CT, PECTs must view themselves as K-12 teachers and teachers of future teachers (teacher-educators) in unison. The role of being a K-12 teacher and CT is a "conflict of dual loyalties to student teachers and to the pupils they teach" (Rajuan et al., 2007). While this may seem obvious, it is important to remember that this responsibility is often overlooked when looking at CTs' literature and their relationship with the student teaching experience.

This teacher-educator role will be further explored in the limitations section.

This study provides insight into the perceptions of five PECTs' participation and beliefs of PECTs about their roles during the student teaching experience. Further research in this area is needed before this complex and multifaceted role can be understood entirely. Beyond understanding the role, continued research can help identify the support structures required to assist PECTs throughout the student teaching experience.

Limitations and Future Research

The first limitation of this study is researcher biases. Qualitative research is subject to the researcher's interpretations (Creswell, 2013). Acknowledging at the beginning of this study, the researchers may have believed PECTs did participate in most of the teacher-educator roles is an important consideration. Another limitation of this study is a convenience sample because the PECT participants may have differed from PECTs who did not participate (Creswell, 2013). As with most qualitative research, there is a risk to internal validity due to the nature of the data's self-reporting. The interviewees may have responded to interview questions based on what they thought they should say rather than the truth.

Future studies could employ a larger and geographically more diverse sample to generalize to the larger population. One recommendation for future research is to study the consistency between PETE faculty, university supervisors, and K-12 school administrators regarding their beliefs and understandings of how PECTs should participate in the 11 identified teacher-educator roles. Much of the field experiences literature is presented from three viewpoints: the student teacher, the university supervisor, and the PECT. Adding new perspectives and perceptions about PECTs, such as views of PETE faculty, would add a broader perspective on the expectations of PECTs. Another extension related to PECTs' participation and beliefs would be to systematically observe the participation and actions of the PECT during the student teaching experience. Observing PECTs would provide the opportunity to compare the self-reported data to objectively observed data. Additionally, examining PECTs' knowledge and understanding of adequate supervision and completing the role accurately per PETE program expectations could stand

in great stead in understanding how to prepare PECTs for their role. Furthermore, inquiring if PECTs believe they do the role well could add to understanding PECTs' engagement, as this study indicates PECTs believe they should engage in the 11 teacher-educator roles.

In conclusion, this study provides insight into the relationship between participation and beliefs of PECTs. Supporting CT research, this study acknowledged 11 teacher-educator roles that PECTs participate in during the student-teaching experience and that PECTs believe are part of the responsibility of serving as a supervisor during the student-teaching experience.

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