

Mentor Teachers' Professional Practice:
Shaped by Identity Tensions, Examined Through Collective Reflection and Inquiry

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Abstract

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Mentor teachers (MTs) play a key role in a teacher candidate's (TC) learning to teach and teaching a TC to become a teacher is complex work. While there has been some scholarship that indicates MTs benefit from collective inquiry into and examination of their mentoring practice, there is minimum attention to engaging MTs in deliberate activity about their understanding and improving their practice as mentors.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the dual responsibilities MTs have shape their mentoring practice?
2. In what ways does a collective reflection and inquiry group support MTs in addressing the problems of practice they encounter, including tensions they experience between serving as MTs and classroom teachers?
3. What are the limitations of an MT reflection and inquiry group?

From October 2017 through March 2018 I met monthly with six high-school MTs from four content areas with one to 15 years of mentoring experience. Main qualitative data sources included audio-recordings of the monthly meetings, as well as periodic interviews with each MT and field notes of two full-day observations of each MT-TC pair in their classrooms. Drawing on sociocultural theories of identity, specifically practice-linked identities and multimembership in relation to reflection in and on action, I found that, consistent with other research, the MTs struggled to reconcile their commitments as MTs with those as classroom teachers. Namely, while MTs engaged in explicit mentoring outside of classroom instruction, I did not observe explicit mentoring during instructional time in the presence of students. This tension, among others, was discussed in the MT reflection and inquiry group. Analyses of group conversation and interviews with MTs showed that while MTs articulated benefits from collective reflection-on-action in the group, the group could not offer sufficient ways to solve the identity tensions MTs experienced. Namely, collective reflection-on-action resulted in more in-depth engagement with the work of mentoring, normalized problems of practice, and lessened the solitude inherent in mentoring. At the same time, reflection-on-action was not enough to solve the frustration MTs experienced during instructional time when their identities as classroom- and mentor teachers were conflicting with one another. These findings suggest that teacher education programs need to gain a more complete understanding of the ways challenges shape the MTs' mentoring practice and facilitate reconciliation of the tensions MTs experience, for example through supporting MTs in identifying opportunities for reflection-in-action during instructional time.

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Thank you to Ted, my husband. It is really thanks to you as the embodiment of “yes” that this five-year journey was possible and could be sustained.

And thank you to Julie, my bestest.

Dedication

Dedicated to the Mentor Teachers at Luddington High School whose enthusiasm and inquisitiveness made this research project possible, worthy, and great fun.

I thank you for opening your minds and hearts to this project and to me,
and I hope it did do your needs justice.

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Chapter One: Mentor Teachers in the Teacher Education Enterprise and the Challenges They Encounter in Mentoring Teacher Candidates

I think without this [mentor teacher inquiry group], I wouldn't have given [mentoring] all the reflection that I do. I wouldn't have thought about all of the important issues that are part of being a [teacher candidate] and then ultimately becoming a teacher. For me, I have a greater appreciation for all of the pieces and parts that help a [teacher candidate] become a teacher. I have a new-found belief that the mentor teacher is a very important piece of that puzzle. If not the most important piece of the puzzle. Where before, I don't think I had really given it a lot of thought. I don't think I really thought about what's important and what's not important. I didn't really consider all of the aspects of becoming a teacher.

From an interview with Charles,¹ Mentor Teacher

As Charles, a secondary science teacher who has mentored eight teacher candidates over his 20 years of teaching, articulated above, mentor teachers (MTs) play a significant part in their teacher candidates' (TCs) processes of learning to teach. In fact, as Charles stated, he has come to believe "that the mentor teacher is a very important piece in the puzzle [, if] not the most important piece." His sentiment is reflective of what has been reported in the literature for decades: Most teachers, when asked which part of their teacher education program (TEP) they

¹ This name is a pseudonym, as are all names of the people, places, and institutions in this dissertation to protect their anonymity.

consider the most formative, answer their practicum² – the time they spent as TCs in their MTs’ classrooms (Feiman-Nemser, 1983, 1992, 2003; Grossman, 1990; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Zeichner, 2005), irrespective of positive or negative feelings they may have about it (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Russell & Russell, 2011; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009; Veal & Rikkard, 1998). MTs clearly play a prominent role in the teacher education enterprise, and as of late TEPs increasingly place importance on the practicum (Zeichner, 2012) which magnifies the significance of the MTs’ role in the TCs’ learning to teach.

Yet, the role of the MTs is a difficult one. Despite their significant contributions to the TCs’ learning to teach, their knowledge of, understanding about, practices of, and insights into becoming a teacher are often marginalized in the teacher education enterprise (Zeichner, 2010). One effect of MTs as a marginalized participant in teacher education is that there are only limited accounts of what mentor teachers actually *do* with their TCs (Schwille, 2008), how they view themselves as part of the teacher education enterprise (Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Roberts, Benedict, & Thomas, 2013; Valencia et al., 2009), and the tensions they encounter in their mentoring work (Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014; Koerner, 1992; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008; Rajuan, Meijer, & Verloop, 2007). In other words, as a field we do not have a good grasp of how MTs view themselves as teacher educators, how they engage in and make sense of their mentoring practice, the challenges they encounter and how they address those challenges.

Another effect of the marginalization of the MT is the perception by “many universities” that mentoring is “a self-evident activity” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 118), that is, it is work that does

² The practicum is also referred to as the clinical experience, the internship, or student teaching. I use practicum in this dissertation.

not require extra time, support, or attention. There is minimum attention to engaging MTs in deliberate activity about their understanding and improving their practice as mentors despite research indicating that MTs consider it helpful and useful (Ambrosetti, 2012, 2014; Arnold, 2002).

Research Context

In response to the issues identified above, I carried out a qualitative study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to understand mentoring from mentor teachers' perspectives (their work, their challenges, their tensions) as well as the value in bringing together mentor teachers to make sense of their practice. I carried out the study at Luddington High School, a school with an established expectation for its teachers to serve as MTs that had partnered with a number of TEPs, both local and national, over many years. From October 2017 to March 2018, six high-school MTs from four content areas (science, language arts, math, and social studies) and I met monthly to reflect on and inquire into their mentoring practice. Their teaching experience ranged from nine to 24 years, and their mentoring experience ranged from one to 15 years.

The monthly group meetings provided support to MTs that they typically do not have (Arnold, 2002; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008), that is, to engage in exchanges about their experiences, to build community, to reflect on their practice and the challenges they encounter, to problem solve and strategize – in short, to make sense of their mentoring work collectively and critically.

My goals in carrying out this study were multiple. Firstly, I wanted to understand how MTs engaged in their work and what tensions and challenges they encountered. Secondly, I wanted to understand if and in what ways those challenges shaped their mentoring practice. Lastly, I wanted to explore with them in what ways a reflection and inquiry group affords and

limits support for them in addressing those challenges and tensions. Thus, the research questions this study sought to investigate were:

1. If MTs identify first and foremost with being classroom teachers and their responsibilities to their students, what happens when they also serve as mentor teachers? In other words, how do the dual responsibilities MTs have shape their mentoring practice?
2. In what ways does a collective reflection and inquiry group support MTs in addressing the problems of practice they encounter, including tensions they experience between serving as MTs and classroom teachers?
3. What are the limitations of an MT reflection and inquiry group?

Organization of the dissertation

The dissertation is organized as follows. In Chapter Two, I provide a review of the key empirical literature regarding MTs' identities and tensions inherent in the work of mentoring, as well as a review of empirical research about collective reflection/group learning and its affordances and limitations. In addition, I clarify the theoretical framing I used in analysis of my data. Specifically, I draw on Wenger's (1998) concepts of identity, practice, and communities of practice, as well as Nasir and Hand's (2008) concept of practice-linked identities. Schön's (1983) concept of reflection is also addressed in detail to account for the role reflection plays in shaping one's professional identity.

In Chapter Three I outline my methods. Chapter Four provides important contextual information; I introduce each of the MT participants, and also describe, from the MTs' perspectives, the TEPs with which the MTs were affiliated, especially the communication between each TEP and the MT.

The findings presented in chapters five and six illustrate the tensions the MTs experienced in their mentoring work and the ways in which those tensions shaped their mentoring work. There were indicators that the MTs experienced the tension between their dual responsibilities as classroom and mentor teachers as real and that it shaped when and how the MTs interacted with their TCs for the purpose of mentoring them. There were distinct differences in interactions between MTs and TCs outside of and during instructional time. Chapter Seven addresses the affordances and limitations of the group's collective reflection. The findings presented in Chapter Seven indicate that while the reflection and inquiry group led to numerous valuable outcomes for the MTs, it was not a sufficient catalyst in addressing or solving the identity tensions the MTs experienced. Chapter Eight discusses the implications of this project for TEPs who wish to partner with MTs and offer them meaningful support for the work of mentoring.

Mentor Teacher, Not Cooperating Teacher

Before I turn to Chapter Two, I want to make a note on terminology in this dissertation. While the bulk of the literature refers to a classroom teacher who takes on a teacher candidate as the *cooperating teacher* (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014), I use the term *mentor teacher* throughout this dissertation. *Cooperating teacher* implies an educator of lesser status as compared to the university-based teacher educator – that is, someone who cooperates with a program, but who does not necessarily contribute to defining the role (Ambrosetti, 2014; Clarke et al., 2014). By contrast, a *mentor teacher* describes an educator who engages in reflection on her work/practices as *mentor* (Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough, 2008). I insist here on calling classroom teachers who take on teacher candidates *mentor teachers* because apart from modeling best practices, demonstrating good classroom management, planning lessons, and other

behaviors that can be *observed*, they also teach the TC the why, when, what, and how of teaching. In other words, they convey their thinking about teaching to the TC (Hall et al., 2008; Glenn, 2006). MTs articulate processes that seem intuitive to them but cannot be learned simply by watching them teach.

Chapter Two: Theorizing and Addressing Tensions that Arise for Mentor Teachers

Commonly held Conceptions of Mentor Teachers by Teacher Education Programs

The body of literature investigating the role, position, and work of the mentor teacher is substantial. For example, Clarke et al. (2014) reviewed over 400 papers and articles on mentor teachers' involvement in teacher education, published between 1948 and 2011, and identified three conceptions teacher education programs and researchers commonly hold about mentor teachers. One conception of the mentor teacher is that as *classroom placeholder*, which is to say the MT provides the classroom and students for the TC to learn to teach but participates only minimally in the TC's learning to teach. Clarke et al. (2014) liken this role to that of an "absentee landlord" (p. 167).

Since the 1990s, the conception of MT as classroom placeholder is less common (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Clarke et al., 2014) and instead has mostly been replaced by two other notions of the MT, namely as either *supervisor* or *school-based teacher educator*. The mentor teacher as *supervisor* operates as the overseer of the TC's application of the knowledge about teaching acquired in her university courses. This conception is consistent with what is referred to as the "theory into practice model" (Zeichner, 2002). This model assumes that TCs learn a theory of teaching and learning in their TEP coursework and apply it in their practicum placement. The MT merely supervises the implementation of the TC's campus learning. In this model, the MT's status, knowledge and contributions to the TC's learning are considered the lesser of the two between the university and the school. It "undervalues the importance of practitioner knowledge in the process of learning to teach" (p. 61).

The mentor teacher as *school-based teacher educator* fully participates in the TC's learning to teach. Here, the MT reflects on her own role and work (Clarke, 2006; Schön, 1983;

Zeichner & Liston, 2014) and also makes her reflective processes transparent to her TC (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1985). MTs as teacher educators are more like a

[...] coach, that is, someone who works closely with the learner in the immediacy of the action setting [Russell, 1997], encouraging and eliciting the meaning that the learner is making of his or her practice [MacKinnon & Erickson, 1988], and judiciously providing guidance to facilitate the development of her or his repertoire [Clarke, 1997; Hatch, 1993; Kettle & Sellars, 1996] (Clarke et al., 2014, p. 167)

However, few teacher education programs position their MTs as teacher educators. The university is usually the final authority in decision-making processes regarding teacher education: from the content and timeline of the practicum to determining a TC's successful completion of the program, including the practicum, the university often has the final say (Huening, 2016; Zeichner, 2005).

This often is true, too, for determining who gets to be a mentor teacher. Many programs want to choose who can serve as a mentor teacher according to the MTs' pedagogical "fit" with the program, and this desire is frequently in tension with the program's need for a certain number of MTs (Blocker & Swetnam, 1995; Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2006; LaBoskey & Richert, 1999; Zeichner, 2002). It is understandable that programs have a vested interest in their teacher candidates consistently observing and experiencing good teaching so they can learn by positive example (LaBoskey & Richert, 1999) but the compatibility question creates barriers (Zeichner, 2002; Zeichner & Bier, 2015). One such barrier can be the unproductive and pronounced power differential between teacher education programs and the world of the practitioner. The power differential positions the MT as less-regarded and less meaningful, as though her knowledge about the process of learning to teach is at best secondary to that of the

university (thus, relegating the MT to the supervisor role identified by Clarke et al. [2014] as mentioned earlier). As Zeichner (2002) points out, making an MT's surmised compatibility with the university program a primary deciding factor "reinforces the view of a 'theory into practice' model which posits that student teachers learn theory in the university and apply and enact it in the schools" (p. 61), thus perpetuating the idea of teaching being a profession that is learned in two worlds divorced from one another (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1985). Insisting on compatibility creates a hierarchy of bodies of knowledge about learning to teach, namely one in which the knowledge residing on campus with faculty is superior to the knowledge residing in schools with teachers, and this insistence results in a fragmented experience for both the MT and the TC (Nielsen, Triggs, & Clarke, 2010).

Mentor Teachers' Voices

Clarke et al.'s (2014) review also reveals that mentor teacher voices themselves seem to be largely missing from the research literature. How do *MTs* identify their practices? In what ways do or don't *they* identify themselves as teacher educators and why (or why not)? What do *they* think is a teacher educator in the first place, and what are their responsibilities? What are *their* hopes and goals for their teacher candidates? A seminal study that highlighted *MTs'* perceptions of themselves as participants in the teacher education enterprise was that by Borko and Mayfield (1995). It demonstrated that mentor teachers who "believed that they could and should play an active role in student teachers' learning conducted longer and more frequent conferences with their student teachers and provided more extensive feedback" (p. 501). The authors found that some *MTs* conceptualized their role as something akin to the school-based teacher educator identified by Clarke et al. (2014) by working closely with their *TCs* as learners in their charge. They effectively coached them via observations and more frequent as well as

more in-depth post-lesson debriefs. In other words, MTs who felt compelled to contribute to their TCs' learning engaged differently in their role than those who believed they should not be involved; and the authors found that the involved MTs exerted a positive influence over their TCs' learning. They demonstrated that "the habit of inquiry...is important to cultivate...at the pre-service level and to show its indispensable role in teaching and getting better at teaching over time" (p. 56). The absence of mentor teachers' voices (Goodfellow, 2000) from the literature describing, questioning, and evaluating their role and work is a problem this study seeks to address.

Troubling Mentoring as "Obvious Work" – Tensions for Mentor Teachers

Teacher education programs often approach mentoring and what they assume the MTs do (such as modeling teaching, providing feedback, and supporting reflection) as obvious work (Clarke et al., 2014; Feiman-Nemser & Beasley, 2007; Huening, 2016; Koerner, 1992; Valencia et al. 2009; Zeichner, 2005). Often, teacher education programs expect MTs to know how to mentor a newcomer into becoming a good teacher based on the assumption that as a good teacher of children, the MT intuitively knows how to mentor a TC well (Zeichner, 2005). This assumption may explain the variety of ways Clarke et al. (2014) identified in which MTs, generally left to their own devices in determining what mentoring a TC looks like (Knowles & Cole, 1996), participate in the teacher education enterprise. However, as I substantiate below, the scholarship on mentor teachers indicates that their work is not obvious or self-evident. In fact, it is fraught with tensions and challenges.

The context in which MTs operate contributes to the tensions they experience: Schools and classrooms are set up as places for teachers to teach children, not as places to learn to teach (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1985) or to teach someone to teach. MTs are responsible to two

distinct groups of learners, namely the students in their classrooms as well as their teacher candidates. Research indicates that MTs experience a tension resulting from these two sets of responsibilities (Bullough, 2005; Goodfellow, 2000; Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014; Koerner, 1992; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008; Rajuan, Meijer, & Verloop, 2007).

For example, Rajuan et al. (2007) conducted focus-group interviews of 40 MTs and 74 TCs and found that MTs reported that they give their role/ identity as classroom teachers priority over their role/identity as mentor teacher because they think of themselves first as classroom teachers. The MTs reported concerns that their students' learning would suffer when they are taught by the TC and they expressed reluctance to letting their TCs explore alternative teaching methods and turning their classes over to their TCs. Parker-Katz and Bay (2008) facilitated conversation groups of 17 MTs over the course of six months and in their findings also reported MTs expressing concern about protecting students' learning opportunities while at the same time providing a useful practicum experience for their TCs. In addition, Jaspers et al. (2014) in their interview study of seven MTs found the same tensions surface regarding the MTs responsibilities toward both groups of learners – the students and the TCs – in their charge. MTs described “being a mentor to [their TCs] as an aside or additional task” (p. 106). This finding echoes Zeichner's (2005) concern that mentoring is often thought of as a “self-evident” activity that does not require special attention.

Mentor Teachers' Identities

The duality of MTs' responsibilities as reported in the literature and discussed above, that is, their responsibilities to teach both their students and their TCs at the same time, gives rise to questions about how matters of identity shape their work as MTs and led to me asking how the dual responsibilities MTs have shape their mentoring practice.

Research findings from a range of disciplines – philosophy (Taylor, 1989), psychology (Erickson, 1959), anthropology (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998) – have established that a person’s identity is dynamic and changes over time and is shaped by social, cultural, and historical contexts. I draw on Wenger’s (1998) conceptualization of identity as a dynamic construct, which is to say that people, teachers in this case, do neither remake themselves in every interaction from the ground up, nor do they achieve one “teacher identity” for all time. A teacher’s identity varies and is in relation with/to what she does, that is practices she engages in, and with whom she engages, that is her context. This sociocultural lens conceives of identity, practices, and contexts as constantly in dialogue with one another. In other words, who people are becoming and what they do shape each other; inseparably linked, identity and practice mutually construct each other while being affected by their context(s).

While there is a substantial body of research investigating matters of identity and learning for TCs and novice teachers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Burn, 2007; Campbell, Horn, Nolen, & Ward, 2008; Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbell, 2008; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004; Varghese & Snyder, 2018), empirical literature investigating in what ways identity matters for MTs is limited. Bullough’s study (2005) seems to be the exception. In his case study of a high school MT, Bullough (2005) explicitly interrogated identity issues pertaining to the MT. Drawing on Gee’s (1996/2000-2001) categories of identity, Bullough analyzed the MT’s struggle to move beyond her identity as a teacher to assume the identity of mentor teacher in her year-long work with two TCs and argued for increased research attention to matters of MTs’ identities.

The lack of empirical research about the ways identity matters in the work of mentoring may stem from an ostensibly wide-held belief in the teacher education enterprise that the work of

mentoring is obvious/self-evident and that teachers who teach children well will also know how to teach a TC well (Zeichner, 2005). It is, however, now better understood that *teaching* a TC to become a teacher encompasses intricate and complex processes (Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough, 2008; Hawkey, 1997; Orland, 2001), and *learning* to teach is equally intricate and complex (Feiman-Nemser, 1983, 1992, 2003; Grossman, 1990).

As seen in the discussion above, studies that investigated MTs' perceptions of their role and work do not directly discuss/theorize identity, but they provide insights into challenges MTs experience when mentoring TCs which can be taken up as indicators of identity issues for further investigation. Based on Rajuan et al.'s (2008) as well as the other authors' findings, considering the vital role the MT plays in the teacher education enterprise, and knowing how complex a task it is to mentor and teach a TC (Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough, 2008; Hawkey, 1997; Orland, 2001), further investigations seem warranted.

Practice. Practice refers to “a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 2). For example, MTs discussing with each other challenges they encounter in their mentoring work and looking for solutions is part of their practice; or MTs thinking together about the purposes of the letter of recommendation they are expected to write for their TCs, and how to utilize the letter as leverage in their mentoring work. Practice is plastic in the sense that it changes/ evolves as members of one's community engage with it.

Practice-linked identities. For the role of the MT in the context of the teacher education enterprise, I operate from the understanding that MTs' identities and practice are mutually constructed. Social and professional practice and interactions shape their identities and vice versa. A sociocultural lens conceives of identity, practices, and contexts as constantly in dialogue

with one another. In other words, who people are becoming and what they do shape each other; inseparably linked, identity and practice mutually construct each other while being affected by their context(s), and different practice-linked identities (Nasir & Hand, 2008) reside within those contexts. Practice-linked identities are “identities that people come to take on, construct, and embrace that are linked to participation in particular social and cultural practices” (p.147), including professional practices, for example practices of classroom teachers and practices of mentor teachers. An MT is a mentor but also a classroom teacher and as such participates in a community of classroom teachers as well as in a community of mentor teachers, and the communities engage in different practices. For example, as a classroom teacher an MT may develop curriculum with colleagues according to learning standards. As a mentor teacher, an MT belongs to another community of practitioners that is associated with a different set of practices, such as out-loud thinking when planning lessons with their TCs as a way to reveal the numerous aspects of student learning to consider in the planning process.

Identities as multimembership. According to Wenger (1998), everyone belongs to a number of different communities, and participation in them contributes in numerous and various ways to “the production of our identities” (p. 158). As I illustrate in depth in Chapter Five, the MTs were no exception. They were classroom teachers, mentor teachers, parents, spouses, etc., and all those identities existed concurrently. The MTs did not cease to be classroom teachers while their TCs were present, nor did they cease to be MTs when they were teaching their students. They did, however, experience tension between these two identities (Bullough, 2005; Jaspers et al., 2014; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008; Rajuan et al., 2007) and had to negotiate between them: “These kinds of negotiations can create personally felt conflicts because they go to the

heart of what practitioners care about and feel accountable to – in other words, their identity [Edwards, 2010]” (Kubiak et al., 2015, p. 69).

As I explained above, an MT belongs to a community of classroom teachers while belonging to a community of mentor teachers at the same time. Their identities are connected to practices that are relevant in their different communities. In Wenger’s (1998) words, belonging to many communities means for our identities to exist in “a nexus of multimembership” (p. 159). In the nexus, identities exist with one another and inform one another, and they can be complementary or clashing. In other words, an identity is neither a seamless or monolithic unit, nor is it a fragmented collection of identities that exist in discrete compartments from one another. The MTs were mentor teachers and classroom teachers at once and while they taught their students they had to negotiate how to be also MTs to their TCs. Which is to say, their identities had competing demands on them as classroom and mentor teachers, and MTs undertook efforts to reconcile those demands. Assuming that the MTs’ identities existed in a nexus of multimembership implied that the MTs engaged in particular practices attached to those identities and had to traverse between those practices and identities, in effect negotiating between their practice-linked identities (Nasir & Hand, 2008) as described above.

It bears repeating that Wenger (1998) does not claim that multiple memberships exist peacefully with or necessarily complement one another. The conceptualization of identities as dynamic constructs that exist in a nexus of multimembership neither implies total renewal in every interaction, nor does it mean that the MTs at some point arrived at “one teacher identity” for good. What it does suggest is an understanding of identity in which teachers are in ongoing efforts of negotiation and reconciliation of their identit(ies) for the duration and across contexts of their professional lives. As I will clarify in Chapter Three, grounded in the concept of

practice-linked identities, it proved productive to ask the question what happens when professionals experience tension between their identities and how that matters for their work. Participation in collective reflection and inquiry with mentor teacher colleagues could (potentially) reveal both. As MTs engage in reflection, examination, and inquiry, their examining and reflecting could be studied as renderings of their practice-linked identities as classroom and mentor teachers and the conflict the MTs experienced.

Communities of practice. MTs typically do not have opportunities to interact regularly (Arnold, 2002; Bullough, 2005; Norman, 2011) but Bullough (2005) described which conditions he believed would facilitate mentor identity formation, namely “an affinity group [of mentor teachers], organized around the practice of mentoring, a group (closely related to teacher education) that [could] support formation of a strong professional identity” as a teacher of teachers (p. 153).

Examples of groups that brought MTs together for the purpose of reflecting are limited but two studies report the value to MTs to have colleagues to reflect with. One study was done by Arnold (2002). She facilitated five MT “study group sessions” at her school when she and four of her teacher colleagues served as MTs and found that “teachers agreed that the opportunity to collaborate with someone had provided the stimuli for meaningful reflection, the introduction of new ideas, and more careful planning and articulation of teaching methods” (p.129-130). Arnold concluded that collaboration between MTs was needed to sustain MTs in their work. She suggested implementation of systemic support structures at the school- and university levels to provide reliable support for MTs. Similarly, Parker-Katz and Bay’s (2011) six-month long study of 17 mentor teachers demonstrated the importance of mentor teacher “conversation groups” as a process for MTs to articulate their knowledge, in effect to engage in

knowledge construction with one another. Not only did the university-based teacher education researchers benefit from the collective reflections of the MTs about their mentoring work, the MTs reported having benefitted from reflecting in the conversation groups to come to realize the depth and breadth of their knowledge about mentoring. To summarize, both studies report that MTs benefitted from having the time and space to collectively reflect on and inquire into their mentoring practice. As Lortie (1975) pointed out, the social organization of schools, and high schools in particular, in combination with professional norms that value non-interference often leave teachers feeling isolated.

Based on Bullough's recommendation and the findings reported in the literature, I created a deliberate space for the MTs in this project to be able to meet on a recurring basis to exchange their experiences about mentoring TCs, to seek each other's input and support as to how to improve their mentoring work. As such this group – which I refer to as the Mentor Teacher Reflection & Inquiry group (MT R&I group) – constituted what Wenger (1998) calls a “community of practice.” “[T]he formation of a community of practice is also a negotiation of identity” (Wenger, 1998, p. 149). In the case of the MTs this meant that in the process of establishing the MT R&I group) they began wrestling with questions about who an MT is and what an MT does – questions that directly linked identity and practice. In their discussions the MTs began negotiating what constitutes good mentoring and whether they identified with the practice; for example, engaging in reflection with their TCs on the events in the classroom at the end of a school day.

Wenger's (1998) work around learning and identity in the context of communities of practice offers a productive framing for my question about the ways identities shape practice and vice versa. Importantly, members of a community of practice do not only share information or

knowledge, they also solve problems and innovate. That is to say, a community of practice holds within it the possibility to “invent new practices, create new knowledge, define new territory, and develop collective and strategic voice” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger Trayner, 2015, p. 6). Hence, communities of practice are potential crucibles where its members can forge new ways of addressing problems and expand their practice.

The Role of Reflection in Shaping Identity and Practice

Reflection is recognized as a key means by which teachers can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a deep understanding of how this self fits into a larger context which involves others; in other words, reflection is a factor in the shaping of identity. (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 182)

The role of reflection has long been recognized as vital in the development of a professional identity (Schön, 1983, 1987), and educational research has been paying attention to questions about reflection as shaping professional identity especially for teacher candidates (Calderhead, 1992; Korthagen, 2001; Korthagen 2002; Korthagen, Kim, & Green, 2013; Zeichner & Liston 2014). It is surprising, then, how little attention has been paid to the importance of *mentor teachers*' deliberate and intentional reflection on their practices, and its connection to their identities as teacher educators (Bullough, 2005).

Bearing the theoretical concepts of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) and practice-linked identities (Nasir & Hand, 2008) in mind, as well as Bullough's (2005) call for “an affinity group of MTs”, I assumed that creating a reflection and inquiry group would prove useful to the MTs. It would be a place to cultivate a community where they identify and examine their practice and engage in collective reflection and inquiry on what those practices mean for their identities as teacher educators. In other words,

to be true to the proclaimed need for MTs to be reflective, school-based teacher educators (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Zeichner, 2002), MTs needed a venue to think and talk about, and to make sense of mentoring.

The research literature about the role reflection plays in constructing one's professional identity mostly focuses on TCs (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, & Wubbels, 2001; Korthagen, Kim, & Greene, 2012). Clarke's (2006) study, however, focused on *MTs'* reflection and aimed to provide "substantive analyses of the ways in which cooperating teachers frame and reframe their advisory practice" (p. 910). In a modified stimulated recall approach, Clarke (2006) analyzed MTs' reflections they articulated during watching video-recordings of interactions between themselves and their TCs during pre- and post-lesson debriefs. The MTs stopped the recordings at any point they considered relevant to their practice to frame and reframe (Schön 1983) their practice in the manner of reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983) (a concept I elaborate below). Clarke found that exchanges and interactions between MTs and their TCs indeed facilitated MT reflection, and

[...] that reflection typically fell into two main categories: reflection on one's advisory practices or reflection on the sense [MTs] made of the student-teachers' teaching practices. Both categories are significant in that they enabled the cooperating teachers to bring new perspectives to bear on their work as school-based teacher educators. (p. 919)

As insightful as this study's findings are, the MTs reflected on their practice in an "artificial" setting (as opposed to a "live" or "real-time" setting), and we do not know whether or how they engaged in reflection in their daily work with their TCs. Additionally, as Clarke (2006) points out, to understand if and in what ways those new perspectives translated into action takes more research.

In studies investigating MTs' perceptions of their role and work, MTs often express appreciation for increased opportunities to reflect when they mentor TCs (Arnold, 2002; Ambrosetti, 2012, 2014; Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Orland-Barack, 2001, 2010) but studies interrogating in what ways reflection shapes MTs' actual practice and its affordances as well as possible limitations in shaping/changing/affecting MTs' practice are largely absent from the research literature.

Social and professional interactions in this project's reflection and inquiry group were deliberately structured. This allowed me to explore in what ways the group could support MTs in addressing problems of practice they encountered, including tensions they experienced between serving as MTs and classroom teachers. A key feature of the inquiry group regarded the opportunity for MTs to *intentionally* engage in reflection and inquire into their practice.

Reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Schön's (1983) seminal work about the importance of examining why and how practitioners do the things they do (and say and believe) in their professional settings was instructive for this project. Schön refers to the processes of scrutinizing the largely unarticulated knowledge practitioners continuously access in order to do their work as reflection-in-action (during an event) and reflection-on-action (the thinking of the professional before *and* after an event).

Reflection-*in*-action is akin to thinking on one's feet. For example, a teacher changing instruction during a lesson in response to students' reactions is an expression of reflection-in-action. The teacher is in private, reflective conversation with her class context and the people and events in it: When she encounters unexpected responses from her students, she alters her instruction taking into account the students' responses.

Reflection-*on*-action occurs before and/or after an event or encounter. An example for reflection-*on*-action *preceding* an event is a teacher anticipating her students' reactions and responses to the content of a lesson and planning for those reactions and responses. When a teacher foresees a variety of questions and comments, in relation to her instructional goals, she is preparing to be responsive to her students, which entails listening to and taking account of students' thinking within the lesson.

Reflection-*on*-action *following* an event or encounter includes the teacher reflecting back on her lesson after the event. "The act of reflecting-*on*-action enables us to spend time exploring why we acted as we did, what was happening in a group and so on. In so doing we develop sets of questions and ideas about our activities and practice" (Smith, 2001, 2011, n. p.). For example, at the end of a lesson or day, a teacher might consider different reasons for her students' unexpected responses. She might link today's lesson to yesterday's, wondering about a possible disconnect she was unaware of.

Her reflection-*on*-action both before and after an event opens up possibilities for future actions. She considers in what ways her insights from reflecting on present and past events could or should shape her future actions (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Nasir, 2010). Connecting this to identity, reflection encompasses the idea of a dynamic identity that has temporary dimension (Nasir, 2010; Wenger, 1998) as a powerful way to connect the past and the future in the context of one's actions/practices (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Nasir, 2010). Through reflection, Schön argues, practitioners "surface and criticize the tacit understandings about their work (p. 61).

Reflection-with-others. Without a counterpart who offers a different point of view it is difficult to ask oneself questions that shed a different light on one's beliefs (Zeichner & Liston,

2014). In a collective setting the practitioner has the opportunity to listen to others' understandings, points of view, and analyses of a problem and re-sees/reframes her own understanding, and thus learns from the reflective act (Zeichner & Liston, 2014). A critical look back is reflection that demonstrates one's willingness to listen to and consider "opposing points of view because [...] all belief systems have weaknesses and can be strengthened by the confrontation with different beliefs" (Zeichner & Liston, 2014, p. 11).

Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) used Wenger's (1998) social learning framework of communities of practice to explore a teacher induction cohort model and the ways the cohort can support or hinder novice teachers' learning. The authors found that the novices, in supporting each other in sense-making of their experiences, validated each other's practice and effectively mentored one another. For novice teachers, the authors concluded, the cohort structure invited risk-taking; the participants were willing to be vulnerable and examine their own and each other's pedagogies. At the same time Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) cautioned that the cohort model also had its drawbacks: "At times, the cohort protected and reinforced troubling perceptions about kids and teaching; future research should probe this area. Groupthink, particularly around deficit thinking or in defense of ineffective practices, can become reified and endorsed in a cohort" (p. 73).

In her study of teachers' learning communities (LCs), Wood (2007a, 2007b) investigated how and why teacher learning groups can be a catalyst for change in teachers' practice or an infrastructure for preserving the status quo. From her findings she concluded that teachers need to be afforded autonomy and time, two key aspects for forming trusting relationships that enable them to be public about their practice and admit to needs to grow as practitioners. However, "the constant call to build harmony within the group seemed to impede a potentially contentious

exploration of what group members really believed about how students learn” (p.728). In other words, fear of alienating group members, could lead to avoidance of asking the hard but necessary questions that allow a teacher to see her practice in a new light. Achinstein (2002) in fact pointed out that communities that insist on harmony in the belief it will lead to positive outcomes “may become static settings with few mechanisms for reflection, change, or transformation. In underplaying dissent in favor of consensus, such communities limit inquiry and change and easily fall prey to myopia, losing an outside perspective” (p. 447). What Achinstein (2002) describes is echoed by Zeichner and Liston (2014) as the critical nature of reflection and the very thing – dissent, disagreement - that can turn collective reflection into such a potentially powerful learning experience for teachers.

Engaging in critical collective reflection in the context of the MT reflection and inquiry group bore the potential for the participating MTs to think about their practices and ideas and underlying assumptions as a re-examination in light of probing questions and differing viewpoints. The group as the crucible I mentioned above was a space where the MTs could “invent new practices, create new knowledge, define new territory, and develop collective and strategic voice” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger Trayner, 2015, p. 6).

In doing so, they not only could reflect on the past but also speculate about the future and possibly change course. A deliberately and intentionally created space for mentor teachers to engage in critical reflection on their work and role as MTs could reveal their practice, and the meaning of those practices for their identities as teacher educators – as MTs and as classroom teachers at the same time. When a mentor teacher is given the opportunity to reflect on her practices and her participation in a community of practitioners, she can “articulate thoughts about future participation.[...] [I]dentities are as much about that future participation as they are about

current participation” (Nasir, 2010, p. 59). Schön’s (1983) theory of the role of reflection together with Wenger’s (1998) and Nasir and Hand’s (2008) conceptualizations of identity and practice offered a productive frame to investigate and analyze in what ways collective critical reflection shaped the MTs’ work, their identities, and offered support to productively work through the tensions inherent in both.

Chapter Three: Methods

As I have articulated in the preceding chapters, there is a pressing need for university-based teacher educators to expand their understanding of the ways identities matter for teachers who serve as Mentor Teachers. If TEPs wish to be more effective partners for MTs in the teacher education enterprise, MT “affinity groups” (Bullough, 2005) could well provide support and partnership. Yet, it is vital to understand the affordances and limitations of such groups in addressing the challenges MTs encounter in their mentoring work, including identity tensions. In what follows I describe the methodological choices I made in conducting a study that allowed me to inquire into the MTs’ identities while at the same time exploring the ways in which a group for MTs who collectively reflected on and inquired into their mentoring practice could, and could not, address the challenges the MTs faced. The specific research questions this project answers are as follows:

1. How do the dual responsibilities MTs have shape their mentoring practice?
2. In what ways does a collective reflection and inquiry group support MTs in addressing the problems of practice they encounter, including tensions they experience between serving as MTs and classroom teachers?
3. What are the limitations of an MT reflection and inquiry group?

This project was a basic qualitative inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) in which I studied mentor teachers’ practice-linked identities as teacher educators by way of their articulations about their mentoring practice and problems of practice. As a study that asked questions about “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6), it has the hallmarks of a qualitative inquiry. Because my interest was to *observe* matters of identity, rather than only

discuss identity with the MTs I created a setting that allowed me to do that. However, I also was aware of the interrelation between the observer (researcher) and the observed (researched) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in designing this study, operating from the assumption that “power relations are everywhere, including in the research study itself” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 62). Thus, in creating the MT Reflection and Inquiry group (MT R&I group) I sought a format that could express my respect for the knowledge the MTs hold as well as the time the MTs were going to spend with each other and me. The group had to be useful and meaningful to them, and it had to be a place that honored their intellect and self-determination. Creating a deliberate space where MTs could reflect together on their work, role, and responsibilities as mentors, ask each other questions, and problem-solve together met those qualifications. This group afforded the MTs opportunities they did not have under typical mentoring circumstances (Arnold, 2002; Bullough, 2005; Norman 2011) while it simultaneously allowed me to conduct research that contributed to the scholarship on MTs and mentoring. This project was designed to be a reflective and recursive process where “knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 23). It very much represents an effort in centering MTs’ voices and positioning MTs’ knowledge as essential for the teacher education enterprise.

Setting/ Research Context

The setting for this project was a high school in a growing urban area on the west coast of the United States. Luddington High School has over a thousand students and over 90 adult educators. I chose this school purposefully (Patton, 2005) for three distinct reasons. For one, it is a school with a well-established tradition, in fact expectation, of its teachers mentoring teacher candidates. According to the principal, Luddington has “[teacher candidates] every year [...],

between ten to 15 [TCs]” (Interview 1/4/2018, 1.13) from several university-based teacher education programs (TEPs), both local and out-of-state. In other words, the population I sought to do research with was well represented at this school. Secondly, this high school has a solidly established culture of teachers meeting regularly to collectively inquire into and reflect on different aspects of their practice, their school culture, their students’ needs, etc. Once a week students were dismissed early from school for teachers to spend 80 minutes together to collaborate around, reflect on, and inquire into their teaching practice. That is to say, teachers were familiar with a form of professional learning community whose purpose and structure lent itself to the group I established for the MT participants in my project. Lastly, as a result of my yearlong internship at Luddington High School as an administrator intern in 2016 I had developed trusting relationships with many educators in the building, which facilitated my intended research here.

The following are indicators of this trust: After I received IRB approval for my study and permission from the school district office to carry out my project out at Luddington, several teachers approached me voluntarily to let me know that they would be interested in participating in my project. For one of the MTs, being able to join the MT reflection and inquiry group was one of the deciding factors to take on a teacher candidate that year. Two other MTs approached me after they had taken on TCs as urgent placements, unexpectedly having become eligible for participation, and indicated they were very interested in joining the group.

Timeframe

From October 2017 through March 2018, six mentor teachers and I met monthly as the MT Reflection and Inquiry group (MT R&I group), mirroring the length of the TCs’ practicum for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to ensure that the MTs could reliably receive and provide

support from one another for the duration of the practicum. Secondly, staying with the MTs for the duration of the practicum allowed me to explore whether there was an arc in the MTs' practice and identities and in what ways it shaped their practice. The practicum had distinct phases during which the TCs engaged in different activities, and accordingly the MTs' mentoring activities differed, which in turn led to different/new problems of practice. New problems of practice led to conversations that revealed different layers to the MTs' identity tensions and how those shaped the MTs' mentoring practice.

Additionally, the time frame for the project allowed me to meet with the MTs regularly, observe the MTs' interactions with their TCs regularly, and conduct individual interviews with each MT at different points in time to learn how the challenges of mentoring were shaping their practice and identities, and in what ways the group was able to address those challenges and tensions.

Mentor Teacher Participants

I sent a recruitment email in early July of 2017 to all teachers I knew would serve as mentor teachers during the 2017-18 school year. As indicated in Table 1, the MTs who participated in this study were six veteran high school teachers from different disciplines, and over the years had worked with several different university-based TEPs. The MTs' teaching experience ranged from nine to 24 years, and between them they taught Social Studies, English Language Arts, Math, and Science. One of them was a first-time mentor teacher, while the other five had mentored between two and 15 teacher candidates over the course of their careers. One of the veteran mentors also served as the liaison between Luddington High School and the secondary TEP at one of the local universities. I introduce each participant and the TEPs they were affiliated with during this project in more detail in Chapter Four.

Table 1.

The participants of the MT R&I group.

<i>Mentor Teacher (MT)</i>	<i>MT's Years of Teaching Experience</i>	<i>Total Number of TCs Mentored in Career</i>	<i>Teacher Candidate (TC)</i>	<i>TEP Affiliation</i>
Charles	20	8	Moira	Program A ³
Jérôme	9	5	Hubert	Program B
Ginny*	12	2	Emma	Program C
Art	24	7	Marek	Program D
Eleanor	18	15	Kristy	Program D
Tereza	9	1	Jacinta	Program D

*Ginny joined the group in December.

MT Reflection and Inquiry group (MT R&I group)

As I articulated in Chapter Two, the literature reflects a need for opportunities for MTs to engage with colleagues in conversations about the work of mentoring (Arnold, 2002; Norman, 2011). Luddington High School had a well-established culture of professional learning communities around a number of aspects relevant to teachers, such as curriculum, standards-based instruction, race and equity, and others. Teachers chose year to year which group they wanted to join for their professional learning. However, up to the point of this project launching at Luddington, there had been no dedicated time and space for MTs to meet as a community and engage in reflection on and inquiry into their mentoring practice as their professional learning, had they wanted to do so. This lack of opportunity seemed symptomatic for the way teacher education often seems to be treated, that is as a “self-evident activity both for school-and university-based teacher educators” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 118). Thus, establishing this group had several goals.

³ A detailed overview of the programs is presented in Chapter Four.

Firstly, as a community of practice — defined in its most elementary form as “group[] of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1) — it served to bring MTs together to reflect on, inquire into, examine, and discuss their mentoring practice, problems of practice, and questions about mentoring with each other as a form of professional learning. Reflecting on questions about who a mentor teacher is and what a mentor teacher does in this collective, the group members were able to critically examine each other’s practice and mentoring activities, as well as their understandings and knowledges of the mentor teacher’s role during the practicum experience. These examinations offered them new avenues for how to think about their mentoring practice.

Secondly, the group provided an opportunity to investigate Nasir and Hand’s (2008) concept of practice-linked identities by which they mean “identities that people come to take on, construct, and embrace that are linked to participation in particular social and cultural practices” (p.147), including professional practices. The group meetings allowed me to observe the MTs puzzling through their mentoring practice and asking questions about it that unearthed how their identities as classroom teachers and mentor teachers shaped their mentoring practice.

Lastly, the MTs were able to generate concrete outcomes that proved useful to them (such as an interview protocol for interested future TCs, or a roadmap for the practicum from the MT’s vantage point) in hopes to put them to use in a future iteration of the MT R&I group.

Data Collection

To answer my research questions, I drew on three main data sources: audio-recordings of the monthly MT R&I group meetings; audio-recordings of three semi-structured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) interviews with each of the MTs in October 2017, January/February 2018, and

March 2018, for a total of 16 interviews; and field notes of two full-day observations of five of the six MT-TC pairs, which I conducted in October 2017 and February 2018. Additional data sources were audio-recordings of semi-structured interviews with five of the six TCs in February 2018, an audio-recording of a semi-structured interview with the principal of Luddington High School in January 2018, as well as documents related to the TEPs with whom the MTs partnered.

Observing and facilitating the MT reflection and inquiry group (MT R&I group).

Every month from October 2017 until March 2018, the six MTs and I met for an average of 93 minutes as a group with the purpose of critical reflection on and examination of their mentoring practice and the challenges they encountered in their mentoring work at the end of the school day. The length of the meetings depended on how long the MTs wanted to stay. If it looked like we were going past 80 minutes (the length we had originally agreed to for each meeting) I let the MTs know but as is evident from Table 2, they often stayed longer and continued their conversations.

Table 2.

Overview of the MT R&I group meetings.

<i>Date</i>	<i>MTs PRESENT</i>	<i>DURATION</i>
10/11/17	Art, Charles, Tereza, Eleanor, Jérôme	74 mins
11/9/17	Art, Charles, Tereza, Eleanor, Jérôme	79 mins
12/4/17	Art, Charles, Tereza, Eleanor, Jérôme, Ginny	88 mins
1/8/18	Art, Charles, Tereza, Jérôme, Ginny	115 mins
2/8/18	Art, Charles, Tereza, Eleanor, Jérôme, Ginny	93 mins
3/15/18	Art, Charles, Tereza, Eleanor, Jérôme, Ginny	108 mins
		TOTAL: 557 minutes

I audio-recorded each meeting and promptly transcribed the recordings myself. I took notes and made jottings while facilitating the meetings and, immediately following the meeting, I elaborated on my notes while what was discussed was still fresh in my mind. The focus of my notes was on the MTs’ articulations of their mentoring practice and how the challenges they encountered shaped their thinking about mentoring. Facilitating the group meant primarily to listen closely to the MTs’ articulations about their mentoring experiences, as well as asking them probing questions about their experiences to push them deeper into interrogating and reflecting on those experiences. As the facilitator, I also functioned as a reminder for MTs of what they expressed about being an MT and the work of mentoring during previous meeting, and I asked questions about how and why those things connected – or not – with one another. Facilitating meant keeping the group’s conversation focused. In other words, I constantly gauged how the space that airing grievances took up could still serve as a productive space for conversations that led to useful insights and outcomes for the MTs (as illustrated in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven).

Interviews with MTs. In addition to observations and group meetings I conducted individual, semi-structured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) with the MTs. Table 3 shows that the interviews were of varying lengths. A semi-structured protocol allowed for the interview to move more like a conversation, and each MT was inclined differently to talk in less or more depth about the things of interest to him or her.

Table 3.

Overview of the frequency and duration of MT interviews.

<i>Interview Date</i>	<i>Interview Number</i>	<i>MT</i>	<i>Duration</i>
9/5/17	Interview # 1	Tereza	23 mins.
9/5/17	Interview # 1	Art	29 mins.
9/13/17	Interview # 1	Charles	64 mins.
9/16/17	Interview # 1	Eleanor	40 mins.

9/19/17	Interview # 1	Jérôme	64 mins.
7/24/18	Interview # 1	Ginny	78 mins.
1/5/18	Interview # 2	Jérôme	22 mins
1/6/18	Interview # 2	Eleanor	40 mins.
1/10/18	Interview # 2	Tereza	51 mins.
1/12/18	Interview # 2	Art	50 mins
1/16/18	Interview # 2	Charles	49 mins.
3/16/18	Interview # 3	Art	54 mins.
3/17/18	Interview # 3	Eleanor	154 mins.
3/19/18	Interview # 3	Jérôme	64 mins.
3/20/18	Interview # 3	Ginny	87 mins.
3/21/18	Interview # 3	Tereza	39 mins.
3/22/18	Interview # 3	Charles	113 mins.

I conducted the first semi-structured interview with each of the original five MTs before the first MT R&I group meeting with the purpose of learning about their history and current perceptions of their roles and responsibilities as MTs.⁴ Once our group was underway, I conducted two more semi-structured, individual interviews with the MTs. The second interview in January 2017 was an opportunity for the MT to assess a) the practicum and its progression, and b) their involvement in the group. The third and final interview in March 2018 served as a reflection on the MT's participation in the group and its effect(s) on the MT's thinking about being a mentor teacher. In all three interviews, I asked the MTs to (re)define the term "mentor teacher" (see Appendix) to learn if/how their understanding of who they are as teacher educators changed or did not change over the course of the practicum, and how/if their involvement in the MT R&I group prompted the change.

⁴ As a reminder, Ginny joined the group only in December, and I was not able to conduct interview #1 with her until later.

Observations of MT-TC pairs. In addition to the monthly group meetings, I conducted five full-day observations twice of five of the six MT-TC pairs. Table 4 provides insight into the duration of the observations. I spent considerable amounts of time in each MT-TC pair’s classroom to observe what the MTs’ considered “typical days”.

Table 4.

Overview of all-day observations of five MT-TC pairs.

<i>Observation date</i>	<i>MT-TC pair</i>	<i>Duration of observation</i>
Observation #1		
10/17/17	Charles and Moira	6.5 hrs
10/18/17	Tereza and Jacinta	7 hrs
10/23/17	Eleanor and Kristy	5 hrs 15 mins
10/25/17	Art and Marek	7 hrs
10/27/17	Jérôme and Hubert	8 hrs
Observation #2		
11/17/18	Charles and Moira	6.5 hrs
1/19/18	Eleanor and Kristy	5 hrs 45 mins
2/6/18	Jerome and Hubert	7 hrs
2/12/18	Tereza and Jacinta	7.5 hrs
2/2/18	Art and Marek	7 hrs 45 mins
		TOTAL: 68.25 hours

These observational data served to triangulate the audio-recorded data from the group meetings to show in what ways the mentoring activities the MTs articulated and talked about during our meetings reflected what happened when they interacted with their TCs. In other words, I used the observational data to see if and in what ways the MTs’ mentoring practice and their identities connected (Nasir & Hand, 2008) as practice-linked identities. The purpose of observing each MT-TC pair twice was to follow possible changes in roles and responsibilities. As the practicum progressed, the MTs released more of the planning and teaching

responsibilities to their TCs, and via the observations I was able to see if and how this change shaped the MTs' mentoring practice.

For both observations, I asked the MTs when I could observe what they considered a typical day, representative of their daily routines (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I documented my observations through highly descriptive field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During these observations, my focus was on the interactions between the MT and TC. I made every effort to capture as much detail as possible of their interactions and exchanges, writing down conversations as completely as I could and quoting the speakers as exactly as I could. In addition, I jotted down questions that surfaced for me while I was observing. I used those questions to follow up with the MTs for clarifications about my observations. Immediately following an observation, I formally wrote up my field notes that included descriptions, direct quotes, and my own comments and questions. My observational notes also served as entry points into discussions for the MT R&I group.

Documents. To the extent that the MTs were willing and able to share them with me, I collected copies of email correspondence between the MTs and their respective TEPs to learn how frequent and pertaining to what subjects the communication between them was. I also obtained handbooks and forms the TEPs provided to the MTs to the extent that MTs had them. These documents aided me in gaining an understanding of the expectations the TEPs had and support (or lack thereof) they provided the MTs. All documents helped to paint a picture of the TEP context in which the MTs operated.

Interviews with the TCs and the principal. I interviewed five of the six TCs, as well as the principal of Luddington High school. These interviews took place in January and February 2018. For both the TCs and the principal interviews I used semi-structured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) interview protocols. Due to most TCs' time constraints, the interviews had to happen at Luddington during their lunch or preparation periods which put a natural time limit on the interviews. However, as Table 5 shows, the interview with Jacinta was an outlier. When I interviewed her, she went into more detail than the other TCs about frustrations she felt about her TEP and anxieties she had around the practicum.

Table 5.

Overview of additional interviews.

<i>Interview Date</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1/4/18	Principal	23 mins.
2/14/18	TC Hubert	25 mins.
2/16/18	TC Jacinta	76 mins.
2/16/18	TC Kristy	38 mins
2/16/18	TC Marek	25 mins.
2/28/18	TC Moira	37 mins.

My interest in interviewing the TCs was to hear from them about their learning and teaching experiences in their MTs' classrooms. The purpose of the interview with Luddington High School's principal was to gain an understanding of her perception of her school's involvement in TC mentoring. These additional interviews were important for gaining a fuller understanding of the context in which the MTs operated.

Data Analysis

Bearing in mind that the research questions driving this project were asking how identity tensions shape the MTs' practice and in what ways collective reflection and inquiry could

support MTs in addressing those tensions and other challenges, my data analysis focused on the MT R&I group meetings, the all-day observations, and the MT interviews. Other data sources, such as the interviews with the TCs and the principal, and the document collection about the TEPs served to contextualize the MTs' mentoring work.

Data collection and analysis were simultaneous processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) in this study due to the ongoing data collection over the course of six months. I analyzed the transcripts, observational data, and field notes iteratively, identifying recurring and new themes and concerns the MTs articulated in an ongoing manner (see Table 6 in Chapter Five as well as the excerpt from a report in this chapter). Phases of formal data analyses alternated with phases of "wallowing in the data" (Knapp, 2015) – that is, I read and re-read transcripts many times, jotting down notes in the margins, tracking the arcs of themes, and writing down comments and questions. For each group meeting I generated a report (see below) of the topics, concerns, problems of practice, and questions the MTs surfaced during the meeting. I did that for two reasons: To provide the MTs with a tangible outcome of the meeting and to conduct member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for the trustworthiness of my data analysis.

Reflective memos. As soon as I started data collection, I began writing reflective memos to capture my thinking about the data. Questions emerged such as, "How are the MTs framing 'mentoring'? What do the MTs' utterances (questions, complaints, jokes, claims etc.) about mentoring and about their TCs say about their identities as MTs?" I interrogated my learning about the group and its members via memo writing, wondering in what ways the group supported or did not support the MTs in their mentoring work. The memos helped me to continuously clarify my research questions, sort out the many thoughts and wonderings I had, and identify

analytic themes. Below is an excerpt of a memo I wrote after the group's second meeting in November 2017, with my thoughts in italics:

I gave Charles a ride home, just like after our last meeting, and of course we continued to “talk shop”. He said that he realizes how much he loves teaching and being with the kids and in front of them when he has a TC. He misses being the teacher when his TC is “on”. He’s, in his own words, “mad at Moira” when she teaches something wrong, as in factually wrong. This week, she taught the students about Newton’s first and third law and told the students the wrong thing. She got the laws wrong. But Charles didn’t say anything, he continued filming her while she was teaching. And he wondered whether he should tell her that he’s mad at her to which I replied with the question whether his students (the kids) would respond well if he got mad at them when they got something wrong. Of course not, he knows that. – *It seems to me, that so much of what’s happening with the TCs and MTs is about expectations and assumptions, both not always clearly articulated and then disappointing both people. It’s as though the MTs think the TCs should already know how to teach but at the same time they seem offended or irritated when the TCs display confidence in their attempts at teaching but at the same time the MT is not sure how to react.* At least Charles wasn’t. [...]

In this memo I narrated a conversation I had with Charles early on in the project, and it foreshadowed a number of important tensions that stayed with the group over the course of the project. Charles explaining to me that mentoring a TC had reminded him of how much he enjoys teaching students played a role in my analysis later on when I started to see that the MTs felt a tension between their mentoring work and their responsibilities to their students, a tension reported in the literature (Jaspers et al., 2014; Rajuan et al., 2007). My wonderings (in italics)

prompted by Charles' articulations during the car ride were a beginning analysis of the things I heard the MTs discuss during the group meetings. I started picking up on tension and what seemed to me contradicting expectations.

Transcripts

MT R& I group meetings. Immediately following each meeting, I transcribed the audio-recording and identified the themes/ topics, questions, and patterns that emerged from the MTs' discussions. Iterative, open coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldaña, 2013) proved useful in generating categories and themes that served well for writing up the meeting reports as well as for providing me with a solid basis of codes. As mentioned above, this study sought to not only explore my research questions but also provide useful outcomes for the MTs. Therefore, part of my analysis after each meeting was the generation of a meeting report that I shared with the MTs at the following group meeting. For the purpose of the report I open-coded the meetings' transcripts using in-vivo codes (Saldaña, 2013), that is "a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (p. 91), so that the MTs recognized their own words. The promise of a meeting report held me accountable to prompt transcription and preliminary analysis of each group meeting.

When I compiled the topics into a report, I provided line references to the transcript, and turned both the transcript and the report over to the MTs at the beginning of the next meeting.

Figure 1 below shows an excerpt from the transcript.

Figure 1.

Excerpt from the transcript of the MT R&I group meeting on 11/9/2017.

153 **Charles:** There you go. – I guess my connections would be...uhm...because I'm part of this
154 group it makes me think about the...my interactions with my student teacher way more than I
155 think I have ever before. This is my however manieth student teacher that I've had, and I
156 really every time my mouth opens I'm thinking of this group or Maries specifically [people
157 chuckle], and I feel, it feels different for some reason to me. I also find myself, uh, cringing,
158 not because of that but because of the...my own sort of... I find myself thinking about the
159 idea that I am a mentor and therefore I don't really have any idea what a roadmap looks like
160 for doing that because I never thought of myself as that before. I just ... so, I really never
161 thought of myself as a mentor to my student teacher before and so I feel like now I am
162 forcing myself to think in that that I am in that role and feeling like I have no ability to do that
163 thing.
164 **Maries:** Wooowww.
165 **Art:** I have similar feelings.
166 **Maries:**!!!! [people chuckle, Charles laughs] Oh my God, I'm like, turning you all
167 into crisis mode...
168 **Art:** I mean, I can't say that I've been thinking about it differently like you did [looking at
169 Charles] but, uhm, I don't know... and I don't know if, it doesn't really have to do with this
170 group but I have been feeling inadequate as a mentor for my, sometimes, for my teacher
171 candidate. Uhm, he is really good, and he is really critical, and he has great ideas and lots of
172 good suggestions that, you know, keep me thinking about what I should be doing to improve
173 myself. So in some ways I feel like he is mentoring me as much as I'm mentoring him.
174 **Maries:** Wooowwww.
175 **Art:** So, I don't feel like real confident in myself as a mentor.

I then wrote up a report based on the transcript. I identified the themes and referenced the lines in the theme summary, as illustrated in Figure 2. The text highlighted in yellow refers to the transcript excerpt in Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Excerpt of the report generated from transcript in Figure 1.

Topics/Themes that emerged during Connections:

- Thinking of oneself as a mentor – What makes a mentor a mentor?
→ Charles and Art: wondering about their competencies as mentors, fueled by different reasons, though (p. 8-9, ll.153-175)
- Challenges the university programs present to MTs
→ Jerome: TC is very absent due to erratic schedule, very fragmented experience (p. 9, ll. 180-189; p. 28, ll. 568-580)

- What are the things the MT needs to/should teach the TC?
→ Tereza, Eleanor, Charles: *professionalism*; tension b/w “you [the TC] are an adult” and “I [the MT] need to coach you in how to be a professional” (pp. 10-11, ll. 201-227)

- TCs’ ideas and opinions, how/when to make room for them
Art: strong TC w/ ideas and opinions (p. 8-9, ll. 168-175)
Eleanor: “peers - play acting” for students vs. not really peers but teacher/student relationship

As a way to member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I presented both the transcript and the report to the MTs. The MTs took time to read through both but seemed more interested in the report than the transcript. As they read, they expressed surprise at the number and variety of topics they had addressed. Eleanor was especially enthusiastic about it:

Eleanor: This, I mean, I know I enjoyed the discussion last time and I know we talked about a lot of interesting things, this is a nice - oh wow, we covered a lot of topics [referencing the summary report]. It’s nice to have a summary like that.

Jerome: I can’t think of anything else to add or say.

Maries: That’s ok. I just wanted to know, is this reflecting your memory of what you all talked about?

Eleanor: It’s better than my memory. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 15-24)

The reports as a product of our meetings proved to be useful to them. They appreciated having concrete outcomes from the meetings and a record of their collective work. I offered them a copy of each transcript together with the report I generated from it, and while they liked the report, they declined the offer of the transcript.

Since I had promised the MTs a report for each meeting, I promptly engaged in coding the meeting transcripts after I had transcribed them. As the number of group meetings increased and my data set grew thicker and more complex, through the method of constant comparison

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), I continued to develop and sharpen my codes. For example, beginning with group meeting #2 (11/9/2017) the MTs expressed different reasons for frustrations over their interactions or lack of interactions with the TEPs. I began by marking all instances that mentioned the TEPs with “TEP”, then I sorted through those to identify the separate reasons. I labeled them in the words of the MTs, such as “TC teaching load”, “pacing”, “communication”, “supervisor”, “orientation”, “unclear expectations”, etc. Checking for frequency of the different frustration-reason-labels surfaced three overarching codes I subsumed under MT FRUST: TEP Communication, TEP Priorities, and edTPA. Using this scheme, I read and re-read the transcripts from all six meetings and coded the instances of MT frustration and was able to follow a timeline of “frustration-development” over the course of the six meetings.

Interviews. Similar to my analysis approach to the group meetings’ transcripts, I engaged in open coding (Saldaña, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of the interview transcripts. Especially the affordances and limitations of MTs’ participation in the MT R&I group generated categories that I used to compare the MTs’ experiences with and perceptions of the group’s usefulness over time.

Observational field notes. Observational data from MT-TC interactions served to triangulate/ cross reference the data from the group meetings and interviews with the MTs. I used observational field notes to see if there were tensions (perceived and real) between observed actions/practices and MTs’ reflections on those practices in the group meetings, and what those tensions could mean for the MTs’ identities and their mentoring practice. Immediately following each observation, I created fleshed out narratives, including jottings, from the field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through the method of constant comparison (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of the observational data, across MT-TC pairs, within MT-TC pairs, and across time of all

pairs, mentoring activities and patterns of presence and absence of interactions between MTs and their TCs emerged. Table 6 in Chapter Five shows this. It illustrates how the absence and presence of their students shaped the MTs' mentoring of their TCs, that is, what kinds of mentoring activities the MTs engaged in and under what circumstances they did so.

Researcher Positionality

I entered this project wearing a number of different hats that all mattered to varying degrees for my interactions with the MTs who participated in this research project, and it is important for the trustworthiness of my project to be as transparent about my intersectional position as possible (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The confluence of my identities as researcher, group facilitator, former high school teacher, former instructional coach to TCs, principal intern at Luddington High School, and White woman all required of me to be “honest and reflective about the limitations of [my] multiple positionalities and [to] take them into account methodologically” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 59).

My professional history as an instructional coach working with MTs and TCs makes me part of the bigger community of teacher educators. More specifically, I was an instructional coach for TCs in Program D and that position and work provided me with countless opportunities to observe the intensity of what it means to mentor a TC and engage in exchanges about the challenges of mentoring with many MTs. Based in this particular experiential knowledge I recognized the need to address practices and identities as they pertain to mentor teachers. Also based in this knowledge I identified the need MTs seemed to have for community and time to deliberately reflect on and interrogate their practices, questions, and problems of practice.

I was acutely aware how my experiences interacted with the MTs' meaning making. My experiences and identities not only informed my interactions with the MTs, but also co-generated meaning with them. To this end, I kept an ongoing research journal and reflective memos to chronicle and interrogate my thoughts and biases throughout the research process, in order to concretize the complexity of my participation (Maxwell, 2005).

Throughout this study I struggled with its dual purposes: On the one hand, it served my purpose as a researcher to be able to explore how MTs' identity matters shape their mentoring practice and one could argue that I conducted research *on* my participants. Rather than discussing identity with the MTs, I interpreted and made sense of the MTs' contributions to the group conversations and what they said during interviews and informal conversations to me in reference to my research questions. On the other hand, I was as transparent with the MTs about my research purpose as I could be, and I also conducted research *with* them: The groups' meetings were set up so as to meet the MTs' needs and were by and large driven by the MTs' questions and the challenges they encountered mentoring their TCs. Only once did I bring an explicit question, I wanted them to discuss, namely after I had concluded the first round of observations of each MT-TC pair and I noticed the absence of interactions between MTs and TCs during instructional time (see Chapter Five). At the first group meeting I asked them what *their* hopes were for this group, and they talked about the opportunity to deliberately think about mentoring, to find support from people in similar circumstances, and to create a roadmap of the practicum from the MT's perspective, and Chapter Seven indicates those hopes were fulfilled. Still, the multiple-awareness that my study design and my involvement with my participants required me to occupy proved to be challenging at times, which drove home the importance of

ongoing reflective memo writing and journaling to tease out and keep track of my thinking versus my participants' thinking.

Trustworthiness of the study

Most importantly, I triangulated my data sources. It was important that I relied not only on the MTs' articulations about their mentoring work during our group's meetings but also observed the MTs in their classroom contexts with their TCs because what people say and what they actually do are not always reflective of one another. Therefore, in order to have several viewpoints I could cross-check with one another, I drew on multiple data sources. The group's meetings and the individual interviews with the MTs three times over the course of the study were triangulated with observations of the five of the six MT-TC pairs. I observed them twice for a whole school day in the beginning and toward the end of the practicum.

In addition to member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in the context of the group meeting I described above, I also asked the MTs direct questions during my final interview with them about things I had started noticing in my analyses of the data. For example, I had noticed that Art seemed to express frustration, even insecurity, about certain aspects of being a mentor teacher. In my final interview with him I presented this understanding/interpretation to him, based on direct quotes from interview and group meeting transcripts. I asked Art plainly if he felt he was asked to do things as Marek's MT that he did not feel prepared for or had not learned to do, and he answered yes. Similarly, I shared my interpretations of specific things Eleanor, Tereza, Ginny, and Charles had articulated over the course of the project, and they agreed with how I had made sense of their articulations.

Limitations of Study Design

Like all studies, this one was bounded (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and I did not explore in depth each MTs' interactions with their respective TEP. Interviews with the TCs' TEP supervisors could have provided additional perspective and insight into the workings of each TEP and how they shape the MTs' work and roles. However, I did provide some description of the TEPs and their interactions with the MTs in Chapter Four to provide the reader with context regarding each of the MTs, and the TEP with which they were associated.

Another limitation of this design is the make-up of the MT R&I group. The participants in this project were a self-selected group of mentor teachers who, by their own accounts, enjoyed each other's and my company, as well as engaging in reflection on their practice as mentor teachers. That is to say that we neither know what an MT R&I group would afford MTs if they were obligated to participate in such a group, nor if such a group was facilitated by someone who is unfamiliar with the MTs. The MTs themselves pointed out to me that if our group had been bigger, they felt they would have benefitted less from it because there would have been less time for each group member to talk and address their challenges.

Lastly, this study focused on university-based TEPs with on-campus courses and an in-school practicum. According to a 2010 report by the National Research Council, university-based teacher education programs prepared – at the time – 70 to 80 percent of the nation's teachers. However, alternative routes into the teaching profession in the form of for-profit and non-profit programs, as well as school-districts' own teacher preparation programs and residency programs, are on the rise (Zeichner, 2017), and this project did not include MTs affiliated with such programs.

Chapter Four: Introduction to the Mentor Teachers and Their Respective Teacher Education Program Contexts

This chapter serves to introduce the mentor teachers who participated in this project, as well as to describe the respective TEP contexts in which the MTs operated. It is not meant as an analysis of the MTs or the TEPs. Rather, I present these descriptions from the MTs' perspectives, drawing on transcripts from interviews with the MTs and from the MT R&I group meetings. The profile of each MT was derived from the first interview I conducted with them before we began our MT R&I group meetings. The profiles of the TEPs were derived from the MTs' conversations about the different TEPs and from documents the MTs shared with me (see Chapter Three). Table 1 below, reprinted from Chapter Three, illustrates each MTs' teaching and mentoring experience as well as their TEP affiliation. The table elucidates the variety of experience between the MTs.

Table 1.

The participants of the MT R&I group, their mentoring experience, and program affiliations.

<i>Mentor Teacher (MT)</i>	<i>MT's Years of Teaching Experience</i>	<i>Total Number of TCs Mentored in Career</i>	<i>Teacher Candidate (TC)</i>	<i>TEP Affiliation</i>
Charles	20	8	Moira	Program A
Jérôme	9	5	Hubert	Program B
Ginny*	12	2	Emma	Program C
Art	24	7	Marek	Program D
Eleanor	18	15	Kristy	Program D
Tereza	9	1	Jacinta	Program D

*Ginny joined the group in December.

Mentor Teachers

Charles. Charles came to teaching after a years-long career in environmental science consultancy. He had been a secondary-level science teacher for 20 years when he accepted Moira

as his eighth teacher candidate. One of his motivations to become a mentor teacher was to ensure that teacher candidates would not have to endure a traumatic practicum experience like his was, with an absent MT who did not provide guidance or coaching.

Charles' understanding of mentoring a teacher candidate is that "everybody is different, and I have to meet them where they are" (Interview, 9/12/2017). He thinks of his TCs as learners just like he thinks of the students in his classroom as learners. In addition, Charles understands his work of mentoring as securing the future of the teaching profession: "It's like a lasting legacy of the things that I have learned that get imparted to that TC" (Interview, 9/12/2017). His most important goal for his TC is to become a science teacher who centers student learning and who understands that "[text]books are not a good idea for student learning of science. It might be easier for you as the novice teacher at the beginning but that's not good for student learning" (Interview, 9/12/2017). Most importantly, though, Charles believes that "the mentor teacher's job is to work with the [TC] to help them *reflect* on what they do through the lens of student learning – both content and social learning" (Interview, 9/12/2017; emphasis in the original).

Jérôme. Jérôme was a student at Luddington High School where he successfully completed his practicum as TC and now has been an English Language Arts teacher for nine years. "I have not gone far", he joked (Interview, 9/19/2017). Like Eleanor, he took on his first TC when he was still fairly new to the teaching profession, and Hubert is his fifth teacher candidate. Jérôme introduced Hubert, as he has done with all his TCs, to the students as "a teacher *with* him" (Interview, 9/19/2017, emphasis in the original), that is, a teacher who works *with* him, not *for* or *below* him.

Jérôme's understanding of mentoring was to convey to his TC how to "create a classroom where it's about students at the center" (Interview 9/19/2017) He also believed it was important

for his TCs to be in the classroom without Jérôme “so they can feel like, "What is it like to be just me in this room?"” with the students (Interview, 9/19/2017). Leaving the classroom then was Jérôme’s way of expressing trust in his TC, an expression of his belief that Hubert deserved “to be there” (Interview, 9/19/2017), just like Jérôme’s mentor teacher trusted Jérôme and left the students in his charge. He wanted to ensure that Hubert’s practicum was indeed an approximation of the reality of being the teacher in whose charge the students are. This may sound as though Jérôme was the “absentee landlord” (Clarke et al., 2014), but that is not how he saw it. Rather, he thought of the practicum as a learning project with the TC as the driver and Jérôme as the MT being the built-in reflection-and thought partner, not a supervisor (Interview, 9/19/2017). He did not believe he necessarily had to be in the room in order to reflect with his TC about the things the TC noticed, observed, or experienced.

Ginny. Ginny had been a high school science teacher for ten years when she accepted Emma as an emergency-placed TC in November 2017 (that is, more than two months after the practica had commenced for all TCs across programs). Emma was the second TC Ginny took under her wing, and it was a notably different experience than mentoring her first TC. Ginny faced challenges in mentoring Emma that she had not encountered before and expressed relief and gratitude that she could join her colleagues in the MT R&I group. “I need help”, she said bluntly (Field notes, 11/9/2017).

Similar to Charles, Ginny came to teaching from a previous career and really grew to love teaching science to teenagers. Becoming a mentor teacher was inspired by a conversation Ginny had with Eleanor at the end of the 2015-16 school year (Field notes, 7/24/2018). In her role as the liaison between Program D and Luddington, Eleanor was trying to recruit more colleagues as mentors for the following school year (2016-17). She shared with Ginny that while

it is true that taking on a TC means more work it was also a priceless opportunity to reflect on one's practice and grow as a teacher. Ginny had been growing restless and "hungry" for meaningful professional learning for some time and the conversation with Eleanor convinced her to try out mentoring as a way to address this craving. Her first TC came from Program D, and she had a very positive experience. She said she learned just as much from her first TC as the TC learned from her, if not more (Interview 7/24/2018). That experience motivated Ginny to continue mentoring the following year and accept Emma when she urgently needed a placement. Additionally, Ginny considered mentoring as a way of paying it forward, that is, giving back to her profession. She said since someone had "bothered taking me under their wing, I should do the same for someone now" (Interview, 7/24/2018).

Art. Art has been a secondary-level math teacher for 24 years. Marek was the seventh TC he mentored into the teaching profession. When Art first decided to mentor a teacher candidate, he came to it somewhat reluctantly. He was concerned about an increased workload and wondered about his ability to mentor a TC because he thought of himself very much as a teacher who was still learning to become a better teacher every day. A sense of obligation and a desire to give back to the teaching profession in the end were the impetus for Art starting to mentor TCs, despite his concerns. He has found over the years that while it is true that mentoring a TC creates additional responsibilities, the payback in it for him is greater than the work the TC makes for him. This is true for his professional learning regarding organizational skills, as well as philosophical and pedagogical ideas he gleaned from his TCs: As Art told me, just having "a second person to bounce ideas off" was valuable to him, and "the process of interacting with another person helps me to get better, and it can be specific procedures [and] routines, but also mindset, philosophy, [and] the 'why' behind the stuff" (Interview, 9/5/2017). In addition, Art is

convinced that the students in his math classes benefit from the TC's presence: "Two teachers is better than one [teacher], even if the one adult is learning through the kids' learning" (Interview, 9/5/2017).

Eleanor. Eleanor has been a high school Social Studies teacher for 18 years, and she began mentoring TCs three years into her tenure. Kristy is the 15th teacher candidate Eleanor is mentoring into the teaching profession. Most of the TCs she has mentored came from a local university, and she has been the liaison between that Program and her school's mentor teachers for several years. Over the years, her understanding of what mentoring is and what a mentor does has grown more complex. When her first TC came around "it was just nice to have another person to talk things through with" (Interview 9/16/2017) but over time she has come to realize that "a mentor teacher is (in no particular order) a coach, guide, role model, therapist, collaborator, critic, learner, and boss for the [TC]. They provide the physical, intellectual, and emotional space for the [TC] to put into practice all the theory of their program and experience the realities of teaching" (Interview 9/16/2017). For Eleanor, interpersonal and communication skills are 'musts' for a successful practicum because she has learned when things become problematic "we need to talk about it, not let it go undiscussed" (Interview (9/16/2017)).

Tereza. Tereza had been teaching secondary-level science for nine years, and Jacinta was her first teacher candidate. Like Art, Tereza was ambivalent at first about mentoring someone into the teaching profession. While her colleagues were convinced that she would be a good mentor (based on their experiences with her as a teacher and colleague), she faced self-doubt and wondered if she had been a teacher long enough to know how to support a TC. Her way to feel confident in her decision to take Jacinta under her wing was to make transparency in their relationship a primary goal from the very beginning: "You're my intern, and whatever you need

I'll do, just be clear with me" (Interview, 9/24/2017). Tereza thought about herself as the "reality-check for the university-program" (Interview, 9/24/2017) because she did not believe that university-programs build realistic expectations for teacher candidates about what teaching is really like, neglecting to paint a clear and honest picture about time constraints, students' needs, families' needs (and demands) and other pressures bearing down on teachers every day.

The Teacher Education Programs from the MTs' perspectives

Four TEPs (three from within the state, one from outside the state) were represented among the six MT-TC pairs. All four programs were one-year Masters programs housed in colleges or schools of education in four-year-universities. Below I describe the programs on the basis of what I learned about them from the MTs through our group meetings and individual conversations, as well as what I gleaned from email exchanges and handbooks, reports, and other documents the MTs were willing and able to share with me. Charles mentored for Program A, Jérôme mentored for Program B, Ginny mentored for Program C, and Art, Tereza, and Eleanor mentored for Program D.

All TCs started their practica in September 2017 and concluded their practica and programs by the end of March 2018.⁵ Like all people, places, and institutions mentioned in this dissertation are confidential, I kept the names of the TEPs confidential as well since the point of this section is to provide the context in which the MTs operated from their experience, not to provide a comprehensive review or evaluation of the programs.

⁵ This is true for Emma, Ginny's TC as well. She started in September at a different school with a different TC and due to difficulties changed her placement to Luddington with Ginny.

Program A. This Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) online program was an out-of-state program that offered identical curriculum, services and resources to its on-campus MAT “sibling”. Moira, Charles’ TC, participated in weekly, live online classes and completed coursework on her own time, something that became a point of contention between Charles and his TC as it took Moira out of the classroom frequently.

On January 4, 2018 Charles attended a two-hour long webinar hosted by program A to orient its MTs about the program’s expectations of its TCs. This was three months into the practicum. Charles said that he may have missed earlier ones, though:

[...] I did like a webinar for [the TEP] where my student teacher is, it’s an online thing with teachers from all – a hundred teachers from all over the country who have interns from [this TEP]. [...] I guess I must have missed the ones in the past. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 538-540, 545)

Despite the webinar there was a lack of clarity for Charles about how many classes Moira was expected to teach at what point during the practicum:

I think the most she has to do is teach four lessons in a row, and it isn’t even necessarily four lessons of all my [different] classes. It’s unclear what it is. Their program includes everything from pre-school to high school and beyond, and so it fits a really wide range, so it’s not really clear to me [...]. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 560-564)

Program A expected its MTs to submit weekly reports about the TC’s progress in learning to teach. This weekly observation report was a three-page document with three parts to it, asking the MT to address the TC’s skills in “planning for instruction”, “instructing and engaging students in learning”, and “assessing student learning”. Each part encompassed

between three and five questions, such as, “How do the candidate’s plans build students’ subject matter knowledge, conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and/or problem-solving skills?”, or “How does the candidate elicit responses that promote thinking and develop conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and subject matter reasoning or problem-solving skills?”. Charles was asked to describe the practices he observed "providing details" of what he observed, “aligned with each component”. Charles said that he did not receive any preparation or training to be able to complete this form on a weekly basis. He felt overwhelmed by it and eventually stopped submitting it (Field notes, 11/21/2017).

In addition to the weekly observation report, Charles was required each semester to submit a two-page long evaluation form consisting of 17 components, ranging from statements soliciting the MT’s evaluation of the TC’s pedagogical knowledge to the TC displaying professional behaviors, in addition to four open-ended questions about the TC’s "greatest strengths as a new teacher", goals he established with his TC to improve her practice, which extra-curricular activities the TC involved herself in, and any additional information to best inform the program or a potential employer about Moira's qualifications as a new teacher".

Communication between Charles and the TEP happened exclusively via email, and support for Charles seemed irregular and not easily accessible. Contact between Charles and the university-based teacher educators existed only via infrequent video conferences and email exchanges. Charles described it as a frustrating experience in which the relationship between him, the TEP, and his TC that he considered as vital had a gaping hole:

There’s been no [TC supervisor] ever in my program, and I feel like that triangle [between the TC, the MT, and the TEP], while in some sense it’s supposed to exist, I feel like, [...] it’s more like a boomerang with [Moira] in the middle. [She and I] got our

relationship, she has the relationship with the [TEP], and then they never meet up [between me and the TEP]. And so, I don't think I would want to be part of this [again]. I think the student teaching thing is a real personal experience, and when you do something online [...] I just feel like it's not appropriate [...], at least not for me. (MT R&I group 4, 1/8/2018, ll. 431-439)

For Charles, this practicum seemed a dissatisfying experience, and in fact he told me on a different occasion that he was not going to mentor anybody affiliated with an online program again (Field notes, 3/6/2018). He seemed to have felt cut off from the program, dangling at the end of boomerang, rather than being in a triangle where all three points/people are connected. The personal contact between Charles and his TC's supervisor was lacking and he seemed disaffected by that.

During my final interview with him I asked Charles if he had ever received any kind of preparation, workshop, or training to mentor a TC, from any institution he has been affiliated with, from either the TEPs or his district's leadership or his school's leadership. He said he had received handbooks via email from all the TEPs over the years, including from program A, but he did not consult those. He had never received any in-person preparation for being a Mentor Teacher (Exit interview, 3/22/2018).

Program B. This Master in Teaching program was a full-time, cohort-based, one-year program that TCs attended in person. If Jérôme had not accepted his TC Hubert as an urgent placement, Hubert's practicum would have been delayed. Having mentored TCs from this program before, Jérôme assumed he knew what was expected of him and his TC. However, he realized once the practicum was well underway that the program's structure had significantly changed, and it affected his TC's access to learning in the classroom. From September through

early December, the TCs in program B spent only one day a week (Friday) in their practicum-schools and four days a week on campus in classes. This schedule, in Jérôme's opinion, greatly hindered Jérôme's efforts to establish his TC as "a teacher with *him*" (Interview, 9/19/2017, emphasis in the original). Hubert's absence made it difficult for Jérôme to draw on his mentoring repertoire he had built through previous mentoring experiences since his TC was more absent from than present in the classroom with Jérôme and the students (Interview 9/19/2017). Hubert's frequent absences also limited his opportunities to build rapport with the students, which TEPs, including Program B, typically encouraged during the early phase of their practicum.

The first and only time Jérôme learned about the expectations and timeline of the program was on November 6, 2017, when Hubert's supervisor visited Luddington (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017). This was approximately eight weeks after the practicum had begun. According to Jérôme, Hubert's program supervisor explicitly and clearly communicated her and the program's expectations during that meeting to Hubert, and by extension to Jérôme. Jérôme said he enjoyed her directness during this first meeting (Interview 1/5/2018). The second time Jérôme interacted with the supervisor was at the very end of Hubert's practicum for a final review, to discuss with Jérôme his assessment of Hubert's readiness to be a teacher. In between those two "book-ends" interactions the supervisor visited the classroom to observe Hubert a number of times; however, apart from exchanging pleasantries she did not interact with Jérôme. After the observation she and Hubert exited the classroom to debrief the lesson. Jérôme was neither explicitly invited nor uninvited to be part of the post-observation debriefs but since he usually had to teach while she and Hubert debriefed, he was never in a position where he could have participated in the debrief.

Another feature of the program affected by the reorganization and restructuring of program B that concerned Jérôme was his TC's focus on the edTPA. To Jérôme it seemed that due to the shortened length of the program, the edTPA - the final portfolio assessment Hubert had to pass in order to obtain his teaching certificate as well as his MAT degree - distracted Hubert from concentrating on making the most of his time in the classroom with the students and his MT. Instead, the TC's emphasis on the assessment seemed to contribute to the "two-worlds pitfall" (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1985):

It seems almost like, I'm seeing more this year this double tier of [my TC's thinking], "There's the thing I [the TC] do in the building with the students, and there's the assessment that the university is forcing me [the TC] to go through". That may or may not be like those two things aren't necessarily going to be meeting [...] "And how can I shoehorn that [assessment] into [my MT's classroom]?" (Interview 1/5/2018)

Like Charles, Jérôme said that communication between him and the program happened nearly exclusively via email, and in answer to my question whether he had ever received any kind of preparation - from a TEP, his district leadership, or his building leadership - he said that he had not. His principal had handed him a book about mentoring strategies when he was about to start mentoring his third TC, that is, well into his tenure as a classroom and mentor teacher. He said the book seemed interesting but was not high on his list of priorities and he did not consult it (Exit interview, 3/19/2018).

Program C. Program C was, like programs B and D, a full-time, cohort-based, one-year, campus-bound program for a Masters of Education. Both programs C and D were housed in colleges that were part of a university system and based on that Ginny assumed that her experience with program C would be similar to her experience with program D from the

previous year. Yet, that was not the case. While she had good rapport with Emma's field supervisor, she felt disconnected from the program (Interview 7/24/2018). When Ginny officially became Emma's MT she received a welcome-and-thank-you-email from the placement coordinator with a handbook attached that she never felt inclined to consult. The only other time she received email communication from the program was a reminder in early January when the TCs had to complete their portfolio assessment (the edTPA) that TCs had permission to take two days off from teaching in order to write and assemble their portfolios. Ginny said that she did not know anything about the content or structure of the program and felt left in the dark. She made attempts to learn about the program by asking her TC about it, but her answers did not clarify Ginny's understanding of the program (Interview 7/24/2018).

Emma's field supervisor frequently visited Ginny's classroom to observe Emma especially at the beginning of Emma's time at Luddington. She and Emma had to make up for lost time.⁶ The visits by the supervisor and her welcoming demeanor facilitated a positive relationship between her and Ginny. Ginny was able to attend all but one of Emma's post-observation debriefs the supervisor facilitated and Ginny mentioned that the supervisor made a point of scheduling observations so that Ginny could be part of the debriefs. When Ginny contacted the supervisor over concerns about Emma's progress the supervisor was responsive and shared she too was concerned (Field Notes, 1/8/2018). The supervisor then organized a conference with a program instructor, the placement coordinator, herself, Ginny, and Emma in

⁶ Emma's practicum started in September at a different school with a different MT. She changed to Luddington High School/ Ginny in early November and had to catch up lost time from her previous placement.

attendance to work out a plan of success for Emma. Ginny said that while she had her doubts about the program as a whole, she respected it for falling into action for its TC's sake (Interview 7/24/2018). She was not interested in taking on another TC from program C after this experience, though (Interview 7/24/2018).

Program D. Three of the MTs – Art, Tereza, and Eleanor – were mentoring TCs from program D. This program was similar to programs B and C; it was a full-time, cohort-based, one-year campus-bound Masters in Teaching program. Communication between program D and its MTs happened, just like in the other cases, nearly exclusively via email. On August 23rd, 2017 the three MTs received an email from the program's lead supervisor inviting them to a Mentor Teacher orientation on August 29th, hosted by program D on its university campus. The invitation was sent to the MTs' school email accounts, and since neither Art nor Tereza were in the habit of checking their school emails regularly during summer break, they did not see the invitation until after the orientation had happened (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017). Additionally, August 29th was the first contractual day back in the school building for teachers, and both Art and Tereza said that they would not have been able to attend the orientation even if they had known about it earlier (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017). Eleanor knew about the orientation but did not attend it because she did not have the time (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017).

Around the end of September, Art received an email from his TC's supervisor in which she thanked him for meeting with her and that contained program D's handbook. The handbook contained a timeline of the practicum and the types of activities the TCs were expected to be engaged in during each phase of their practicum. It was meant as a resource for the MTs to support them in structuring the practicum according to the program's expectations. Art said he referenced the handbook when he first mentored a TC from program D years ago but had not

since. Eleanor who had owned a copy of the handbook for some time already said she had not consulted the handbook in years due to her longstanding involvement with the program. Tereza did not know of the handbook and expressed that she felt ill-informed about the program's expectations of her TC and wished she knew more about it so she could support her TC better in being accountable to the expectations (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017).

The frequency of contact and interactions between the MTs and their TCs' supervisors varied between Art, Tereza, and Eleanor. Art said that his TC's supervisor sent him emails to notify him about observations of his TC as well as to follow up with her post-observation notes (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017). Tereza said she did not receive emails from her TC's supervisor (Field notes, 7/23/2018).

Regarding post-observation debriefs, Art said he was invited to join his TC and supervisor when he could but most often he was unable to because he taught when the debrief occurred. Tereza participated in the first observation debrief but not anymore thereafter because she, similar to Art, had to teach during the debrief. Eleanor reported that she was always invited by the supervisor to participate in the observation debriefs, and she said she typically tried to be there for at least some time (Field notes, 1/19/2018).

Summary

As has become evident from the illustrations above, on the whole the relationships between the MTs and the TEPs were limited, regardless of program. Communication happened primarily but infrequently via email, and especially communication about the programs' expectations of the MTs' as well as the TCs' responsibilities remained vague in nearly all cases. What also emerged from the MTs' experiences with the TEPs is a lack of inclusion of the MTs as school-based teacher educators.

The following three chapters report the findings from this study. It bears reminding that this chapter served as description of the context in which the MTs operated, and as will become clear from the findings, regardless of program affiliation, the MTs identified shared challenges. Chapter Five reports on tensions the MTs experienced between being classroom teachers and mentor teachers at the same time and how this tension shaped their mentoring practice. Chapter Six illustrates in what ways the TCs' fragile authority interacts with the MTs' decisions to mentor in the presence of students. Chapter Seven is an account of the outcomes of the MTs' participation in the MT R&I group and discusses the affordances and limitations of the group for the MTs' learning about their mentoring practices.

Chapter Five: Identity Tensions – Mentoring in the Presence and Absence of Students

This chapter is about a striking pattern I noticed during the all-day observations I conducted in October 2017 and February 2018. There were distinct differences in MT-TC interactions depending on whether students were present or not. When students were not present, MTs across the board engaged in a variety of mentoring activities and centered their TCs learning to teach. However, when students were present, the MTs focused nearly exclusively on their students and mentoring the TC effectively stopped. This is to say, I found a very real instance of how the tension MTs have been reported to feel in the literature (Jaspers et al., 2014; Rajuan et al., 2007) impacted when and how they mentor their TCs. In other words, this chapter is answering my research question how the dual responsibilities MTs have shape their mentoring practice.

Also, this chapter presents what kinds of mentoring activities the MTs engaged in with their TCs over the course of the practicum, surfacing distinct differences in the kind of mentoring activities during the different phases of the practicum.

This chapter is organized into three parts. The first part presents vignettes of two MT-TC pairs, thoroughly illustrating the pairs' *interactions* (and lack thereof) in the presence as well as absence of students. Both vignettes capture observations from October 2017 and February 2018. The second part of this chapter defines and describes the *mentoring activities* the MTs engaged in in the absence of students. In the third part, I report on how the MTs made sense of my observations.

As mentioned above, in what follows I will substantiate that my all-day classroom observations of a typical day revealed the tensions the MTs appeared to experience between their identities as teachers to their students and their identities as teachers to their TCs. Across all of

my observations, direct interactions between the MT and the TC addressing the TC's learning happened nearly exclusively when students were not present. The MTs addressed the TCs' learning about lesson planning, pacing, student questioning, student participation, assessment etc. either before students arrived at school in the morning, after students had left for the day, or, on occasion, during lunch or prep periods if no students were in the classroom requiring the teachers' assistance. That is, in the *absence* of students, all MTs engaged in different mentoring activities to varying degrees, and I describe those in more detail below.

In contrast, in the *presence* of students I observed the following pattern across all five MT-TC pairs (Observation, FN 10/17- 10/27/2017; Table 6): Before the students arrived in the morning, the MTs and their TCs discussed the lesson plan and sequence for the day, determined which parts the TC would lead, and what kinds of responsibilities each adult would have over the course of the day. Once the students arrived, MTs and TCs both made the students and the lessons their foci. As long as students were present, I neither saw nor heard conversations between the MTs and their TCs about student learning or TC learning; and in fact, in one case, they did not converse about anything while students were present. Nearly every MT-TC pair went through the entirety of instructional/classroom time, equaling 5.25 hours on average, without talking to each other about what students were doing or not doing, or what the TC was doing/not doing or noticing/not noticing. This pattern of "together, but separate" was striking. In what follows, I substantiate these claims and present two detailed vignettes of MT-TC interactions that illustrate the effect of students' presence and absence on the MTs' mentoring activities. At the end of the chapter, I step back to consider how these findings expand the current understanding of the tensions MTs experience and the challenges they face as they attempt to do the important work of inducting someone into the teaching profession.

Mentoring in the presence of students – “Together, but Separate”

To illustrate in more detail the “together, but separate” pattern – that is, both MT and TC were present with their students and engaging with them, but not with one another – that I observed consistently across all MTs and their TCs, I present two in-depth vignettes about two MT-TC pairs (Charles and Moira, and Art and Marek). To demonstrate as clearly as possible the contrast between the interactions of the MT-TC pairs in the absence and presence of students, as well as the similarities over time, both vignettes contain detailed descriptions of the mentoring activities in the *absence* of students as well as the lack of interactions between MT and TC in the *presence* of students across two all-day observations.

For this I draw from my field notes regarding what I observed of the interactions between Charles and his TC Moira, beginning in mid-October 2017. At this point in their practicum, the TCs (regardless of their Teacher Education Program affiliation) were in the process of “wading into teaching”. That is to say, they were expected to co-plan with their MTs, support students individually during class by circulating the room while their MTs were teaching, and in some cases the TCs were expected to teach small segments of a lesson, for example, the warm-up. Mostly, though, the TCs observed and acted as quasi teacher assistants.

Vignette 1

Observation 1 – Charles and Moira.

Absence of students. On Tuesday, October 17, 2017 I walked into Charles’ classroom to observe him and Moira for the day. At 7:52 am it was well before the beginning of first period (8:45 am), and Charles and Moira were discussing the lesson plan for the following day, a lab on velocity. No students were present during this discussion. In order to be transparent about his

thinking when planning a lab for his students, Charles thought out loud about the materials needed (“We need to find more balls, bigger balls, we don’t want drag.”), how to assemble them (“You want the magnets with the same orientation, otherwise it won’t work, I’ve been there too many times”), and where to find them (“We can also go to [science teacher colleague]’s room. She has stuff. Then we don’t have to worry about the gym. They don’t like it when we take their stuff.”) He also started anticipating challenges that might arise when students conducted the experiment and how to respond to them (“When they measure the drop, they end up measuring what they *want* to find out, what their ideas tell them, not what’s really going on, so we gotta pay attention to that.”) (FN, 10/17/2017).

Everything Charles did and said during this preparation time served as a model for Moira to learn about the numerous tasks and considerations a Science teacher ought to engage in when planning and preparing a lesson that involves a lab. While Charles prepared the lab and the lesson for the benefit of his students’ learning, the *way* he did it was meant to serve his TC’s learning. By talking out loud, Charles tried to make visible or explicit that which normally happens in his head, that is, stays invisible. By thinking out loud (listing materials, anticipating students’ errors), Charles centered Moira’s need for learning about planning and preparation.

Moira asked a question about pacing of the lab and lesson. She wondered if “items three and four are too hard to get through in time “(FN, 10/17/2017). Instead of answering her question directly, Charles responded back with a question: “What do *you* think?” An exchange of ideas between the MT and TC ensued (FN, 10/17/2017). Charles, rather than giving a direct answer, provided Moira an opportunity to think out loud about why she was concerned for time — in her estimation, what about items three and four would take the students too long to execute and

understand? Through asking Moira back a question, Charles elicited Moira's ideas about student learning and pacing, again centering his TC's learning about teaching.

After they finished planning for tomorrow and assembling the materials on a cart, Charles turned to today's lesson — students working on a simulation on the computers in the library. He walked Moira through the sequence and offered her choices to insert herself into today's lesson: "Do you want to do the warm-up? Do you want to address the homework issue?" He also solicited her thoughts and ideas about an assignment students would be working on: "Do we want to collect this assignment? Do we want to grade this? Should we should grade it?" (FN, 10/17/2017) Charles used inclusive language - "we" - signaling that he and Moira made decisions together, and he continued asking her questions that elicited her ideas and reasoning about choices teachers have to make over the course of a lesson. Again, in the absence of students, Charles centered his TC's learning.

At 8:25 am, Charles and Moira engaged in a short reflection about yesterday's classes, centering it on Moira's budding teacher identity/persona. Charles focused on Moira appearing guarded in front of the students. He encouraged her to bring her personality to her teaching because it is part and parcel of what it means and takes to be a teacher.

Charles: "[...] You know how the students say "Thank you Mr. A." when they leave? Now they start saying it to you! That's good! That's wonderful!...I wonder, though, what your "thing" is. You know, your...This is my classroom and you gotta roll with my thing, with being silly."

Moira: "Ok." [She looks unconvinced or uncomfortable.] "I'm not really comfortable with being silly."

For Charles, being a teacher means bringing yourself into your teaching, and it should be a side of one's self that compels students to want to listen to the teacher/to appreciate the teacher (saying thank you at the end of class). For Charles, it is his self-deprecating sense of humor, what he calls his "silliness", and he encourages his TC to figure out what of herself she wants to integrate into her teaching and teaching persona in order to compel students to want to learn from her. In this brief conversation, Charles communicated to Moira an aspect about being a good teacher that he considers important and he wanted to ensure that his TC understands its importance.

After the debrief concluded, MT and TC pushed the cart with the assembled materials out the classroom door and walked to the library. From this point forward, students were present nearly all the time, and I again draw on my field notes to illustrate the shift in interactions between Charles and Moira. This shift is part of the pattern I observed across all MT-TC pairs, across both rounds of observations.

Presence of students. By 8:35 am Charles and Moira were in the library, and students started filling the computer classroom. Charles greeted students as they walked in, he readied his teacher station and started promptly at 8:45 am. Moira stayed in the background and observed Charles, rather than leading any part of the lesson. Once the students began working on their simulations, both Charles and Moira circulated around the classroom to look over students' shoulders and check in with them about questions that could come up. The MT and TC neither exchanged observations with one another about student learning, nor had any other exchanges. All five Science classes followed this pattern: The students entered the room and both adults' focus was on the students. In the presence of students, Charles did not engage in questions or

observations about learning with his TC, neither about the students' learning nor his TC's learning.

Toward the end of the last Science class, with students still in the classroom working on their simulations, Charles and Moira practiced the lab for next day's class with the materials they had assembled during the morning since they would not have time for it the next day. During this time, Charles engaged in some out-loud thinking similar to the way he did during prep period in the morning. However, during time of instruction over the course of the school day, he did not engage his TC in real-time learning about teaching while students were learning. That is to say, he did not seize on student learning (students' questions, contributions, misconceptions, behaviors) as opportunities for his TC to learn about teaching.

A similar situation occurred between the MT Jérôme and his TC Hubert. While their 9th grade students were writing in-class essays, both adults were circulating the room and Jérôme asked Hubert who the students were he had checked-in with. He did not ask Hubert what he had observed or noticed while checking in on the students; there was no analysis or reflection. Jérôme asking Hubert about who he had checked in with seemed more a function of "divide and conquer", not a function of supporting his TC's learning.

Observation 2 – Charles and Moira.

My second round of observations revealed similar interaction patterns in the absence and presence of students, only with more or less reversed roles between the MT and TC during instructional time (Observation Round 2, FN 1/17 - 2/12/2018). At this time in the school year (January-February), the TCs had taken on more of the teacher role, with their responsibilities to regularly plan, teach, and assess two or more classes. They had left the role of observer mostly

behind and were more deeply involved in and responsible for student learning in their MTs' classrooms, while the MTs stepped back from teaching and leading classes for part of the day and occupied the role of observer of their TCs and their students.

Absence of students. I returned for my second observation of Charles and Moira four months later, on Wednesday 1/17/2018. With the beginning of the second semester, Moira, like all TCs at Luddington High School, had taken on more planning and teaching responsibilities. The expectation from her – and everyone else's – teacher education program was for her to teach more and observe less.

When I arrived, I found a familiar scene. Students were not yet present, and Charles and Moira were about to launch into lesson planning for the day: creating a lab to explore the physics of friction. For about an hour and a half Charles and Moira talked through the lab set up and the required materials, they discussed what questions students might have, anticipated students' misconceptions, and Moira rehearsed with Charles how to introduce today's lab.

Charles gave Moira recommendations and options about how to set up the lab based on his experiences teaching *Friction*: "I know it because I have done it so many times." He asked her: "How do you start this?" and "What do we need to be prepared for students to say?" (FN, 1/17/2018). Charles was drawing on his teaching experience and knowledge to teach Moira about what to expect during class. But he was not only telling her, he was also asking her. In other words, he was engaging her thinking while assessing her understanding of what to expect. This MT-TC pair was very much doing what I observed them doing during my first observation four months earlier. In the absence of students, the MT was centering his TC's learning about preparing, planning, and teaching.

Since Moira's teaching responsibilities had increased, Charles had added a new piece to their planning routine: He and Moira rehearsed how she was going to introduce the lab and its purpose to the students. Charles took a seat in the back of the classroom and Moira began to introduce the lab. As Moira started to talk, Charles interrupted her: "Make the students part of it, don't ramble on, it's too much information." Moira started again. Charles listened, nodded, and then slowed her down by talking about what students could be thinking, saying, or doing in response and parallel to Moira's introduction. "You want to elicit *their* ideas about friction and surfaces," he reminded her (FN, 1/17/2018; emphasis in the original). Charles approached Moira's practice from the position of an experienced teacher and also from that of a student. He knew from experience how important it is to include the students in the exploration, to not just talk at them and present them with information. In Charles' theory of learning, a teacher elicits the learner's ideas and moves those forward with questions (Interview #2, 1/16/2018), and he reminded Moira to make the students think about what they see, rather than give away an explanation.

After she had practiced her introduction of the day's lab a couple of times, Moira looked over to me and said: "Charles is like my 'bumper lanes'. You know, when you learn how to bowl and you're not good at it, you get bumper lanes" (FN, 1/17/2018). For Moira, the rehearsal's purpose was to practice teaching in a low-stakes circumstance, and she appreciated to be able to fall and pick herself up again with Charles' help. Comparing his presence in the classroom to 'having bumper lanes' strongly suggest that she was grateful that he was there, and she needed him there, too. As Charles explained to me later, the rehearsal served a two-fold purpose: First, thinking about his students as his learners, he ensured that Moira was presenting the purpose of the lab in a way he could approve of. It was a way to control the way the lab rolled out. Second,

his focus was on Moira and her learning/ performance, and he coached her and supported her learning in that very moment.

In sum, my observations of Charles and Moira on this day closely matched my October observations. In the absence of students, Charles' focus was on Moira and her growth and learning in becoming a teacher.

Presence of students. Shortly after Moira's rehearsal, students started walking into the classroom, and from this point forward, students were in the classroom with the MT and TC nearly all the time. In the presence of students, Charles did not interact with Moira in direct ways that made her learning the focus of their interaction like it was during their prep time in the morning (absent students). This shift in interaction between MT and TC, too, closely resembled my observations from October.

Moira started class introducing the friction experiments students were going to conduct today. While she was talking, Charles was writing on the board and assisting Moira in manipulating the materials as a model for the experiment so as to elicit students' ideas. At first, he acted like a teacher assistant, but increasingly Charles asked questions about the experiment, addressing Moira as well as the students (FN, 1/17/2018). As Charles verified for me later, he did this to slow Moira down and to give the students opportunities to catch up with her. Moira slowed down but continued to giving students information, rather than eliciting their thinking and questions. Charles chimed in with questions more often, acting as Moira's 'bumper lanes' while also increasingly taking the lead over from Moira. In fact, Charles entered full teacher mode and Moira stepped into the background, observing Charles asking questions of the students. This went on for approximately five minutes. Moira stepped forward again only to

assign students to their groups, and to direct their attention to the model lab report displayed on the classroom whiteboard she wanted students to follow for their reports (FN, 1/17/2018).

Charles' attempts at slowing down Moira were apparently not as successful as he had hoped, and she did not seem to ask the kinds of questions he knew would elicit ideas and wonderings from the students. His solution to this problem was to step in as the expert and drive the lesson forward in a way he deemed productive.

Students started moving around the room to collect their materials and find their groups, and during this transition time Charles walked over to Moira quickly and commented on class so far. "It went well", he said. "I don't think so", Moira replied, "I talked too much." "No, it's good.", Charles said (FN, 1/17/2018). This short exchange between MT and TC demonstrates Charles' interest in Moira doing well and feeling successful. It also shows how their perceptions of Moira leading through the intro clearly diverge from one another. Charles gave Moira positive feedback, but she rejected it. Her response seemed to indicate she understood why Charles inserted himself and eventually took the lead away from her. Charles, however, waved her rejection off and insisted – despite the evidence – that it was "good".

After this brief and sole exchange, MT and TC went their separate ways in the classroom, both with their focus on the students. Once the students launched into their experiments, Charles and Moira individually began circulating the room, at times following each other around the room, talking with students and asking them questions about their experiments ("What are you doing?", "What are your variables?", "Why are you testing it this way?"; FN, 1/17/2018). The two adults, however, never connected with one another over their observations and conversations with students (FN, 1/17/2018). In the presence of students engaged in experimentation and exploration tasks, Charles did not include or address Moira's learning to teach. When I saw

Charles two days later, he confirmed that I had observed a typical day, representative of his and Moira's routine: They plan the lesson for the day together and Moira rehearses it with Charles. Moira then leads through the set-up or intro, and when the students transition to the experiment or investigation, MT and TC very quickly check in with each other about Moira's "performance". Charles touches on what he thought went well, also makes a suggestion what she should change for the next class. Then both adults circulate around the classroom, and they talk with the students and check in with each group, but they do so separately.

The interaction pattern I observed between Charles and his TC in the presence of students was in many ways a repetition of my observations in October: While Moira had taken on more of the planning and teaching responsibilities, the lack of interaction between MT and TC in the presence of students *to further TC learning* persisted.

Two days later, on 1/19/2018, I happened to see Charles in the hallway, and he told me this:

[Two days ago, when you were here] the students got mad! Moira had come by and told [one group] they're doing a great job, and then I came by [the same group] and asked them what they were doing, and I had to tell them it was all wrong. So, of course, they're like, *What the hell Mr. A?!*, and they were mad at Moira. And I was not happy either, but I couldn't tell them that, but I understand they're frustrated. But I don't know what to do about it! How we [he and his TC] can do this better together so that these situations don't come up! (FN, 1/19/2018)

In other words, when Charles circulated through the classroom he realized that Moira was teaching incorrectly, but he did not know how to resolve the situation other than telling the

students they were wrong. He did not know how to address the problem with Moira in the moment.

Charles not only described what I had observed previously, namely he and his TC circulating around the classroom separately from each other, but also the frustrating consequence of their separate interactions with the students who have to make sense of conflicting feedback and directions from their teachers. Charles' comment also illustrates his own frustrations about recognizing that there is a problem and his inability to solve it. This conversation was a pivotal moment in my growing understanding of the MTs' vexations about mentoring their teacher candidates during instructional time. Charles saying that he did not know what to do in a situation he described above, that is, teaching both his TC and his students while in the presence of students, strongly suggests that the tensions between the MTs' teacher-to-students identities and teacher-to-TC identities are real.

Vignette 2

An MT-TC pair that illustrates this tension for the MT even more starkly is Art and his TC Marek. My field notes from two days of observations, the first in mid-October 2017 and the second in early February 2018, indicate that students' presence seems to be the most relevant inhibitor to this MT-TC pair's interactions. My observation from mid-October, that is, early in the practicum with the TC occupying mostly the role of observer, demonstrates this constraining effect especially clearly. Art and Marek spent a whole day of instruction (5.25 hours) without talking with each other once, thus suggesting that Charles and Moira's experiences were not atypical.

Observation 1 - Art and Marek.

It was still before school at 8:30 am, and already I counted four students in Art's math classroom. Some were there for math help, others were just hanging out with their friends before the start of first period (FN, 10/25/2017). I had noticed all year long that Art's classroom was a popular spot - either for students to get help with math, or simply to spend time with friends. Art did not necessarily chat with the students who were in his room to socialize, and when I asked him if he knew every student who comes to his classroom he said, "No. There's kids who just come here. I guess they just like to hang out here" (FN, 10/25/2017).

On this morning, Art was helping a student with a geometry assignment while Marek, Art's TC, was calibrating the projector and SMART™ board for first period Geometry. The two adults checked in with each other over a technical challenge but after less than a minute, Art was back with the student and Marek finished preparations for the incoming math class.

First period officially begins at Luddington at 8:45 am, and Art started taking attendance at 8:42 am as more students started filtering into the classroom. Before he had left the classroom briefly at the beginning of class, Marek had made sure the warm-up was projected on the screen. When Marek returned at 8:47 am, some latecomers snuck into their seats and Art had started going through the warm-up with the class. Marek sat in the back of the room and watched Art teach for about three minutes. Then he started to slowly circulate through the classroom, looking over students' shoulders at their math work. When he noticed a student struggled, he knelt down to be at eye level with the student and provided help (FN, 10/25/2017).

Ten minutes into class, Art assigned the students a task, and he also started circulating the room, assessing if and how students were working through the task. Both adults circulated the room for twenty-five minutes, assisting students, but not once did I see or hear them connecting

with one another over what they observed students doing, saying, or struggling with (FN, 10/25/2017).

At 9:37 am, Art passed out a group quiz — a formative assessment students take together in small groups — and both adults continued to circulate separately from one other through the classroom. They engaged in a sort of “together, but separate” pattern, matching the other MT-TC pairs in this study: They pursued a common goal, namely supporting student learning as teachers in the classroom, but at the same time they ignored one another as mentor teacher and teacher candidate. Both adults were sharply focused on student learning. When the class ended at 10:10 am, the students packed up and left the classroom while students for Advisory started entering the classroom (FN, 10/25/2017). Over the course of 85 minutes, MT and TC had not exchanged a single word with one another - neither about student learning, nor about teaching, nor about any other topic.

During Advisory, Art told me that Marek had requested a feedback session/debrief with Art (he must have asked Art the day before or earlier in the morning before I arrived), and that they aimed for lunch time to do that. However, at the beginning of lunch time students came into the classroom, requesting math help and hanging out with friends (it was a similar scene to the one before first period started), and the debrief was tabled. Neither the MT nor the TC actually addressed the need to delay the debrief. They seemed to have a tacit understanding that the students’ presence and needs superseded Marek’s desire for feedback from his MT (FN, 10/25/2017). So far, students were a constant presence in the classroom with Art and Marek, and both Art and Marek centered their attention on the students. Very similar to my observations of Charles, Art seemed unable to think about his TC’s learning in the presence of students.

Because this day was a block day, Art and Marek did not have a prep-period. This is significant because students are typically not present during teachers' prep-periods, and from what I had observed so far, this MT-TC pair did not address each other when students were present.

The remaining two math classes followed the same pattern I observed during first period Geometry: While Art was teaching, Marek circulated the room and assisted students. Once students worked on a task Art also circulated the room, with both adults assisting and supporting student learning. But the two adults never spoke a word to each other (FN, 10/25/2017). This MT-TC pair had gone through an entire school day, including instructional and non-instructional time with a total of 5.25 hours, without talking to one another at all.

Observation 2 – Art and Marek.

When I came back for my second all-day observation four months later (2/2/2018), I found a familiar scene. The start of first period was about a half hour away, but already a number of students were congregating in Art's classroom. Marek was creating slides for the upcoming Geometry lesson he was going to teach today. Just like Moira and the other TCs, Marek had taken on more planning and teaching responsibilities. Marek had planned today's lesson by himself and was going through his materials to be ready to teach. Art was working at his desk. More students wandered into the room, and at around 8:30 am, Art began to take attendance.

Marek started class promptly at 8:45 am, having taken over the clipboard for attendance-taking from Art and directing students to their seats. While Marek was launching the lesson, Art stood in the back of the room to observe Marek and the students. When Marek assigned the students a group task, Art promptly walked to a student without a group to partner up with her. When students needed calculators, Art distributed them. When students appeared to struggle, Art

walked up and supported them. When Marek directed students to work on a worksheet, Art handed out the worksheet. While the students were working in groups or independently, Art and Marek separately circulated the classroom, provided assistance where needed, and never exchanged a word (FN, 2/2/2018).

Art responded to Marek's teaching and directions in the manner described above for the duration of the class (55 minutes), and it became clear to me that the MT's and TC's roles had, in effect, been reversed. Marek had acted in the role of "teacher assistant" to Art in October. He had circulated the room to support students and passed out materials. Now Art was filling this role, doing what Marek was doing earlier in the year, and Art said as much to me: "I try to assist him where I can" (FN, 2/2/2018). Art was extraordinarily attentive to everything Marek said and did, so as to ensure that he could be of support to his TC in the service of his math students' learning. The absence of interaction between MT and TC was still as present and obvious as it had been in October.

With about five minutes left in the class period, something atypical happened. Marek initiated the one and only exchange between MT and TC in the presence of students. Marek walked over to his MT to ask what he still needed to address before the end of class, and Art reminded him to have students complete an exit ticket and to briefly talk about *Pythagorean Triples*. Marek nodded and followed through (FN, 2/2/2018).

Art and Marek seized the following prep-period as a chance to debrief the lesson Marek had just taught. While it was exciting to see that Art took the time to center Marek's learning to teach, the debrief itself appeared to be without focus and it was unclear if it was useful to Marek. "It went well, according to lesson plan," Art said. He then emphasized that "[the students] need to show their work. We're not giving credit if they don't show their work." Then: "Elaborate

what you mean by ‘perfect solution’ in reference to the *Pythagorean Triples*.” Finally: “You did address Black History Month at the end, it’s good to say something at the end of class to signal the end of class, otherwise [the students] just escape” (FN, 2/2/2018). The absence of a clear focus of this debrief could have stemmed from the MT having felt pressed for time during his prep-period since many other things needed to happen during it, and so he attempted to cover as many points as possible, providing a feedback statement that touched on as many aspects as he could think of for this lesson.

The feedback Art gave Marek following the lesson I observed illustrates the difficulties that Art reported he faced in providing feedback to his TC. He complimented Marek on the lesson overall and deemed it successful since it had gone the way Marek had planned it. Then Art jumped to an expectation he has of his students (“they need to show their work”), and by using “we”, he signaled that he includes Marek in having and enforcing this expectation. Art’s next comment was directed at a need for content clarification (“Elaborate what you mean by ‘perfect solution’ in reference to the *Pythagorean Triples*.”), and his last comment addressed a managerial issue and strategy (“You did address Black History Month at the end, it’s good to say something at the end of class to signal the end of class, otherwise [the students] just escape”). The debrief lasted approximately seven minutes, and Marek commented with “yeah” and “hmm”, but he did not make statements or ask questions. Neither did Art ask Marek questions, such as, “What do *you* think how it went? Why do you think that?” MT and TC did not have an exchange.

During my second interview with him, Art expressed that he finds it difficult to provide commentary and feedback to his TC:

[...] When he teaches, and he asks me for feedback I have a hard time knowing what to say. I feel like I'm not very good at giving feedback. (Interview, 1/12/2018, ll. 131-133).

During the MT R&I group meeting in January Art expressed again how he struggled with providing feedback to his TC, this time about Marek's lesson plans:

[...] I read the lesson plans and they didn't make a whole lot of sense to me, but I didn't worry about it, I just said "Ok, go with it." The lessons ended up fine, they could have been probably stronger in some way, but I don't feel like I... Having ideas for feedback is something I don't have. [Charles], you said you have lots of ideas, I look at stuff and it's hard for me to think of what to say about how to improve this. I don't feel like I'm very good at knowing how to guide someone with their lesson planning. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll.492-498)

The following month, Art told the group about his challenge to support Marek when his TC had a "hard day":

[Marek] had another [hard day] today, he's had several, and he doesn't have the strategies for when the kids won't listen to him, and it makes me feel like, I'm supposed to be helping him with that, I'm supposed to show him how to do that and I don't know how to show him. [...]. (MT R&I group, 2/8/2018, ll. 199-204)

In the context of my observations of Art and Marek and the lack of interactions between them during class time, it makes sense that Art felt as though he does not know how to show his TC how to respond in real-time to student behavior that challenged Marek's authority as the teacher in class. As illustrated in vignette 2, Art and Marek never interacted in the presence of their students and opportunities for Art to mentor Marek in the moment went unused.

During my last interview with Art, I asked him directly about the challenges he feels he had with providing feedback:

Art: [...] There were these times when we were separate and how to get that conversation started I wasn't always sure. [...]

Maries: Do you feel like that you're being asked to do something, to provide something to your teacher candidate that you have not been prepared to do?

Art: Somewhat, yes. I haven't learned how to do that very well yet, and I'm still learning. I have a few more ideas after this year for next year or next time.

(Exit Interview, 3/16/2018)

Art wanted to support his TC's learning to become a teacher, but he seemed to feel unsure about how to best do that. Even though he seemed to understand that more talk between him and his TC would have been beneficial, he was uncertain how to go about it. He felt unprepared for the challenges he encountered while mentoring Marek, but he expressed confidence that thanks to the MT R&I group meetings he will be better prepared for the next time he mentors a TC.

Observations of the Other Three MT-TC Pairs

My observations of the other MT-TC pairs – Eleanor and Kristy, Tereza and Jacinta, and Jérôme and Hubert – and their interactions in the *presence* of their students were similar to those I observed between Art and Marek, and Charles and Moira. Table 6 offers more detail of the MT-TC pairs' interactions in the absence *and* presence of their students, across both observation days for all MT-TC pairs I observed. The similarities between the pairs' interactions (and absence thereof) substantiate that the vignettes of Charles and Moira as well as Art and Marek are representative, despite slight variations among the pairs.

Table 6.

Interactions Between MTs and Their TCs in the Presence and Absence of Students Over the Course of Two Full-day Observations.

	<i>Observation 1 (October 2017): TC primarily observer and 'teacher assistant' – MT lead in planning and teaching</i>		<i>Observation 2 (January/ February 2018): TC with increased responsibilities for planning and teaching – MT supports TC</i>	
<i>MT-TC Pair</i>	Students present	Students absent	Students present	Students absent
Charles and Moira	<p>“Together, but Separate”: Both MT and TC focused on students, circulated through the classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations. MT and TC practiced lab for next day in back of classroom toward the end of last class of the day but did not discuss anything about the lab.</p>	<p>Before school and during prep. period MT made his thinking transparent: MT and TC discussed in detail lesson plans for the day through MT’s frequent “out-loud-thinking” about lesson objective, materials, student responses and questions. MT elicited TC’s ideas and questions about content and format of lesson and integrated TC’s contributions to planning the day. MT guided TC through reflective debrief of lesson from previous day, MT encouraged TC to be less guarded with students. TC left soon after last period ended.</p>	<p>MT stepped in during lab intro, took over from TC for a brief time. “MT-TC huddle”: MT spoke briefly with TC during transition time (students were gathering their materials and setting up their experiments) for quick kudos. “Together, but Separate”: MT and TC circulated through the classroom while students were conducting their experiments. MT and TC at times followed each other but did not connect over their observations of what students were doing and saying.</p>	<p>MT and TC discussed students. MT and TC co-planned lesson for the day: TC explained her plan, MT listened and engaged in constant “out-loud-thinking” of scope and sequence of lesson, of lesson purpose and content, student responses and questions, asked TC to reason through her choices, offered insights from his teaching experience. MT and TC assembled materials for lab and practiced experiment together. TC rehearsed intro to lab with MT, MT provided constant feedback, reminded TC to elicit students’ ideas.</p>
<i>MT-TC Pair</i>	Students present	Students absent	Students present	Students absent
Art and Marek	<p>“Together, but Separate”: Students were present in room before the school day officially began, and both MT and TC were assisting students. During instructional time, TC mostly observed MT and acted as teacher assistant. Both MT and TC focused on students, circulated through the</p>	<p>Only after students had left for the day and the Geometry teachers briefly met as a team MT conducted short (10 mins) debrief with his TC.</p>	<p>Students were present in room before the school day officially began. TC was preparing lesson, MT worked at computer. During instructional time, MT acted as teacher assistant, passing out materials and supporting students. “Together, but Separate”: Both MT and TC focused on students, circulated</p>	<p>During prep. period, MT conducted debrief with TC, MT and TC discussed students of concern, and MT and TC discussed lesson plans and preparation for class. During passing period, TC expressed frustration with one class in particular but students’ arrival into the classroom truncated the conversation.</p>

	classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations. MT and TC assisted students also during lunch and after school and did not connect with each other.		through the classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations. TC disrupted the pattern once, asked his MT one question about closing the lesson. TC solo-taught 5 th period and requested MT and Maries to leave.	After students have left for the day, MT and TC discussed lesson plans for the following week.
<i>MT-TC Pair</i>	Students present	Students absent	Students present	Students absent
Jérôme and Hubert	“Together, but Separate”: Both MT and TC focused on students, circulated through the classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations. MT asks TC once which students he checked with (“divide and conquer” type of question). MT asked TC to pass out materials. TC observes MT and students from the back of the room for nearly the whole day. TC leaves classroom a few times over the course of all classes.	MT brings TC up to speed (reports) about their 9 th and 12 th grade classes: MT describes lesson plans for the day, shows TC posters 9 th grade students created about topics from last novel, tells TC about parents who requested a meeting and why, and explains the odd bell schedule for the day and the reasons for it (literary festival day). After school MT attempts to engage TC in reflective conversation about the day’s lessons and events, but TC gave monosyllabic answers, asked no questions. MT and TC talked about plans for next week, TC’s edTPA unit in January.	TC taught both 9 th grade classes. MT observed TC and students. “Together, but Separate”: Both MT and TC focused on students, circulated through the classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations. MT assisted TC with classroom management (quieted down students so that TC could be heard by all students) and also with material distribution. “MT-TC huddle”: Once to remind TC about addressing important aspects of the text the class began reading today. MT taught both 12 th grade classes, TC sat in back of room and observed. No teaching during Advisory, MT conducted reflective debrief of morning classes with TC.	TC prepared to teach class (edTPA unit), MT stepped out into hallway with Maries to bring her up to speed about TC’s increased responsibilities. During prep. period, MT and TC continued reflective debrief of classes TC taught today and discussed how best to move on with the 9 th grade classes the next day. MT asked a lot of thoughtful questions to elicit TC’s thinking and ideas for the next day’s lesson plans, and to engage TC’s problem-solving skills due to shortened class periods the next day.
<i>MT-TC Pair</i>	Students present	Students absent	Students present	Students absent
Eleanor and Kristy	“See One-Teach One”: MT modeled teaching first 9 th grade class, TC taught subsequent 9 th grade class. While TC taught MT	Before school, MT and TC discussed lesson plans for the day. MT engaged in “out-loud thinking”: MT and TC discussed content, analytic	“Together, but Separate”: TC solo-taught both 9 th grade classes. MT observed, worked at her computer, injected one question, left the	MT and TC discussed lesson plans for today. TC had planned today’s 9 th grade lessons, MT was complimentary of and

	<p>observed, clarified content to whole class, worked at her computer, and circulated the room.</p> <p>“Together, but Separate”: MT and TC did not interact during either 9th grade classes. MT led both 11th grade classes, TC observed and assisted with material distribution.</p>	<p>lenses for content, and analytic questions of content for students. MT explained scope and sequence of today’s plan and reasoned out-loud through the order for TC’s benefit. MT asked TC about TEP requirements/ expectations for this week.</p> <p>During prep. period MT led through reflective debrief of 9th grade classes, verbalizing her own thoughts and insight on the lesson: She wondered about how to keep students focused, and she expressed how valuable it is for her to watch the TC teach and reconsider the reasons for why she planned the lesson the way she did. She talked about time as a precious and limited resource that requires teachers to be uncompromisingly intentional with all they do. She discussed her own challenges in teaching, modelling her willingness to learn, her own vulnerability for her TC.</p> <p>After school, MT and TC discussed lesson plans (content) for the next day.</p>	<p>classroom due to student of concern a few times (MT said that her leaving was unusual). “MT-TC huddle”: Once to give TC positive feedback and to remind her to address the complicated nature of the label “terrorism”.</p>	<p>encouraging about the plans – today the TC’s TEP coach came for an observation. MT said she mentioned to a colleague how grateful she is to have a reliable and competent TC.</p> <p>MT and TC briefly discussed a student of concern with a colleague who stopped by for a check-in about the student. TC prepared to be ready to teach both 9th grade classes. During prep. period TEP coach led TC and MT through extensive debrief of TC’s lesson. MT made thoughtful, detailed, reflective comments during the debrief. After school MT and TC discussed content and lesson plan ideas for next week’s classes.</p>
<i>MT-TC Pair</i>	Students present	Students absent	Students present	Students absent
Tereza and Jacinta	<p>“See One-Teach One”: MT modeled teaching first 9th grade class, TC led students through warm-up in subsequent 9th grade class.</p> <p>“Together, but Separate”: MT and TC focused on</p>	<p>MT prepared lesson and materials for the day at her computer, TC looked over MT’s shoulder and followed along, asking content- and sequencing-clarification questions. MT engaged in</p>	<p>“Together, but Separate” for the majority of instructional time: MT and TC focused on students, circulated through the classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations. Twice the</p>	<p>MT and TC co-planned today’s 9th grade lesson, co-created materials and set up the lab for today’s 9th grade lesson. MT and TC exchanged ideas for the lab like peers. During prep. period, TC graded</p>

	<p>students, circulated through the classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations.</p>	<p>“out-loud thinking”: She explained the scientific principles, the learning objective, and anticipated student questions and responses. MT asked TC what part she wanted to lead today, TC decided on warm-up. After school, MT conducted debrief of TC’s lead through today’s warm-up. Asked how she think it went, TC answered “clunky” to which MT responded “yeah”. The MT addressed TC’s struggle to manage the classroom and adequately address students’ needs. She also addressed the TC’s lack of presence and confidence and urged the TC to remember that she might have an idealized concept of teaching that clashed with the reality of the classroom. MT concluded that today was “fantastic” considering it was the TC’s first time in front of the whole class.</p>	<p>TC broke this pattern (once during each 9th grade class) and reported her observations to her MT. “Together, but Separate”: MT taught both 11th grade classes, TC observed. MT and TC focused on students, circulated through the classroom but did not connect with each other over their observations.</p>	<p>a stack of student work, MT prepared for today’s 11th grade classes, and MT and TC discussed how to proceed with their 9th grade classes tomorrow. They continued this discussion after school and co-planned the warm-up for tomorrow’s classes in detail.</p>
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Mentoring in the *Absence* of Students

My fieldnotes from October 2017 and January/ February 2018 revealed that MTs engage in similar mentoring activities with their TCs when students were *absent* from the classrooms; however, the frequency of activities and depth of engagement in them varied among the pairs. Table 7 below shows the distribution of mentoring activities I observed each MT-TC pair engaged in over the course of both observations. I identified four specific activities that all MTs engaged in and I define in greater detail below: out-loud-thinking, debriefs/ reflections, lesson co-planning, and lesson plan discussions. Some of these mentoring activities have been reported before (Schwille, 2008). The first two activities – out-loud thinking and debriefs/reflections – were more prominent during the October observations when the TCs were in more of an observational and teacher assistant type of role, whereas the latter two activities –co-planning a lesson and discussing a lesson – were more prominent during the January/ February observations when the TCs had taken on more of the lead-teacher role. Four of the five MTs engaged in reflective activities across both observations to varying degrees.

Table 7.

Mentoring Activities and Frequencies Across MT-TC Pairs in the Absence of Students.

Mentoring Activity	Observation 1 (October 2017): TC primarily observer and 'teacher assistant' – MT leads in planning and teaching					Observation 2 (January/ February 2018): TC with increased responsibilities for planning and teaching – MT supports TC				
	Art & Marek	Charles & Moira	Tereza & Jacinta	Eleanor & Kristy	Jérôme & Hubert ⁷	Art & Marek	Charles & Moira	Tereza & Jacinta	Eleanor & Kristy	Jérôme & Hubert
Out-Loud Thinking		x	x	x			x			
Debrief/ Reflection	x	x	x	x	(x)*	x	x		x	x
Co-Planning		x					x	x		
Lesson Plan Discussion						x		x	x	x
Rehearsal							x			

*The parentheses represent Hubert’s resistance to Jérôme’s attempt at engaging in reflection

Out-loud-thinking. I listened to a fair amount of “out-loud-thinking” while lesson planning with their TCs by Charles, Eleanor, and Tereza, and vignette 1 includes a rich example of Charles engaging in this mentoring activity. “Out-loud-thinking” refers to the MTs

⁷At this point in his practicum – due to his TEP’s structure – Hubert only spent one day each week at Luddington High School, i.e. he regularly missed four out of five school days. This means that Jérôme had to catch him up each week about the students, the lessons and their progressions, the events that happened at school and in the classroom, and about everything else of relevance. Jérôme expressed frustration with this schedule that made Hubert more absent than present in the classroom and challenged Jérôme to figure out how to integrate Hubert into the classroom in meaningful ways – meaningful for the TC, as well as meaningful for the students and the MT (Interview #2, 1/5/2018).

verbalizing in real-time as many thoughts as possible while planning a lesson, in other words, the MTs articulated their thinking processes. MTs verbalized what they anticipated students would say, ask, and do in response to the lessons' contents and learning objectives, thus demonstrating to their TCs that lesson planning is driven by a dialogue playing out in the MTs' heads between content, students, and teacher. "Out-loud-thinking" as a window into the MTs' minds conveyed the complexity and circular nature of the lesson planning process.

Debrief or Reflection. All MT-TC pairs engaged in debriefs or reflections about the day's lessons and experiences, varying in length, focus, and purpose. Charles engaged his TC Moira in thoughtful reflection about her teacher persona (see vignette 1). Eleanor reflected with her TC Kristy on student learning by way of talking about her observations of Kristy teaching Eleanor's lesson, and connecting her observations to her own teaching practice. Eleanor had written down questions for the students while Kristy was teaching Eleanor's lesson, to use as follow-ups over the next days about the lesson's content. She said to Kristy, "It's really valuable for me to watch you teach, [to see in action] what I come up with, to see what happens with the students, and how [the lesson] flows etc." (FN, Observation #1, 10/23/2017). Jérôme's attempt to guide his TC Hubert through a reflective conversation in October was thwarted by his TC but successful during my second observation (see Table 7). The debriefs I observed between Art (see vignette 2) and Tereza with their respective TCs resembled surface reviews of the TCs' teaching attempts, interspersed with suggestions for the TCs what to do differently next time. Both Tereza and Art did most of the talking during the debriefs with their TCs.

Lesson Co-Planning. Charles engaged in out-loud-thinking, much like I observed him doing in October, while co-planning the day's lesson with his TC Moira (see Vignette 1 for a detailed account of this MT-TC pair's dynamics). For Tereza and her TC Jacinta, co-planning

and co-creating lesson plans and class materials were the main mentoring activity that day (see Table 7). Especially during their prep. period, they engaged in a lively and content-heavy discussion for the next day's plans: Tereza fleshed out the topics and objectives for the unit while Jacinta articulated questions and responses she anticipated students will have. They were exchanging ideas and together creating the plan for tomorrow's class (FN, Observation #2, 2/12/2018).

Co-planning differs from out-loud-thinking in that it is an exchange of ideas between the MT and TC while planning the lesson, rather than the MT doing most of the talking to convey his or her internal thinking processes about lesson planning.

Lesson Plan Discussion. I also observed lesson plan discussions between Art and his TC Marek, Eleanor and her TC Kristy, and Jérôme and his TC Hubert. Lesson plan discussions differ from co-planning in that the conversation resembles a check-in for an already planned lesson to be taught, rather than an idea exchange and creation-process. The discussions of the lesson plans seemed to be last step in the overall lesson planning process. An example that illustrates this mentoring activity well is the conversation I observed between Eleanor and Kristy (FN, Observation #2, 1/19/2018). As soon as Eleanor entered the classroom she began talking to Kristy about her lesson plan because it so happened that Kristy's TEP coach came to observe Kristy today. Eleanor went verbally through the lesson's sequence and made comments such as "That's good", "You ask [the students] here, that's good", and finally "Your lesson is focused, like we talked about." Neither one of them changed the lesson plan; it was really more of a verbal walk-through to make sure Kristy was in fact ready to teach this lesson plan.

In summary, all MTs engaged in mentoring activities with their TCs, at varying levels, when students were not present, and the described mentoring activities reflect those reported in the literature (Clarke et al., 2014).

Making sense of the observations with the MT R&I group

I brought my observations about the overall absence of interactions between the MTs and their TCs during instructional time to our group meeting in mid-November 2017. At that point I had completed my first round of observations. I brought my observations to the group and anchored my questions about the pattern I had observed in the observations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I asked the group members two questions: Had they noticed the absence of interaction between them and their TCs over the course of the day when their students were present? What were the reasons for the absence of interaction between them and their TCs in the presence of students? Below is an excerpt from the transcript in which I asked the MTs about my observations:

Maries: I want to bring up something that I noticed when I saw you all, and it has something to do with [...] communication, or the lack of communication. [...] Something that I noticed, what I found really interesting is the day that I spent in all of your rooms. I noticed that you all can be together with your TC all day long and not talk to each other once. [...] I was very struck by it. I'm not saying that it's bad or wonderful. I was really wowed by that because what I thought would happen that when you [both the MT and TC] float around [the classroom] that you check in with each other, "How are things going?", "Did you notice something?" And I didn't really ... overall, I was really stunned by the absence of people talking to one another. And so, I'm just curious, if you know that and what's the reason? (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 393-406)

A spirited discussion ensued and revealed the tensions MTs felt between their identities as teachers to their students and teachers to their TCs. The group's discussion resulting from my observations is an example of Wenger's (1998) conceptualization of identities in a nexus of multimembership (as elaborated in Chapter Two), and the ways people try to navigate this multimembership.

Eleanor spoke first. She said she felt irritated when her TC attempted to talk about instruction in the presence of students. She responded rather emphatically:

[T]hat irritates me, when she [her TC Kristy], like...I'm like "I'm teaching, we can talk about that later". 'Cause she's one of those that will come up and be like, and I'll be like, "One, I'm in the midst of teaching, now is not the time", or...So, we talk outside, on occasion when something happens – I don't feel the luxury for a sort of, an ongoing... (MT R&I group #2, 11/9/2017, ll. 403-413).

Eleanor was irritated when her TC Kristy initiated interactions in the presence of students that Kristy thought would benefit her learning. In fact, Eleanor considered it a "luxury" to have exchanges with her TC during instructional time, and only "on occasion, when something happens" addressed what the "something" meant for her TC's learning about becoming a teacher. And even during those moments, she stepped out of the room, that is, away from the students, as though to physically create space between her identity as teacher to students and her identity as teacher to her TC. Eleanor went on to say,

[...] I'm stressed, there is so much to keep up with, I'm still 100% in charge of the class, and it's not easy for me, maybe for other people, to have that and on top of that have the sort of relaxation "Ok, let's talk through that". I can't juggle that." (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 413-417).

In other words, Eleanor felt the pressure of being fully responsible for the students' learning, and it is such pressure that she does not feel that she could indulge her capacity to also attend to her TC's learning. Eleanor's students' learning superseded the needs of her TC as her learner. Eleanor's statement illustrates how crossing between her identities as mentor teacher and classroom teacher presented her with challenges and frustrations. Her dual responsibilities were in tension with one another and seemed to create conflict within the mentor teacher where the teacher identity superseded the mentor identity. Her statement indicates that she thought about her identities as MT and as classroom teacher as two separate entities that took the stage at separate times.

Similar to Eleanor's description of having to step out of the classroom in order to attend to her TC's learning during instructional time, Jérôme also talked about requiring physical space to step back from his identity as teacher to students and into his identity as teacher to his TC in the presence of students. Jérôme talked about the different spaces he occupies when he teaches his Freshman classes versus his Senior English classes, and how those different demands on his attention as a teacher to students allow or disallow him to engage with his TC about teaching and learning in the presence of students. He returned to this need for physical space in order to think about teaching and learning with his TC, and this return to the need for space really seems to drive home the point that the tension between being a teacher to students while being a teacher to a TC was real:

[...] I think there are 24, 25 Freshman in my class, which there is more physical space for me to be able to walk away from them and talk to him [his TC]. So, I just walked a couple of steps away this morning as they were writing their final essays, and then I talked to him "these are the choices I made, I noticed they're not gonna get finished but

that's ok because we did these particular steps beforehand" and I feel like if I did that in my Senior class, there are just too many of them and they're way bigger and so, there is nowhere to go that's not classroom space. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 622-632)

Having the actual room to step back and forth between being a teacher to students and a teacher to TCs appears an important factor in an MT's ability to engage in teaching about teaching while students are present – students for whose learning solely the MT is held responsible.

Jérôme continued to elaborate on his reasons for determining when and when not to engage in exchanges or interactions with his TC in the presence of students. He explained that the cognitive and emotional demands on him as the teacher are different in the different grade levels. He made clear that the demands on his capacity of *directing* energy of his 9th grade students versus *creating* energy for his 12th grade students (FN, Observation, 2/6/2018) affect his capacity for stepping back and forth between his identities as classroom or mentor teacher:

Yeah. Yes, and I feel like with my seniors I have to be in a very different...mode because they are demanding a lot more from me, in terms of me paying attention to what they're doing, also in terms of me keeping their attentions to some degree. [...] The Seniors, it's more like I'm in the midst of holding something together which is this class with this group of people, and to, I... I don't know [...] I am working really hard to be a teacher in that space [with the 12th graders] even when I'm not directly speaking, I find myself almost like there is a persona that I'm using as I am, maybe, walking near a group of students or I'm walking up to them and I'm saying intentional things or asking intentional questions. It feels almost like that spell would be broken if I were to step over and start talking to [Hubert] about like the metacognitive piece or the metateaching that's going on

in terms of what I've just chosen. I don't know what is totally different between the two.
[...] [With the Seniors] I need to know where I'm going next. (MT R&I group,
11/9/2017, ll. 588-606)

Jérôme explained how he is “working really hard to be a teacher” in the presence of his 12th graders, and that those students demand something different of him than his 9th graders who can be directed to follow instructions more easily and effortlessly. Jérôme described how he is “in the midst of holding something together”, and how a “spell would be broken” if he were to step away from his identity as teacher to his students and into his identity as teacher to his TC.

The responses from both Eleanor and Jérôme reveal that mentoring is not an easy or self-evident activity, and that the barriers to mentoring are more complicated and complex than university-based teacher educators have understood them to be thus far.

Charles' explanation also seemed to indicate a need for separation – a separation between him teaching students and his TC teaching students because if they both teach the students at the same time it creates friction or tension for him and his TC:

I seem to think about it like a co-teaching model, and I don't know that I really know what co-teaching really means. My intern and I have struggled in a model where we each take parts of a lesson, “I'm gonna do this, and then you're gonna do this and then you're gonna do this, and then we're gonna have a discussion and then we're gonna decide what to do next.” We tried it a few times and failed. [...] I'm sort of the authority in the classroom, and so she, sort of, everything flows to me if I'm the authority in the classroom, so we have struggled doing that because of me. And so, we decided, “Ok, when you [the TC] teach a lesson, I'm not going to comment, if you really want to ask

me a question and treat me like the authority that's up to you, but I'm not gonna offer things.

Maries: During or after?

Charles: During and or after, both. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 442-455)

For Charles, trying to co-teach equaled treating his TC as his peer in front of the students, when she was not his peer. He thought their co-teaching failures were due to the differential in knowledge and teaching expertise and that resulted in confusion about who has the authority in the room. Charles went on to explain in more detail how complicated it is for him to be in the classroom with someone who is a non-expert at the content but has to learn to teach that content while making mistakes, and how he is unsure how to respond to these situations:

[...] I feel like, and she feels like, I need to not, almost not be there. Because I wreck her. And a good example is last week, ago, I videotaped her, and so I have her iPad in front of me like this [holds up his hands up as if holding an iPad that is hiding his face], and pretty much everything she said, she just – I don't know how to exactly call this, I wanna call it "male answer syndrome", you're just gonna, like, say things that aren't true. The students were asking questions, and like Boom! the words are coming out "This is the way it works.", "Well [Charles to himself], that ain't the way it actually works!" She's wrong! Way wrong! On things like Newton's First Law, Newton's Third Law, just incorrect, and so I'm sitting there behind the damned camera going like [making a cringing face], it was awful, and I... I sort of feel like, so, should we be co-teaching? This is where she is a student, and she has to learn to...she might know how to do something, like take a test, but when you're teaching something, you have to bring it up like this [snaps his fingers]. When kids ask questions of some way to apply the thing

you're doing is when the rubber really meets the road, and your understanding really gets tested, and hers was tested and it broke. And I feel like, I as a mentor have no clue how to help her out in this case. I could just be mad? I want to take over my own classrooms again?

Maries: 'Cause you're worried about the students' learning, the kids.

Charles: I am [...].

(MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 469-493)

Charles was concerned for his TC's standing in the classroom with the students as the teacher "in charge". He believed it would be best if he were not present because he makes his TC nervous, or in his words he "wreck[ed] her" since he was the authority in the classroom, the content and pedagogy expert. At the same time, as the expert and the adult being held accountable for his students' learning, Charles was even more concerned for his students and felt helpless in situations when his TC provided incorrect information to the students, information that is crucial to their learning and understanding of Physics. As he pointed out, "When kids ask questions [...] is when the rubber really meets the road, and your understanding really gets tested, and hers was tested and it broke." In order to understand a student's question and to support the student's learning, a teacher has to have a flexible and deep understanding of the content and of teaching and learning and based on his experiences with his TC and his assessment of Moira's content knowledge, Charles questioned whether the idea of co-teaching can be legitimately applied to a TC learning to teach. The situation left him frustrated and without an answer as to what do about it. Charles felt profoundly conflicted about the necessity for Moira to learn to teach which inevitably means she will make mistakes along the way (his

identity as teacher to his TC) and the need for his students to learn Physics correctly (his identity as teacher to his students).

Similar to Charles, Tereza talked about her TC's lack of knowledge about content and teaching and learning as the reasons for her not interacting with Jacinta during instructional time:

[...] I won't refer to her, ask her what she noticed because I know she doesn't know what to look for. I know she's not gonna say "I noticed a bunch of things" that are meaningful, that are gonna be like "Oh yeah, ok, let's bring the students together". I don't think she can give me that nugget of information, and so, for me that's why probably why I don't ever ask her [...]. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 529-535)

Tereza's statement illustrates how the students' learning is at the forefront of her mind and how Jacinta's learning has to take the backseat while students are present. Also, Tereza is certain that her TC cannot, at this point in her practicum, sufficiently contribute to a conversation about student learning; she does not consider Jacinta as a useful source of information about student learning.

Art's response to my observations and questions went into a different direction. He said, "Since you pointed that out [the lack of talking between him and Marek] I've been aware of it, and it's true that we don't talk to each other much" (MT R&I group #2, 11/9/2017, ll. 641-642). He then went on to express regret about the lack of communication between him and Marek, but similar to Charles, seemed to be without ideas how to resolve the situation:

[...] I have very high confidence in [Marek's] ability to read what's going on with students, when they have misconceptions, he's really good at finding them and clearing them up and I mean, sometimes when we do talk, I'll notice that he's having a conversation with a student who's been struggling, and I have to ask him, "What was that

conversation about?” It’d be nice if he said, “Well, I talked to her in the hall and we talked about this.” I don’t think it’s anything but just not thinking about sharing. He’s fine with sharing his conversations that are about a student who’s struggling and what they need to be doing better. But we don’t talk much, you’re right. I don’t think that’s always the case when I have a student teacher. I’ve had student teachers that have lots of questions and are really curious about “*Why did you do it that way?*”, and he just doesn’t seem to be that curious about it (MT R&I group, 11/9/2018, ll. 641-658).

Art was pleased, even impressed with his TC’s ability to “get into the students’ heads”, that is to say, to understand what students struggled with and how to help them resolve their struggles.⁸ However, Art also noticed that Marek did not necessarily include Art in the things he discussed with the students. It seems as though the TC thought of his interactions with the students as separate from the MT’s interactions with the students, rather than both TC and MT being a team of teachers of the same groups of students. Art seemed disappointed that Marek did not volunteer this useful information to him, but he also did not know how to initiate more conversation between them. He had not experienced this kind of communication challenge with his previous TCs who seemed to have been more pro-active and expressed curiosity about Art’s

⁸ During my observation I too remarked on Marek’s focus on the students and his ongoing circulating the room to support students. At some point during the day I was not able to find Marek among the students because he kept moving and always knelt or sat so that he was at eye level with the students. I also noticed how students were reaching out to him, not only to Art, for help.

practices. Interestingly, Art acknowledged that not much had changed in the interaction patterns or frequency of conversation between him and Marek since I had shared my observations with him because he did not know what or how to do it differently, saying “[...] There were these times when we were separate and how to get that conversation started I wasn’t always sure. [...]” (Interview #3, 3/16/2018).

Summary

Findings such as the technical nature of the feedback most MTs provide (Clarke et al., 2014) and the tension MTs experience from the dual role as classroom teacher and mentor teacher have been described before (Rajuan et al., 2007). However, my observations and the subsequent conversation in our MT R&I group meeting revealed levels of complexity about the teachers’ identities as MTs and as classroom teachers that have gone largely undiscussed in the literature. In the conversation about the work of mentoring and whether to prepare MTs for their role, this tension rarely received the consideration it deserves (Clarke et al., 2014) and the *effect* of this tension – that is, explicit mentoring occurring only in the absence of students – requires our attention.

The teachers who participated in this project are extraordinarily thoughtful educators. My observations of the MTs and TCs during instructional time illustrate that the MTs seemed to conceptualize their identities as teachers to TCs as separate from their identities as teachers to students, as though they could only be one or the other at a time or attend to their responsibilities for one type of learner – student or TC – at a time. What has also emerged from my observations and the MTs’ responses is that they experience the tension between their identities as teachers to students and teachers to TCs as real; that both identities seem to require physical space and that

different groups of students have different demands on the teachers that either allow or disallow them to step back and forth between their identities.

Feiman-Nemser (1985) and Bullough (2005) among others discussed challenges MTs encounter in their mentoring, given the nature of the setting/the environment in which they work: Schools are not set up as places to learn to teach or to teach someone to become a teacher, and the expectation of teachers – by society and also by teachers themselves – is to be experts at teaching children, not at teaching a TC how to become a teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 1985, 2001; Lortie, 1975). Thus, Bullough’s (2005) findings about the hurdles MTs face when negotiating their roles as classroom teachers and mentor teachers do not come as a surprise. He argued “for the importance of attending to identity in teacher education and mentoring” (p. 143), and, as the findings of this project have illustrated so far, for good reason. As discussed in Chapter Two, drawing on Gee’s (2000-2001) ways of viewing identity, Bullough (2005) portrayed “a case study [...] of a secondary school teacher’s struggle to move beyond her identity as a teacher to assume a mentor’s identity [...]” (p. 143), arguing “for the importance of attending to identity in teacher education and mentoring” (p. 143). He concluded that teachers who take on TCs need to “move beyond” (p. 143) their identities as teachers to students and arrive at that of mentor teachers instead. This project’s findings, however, have revealed that the concept of identities in mentor teachers is more complicated than moving past one identity. The participants in this project all identified as mentor teachers and engaged in mentoring practice. As soon as the TCs stepped into the MTs’ classrooms mentoring started to happen. The question is not whether or not they have MT identities, but rather – as has emerged here –in what ways the teachers successfully negotiate their two practice-linked identities over the course of the school day in the absence and presence of students who require their teachers’ attention; how the MTs can seize on

opportunities for their TCs to learn to teach, in the absence as well as in the *presence* of the students for whose learning they are also responsible.

The findings from this chapter will be discussed further in relation to the findings from Chapters Six and Seven in the Conclusion (Chapter Eight). In the following chapter (Chapter Six) I looked closely at one particular mentoring activity – “stepping in”, that is, the MT inserting him- or herself during the TC leading the class. “Stepping in” illustrated in detail in what ways the tensions identified in this chapter shape the MTs’ mentoring in the presence of students.

Chapter Six: “Yes, for the students we’re play-acting.” The TC’s Ostensible Authority in the Classroom and the MT’s Concern with ‘Undermining’

Chapter Five illustrated the tension the MTs experience between their identities as teachers to their TCs and as teachers to their students (Rajuan et al., 2007) and what effect this tension has on the MTs’ mentoring practices. Namely, it appears to prevent MTs from taking advantage of instructional time with their students to teach their TCs, that is, to put instructional time not only in service of student learning, but also in service of TC learning. This tension created a barrier for approximately five hours on the days I observed each MT-TC pair, which translated into many foregone opportunities for TC learning.

Another factor that seems to have played a role in preventing MTs from coaching their TCs in real time, that is, in the presence of students during instructional time, is the MTs’ desire to not undermine their TCs’ standing/position in the classroom. Bullough and Draper (2004a) have reported on MTs feeling protective of their TCs, “consistently worried that what they said, how and when they said it, might overwhelm the interns and set them back by undermining their confidence and shaking their determination to teach” (p. 282). This chapter’s findings further illuminate the complexity of this concern and provide examples that reveal the MTs’ thought- and decision-making processes whether to step into their TCs’ leads. In doing this, this chapter continues to elaborate on the first research question, that is, how the dual responsibilities MTs have shape their mentoring practice. This chapter provides an example of a mentoring activity – stepping in – that illustrates in detail how the tensions identified in Chapter Five shape this mentoring activity.

The TCs as Ostensible Authorities in their MTs' Classrooms

Similar to the MTs, the TCs also inhabit a difficult, dual position in the classroom, namely as learners of teaching and non-experts in relationship to their MTs, but as ostensible teachers and experts in relationship to the students. Mentoring in the presence of students could lead to the undermining of the TCs (Bullough & Draper, 2004a), and this concern surfaced during the last MT R&I group meeting in March 2018. However, after in-depth re-reading of the transcripts from the preceding MT R&I group meetings, I noticed that the MTs' concern about undermining their TCs in front of the students was actually a recurring one.

Eleanor, the veteran MT in the group, articulated the TCs' challenging position during the first MT R&I group meeting in October 2017. She teased out the considerable challenge inherent in the TC's role, and described her attempts to address this issue when she introduced her TC to her students at the beginning of the school year:

And the role [the TCs] assume. [...] I've tried for many years [when introducing the TC to the students] to be, like, uhm, you know, "Here is Ms./Mr. So-and-So and they are becoming a teacher but mostly you have two teachers", I change my language to instead of "I" to "we" – "We want you to learn this", "We are going to ask you..." – wanting to be inclusive and supportive of [the TC's] role [but] that can backfire when they start to then talk as if they are an actual peer [...] (the MT group chuckles). (MT R&I group, 10/11/2017, ll. 665-669)

Telling the students that they "mostly have two teachers" was Eleanor's way of publicly conferring positional authority to the TC in the students' eyes. Using inclusive language, Eleanor signaled to her students that both she and her TC were teachers of the same standing in the classroom; that she and her TC have arrived at decisions together and pursue the same goals for

the students. During my first observation of Eleanor and Kristy I heard Eleanor say to the students, “Ms. F. and I want you [the students] to ...” when she explained an assignment. She used inclusive language to indicate for the students that MT and TC are a teacher-team (FN, Observation, 10/23/2017).

However, signaling to the students that the MT and TC are equals for the sake of the TC’s standing with the students seemed to have led to confusion for the TC. In Eleanor’s words, “that can backfire when [the TC] start[s] to then talk as if they are an actual peer” (MT R&I group, 10/11/2017). As Eleanor made clear, while she presented her TC Kristy to the students as a fellow *teacher*, she did not actually view Kristy as a peer. Thus, regardless of the good intention Eleanor had (boosting her TC’s authority in the students’ eyes), she assumed that Kristy understood the ploy when in fact she did not. Eleanor expressed her frustration with this situation:

How do you communicate, like, “Yes, for the students we’re play acting” (the other MTs laugh out loud) and actually “No, you’re here to listen mostly” – nah, I mean, that’s extreme but I think it’s true a little bit [...] I am not gonna correct [the TC] in front of the students but I will talk to [her] later about it [...] and the inference is [she] better not do that to me. (MT R&I group, 10/11/2017, ll. 671-681)

Here, Eleanor called out the tension between not wanting to undermine her TC in front of the students, all the while wondering how to convey to her TC that Eleanor does not actually consider her a peer, but rather a learner whose task it was to listen and also not undermine her MT in turn.

During the group’s meeting in February 2018, the conversation returned to the perplexing dynamic between the MT and the TC. Art had brought a problem of practice to the group –

Marek's (Art's TC) lack of confidence in his budding teaching skills. The MTs discussed factors that potentially affected his confidence. It was Eleanor again who pointed out that the TCs find themselves in a challenging circumstance from the very beginning of their practicum:

And there's that thing, too, really that is a huge factor in this whole endeavor, they're teaching in someone else's classroom! They are "playing at teaching" in the kids' eyes [...] It's like, [the TCs] are fighting an uphill battle on so many levels [...]. They have to know that from the get-go, and we have to coach them through that because they just, they aren't seen as real teachers, period. (MT R&I group, 2/8/2018, ll. 605-613)

Eleanor candidly articulated the difficult reality of the practicum for the TCs: They are guests in classrooms that they are expected to somehow, somewhat make their own and build relationships with the students, while everyone involved – the MTs, the TCs, and the students – knows that it is a sort of "make-believe" situation. Of the MTs in our group, Eleanor spoke about the precarious position of the TCs most frequently and with a sense of authority, most likely grounded in her experience of having mentored 15 TCs in her 18 years of teaching. While the other MTs did not name the difficult nature of the TCs' position in their classrooms the way Eleanor had, they articulated this was not easy for the TC, as became evident in how the conversation continued:

Maries: Even if you introduce [the TCs] like you say, you do all these things to mitigate that effect, but the [students] do know "Ah, no, no. You weren't here last year, and you won't be here next year."

Eleanor: Or [the TCs] don't, like, confidently answer that question, or [the TCs] got a little quiver in [their] voice, or, you know,

Ginny: Or [the TCs] look to you (meaning the MT as the authority in the room)

Eleanor: So, those are on top of the students assuming that this is a part-teacher, not a real teacher. (MT R&I group, 2/8/2018, ll. 614-622)

In this exchange, both Eleanor and Ginny further illuminate the delicate nature of the TCs' position. Insecurities considered typical of a novice, such as lack of confidence in one's knowledge or authority, add to the TCs' already difficult position as "part-teacher" in the eyes of the students.

MTs' fear of undermining the TCs' ostensible authority and its effects on mentoring

What does 'undermining' the TC look like and sound like? It then becomes vital for the MTs to make sure they do not undermine the TCs in the presence of students. However, the MTs wrestled with the idea of undermining and were uncertain which interactions and events qualify as undermining. For example, Charles talked about an occasion when, in his assessment, he had undermined his TC Moira. In this instance, he had refused to keep Moira current with the on-goings of his science classes while she went on her optional university spring break:

Charles: Well, just this last week she's on her spring break, and my feeling is, is...well, I don't want to say what my feeling is, it's not very good. It's like, "Are you kidding me?!" – So, she sent me a very nice email, "Charles, you know, I want to keep up during the week while you're teaching, send me all the information so I can be ready on Monday."

Eleanor: "Do some more work to help me keep up."

Tereza: That's a lot of – that's...!!

Charles: So, I was just like, "No! Not doing that!" That's... That fits into your 'undermining'.

Everyone [crosstalk]: No. No. That's not undermining.

Art: What? The fact that you wouldn't supply her? I don't see how that's undermining.

Everyone [crosstalk]: No, that is not undermining. (MT R&I group, 3/15/2018, ll. 232-245)

Everyone in the group seemed appalled by Moira's request. It seemed that even after the long time Moira had spent with Charles in his classroom, she did not understand how time-consuming and all-encompassing teaching was, and to make such a request of her MT when her absence was discretionary left the MTs puzzled. They all agreed that Charles' refusal, or inaction, did not qualify as 'undermining one's TC'. As the conversation went on, Ginny wondered out loud about what constitutes undermining and whether she had undermined her TC:

Ginny: Can we – I'm trying to think "Have I been undermining?" Maybe some of the things where I feel like I didn't necessarily rescue [Emma], I didn't swoop in when I should've, you could interpret that as undermining. I'm kind of spinning that as "Sometimes you just gotta learn". It's like with a toddler. You can't catch them every time they're trying to learn how to walk, sometimes they just gotta eat it.

Tereza, Charles: Right. Yea.

Ginny: And there are days that I just let her eat it.

Tereza: I don't think that's undermining. (MT R&I group, 3/15/2018, ll. 246-254)

Here it was Ginny who tried to figure out whether her inaction could have undermined her TC Emma, and she and her colleagues conclude she had not. From Ginny's point of view, learning includes failing, and sometimes Emma needed to fail ("I just let her eat it") in order to learn how to do something better. However, thinking back to Eleanor's explanation above about the TC's fragile authority in the classroom, there seems to be a tension between letting the TC fail in the interest of her learning while also potentially undermining her. What seems to Ginny like a deliberate mentor move of "not swooping in" for the sake of her TC's growth as a teacher

could very well have resulted in Emma feeling undermined by her MT. Ginny's willingness to let Emma be unsuccessful in the interest of learning probably would need to be clearly communicated to the TC for her not to feel having been "left hanging high and dry" by her MT. The conversation continued with Ginny, Tereza, and me trying to clarify what 'undermining someone' is:

Ginny: What's undermining look like?

Tereza: I would say, like, when you say when [the TC]'s not in [the room], it's like, "The TC] said yesterday that you (the students) should do this, but really you don't have to." [said in a dismissive voice]

Maries: That is throwing someone under the bus.

Ginny: Oh, I got thrown under the bus by [my TC]! I don't know about the other way around. (MT R&I group, 3/15/2018, ll. 255-261)

Tereza's characterization of undermining seems to reflect its dictionary meaning "to subvert or weaken insidiously or secretly".⁹ The MTs grappled with defining what 'undermining' in their mentoring contexts sounded and looked like. However, to understand 'undermining' strictly in the sense of 'throwing someone under the bus' seemed too narrow. Jérôme stepped into the pause that followed Ginny's last remark with an example of a situation he experienced with Hubert and his students that lucidly illustrated the complex nature and effects of the MT stepping in as potentially undermining the TC.

⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/undermine>; Retrieved 8/12/2018

‘Stepping in’ as an act of ‘undermining’. Drawing on the question what action/inaction qualifies for undermining, Jérôme surfaced complexity and tensions inherent in the idea of ‘undermining one’s TC’ that he felt came into play when he stepped in during his TC leading the class:

[...] Sometimes I feel like when I can’t stay quiet because there’s something going on and I feel like I have to step in and it becomes very clear and apparent to the students who has a better sense of what they’re talking about. I mean, sure, [the students] do [know anyway], which is why I can start talking and all of a sudden, they’ll be quiet, whereas [Hubert] will have been talking for 10 minutes and half the class will have been having their own side conversations. I mean there’s that. And I do try really hard not to, but there are some times that I know that by talking it will hurt his authority because all of a sudden things have shifted and [the students] say “Oh, ok, [Mr. K– the MT] does have authority right now, [Mr. C – the TC] who is trying to lead the conversation obviously didn't, for a variety of reasons”. And I do feel bad, but there are also a couple times where I think this has to happen, these are the places we have to go. And I know there are times where [Charles] talked about that as a way to say, “Here is a way you can approach this conversation next time around”, but the time I’m thinking about, there wasn’t a next time round, other than maybe in his future teaching career he could think about it. (MT R&I group, 3/15/2018, ll. 263-279)

Jérôme’s first sentence already revealed the pull of the different demands on him as classroom and mentor teacher in the described scenario. As the classroom teacher responsible for his students’ learning, Jérôme saw the need to insert himself into his TC’s teaching the class because the lesson was not progressing in the way it should have. The students behaved in a way

that clearly signaled to the TC as well as the MT that they considered Jérôme the expert and the authority because he “can start talking and all of a sudden they’ll be quiet whereas [Hubert] will have been talking for 10 minutes and half the class will have been having their own side conversations.” This echoes Eleanor’s earlier remark about the students knowing that the TC is “a part teacher [...] not a real teacher”. Jérôme understood that his insertion only confirmed the pretense of the TC’s position as the ostensible authority and “it will hurt [the TC’s] authority”, in other words, Jérôme’s stepping in is in fact an act of undermining Hubert. Jérôme was well aware of that effect and did not take it lightly (“I do feel bad”). However, weighing what was at stake, Jérôme was unwilling to jeopardize his students’ learning for the sake of the TC’s position, as well as letting slip away an opportunity to model a teaching strategy for his TC. It was remarkable to listen to Jérôme articulating the tensions moving around the triangle between students, MT, and TC. His account not only conveyed the effect of the tensions on him, he also expressed how his TC and students must have experienced this situation.

Figure 3 illustrates the dynamics between the students, the MT, and the TC before the TC decided to step in. While the TC attempted to teach and draw the students’ attention to her- or himself, the MT observed the TC and how the students responded to the TC. The students mostly paid attention to themselves and engaged in side conversations with one another. The TC did not seem to have the actual but only ostensible authority to direct the students’ attention. Jérôme described how he observed his students and his TC and decided that class could not continue based on his observations. Thus, he stepped in. Figure 4 illustrates the shift in attention and dynamics once the MT stepped in. The students directed their attention to the MT as the actual authority in the classroom as soon as the MT began to speak. While the MT commanded the

classroom, the TC withdrew and became an observer of the students and the MT. Jérôme stepped in so that he could refocus the students' attention and move the lesson forward.

Figure 3. *Locus of Authority – Actual vs. Ostensible Authority. Dynamics Before the MT Steps in and Intervenes.*

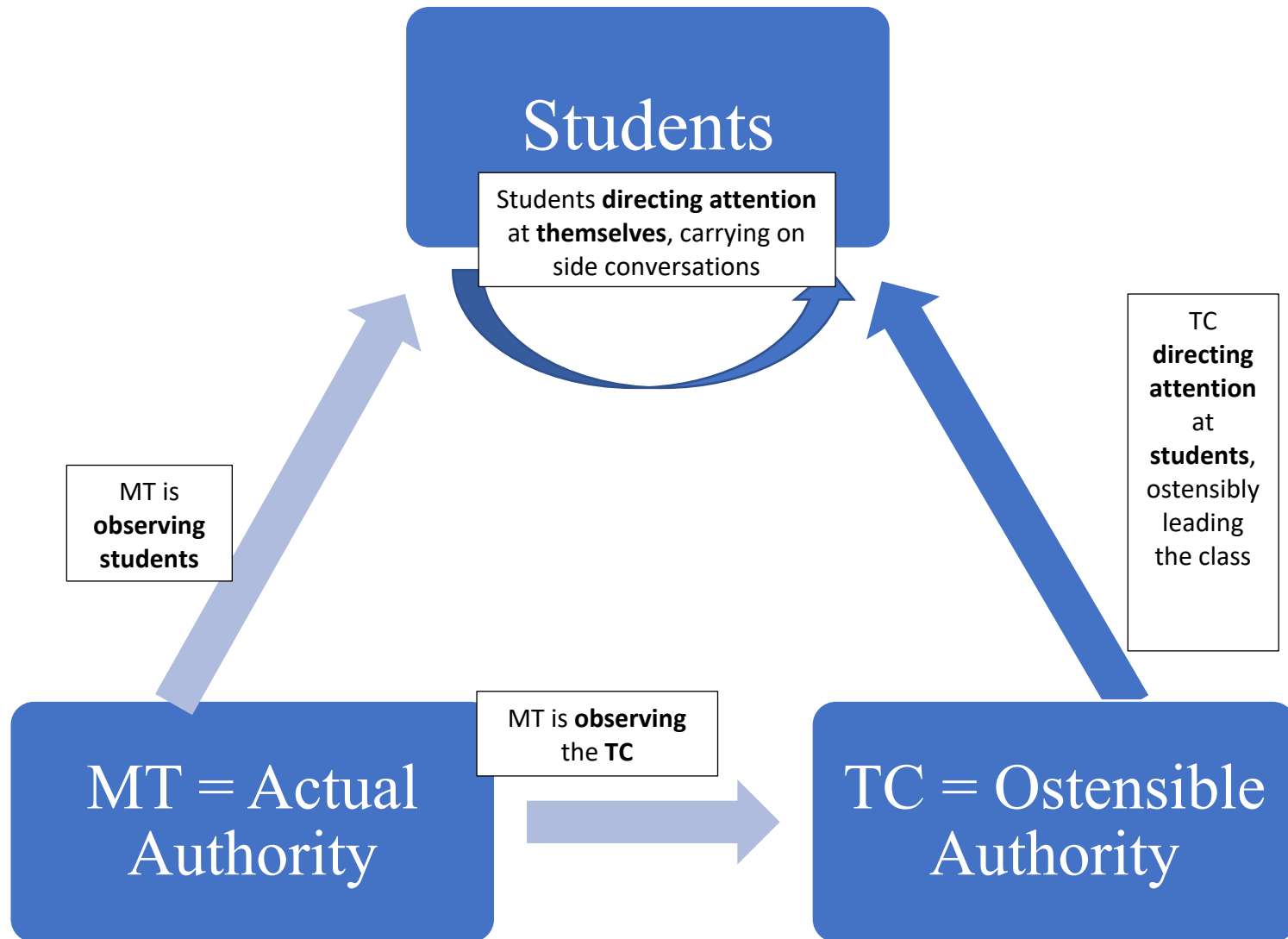
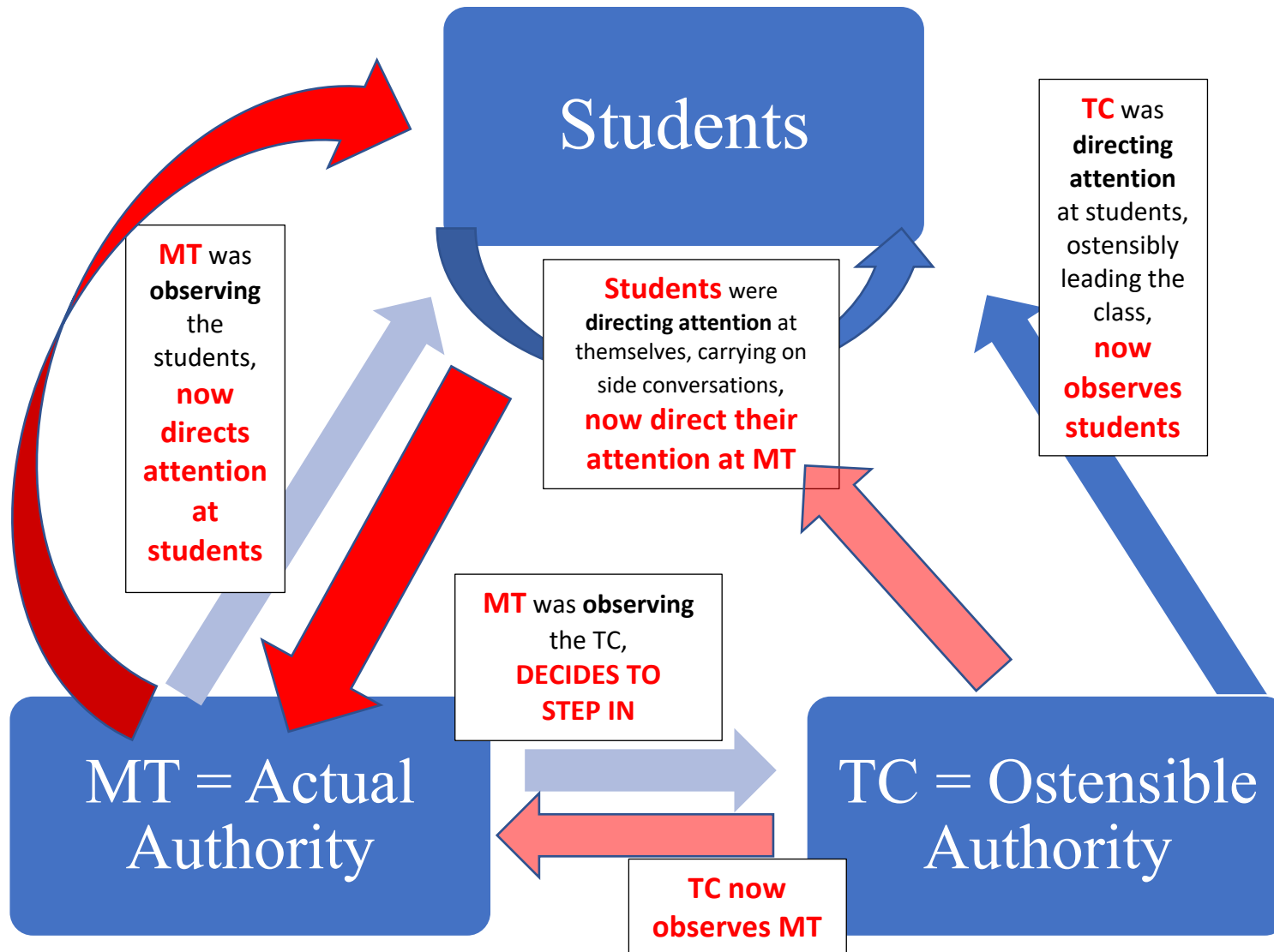


Figure 4. *Locus of Authority – Actual vs. Ostensible Authority. Dynamics After the MT Decides to Step in and Intervene.*



Jérôme reasoned through the scenario and why he made the choice he made, which was to step in, and his thinking revealed legitimate concerns and reasons for stepping into his TC's lead. Yet, despite the good intentions for his mentoring move, he realized that he undermined his TC in front of the students. Jérôme's example is a vivid illustration of (a) how complicated and serious the issue of 'undermining' in mentoring is, (b) how the MT's concern over the TC's ostensible authority intensifies the identity tension highlighted in Chapter Five, and (c) provides a rich example of this MT's reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987).

'Stepping in' without consequences? In general, in light of these conversations, mentor teachers on the whole agreed that "stepping in" during instruction was an example of undermining. However, Tereza expressed that she did not view "stepping in" as undermining. In fact, she seemed to think of it as a necessary and natural mentoring activity that did not (or should not) affect the TC's standing in the classroom. During our group meeting in February Tereza explained:

I know, I feel, like, I step in especially with management, all the time. It's just like, "Alright!" [...] Today I stopped the whole class, I was like, "Look, you need to stop so Ms. S. [her TC] can give you these directions, so let's stop." [...] And then that was that. And then she went on. (MT R&I group, 2/8/2018, ll. 341-351)

During our group meeting in March, she reiterated her understanding of 'stepping in':

I wonder if that's situational. 'Cause I've, I'm reflecting back as you say that, and I've done that, and it doesn't, I don't feel like the students have responded with as, that situation as me undermining her. I think it's like, I recognized they needed to stop talking and I said something, and I did and then they – and then she carried on and I don't think

it reflected negatively against her authority with them. [...] (MT R&I group, 3/15/2018, ll. 281-286)

Tereza was a first-time MT, and in both quotes she articulated a clear stance toward stepping in when she saw the need. Tereza openly spoke to what her most pressing concern seemed to have been, namely her responsibility as the teacher to ensure that students are learning. But if no one is paying attention to the person in the teacher role, in this case her TC Jacinta, then learning cannot happen. Hence, she stepped in to ensure Jacinta can teach so that students can learn. Tereza did not think that her intervening could make Jacinta look powerless in the students' eyes. However, she could not know for certain as she asked neither Jacinta nor the students about it.

'Undermining' as a threat to one's sense of self as teacher. Jérôme drove the question of undermining a level deeper when he considered the very personal nature of the teaching profession. During an earlier group meeting (December 2017), Jérôme had wondered out loud about undermining when debriefing or reflecting on a lesson with the TC. He pondered the challenge of providing constructive and useful feedback to his TC without compromising his budding teacher self, which could be understood as a question about how to prevent undermining the TC. Jérôme explained that he tries to avoid giving "really direct feedback" to his TC because, to his way of thinking, that kind of feedback not only is criticism of the thing the TC did but "as a teacher", Jérôme said,

[...] it feels like criticism of who you are because being a teacher is such a deeply rooted identity for people who teach that this harsh, direct criticism chips away at who you are, the way you think about yourself because teaching is not something you do, it is something you are. (FN, MT R&I group, 12/4/2017)

Here Jérôme articulated an aspect of teachers' professional identities that seems to be important to take into overall account in conversations about teachers' identities – the idea that critiquing a teacher's practice can feel as “criticism of who you are”. To Jérôme's way of thinking, being a teacher is a deeply personal matter in which questions about one's profession become interchangeable with questions about one's sense of self (“teaching is not something you do, it is something you are”). This statement echoed and expanded Eleanor's earlier remark that MT and TC hopefully agreed to avoid mutual humiliation. Jérôme seemed to say that not only would he refrain from providing what he calls “really direct feedback” to his TC, he also seems to say by the same token he would not want to receive “really direct feedback” since it would “chip away at” his sense of self as a teacher *and* an individual.

Summary

The concerns MTs have for their TCs' confidence as nascent teachers (Bullough & Draper, 2004a) as well as the TC's tenuous position as described by Eleanor have been reported in the literature (Bullough & Draper, 2004b; Valencia, 2009). The conversations between the MTs in this study group confirmed those previous findings but also revealed more complexity about these issues.

As seen throughout this chapter, there seems to be a lack of agreement between the MTs which actions or inactions qualify as undermining. There was Charles who thought he undermined his TC when he refused what the other MTs deemed an unreasonable expectation from his TC, and then there was Tereza who believed that her ‘stepping in’ was not undermining her TC's tenuous authority but rather an appropriate mentoring activity without consequences for the TC's position. This illustrates the variation of when MTs thought they undermined their TCs.

Jérôme described a situation in which he decided to step into his TC's lead, and his astute analysis of the actual versus ostensible locus of authority in a 'stepping in' situation revealed how difficult it is for the MT to decide whether and how to intervene. Ginny's example of deciding not to intervene underscores the complexity detailed in Jérôme's analysis. In Ginny's case her inaction could be perceived as undermining, but had she intervened or "swooped in" she also might have undermined her TC. As has become evident, this is a complicated matter affecting the TC's learning opportunities and the dynamics between the MT, the TC, and the students.

Since MTs consider 'stepping in' a useful, in fact necessary, real-time coaching move as portrayed in Schwille (2008) as well as illustrated by Jérôme's and Tereza's examples, the possibility of undermining the TC seems inevitable. The MTs' accounts here illustrate both action (Jérôme, Tereza) and inaction (Charles, Ginny) as mentoring choices that could undermine the TC's standing. However, in light of the findings discussed in Chapter Five, not intervening for fear of undermining the TC cannot be an option any longer because it perpetuates a model of mentoring that allows for too many opportunities for the TC to learn (about) teaching to slip away. As I discuss further in the concluding chapter of this dissertation, the need for direct mentoring of the TC in the presence of students has become evident, but we have to consider in what ways it is best done. The mentoring moment described by Jérôme seems to qualify as undermining, even in Jérôme's own assessment ("I know by talking it will hurt [my TC's] authority"). Yet, he chose to insert himself, thus evidently the question for Jérôme is not *if* he should step in, but more importantly *how* to step in and lessen the threat of undermining his TC.

An important consideration for a different mentoring model seems to be the function of assumptions about the TC's role and objective in the classroom. One assumption that every actor

in this setting – MT, TC, students – seems to hold (to some degree) is that the TC should already be knowledgeable about teaching. This assumption seems to be rooted in the “familiarity pitfall” (Feiman-Nemser, 1985). It is the idea that “prospective teachers are no strangers to classrooms” (p. 63) and believe to know what it takes to teach from having observed and experienced teaching as a *student*.

Thus, it might prove productive for the MT to explicitly address with the TC the complex and delicate nature of the TC’s position the way Eleanor did for her MT colleagues, as well as surface assumptions the MT and TC may have about what it looks like to learn to become a teacher at the start of the practicum.

Chapter Seven: Participation in the MT Reflection and Inquiry Group – Affordances and Limitations

This chapter addresses my research questions about affordances and limitations of MTs discussing and reflecting together on their mentoring practice: In what ways does a collective reflection and inquiry group support MTs in addressing the problems of practice they encounter, including tensions they experience between serving as MTs and classroom teachers? What are the limitations of an MT reflection and inquiry group?

Reports in the literature about similar teacher groups (Arnold, 2002; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008) discuss the usefulness of such groups. Illustration of reflection-on-action with the group, not alone, bring in Schön (1987) here and connect it to the affordances that the MTs describe in detail below. Their comments suggest a deep-seated need for ongoing exchange with other MTs while mentoring a TC. However, this chapter also shines a light on the limitations for learning that seem inherent in this kind of teacher self-study group.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents an overview of the topics and issues that surfaced during each MT R&I group meeting. The second part of this chapter presents the outcomes of the meetings that the MTs reported as the most useful to them, that is, the affordances of this group. In the last part I discuss in what ways group learning limits the chances of MTs changing their mentoring practice, even when they identified the need and expressed desire to do things differently.

Meeting Topics

Over the course of six months of group meetings a variety of topics emerged, and they reflected the arc of the practicum. That is to say, overall the problems of practice the MTs discussed mirrored the things happening with their TCs in the classrooms. Table 8 provides a

summary of the topics and issues as well as insights into which topics and issues stayed with the MTs over the course of the practicum and project. As the table illustrates, during the first three months (October through December) the TCs were not yet planning and teaching solo, and the MTs conversations primarily revolved around professional behavior, their roles and responsibilities, and in what ways they felt the TEPs were challenging or supporting them in their mentoring work. After winter break and for the remaining three months (January through March), the topics became more focused on the TCs' progress (or lack thereof) in planning lessons and teaching students. However, as also becomes evident from Table 8, the MTs grappled throughout the practicum with challenges they perceived the TEPs presented them with.

Table 8.

MT R&I Group Meeting Topics.

Meeting Date	Topics (# of speakers)	Description/Content
October 2017	<i>TC Professionalism</i> (5: Charles, Eleanor, Tereza, Jérôme, Art)	Discussion surfaced tensions between what the professional skills and behaviors were that the MTs expected the TCs brought vs. professional skills and behaviors the MTs had to teach the TCs (whether or not they considered teaching those skills as part of their responsibilities).
	<i>MT Competence</i> (3: Charles, Art, Jérôme)	Discussion about new challenges MTs faced working with their current TCs (who were unlike their previous TCs).
	<i>Challenges with TEPs</i> (2: Jérôme, Eleanor)	Discussion about program structures that inhibited or even prevented TC learning.
	<i>TCs' Ideas and Challenges</i> (2: Art, Eleanor)	Discussion about TCs coming in with strong opinions and ideas about curriculum and teaching methods and how and when to make room for them.
November 2017	<i>Absence of interaction between MTs and TCs during instructional time</i> (5: Eleanor, Charles, Art, Tereza, Jérôme)	Maries shared her observations across all five MT-TC pairs: Absence of interactions between MTs and their TCs during instructional time. Discussion about reasons for this absence.
	<i>Role of the letter of Recommendation for TC</i> (4: Eleanor, Jérôme, Art, Charles)	Discussion about the importance of the letter of recommendation for the TCs' career prospects, its use as a goal-setting and leverage tool for the MT.
	<i>Increased teaching and planning responsibilities for TCs</i> (3: Tereza, Eleanor, Charles)	Discussion about what TEPs recommend/expect TCs take on as an acceptable teaching load during their practicum in contrast to the MTs' beliefs about an acceptable and useful teaching load during the practicum.
December 2017	<i>Workshop: Letters of Recommendation</i> (6: Art, Jérôme, Charles,	MTs brought examples of letter of recommendations they had written for previous TCs (strong and struggling TCs). MTs discussed the letters as a way to clarify goals they have for their TCs and as a tool to mentor and communicate with those goals in mind.

	Tereza, Eleanor, Ginny)	
January 2018 (Eleanor absent)	<i>TC Professionalism</i> (2: Tereza, Charles)	TCs “waking up” to the hard realities of what it means to be a teacher. MTs frustrations with TCs showing up late to work, not being prepared for their day with the students.
	<i>Lesson Planning</i> (3: Ginny, Charles, Art)	MTs reported lesson planning as profoundly challenging for their TCs and that they need to give their TCs more opportunities to plan, by themselves and with the MTs.
	<i>Challenges with TEPs</i> (4: Tereza, Jérôme, Charles, Ginny)	Teaching load should be bigger for TCs to approximate reality of a teacher’s life. MTs frustrations with what they see as TCs’ and TEPs’ “obsession” with the edTPA.
	<i>Gender roles and gender dynamics when mentoring</i> (4: Jérôme, Charles, Art, Ginny)	Jérôme and Art were mentoring TCs who were in many ways unlike their previous TCs and presented challenges neither MT had to consider before. Jérôme had requested to discuss his challenges with the group for support in figuring out how to respond to the challenges.
February 2018	<i>Problem of Practice: My TC is having a hard time teaching and wants to drop out of the program. What do I do?</i> (6: Art, Charles, Eleanor, Ginny, Tereza, Jérôme)	Art’s TC Marek, who seemed like a “superstar” TC during the first half of the practicum, had been struggling heavily with teaching a whole class, as well as juggling planning and teaching with the “unglamorous things” in teaching (attendance, grading, tracking homework and make-up assessments). After a particularly difficult day Marek told Art that he wanted to drop out of his TEP. The group utilized the CFG Consultancy protocol to assist Art in developing ideas/strategies how to respond to the situation and support his TC.
March 2018	<i>Challenges with TEPs</i> (5: Charles, Jérôme, Eleanor, Tereza, Ginny)	Teaching load should be bigger for TCs to approximate reality of a teacher’s life. TCs’ and TEPs’ “obsession” with the edTPA made TCs lose focus on kids and learning to become a teacher. Compensation for MTs can feel “like a slap in the face”.
	<i>Fear of Undermining the TC</i> (6: Charles, Eleanor, Tereza, Art, Jérôme, Art)	Discussion about what undermining the TC does and does not look like, and why it is risky yet sometimes necessary to step in and something that looks like undermining.
	<i>Where do we go from here? - Future MT Reflection & Inquiry Group</i> (5: Eleanor, Art, Charles, Ginny, Jérôme)	Discussion of need <i>for</i> as well as frame and purpose <i>of</i> future MT group at Luddington HS.

	<i>MT as teacher educator</i> (5: Eleanor, Art, Charles, Ginny, Jérôme)	Discussion about who a teacher educator is, why and in what ways MTs are teacher educators.
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How TEPs Affect the MTs' Abilities to Mentor their TCs

A discussion that re-emerged over the course of the six months with regularity and that proves itself of interest for university-based teacher educators and TEPs was the MTs' varying and numerous frustrations with their TCs' TEPs. Over the months these discussions garnered more involvement by more MTs. While at the beginning Charles and Jérôme were the ones expressing dissatisfaction, at the end of this project all MTs had expressed frustrations about the TEPs, if not during the MT R&I group meetings then during the exit interviews.

During our first meeting in October 2017, Jérôme expressed concern about his TC's (Hubert) experience of learning about teaching and being a teacher due to the fragmented structure of Hubert's TEP from September through December (as explained in Chapter Four):

I think this year I'm feeling more frustrated than I have in the past about the way that [this TEP] has set up [...] the days in which [TCs] are showing up [...] it's really hard for him to be getting a relationship with the students and knowing the flow of class, and being there... he's there for a week, he's gone for a week except Friday, and then he's there for a week and then he's gone for a week except Friday, and then he's gone for two weeks except for Fridays, and so even in the observational role he's getting a very fragmented sense of what's happening in the class, and how I'm working to build relationships with students, and how we're doing a series of things that build on each other in different ways [...].(MT R&I group, 10/11/2017, ll. 180-189)

As the MT tasked with demonstrating for his TC how to start a new school year with a fresh group of students, Jérôme felt that the structure of Hubert's TEP was working against this objective and left him feeling frustrated. During the same meeting, Eleanor the veteran MT of 15 years, observed that "[...] over the many years the actual amount of time that [the TCs] are

expected [by their TEPs] to be in our building and expected to be in front of the classroom has gotten whittled and whittled and whittled away” (MT R&I group 1, 10/11/2017), and she felt a lack of respect by the TEPs for the time TCs spend in the classrooms with their MTs. Eleanor’s tone of voice conveyed anger about the “lack of professional sort of training and [that the TCs’] preparedness is even less [...]” (MT R&I group, 10/11/2017).

During the group meeting in November, the conversation revolved around questions about how and when the TCs should increase their load (that is, their teaching and planning responsibilities), as well as the difference in ideas between the MTs and the TEPs about the progression and timing of the load increase. Tereza thought her circumstance as a 9th grade science teacher who started the second quarter of the school year with a new group of students lent itself ideally to Jacinta (her TC) taking over all planning and teaching responsibilities for the second quarter:

Ideally, for her or us who have 9th grade, [those TCs] should do it soon. I mean [Jacinta has] seen already first quarter and we’re about to redo it [second quarter]. [She] already got to do the “see one, teach one” model of it, [she has] seen it for an entire scope and sequence for one quarter, and so, in my mind, [she] should be able to teach the entire 2nd quarter [laughter] because [she has] seen it done from start to finish! (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 189-194)

As a first-time mentor whose mentoring was mostly informed by an absent MT during her own practicum (as described in Chapter Four), Tereza felt that Jacinta was presented with an outstanding and unique opportunity to learn as much teaching as quickly as possible with the beginning of the new quarter. Eleanor, while frustrated with what felt to her an overall decrease

in time the TCs spent actually teaching, cautioned Tereza's eagerness to put this much responsibility on Jacinta at this point in the practicum:

Here's the thing. [...] Just as the university liaison person (talking about her role), [I can tell you Jacinta] might be getting very different messages [from her TEP], [...] [the university teacher educators] generally would not want that level, that load at this point. When I – I was doing the “watch one-teach one” thing for a while now because Kristy's been here and seems like fine to do that, and very confident, but her coach was kinda like “Oh, you're actually [teaching]!”, and I was like “Why not?” [...] But that is just one, after seeing, you know, I do a lesson and I ask her “Is there part of the lesson you wanna do? You can do it.” But teaching the whole quarter next quarter, it's not gonna [happen]. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 201-212)

Here, Eleanor articulated the problem that the expectations MTs may have for the TCs do not necessarily align with the expectations the TEPs have for their TCs, and it appears that Eleanor only had a clearer understanding of the TEP's expectations because of her role as the liaison between the TEP and the school. Tereza, who was mentoring a TC from the same TEP as Eleanor, did not seem to have that understanding and it was not clear why that was. Eleanor wondered about the reasons for the TEPs' hesitations about expecting their TCs to increase their loads:

[...] Over the many years that I've been working with the different programs, the message that they tell their [TCs] about how much they should be doing at the peak is very different. From “You should spend ½ the time teaching all the classes” [to] there's a little blip, for like a unit where they take on all the classes and try it out. And maybe I'm misinterpreting and it's not quite that explicit, but [the TEPs] really have not been

pushing [the TCs] to take it all on. Maybe it went too far for a while. They don't want the sink or swim kind of [model] – we've had some issues even in this building where mentors would have to go on bereavement leave or [were] gone for illness, and they just expect[ed] their [TCs] to be able to [teach the full load], and that's just not – they can't, right. So, [the university teacher educators] are a little extra protective of [the TCs]. But there's a middle ground for sure. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 221-234)

Eleanor's musings demonstrate that she understood that TEPs have reasons for regulating the TC's planning and teaching responsibilities. At the same time, she sounded dissatisfied with the variability and lack of clarity about the reasons, as well as with the amount of time the TCs are expected to take on as full a load as possible, and she restated her irritation during the March discussion:

[...] For many years, this idea that – how much should [the TCs] be doing in their [practicum] stint? And it seems like [the TEPs have] really – I don't know, I'm sure there's a reason [...] So, [the TEPs] rationalized “Do you want to kill an intern? Do you want them to learn in a supported environment, so they actually really get to practice without burning out, without feeling totally ineffective for a huge period of time? So, do it well in a supported way with a limited class load, very limited.” But then there is always the “Yeah, but then they never understand what [being a teacher] truly means, and what is [the practicum] setting them up for?” [...] There is obviously somewhere in between, but just more and more [limited time], on top of the edTPA [...] it means – my intern is pretty darn competent, like, but she also has no idea what it means, none of them do, full-time for anything longer than a day, even if that. (MT R&I group, 3/15/2018, ll. 154-171)

Eleanor tried to be understanding of the TEPs' directives regarding the TCs' teaching and planning responsibilities but she seemed to also say that she felt uneasy and concerned about sending her TC, or any TC, out into the world without a clear understanding of how demanding being a full-time teacher is.

The edTPA also became a key issue for discussion. Jérôme was especially outspoken about how the edTPA seemed to distract his TC's focus on learning to teach:

To be honest, I felt blindsided by the, how it feels so different [from] my other experiences with where their attention seems to be. [...] Where they seem so obsessed with the edTPA. It's a relatively – it's what, the last 3 or 4 years that that has become a "thing" [...]. (MT R&I group 6, 3/15/2018, ll. 575-580)

From Jérôme's perspective, TC Hubert and Hubert's colleagues from the same TEP seemed "obsessed" with the edTPA as the "thing" that matters over everything else, and it amplified the frustrations Jérôme had felt with Hubert's TEP since the beginning of the practicum (in September). At the beginning of his program, Hubert's TEP structure shaped what Jérôme called a "fragmented classroom experience" (as illustrated above), and now the TEP's facilitation of the edTPA-process kept Hubert away from the classroom. Jérôme maintained his countenance and seemed almost amused with the TEP's expectations and the ways they infringed upon what Jérôme considered the more important learning experiences for Hubert in becoming a teacher:

[...] I'm out for a training tomorrow, so I was kinda hoping [Hubert] would be able to step in and take on some tasks in a more real way, and it was interesting, he was like "Yeah, I can't be [here], there's a mandatory edTPA training all day tomorrow". So, there's one other day where he has to be gone, the entire day for training how to do the

assessment. It is kinda interesting how – he also seems, sorta weirdly focused on his [edTPA] lesson plans because I think that’s what edTPA wants to see, and it’s interesting how much – in that way it kinda feels like the tail wagging the dog in terms of what’s important. What’s important is how edTPA is going to be evaluating what you do. Not whether you’re developing the practice and skills you need to be able to be working with students and helping students learn. It’s more like, how well can you prove to this other organization that you deserve your certification. Which it is interesting to see that. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 600-611)

In Jérôme’s view, the TEP’s (and by extension Hubert’s) focus on the edTPA seemed misplaced like “the tail wagging the dog”. It seemed that being in Jérôme’s classroom served to satisfy the assessment’s requirements, not Hubert’s long-term growth as a new teacher. Jérôme sounded frustrated with the effects of Hubert’s TEP on the TC’s opportunities to learn to become a teacher:

Yeah, so it just seems weird that there is a whole day that they're just gone after they've been really in and out all this year so far. This is – last week was the very first week that he had a full week that he was expected to be here [w]hich was only four days! And now he’s only gonna be here for four days again this week. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 627-633)

Charles echoed Jérôme’s and Eleanor’s sentiments vis-a-vis the effect of the edTPA on the TCs’ ability to be present for their learning to teach:

I totally agree with that. If they’re focused on the edTPA as their... [if that] is what’s important, then I suppose they could not care about personalization, they could care about not anything but their videos. (MT R&I group 4, 1/8/2018, ll. 1095-1100)

At our last group meeting, Charles reiterated these concerns and articulated his expectations of any future TC who might set foot in his classroom:

[...] I would say, we want the student teacher to bring their whole self here. And things pull them away: Forms [that need] to be filled out that I have to hand in, otherwise my student teacher doesn't get a grade, or the edTPA – they pull the student teacher away from being present here in our classrooms. And I think we want them to be present because then we get to be [...] teacher educator[s] instead [...] just the placeholder for them to do the edTPA. (MT R&I group, 3/15/2018, ll. 1149-1155)

Like Eleanor, Charles expressed understanding for the numerous demands that push and pull on the TCs, but he also expressed the need for a change in order for him and his colleagues to be able to do the work of mentoring with integrity, that is as teacher educators. The sense of dissatisfaction reverberated throughout the MTs' discussions of the ways the TEPs affected the MTs' mentoring work. Ginny's statement presented a sober summary of the discussions' tenor:

I've been thinking about this – our group has really helped me think about what would the ideal situation look like? Because this doesn't feel ideal, it feels cobbled together given the systems that we have in place and making the best of what we've got. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 1102-1105)

Affordances of the MT R&I Group as Identified by the MTs

To illustrate the affordances of the group meetings as identified by the MTs, I draw on the transcripts from the second and the exit interviews that I conducted with the MTs in January and March 2018. The MTs explicitly named the affordances, and I used their explicit labels as codes to identify and group the affordances.

Without exception the MTs considered having had a professional community where they could commiserate with, problem solve, and ask questions of each other as the best feature of the MT R&I group, and I elaborate on it in detail below. The common denominator of the remaining affordances was having had the opportunity to develop their professional practice as MTs in a collaborative manner, and those affordances are also described in detail below.

Commonalities and community. All MTs described the group meetings in positive terms, such as “valuable”, “helpful”, “useful”, or “so necessary”. Overwhelmingly they expressed that at the most fundamental level it felt good to have a dedicated time to meet in their community of MT colleagues who faced similar challenges while doing the work of mentoring.

Art and Jérôme both explicitly expressed how much they liked having time officially dedicated to meeting and talking about being an MT and the work of mentoring. In the past, conversations with colleagues happened by chance and were not as helpful or had as meaningful an impact on them as our group meetings did:

Art: I’ve had a colleague who is right across the hall from me, and we had many TCs the same year, so we would compare notes from time to time, but it wasn’t as extensive, I don’t think, as this was. [...] And that’s somebody I work with all the time, every day, so I mean, we do share notes and ideas about lots of things related to teaching, and I don’t remember that we [...] spent a lot of time talking about being mentor teachers even though we both had [teacher candidates] [...] Well, just – [our group] was dedicated time, I think that’s a big part of it, it’s just that there is this hour and a half or hour once a month dedicated to that. [...] It just comes up by happenstance otherwise.” (Exit Interview, 3/16/2018, ll. 9-24)

Despite their close physical proximity and ongoing exchange about curriculum and teaching, Art and his colleague did not engage in conversations about mentoring their respective TCs, which could be an indicator of the assumption that mentoring happens through teaching, not necessarily with much intention or attention to it. However, Art articulated that being intentional about making sense of mentoring with other MTs had value for him.

Similarly, Jérôme expressed appreciation for the intentionality of the MT R&I group and how it supported him to approach the fundamental questions of the work of mentoring TCs:

[...] I don't think I've ever really ever talked to other teachers about “What is your philosophy of being a mentor teacher? What do you see your role as being?” I've sometimes talked about either frustrations or with things that I thought were really positive about it, but I hadn't really talked to them about “How do you go about it?”. It was interesting to actually be in a space where we are intentionally talking about how do each of us go about it and how do we see it in different ways. (Interview, 1/5/2018, ll. 123-129)

Meeting once a month as an officially sanctioned group of practicing mentor teachers gave the endeavor a different heft and provided time and space to venture further and deeper in conversations about doing the work of mentoring, past venting frustrations or celebrating little successes.

Charles' comment illustrated another sentiment, namely when things did not go as planned or as well as he had hoped for that he assumed this was his individual problem, in his words “a Charles problem”. Through the MT R&I group conversations, he came to understand that many of the challenges qualified as “MTs' problems”:

This [study group] that I've been a part of has helped me to see [...] that a lot of the struggles that I have are similar with other teachers' [struggles]. It was fascinating to me.

It's like, "Well, this is not just a Charles problem." (Exit Interview, 3/22/2018, ll. 18-21)

For Jérôme, it not only was reassuring to learn that his colleagues had similar experiences to his but that the challenges that mentoring a TC bring seem to have patterns, i.e. they are common and repeat, and learning that "[the problem] wasn't coming out of nowhere" (Exit Interview, 3/19/2018, ll. 7) was helpful for him.

Art echoed both Charles and Jérôme, saying that the group was

[...] a place to hear how other people were managing with their TCs and get some ideas from hearing what their experiences were, and it was also a place for me to talk about what I was experiencing and have some feedback from other people who were in the position of being able to relate. (Exit Interview, 3/16/2018, ll. 1-5)

Eleanor teased out another layer of usefulness, saying that not only did the group alleviate the loneliness of mentoring, but she also found it helpful as a demonstration of how knotty the work of mentoring a TC is. Echoing Charles' sentiment, for Eleanor to hear other MTs face similar challenges and questions that sometimes seem difficult to resolve normalized her experience of mentoring being complicated terrain:

I found it very valuable. [...] The meetings reminded me of really how complicated it is. I'm not sure that I saw mentoring a lot differently but being able to talk through many different circumstances, issues, problems, people's concerns, just laid out [...] what is normal. Usually, it's just me, myself, and I [...] so it's nice to do it in community [...]. (Exit Interview, 3/17/2018, ll. 45-59)

Ginny, who accepted a TC emergency-placement in November and quickly realized

that she needed support from her MT colleagues, joined the group starting in December, and our group proved helpful in many ways to her. She started out by talking about the community aspect, saying it was

[...] nice to have people to commiserate with. [It] was really nice through the challenging things to have a group to go and just vent. Have people nod their heads in agreement, and understand like, “Yes, that sucks. It happened to me too and I still have no solutions.” It's nice to have company in those moments. Also, have a really formal group to troubleshoot and think that through, so I didn't feel alone. There's something very lonely about teaching in general. You can have this classroom with 30 kids and you, and you can be so lonely. Then there's something kind of lonely in having an intern as well. (Exit Interview, 3/20/2018, ll. 2-10)

In her comment, Ginny surfaced the need to process the emotions involved in mentoring (“just vent”) as well as the need to find practical strategies to address the problems (“to troubleshoot and think that through”) and she remarked on how both teaching and mentoring are activities that are at once social and solitary. While the TC’s presence can make the teaching less lonely, the MT is still usually by herself trying to figure out how to best support the MT, and the group meetings lessened this sense of loneliness for Ginny. In fact, Ginny said she felt as though her MT colleagues were always with her:

[...] I'm kind of flying blind and not really knowing what I'm doing, so getting that feedback from other people like, "Here's what I might do in that situation", that suddenly made it feel like even though not everyone was in my room with me all the time, I could bring their voices in my head into my room with [my TC], and like, here's something

Charles had said, or Tereza had said, things like, “Okay, I got this, I can do this, I could help [my TC]”. (Exit Interview, 3/20/2008, ll. 13-18)

Art described the same feeling, that of feeling lonely in teaching and the benefit of the MT group to mitigate that feeling, in an earlier interview:

In some ways, having a [TC] is less lonely than just teaching by yourself. [...] Still, being able to collaborate with other mentor teachers is even better. (Interview, 1/12/2018, ll. 531-534)

Tereza also expressed how she found it helpful to be part of the group. She felt that her need for community to process the emotional demands of mentoring was met by her frequent conversations with Charles and Ginny with whom she was professionally as well as personally close:

[...] Ginny and Charles are my hall-mates, my buddies, so [...] we talk a lot, and so that is happening informally. [...] I like hearing that I’m not the only going through it. [...] When we talk to each other, it’s like a shoulder to cry on. It’s like, “Yes, I know. I’m going through the same thing, too.” (Interview, 1/10/2018, ll. 571-682)

As has become evident, the MTs experienced having and participating in this MT R&I group provided a much-needed community and connections with other mentor teachers.

Sharing and developing professional practice: The letter of recommendation. As mentioned above, the group allowed the MTs to develop a community of mentor teachers that could share challenges with one another, and feel less alone in their work. The group also supported mentor teachers to share and develop specific aspects of their professional practice. Here, I report on a key example of this kind of activity: the letter of recommendation.

The letter of recommendation is an object coveted by TCs as an important piece of evidence of their skills and abilities to step into a classroom as the teacher of record. Most, if not all TEPs, expect the MTs to write a letter of recommendation for their TCs as a stamp of approval. In this way, the MT can function as a gate keeper of the teaching profession and can enact power over the TC in ways the TEP could not. The MTs' letters have currency in the hiring process. As it turned out, not all MTs in the group were aware of the power that came with their position and the meaning of the letter of recommendation. Eleanor, however, as the veteran and liaison of one of the TEPs, was fully aware of the weight and meaning of the letter, and early on in the project, she brought up the letter of recommendation as a significant tool in her mentoring work:

[The letter] can be a useful tool to [...] clarify for ourselves as mentors [the goals we have for the TC]. For me, in the nuttiness of the day [...] to know what to focus on and to know how [to] direct our action so [that] it's productive. [...] "Ok, I can see these things and haven't yet" ... but also just as a way to nudge, encourage, or pressure the behaviors or growth that we want, need to see. And I wonder if even, I've never really sat down, [...] I haven't at the beginning sat down and said, "These are the things I look for" and that might be actually a good concrete roadmap for the relationship and the process. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 773-)

The letter of recommendation served Eleanor as a means to gain clarity about the goals she had for her TC as well as leverage to push her TC's learning. It occurred to Eleanor that the letter could be well suited for backwards designing/planning of the practicum, so that both the MT and TC have a "roadmap" for the time they spend together in the classroom. Jérôme was intrigued by this idea, saying "[...] that could be interesting. I never thought of the letter as my

end goal [...]” (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017) to which Eleanor was quick to clarify, “It’s not my end goal but it’s the [TCs’]” (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017) and she found it beneficial to use the TCs’ interest in the letter as a way to direct her mentoring of her TCs. Jérôme grew more intrigued by this reframed purpose of the letter of recommendation:

Yeah, and in some ways, it’s like their certificate that they get in a very real way [...] that says, “These are your strengths, and this is what I can recommend and the level at which I can recommend you to your future employers,” which is interesting to think about it that way. I just hadn’t before. (MT R&I group, 11/9/2017, ll. 773-802)

From this exchange emerged the idea to have our next group meeting be a workshop around letters of recommendation. Each MT brought examples of letters they wrote in the past for strong as well as struggling TCs, and as they took turns reading the letters out loud, they identified similarities and differences between their letters and homed in on aspects they could all agree were important for the TCs to have demonstrated by the end of their practicum.

The conversation during this workshop left a lasting impression on Jérôme and Charles. Jérôme, as a result of our discussion, realized that he as the MT occupies the role of a gatekeeper for the teaching profession, and he was intrigued to realize how much of a significant part he played in his TC’s certification process. He also realized the potential of the letter as a tool to guide changes in his mentoring practice in response to his TC’s needs:

The conversation we had about the letter of recommendation, to what degree the recommendation itself is saying, like, “This is what we saw in you that we think we wanted to see by the time you were done.” It did make me think about, in particular, how I might be able to explicitly say [...] “This is what I want to see from you by the time we’re done together”, rather than just be like, “We’re on this journey together and we’re

going to be in this space figuring it out as we go along.” – Which is how I’ve done it in the past [...] (Interview, 1/5/2018, ll. 157-164)

During the exit interview Jérôme reiterated how transformative the discussion about the letter of recommendation was for him:

I'd definitely say our big conversation about the letter of recommendation did reframe the way that I thought of myself. In the past, I did not overtly think of myself as one of those final checks in the process. I more thought of myself as the role of almost a teaching facilitator, like “How can I create opportunities for you to learn what it means to be teacher?” and less “Here's one of the stamps of approval that you're going to need as you move forward to the teaching profession.” (Exit Interview, 3/19/2018)

Charles talked about the discussion of the letter of recommendation in terms of providing him a more productive approach to the process of letter writing not only for his TC, but also for his students:

A couple of meetings ago, we had this discussion about what makes a recommendation. That you could actually look at a whole body of recommendations and decide what's important from a recommendation. Had I ever thought about that? No, I just sat there and wrote a recommendation and typed up whatever I thought was important. Now because of this, I am now thinking in a different way. [...]. All of a sudden, because of this [group]...I can think of the last two or three recommendations, I thought, I'm thinking “What do I think is important before I write my recommendation?” That is not a small thing, that's really cool. (Interview, 1/16/2018, ll. 463-472)

Sharing and developing professional practice: Lesson planning. Supporting the TCs in learning to plan lessons was another key aspect of the MTs’ professional practice although not

all MTs seemed to have realized that they had to focus on this aspect. With the beginning of the second semester (January), the TCs were expected to take on more planning and teaching responsibilities, and this change surfaced struggles for some TCs that had gone undetected until then. Lesson planning was a significant one, and it became evident that some MTs had made assumptions about their TCs' lesson planning knowledge and skills that did not reflect reality. The MTs discussed the need to figure out how to better support their TCs' learning to lesson plan.

During the first phase of the practicum most MTs engaged their TCs in lesson planning via out-loud-thinking and co-planning (see Chapter Five) but with the change of the semester the TCs were expected to engage in lesson planning more independently. However, some TCs struggled with this independence. Tereza started the January group meeting expressing frustration that her TC Jacinta did apparently not understand that she needed to have a complete lesson plan ready in the morning, which created stress for Tereza that she deemed unnecessary:

[...] So, [Jacinta] is, I think she is doing light planning at home, and expecting to do the rest of it here but not giving her[self the] time to do it here. So, she's doing light planning, she comes in at about – by the time I sit down and start talking to her maybe it's 7:50, 8 o'clock? [Charles makes whistling sound] And so then she's expecting the rest of the planning and bouncing off ideas and just solidifying the plans in those 30 minutes [before first period starts], and I'm like "You can't do that with me". [Charles muttering "no", shaking his head] "You have to be solid by the time I walk in. I can look

at the [the complete lesson plan] and then we can have the conversation” but I think in that time she’s still putting it together. [...].¹⁰ (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 61-78)

Tereza’s account illustrated how her and her TC’s expectations did not align when it came to lesson planning. Jacinta appeared to expect to finalize plans with Tereza in the morning but Tereza expected her to arrive with the final product, “a complete lesson plan” because there was not enough time before class started to arrive at a solid lesson plan. Ginny talked about how lesson planning was challenging her TC Emma, but it was also |challenging for Ginny to teach Emma to lesson plan:

Ginny: So, I think I have to break it down into smaller chunks for [Emma]. She’s been also struggling with planning, and taking a really long time over planning, and I think it’s because she’s trying too many things at once... I think I have given her five balls to juggle at once, and she doesn't even know how to catch the first one yet, and so she’s dropping them all.

¹⁰ From interviewing Jacinta I know that she in fact heavily struggled with lesson planning but she did not convey the degree of her struggle to her MT: “I feel like once I started taking on more lesson planning, I realized "Oh my God, I have no idea what I'm doing," because another big part is I think [our methods instructor] does a great job with focusing on [...] [key aspects of teaching science], but I don't think we got a great break down of lesson planning. [The instructor] spent maybe two classes on lesson planning. I felt like that wasn't enough. When [Tereza and I] started lesson planning, I really had no idea on what to do.” (Interview on 2/16/2018, ll. 208-213)

Maries: And planning is really hard.

Ginny: It's hard.

Tereza: Yes, it is.

Ginny: And it's really hard to articulate actually how to do it, as well.

(MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 300-317)

Ginny seemed to have realized how difficult it is to learn to lesson plan by way of being the MT having to verbalize (out-loud thinking) the questions she asked herself when lesson planning and the decision-making processes she went through while lesson planning.

The conversation went on with Charles who expressed equal frustration over his TC's seeming inability to create a lesson plan, and listening to Tereza's and Ginny's accounts was helpful to him:

I have really struggled with planning also, and it really helps me to listen to the two of you, because I've been sort of pissed off with Moira in that she just doesn't seem to be able to plan. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 376-378)

Art shared that he had not asked his TC Marek up to this point to plan but the conversation thus far made him realize that he needed to change that. Similar to Charles, Art made assumptions about his TC's planning skills:

Hearing what you're saying about lesson planning makes me think I've been neglecting [...] that area. [Marek's] written lesson plans once or twice [...] He is gonna be doing a three-week unit, starting the beginning of the semester, so I've been assuming that that's when he's gonna be really taking on the bulk of the planning but so far, he hasn't – he really hasn't done a lot of planning at all. He's just been using my lesson plans. So, that's something I need to think about maybe. (MT R&I group, 1/8/2018, ll. 489-502)

During my second interview with Art he mentioned the conversation about lesson planning as one example of the ways in which the group meetings have been useful in that they reminded him to engage in mentoring activities that he had not thought about by himself:

Well, [...] things like hearing other people say, "We're planning a lesson together," and I'm thinking, "God, we've never planned a lesson together. I got to do that." (Exit Interview, 1/12/2018, ll. 502-504)

The discussion about lesson planning turned out to have strong staying power with Tereza and prompted her to rethink what she thought was a problem of Jacinta doing only “light planning at home” (see above). My second interview with Tereza happened a day after the meeting, and she emphatically recounted the effect the lesson planning discussion had on her thinking:

Like that planning piece [...] that came up yesterday, I was like -- When [the other MTs] said like, "He's getting ready. He's been planning for three units." I was like, "Oh fuck. I've not really given her that opportunity to do that." Really? She won't have that opportunity in ninth grade. I got to do something about that [...]. (Interview, 1/10/2018, ll. 721-724)

Tereza seemed to reframe what she thought was Jacinta’s shortcoming into her own responsibility as the MT to provide opportunities to lesson plan to her TC. In fact, during my interview with Jacinta, she talked at length about lesson planning having been a big challenge for her, and I was able to piece together that shortly after the group meeting Tereza referenced in the quote above, she had asked Jacinta directly how she approached lesson planning. For Jacinta this was the turning point from where things improved:

[...] I think there was a day [...] Tereza explained what lesson planning was, after the whole second quarter. After quarter two basically was at the tail end and [she] saw how bad [my planning] was. [...] [She was] like, "What are you thinking when you do lesson planning?" I was like, "Basically a string of activities. What [the students are] going to do for the day." – "Did you create a seamless explanation, a gapless explanation of what you want them to come to?" I was like "No." [She was] like, "Oh, that's the first thing you do." I wish someone had told me in the very beginning about this stuff. (Interview, 2/16/2018, ll. 247-255)

This occurrence appears to be an example of the group's conversation and the MTs' comparing notes really made a difference for the better, for both the MT and her TC. Jacinta had been feeling uninformed about how to plan a lesson; by her own account she was "bad" at it. The direct question from Tereza, apparently resulting from the MT R&I group's discussion about lesson planning was a game changer for both the TC and the MT.

It was no surprise then that during her exit interview Tereza emphatically reiterated the importance of the lesson planning discussion and its effect on her mentoring practice:

The big one that came up [for me from the group] [...] was the lesson planning, and I was, "I haven't given her really the opportunity to lesson plan. I need to do that." If that [hadn't] come up, I don't know that she would have ever really got that opportunity in a more meaningful way." (Exit Interview, 3/21/2018, ll. 2-8).

Charles described the discussion about lesson planning as a "profound experience" that helped him to understand that his expectations of his TC's skills were not realistic, and that other MTs and TCs struggled with this aspect of "learning to teach" as well:

I assumed too much too early. I ended up being frustrated like, "What the heck! You couldn't make a lesson plan for this simple lesson and now you have to write a lesson plan after you do the lesson?" It just made no sense to me. Now, looking back on it I feel like-- and having our meetings where we discuss this kind of thing, I have come to the realization of I was way ahead of myself when it comes to this stuff. This is actually, that writing a lesson plan is not as easy as it seems to me. [...] [The discussion] was a profound experience for me because I sat there thinking, "This is something that seemed really simple to me, and clearly all these other teacher candidates, these teachers who we're talking about are struggling with this phase and my own struggles too. This isn't as easy as it looks." There's a lot of complexity that goes with thinking, "What did the kids do before? What are the things I'm going to be teaching them? How is that going to be delivered? How am I going to do formatively assess that?" Those things are not as simple as they appear." (Interview, 1/16/2018, ll. 103-126)

Similar to Tereza, Charles realized that he "assumed too much too early" in terms of his TC's skills. He realized through the group's discussion of lesson planning and the struggles of many TCs with lesson planning that surfaced that again this was not just "a Charles problem" but a common challenge among the TCs – and by extension a challenge for the MTs who were wondering about why lesson planning turned out to be so difficult a task for their TCs.

Reflection-on-action – Clarification for MTs of their purposes and practices

Similar to the affordance of community, all MTs articulated an affordance of clarification of their role, purposes, and practices as MTs. All six MTs articulated that they reflected more and/or differently on their role, purpose, and practices as Mentor Teachers than they had before having been part of our group. The group provided them a valuable way to address emotional,

practical, and theoretical aspects of their mentoring work. The preceding sections described concrete outcomes for individual MTs of the group's discussion and reflections. Separately from the effects described above, the MTs also unequivocally expressed reflection itself as an affordance and provided evidence for the importance of examining why and how practitioners do the things they do (and say and believe) in their professional settings (Schön, 1983, 1987).

Concretizing. Ginny talked about her largely unarticulated knowledge about mentoring and was able through reflection with her colleagues to surface and think critically about her until then tacit understandings about mentoring (Schön, 1983):

Well, I think I kind of understood [mentoring] before, but I think being part of this group helped me figure out more specifically what to do. I kind of knew in theory, my job is to help this [TC] become a teacher [but] the group really helped circle in on discrete things to work on and to think about and to talk about. (Exit Interview, 3/20/2018, ll. 379-381, 386)

Reflecting with the other MTs turned a vague and general idea about *who* a mentor is – someone to “help this TC to become a teacher” – into concrete objects of what an MT *does* – “discreet things to work on”.

Eleanor similarly talked about the ways in which the group's reflections on the work of mentoring provided a space where mentoring as individual practice can become shared practice and provided an opportunity to begin to concretize what mentoring entails:

[Our group] made me think, a person shouldn't need to have done this 15 times, but we can benefit everybody by shared wisdom, or at least experience. [...] Now, we've got like a cadre of people who have this experience [of meeting and reflecting together], and together [we] can create a beginning roadmap [...]. (Exit Interview, 3/17/2018, ll. 67-78)

As the veteran MT of the group, the teacher who had “done this 15 times”, Eleanor said that no one should have to mentor as many times as she did in order to arrive at useful insights, or ideas that could serve as a guide the next time a TC arrives on an MT’s classroom door step. She was excited that the MTs who chose to participate in our group had a space to share their insights, and if not insights at least their experiences – regardless of years of mentoring experience – from which the group collectively could derive insights. The aspect of “togetherness” seemed of importance to Eleanor, again echoing the relief from loneliness some of the MTs described they felt doing mentoring work but potentially also emphasizing that there is power in numbers. In other words, now that a group of teachers in the building had experienced the benefits of meeting as a MT community to discuss their work of mentoring, creating a guide document – “a beginning roadmap” – possibly carried more credibility with their other colleagues in the building than had she tried to create such a document by herself, based on her 15-year long, but still lonely/ individual mentoring experience.

For Art, too, the group’s discussions brought mentoring closer to the front of his mind and helped him make concrete things that were not before:

[The group]’s made me think more about [mentoring]. Because in the past, I didn’t have any kind of strategy or anything, I just was basically reacting to questions or what I was seeing – which is mostly what I’m still doing but I’m starting to think a little bit more about what some of the broad categories of things are. (Interview, 1/12/2018, ll. 550-555)

Art’s participation in the group helped him to begin identifying categories within the work of mentoring to which he could attach practices he engaged in, rather than reacting to events or responding to questions without much forethought or system, something that Tereza

echoed when I asked her in what ways her participation in this group has been useful to her as a first-time mentor teacher:

[...] For me, again, because I didn't know what I was supposed to do, it gave me some insight on what I should be doing, what I'm doing well potentially, what I needed to work on [...] I have a better idea [of mentoring]. If I wasn't part of [this group], I would still have these magical ideas of what it should look like and could look like. It would probably still be incomplete because it's just me. Granted, I would probably still have talked to Charles and Ginny, but it still would have been incomplete, right? Then it's just them two, at least with more people then I get a better sense of all the possibilities or all the things I could do to be a better [mentor] teacher. (Exit Interview, 3/21/2018, ll. 2-4, 121-127)

Tereza touches on a number of important aspects the group helped her to recognize. The absence of her own MT when Tereza was a TC failed to provide her with a model for mentoring a TC. She had “magical ideas” about what mentoring could look like and she realized that those ideas were probably incomplete. Talking with her two closest friends and colleagues would have been helpful under any circumstance but it was the group’s conversations and discussions that provided her with ways of building a mental model of mentoring a TC that was more complete and, it appears, more realistic than the “magical ideas” she had before. Similar to Eleanor, Tereza found it advantageous to have a greater number of MTs to listen and talk to.

In summary, for Eleanor, Art, Ginny, and Tereza collectively reflecting on mentoring and its challenges appeared to have provided them ways to make work that felt to be abstract and general more concrete, and it turned nebulous expectations – help someone to become a teacher – into concrete and tangible actions that could help fulfill that expectation.

Meta-cognizing. All MTs articulated appreciation for and usefulness of the opportunities to reflect on their mentoring practice that our monthly meetings provided. A couple of them, Charles and Jérôme, were particularly expressive about how the group prompted them to think about teaching and learning overall and in more depth than they had before.

Charles declared numerous times over the course of the project that this group made him think about not only mentoring more intensely than ever before, but also about teaching and learning, and being a teacher overall. During my second interview with him, he said:

[T]he things that come up in our conversations [...] are helpful in a whole wide range of things in my own pedagogy [...] as a teacher [...] I know that in the past with my teacher candidates, I really have not had a lot of thinking around them as compared to this time. I would say, 10 times more thinking and conversations have happened this time....

[Conversations] with other teachers or with other people about this experience of my having a teacher candidate. (Interview, 1/16/2018, ll. 460-461, 537-543)

He portrayed the effects of the conversations as helpful and extending beyond mentoring into his teaching overall, and not only did he discuss mentoring in our group, but he expanded his discussions beyond the group to other, non-MTs in the building. During the exit interview, Charles' accounts revealed a deepened and changed understanding of the work of mentoring that placed the TC's learning front and center and identified the MT as the most significant actor in the TC's learning successes or failures:

Well, it's been helpful to think about how teacher candidates learn. I think without this process, I wouldn't have given it all the reflection that I do. I wouldn't have thought about all of the important issues that are part of being a pre-service teacher and then ultimately becoming a teacher. For me, I have a greater appreciation for all of the pieces and parts

that help a preservice teacher become a teacher. I have a new-found belief that the mentor teacher is a very important piece of that puzzle, if not the most important piece of the puzzle. Where before, I don't think I had really given it a lot of thought. I don't think I really thought about what's important and what's not important. I didn't really consider all of the aspects of becoming a teacher. I think back to my former interns and I don't think I had really considered the different parts of becoming a teacher. I just thought, "Well, I have a classroom and we're going to do the best I can. I have this person. We work together and now they're a teacher." (Exit interview, 3/ 22/2018, ll. 3-16)

Reflecting on the TC's learning processes and what it takes to learn to become a teacher left an indelible mark on Charles. Gaining a deeper understanding of the myriad pieces that are at play when learning to teach seemed to have made Charles appreciate more how challenging it is to learn to teach, how complex teaching is, and how big of a role mentoring plays in learning to teach.

Similarly, Jérôme found the intense reflection worthwhile. He enjoyed having had the opportunity to listen to other MTs' experiences:

I think it was also really helpful just to even step back and think about what a mentor teacher even does and have the meta process on top of being in the midst of it. I think it was particularly helpful for me this year where I felt like the skills that I had developed previously just weren't working in the same way. (Exit Interview, 3/19/2018, ll. 10-16)

It sounded as though having had the opportunity to consider mentoring from a broader perspective – “to step back” - is what made being part of the group unique and meaningful for Jérôme, especially this year when his understanding of mentoring and his repertoire of mentoring practices were challenged by a TC who was unlike any of his previous TCs.

In summary, both Charles and Jérôme appreciated the reflective processes they engaged in with the group and individually as ways to expand and deepen their understandings of teaching and learning.

Limitations to what could be accomplished in the MT R&I group

As has become evident in this chapter, continuous, collective reflection-on-action has proved to be meaningful and useful for the MTs in this group. It provided them a constructive way to address emotional, practical, and theoretical aspects of their mentoring work. However, the format of the MT R&I group ran up against a serious limitation, and that is its apparent inability to effectively catalyze change in mentoring practices even when mentors identified their current practice as only partially effective.

I asked the MTs during both the second and the exit interview whether they had felt compelled to change any aspect of their mentoring practice as a result of our group's discussions. I was especially interested to learn whether our meeting revolving around the absence of interactions between MTs and TCs in the presence of students (Chapter Five) catalyzed any changes in their mentoring practice. In other words, I was interested in learning if the MTs had changed (decreased, increased, expanded, added, eliminated etc.) any of the mentoring activities (see Chapter Five) but also whether they engaged in explicit mentoring of their TCs at different times as a result of our discussion. In general, I found that the MTs did not change their mentoring practice, and Art summed up the issue in his exit interview when he said:

I don't know if [the group] changed [my understanding of mentoring] as much as it made [mentoring] more present in my mind." (Exit Interview, 3/16/2018, l. 122).

None of the MTs reported that they changed their time allocations of when they engaged in explicit mentoring of their TCs (before and after school vs. before and after school as well as

during instructional time). My observations of the absence of interactions between the MTs and their TCs in the presence of their students generated a spirited and rich conversation about the demands on the MT as mentor and classroom teacher (see Chapter Five) but to my knowledge none of the MTs changed opportunities as a result of that conversation to change the opportunities for their TCs to learn teaching to include instructional time with the students.

Lortie's (1975) "apprenticeship of observation" might help us to understand why the MTs did not initiate such a change, despite the group's rich conversation and my (adjective?) questions about the absence of interactions. As Lortie explains it, the teaching profession is slow to respond to change because we – that is, everyone who has been a student – have observed teaching for years before we become teachers. By extension, we have observed people becoming teachers (when we were students and our teachers served as MTs), and what we have observed is that those TCs spent a lot of time observing – the students and the teacher. Thus, the model from which many of us seem to operate is that teaching is learned by observation. This model seems solidly woven into the fabric of education in the U.S., including the teacher education enterprise (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1985; Lortie, 1975), and the MTs and TCs themselves were no exception. For example, Art's TC Marek seemed like a "superstar" TC to his MT and the other MTs during the observational phase of the practicum (October through December). Marek built relationships with students and was constantly circulating the classroom so as to help students with math (see Chapter Five). However, it turned out that Marek struggled severely with learning to teach once he actually stood in front of a full class of students and had to teach all of them at once. Art's assessment of Marek's struggles revealed that the inaccurate assumption of "watching someone teach will suffice to know how to teach" seemed to have played a key role in Marek's failure:

[...] When he was teaching my lessons, he didn't [...] he didn't look at my files ahead of time enough. He didn't practice. He just watched me [teach the lesson] and then did it himself. He didn't look at the files before the school day started and walk through them and figure out what he was going to say, and [in hindsight] I would push him to do more of that. Maybe he would have had an easier time of it if he had done that. (Exit interview, 3/16/2018, ll. 139-143)

“He watched me teach the lesson and then did it himself.” This is, in essence, one side of the problem: The TC extending his apprenticeship of observation, in this case of his mentor teacher, following through on the belief that he can teach what he observed because the observation was sufficient. The other side of the problem is an apparent powerlessness many MTs seem to experience, knowing that something needs to change but apparently feeling unsure about how to go about mentoring differently (see Charles’ account in Chapter Five). Art realized “in hindsight” that he needed to push Marek to thinking lessons through before attempting to teach them.

Charles’ experience also illustrated this sense of frustration. Similar to Jérôme’s account in Chapter Five illustrating the tension between his identities as mentor and classroom teacher interlaced with the concern about undermining the TC, Charles described a situation from his classroom in a personal conversation he and I had two days after I had observed him and his TC Moira for the second time. Charles’ account is a vivid illustration of the same tension but as opposed to Jérôme who had decided to intervene, Charles did not intervene, and it left him feeling frustrated:

[Two days ago, when you were here] the students got mad! Moira had come by and told [one group] they’re doing a great job, and then I came by and asked them what they were

doing, and I had to tell them it was all wrong. So, of course, they're like, *What the hell Mr. A?!*, and they were mad at Moira. And I was not happy either, but I couldn't tell them that, but I understand they're frustrated. But I don't know what to do about it! How we [he and his TC] can do this better together so that these situations don't come up! (FN, 1/19/2018)¹¹

In other words, when Charles circulated through the classroom, he realized that Moira was teaching incorrectly, but he did not know how to resolve the situation other than telling the students they were wrong. He did not know how to address the problem with Moira in the moment. He was not happy how the situation unfolded but he also was fresh out of ideas as to what to do differently. In another instance, Charles made an attempt to coach his TC Moira in the presence of students, but he did not signal clearly to her that she was supposed to take up his question technique, so his stepping in as a way of modeling for her fell flat. He recounted the event to his colleagues during a group meeting: Moira was leading the class during an exploration of sounds and the physics of sound waves when Charles realized that she was talking at the students, rather than eliciting their ideas and experiences to build on. He decided to step in and model questioning for her. He asked students if they had had an ultrasound before or knew what it was:

Charles: [...] “Has anybody here had an ultrasound?”, oh, now we have a conversation about ultrasounds, and everybody has got, or a group of kids has an idea of, like, “Oh I had an ultrasound when I hurt my neck, my mom had an ultrasound when they had my brother”, blablabla whatever. And then the next class, no questions about the ultrasound! I'm like “Huh?!”

¹¹ I reported on this same quote in Chapter Five, but for a different purpose.

Tereza, Eleanor, Jérôme: Oooh! Yeah!!!

Charles: [Moira] didn't get it!

Maries: Right! [Moira] probably thought “Oh, Charles is doing his thing.” and not “Oh! I should be asking about the ultrasound!” (MT R&I group 5, 2/8/2018, ll. 362-372)

Charles inserted the question to the students about who may have had an ultrasound for two reasons: He wanted to elicit student thinking and make a connection between a physics phenomenon and the students' lived experiences, as well as model for Moira how to link physics and students' lived experiences. Yet, modeling for his TC did not result in his intended outcome (“And then next class, no questions about the ultrasound!”). According to Charles, he modeled for Moira how and what to ask the students to engage their thinking instead of, however unintended, giving away the answers. However, in light of him not explicitly signaling to Moira that this was a modeling moment, Moira did not integrate Charles's questions about ultra-sounds into her teaching the lesson to the following class. And his colleagues' responses indicate that they have had similar experiences.

Alternative Models to the “Apprenticeship of Observation”

As the findings have illustrated, and the example of Charles above illustrates, all six MTs experienced and articulated frustration or discontent over the course of the practicum with the familiar/ current mentoring model. They discussed the need for alternatives to an “apprenticeship of observation” model but seemed unsure if they could enact an alternative, and if so, what an alternative would look like. However, Ginny and Charles were especially engaged in imagining how mentoring could happen differently. In what follows I present two short vignettes of Ginny and Charles who proposed different models to mentor a TC, prompted by their desire to integrate

reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) – that is reflection during instructional time that translates into a new course of action – more thoroughly into their mentoring practice.

Ginny– “It was almost like I needed someone to give me the green light to do that”.

When I realized how frustrated the MTs were (and Ginny was indeed quite frustrated), I approached her with the idea of me coming in as *her* coach. Ginny was well aware of the dilemma that she and her MT colleagues seemed to face daily: How can a mentor teacher both teach students and the TC at the same time during instructional time? I explained to her and Emma what I had found through my observations of each MT-TC pair’s classrooms (see Chapter Five) and asked if they would be willing to indulge me in a little experiment. I proposed that I would visit them in their classroom for one day to assist Ginny in identifying learning opportunities for Emma in the presence of students that offered themselves as real-time mentoring opportunities. This way, rather than waiting until her prep period or the end of the day to engage in reflection with Emma after the events – when Emma would not have an opportunity to do things differently – right away MT and TC could adapt and modify the TC’s teaching and exchange. In summary, I offered to coach Ginny to engage in reflection-in-action with her TC.

In addition to reflecting together after class on the events that happened during class, I would coach Ginny in real time to identify specific moments during the lesson where the MT and TC can have a quick huddle to compare their observations of students and the TC’s actions. This huddle would take no more than a couple of minutes, allowing class to continue. This way, the MT could assess the TC’s actions and student learning in the room, as well as provide discrete, real-time feedback to the TC. This real-time feedback would allow the TC to immediately implement a suggestion or think about into what direction the class should go. Thinking quickly on one’s feet is a skill developed over time, so this would give the TC an opportunity to test this

skill, but with the MT still guiding her. Both responded enthusiastically to the idea, and on Friday 2/9/2018 I spent three class periods with Ginny and Emma to try out mentor-and-TC real-time coaching.

Ginny and Emma were a well-suited MT-TC pair try out this idea of real-time mentor and TC coaching because of their teaching schedule – 10th grade Biology back to back to back, i.e. they taught three iterations of the same lesson plan. During the first class I observed MT, TC, and the students and identified opportune moments for Ginny to provide Emma with real-time coaching (in form of a question, giving direction, making a suggestion, asking for brief explanation etc.). During the second class, I coached Ginny through the previously identified moments and she coached her TC in real-time. During the third class I observed Ginny and Emma engaging in real-time teaching and coaching and noticed that Ginny quickly identified more opportunities to coach Emma around different teaching moves in real-time.

This day became a focal point of reflection during Ginny's exit interview and, as I learned, it was a turning point in her mentoring practice. Basically, the day's experience led Ginny to release her concern about undermining Emma in front of her students and opened up space for the TC to learn and for the MT to interact with her TC in a productive and satisfying way:

That's key, I think, because after you came to my room and sort of helped me start to see some ways to help her in the moment, that became immediately more comfortable to do that. [...] It was so weird. It was almost like I needed someone to give me the green light to do that, which I don't know why I would need that. It's my classroom, and I can do whatever the heck I want, but for some reason, it didn't feel like I should be doing that, or I just didn't feel comfortable. It was never as slick as that day you were there [but] at least

it opened up a new possibility where I could just pull her to the side and have these quick conversations. One day made an impact, so I can only imagine if we had multiple days of that or repeated days of that, how impactful that could be. (Exit interview, 3/20/2018, ll. 307-321)

The example of the real-time coaching (reflection-in-action) of Ginny and her TC Emma illustrates something worthwhile of notice: It seemed as though the group was not able to catalyze different interactions between MT and TC but an outsider with a different perspective could. Ginny said that it was “so weird”, as if she needed permission (“I needed someone to give me the green light”) to utilize instructional time also as mentoring time, and it was an eye-opening experience that prompted her to continue interacting differently with her TC in the presence of students until the end of Emma’s practicum. During the exit interviews I asked each MT whether they would be open to having a mentor coach come in and support them in opening up their instructional time to also engage in mentoring their TCs, and all of them said they would be interested in having such a coach if it serves to make them better MTs and help their TCs to learn to teach.

Charles – “It really makes me wonder because there could be a different model”.

Charles articulated the need for a different mentoring model during his exit interview, and he began to develop the model right then and there, unravelling the assumption of the apprenticeship of observation and building from a different premise, namely the need for more frequent reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) with the TC and the students during instructional time. He expressed curiosity about the model that Ginny, Emma, and I tried out but concluded that an outsider-coach was not necessary in order to break the current mentoring model:

[...] It really makes me wonder because there could be a different model. [...] The model would be very transparent to the students and what that model is – because students know this is an **intern** teacher. This is not **the** teacher, and so the ... What could happen is a discussion between myself, the intern, and the students and [I could] say, “We’re practicing teaching, and we are going to stop the lesson right in the middle sometimes when Mr. A. [Charles] feels like we want to change – address something”, and me and the student teacher, we are going to talk, and then she’s going to continue on. We’ve never done that but that would be a higher level of guiding of this person to do the things that they want to do, and we never did that. [...] It’s fascinating that here we are at the very end thinking, “This is a damn good idea.” It actually rejuvenates my idea of what student teaching could be. It doesn’t have to include a mentor of the mentor. Not that that would be bad. That would only be good but that’s not a necessity of this. (Exit interview, 3/22/2018, ll. 252-268, 367-375; emphases by the speaker)

In this description, Charles addressed one of the challenges that were illustrated in Chapter Six: The TC’s ostensible authority as the teacher. Charles proposed rather than pretending the TC is already an expert teacher (based on years of observing teaching and teachers) to be transparent about everyone’s roles and purposes. Suggesting stopping class in order to think about what just happened, how it affected all the actors in the room, and considering the learning that is or is not happening and why is, quintessentially, reflection-in-action.

Charles went on developing his new model of mentoring and learning to teach, dismissing the first, observational phase of the practicum as ineffective. He would rather actively

involve the TC as well as the students in thinking about teaching and learning from the very beginning:

[...] Most teacher candidate programs start out with these observations. There's no reason that the mentor teacher couldn't implement something such as, "After 20 minutes of the class we're going to reflect for five minutes or two minutes on "How is this class is going for you? Are you learning stuff right now?" You have kids respond. "Yes." "No." "This works, this doesn't work, I really wondered about this," whatever.

Charles proposed to integrate meta-cognitive thinking into his regular teaching routine, were he to mentor a TC again, but not only for the TC's sake, also for the students' sake. He proposed the MT could model reflection-in-action with the students so as to establish it as a typical activity the teacher and the students engage in regularly, and by the time the TC would take on more teaching responsibility every actor in the classroom would be in the habit of thinking about their own and others' learning:

The mentor could model that process with the students. Then when it comes time for the teacher candidate to take over, then that process is part of the way that the classroom actually just works. [...] When you make people reflect on things, even for a short time, they probably learn more anyway because they're thinking about their own learning like, "Actually, I'm doing my calculus. I'm not actually engaged in the physics right now".

[...] Even if they don't articulate that, they certainly thought it because you stop the class with your [...] little bell or whatever. [...] You disrupted it. [...] I feel like it would be a good model for me regardless of whether or not I have a teacher candidate. I think it would be a good model for me. I think it would be super good for a teacher candidate. In that way, the teacher candidate can continuously get feedback from the students and the

teacher. When the teacher is teaching and the teacher candidate is sitting and watching early on in the year, and you have that “moment of thoughtfulness” the teacher candidate gets to say, “I can’t figure out why you did this.” The teacher candidate would be asked to say something each of these times. That way they have to reflect on “What the hell is going on in the classroom?” (ll. 517-546)

In Charles’ evolving thinking about a new model for the practicum, the “moment of thoughtfulness” could serve as a way to involve the TC early on in the actual teaching and learning in the classroom and make productive use of questions the TC might have (“I can’t figure out why you did this.”) that might otherwise go unspoken and unanswered.

Charles had expressed a lot of frustration over the course of the project about the lack of connection he felt to his TC, his TC’s TEP, and the apprenticeship-model of learning to teach overall. During one of our hallway conversations he said to me that he “was done with this thing, student teaching and being a mentor teacher” (Field notes, 3/6/2018). However, this conversation (exit interview) invigorated and motivated him to reconsider:

It’s fascinating that here we are at the very end thinking, “This is a damn good idea.” It actually rejuvenates my idea of what student teaching could be. It doesn’t have to include a mentor of the mentor. Not that that would be bad. That would only be good but that’s not a necessity of this. It’s more of a – what is the student teaching model? [...] (ll. 367-371)

The way Charles re-thought and re-considered what the practicum could look and be like demonstrated his rejuvenated interest in participating in teacher education, as well as his desire to develop a more satisfying model of teacher education, or the practicum in particular. He seemed to be in favor of alternatives to the current model since he has found it to cause him

much frustration and dissatisfaction, as has become evident in Chapter Five. Charles was imagining an alternative model that would involve the MT and TC more actively and create a relationship of mutual learning between MT, TC, and students from the beginning of the practicum. Rather than two distinct phases – phase one during which the TC observes and phase two during which the TC teaches – Charles’ model would compel MT and TC to engage with one another about teaching and learning across all aspects of the classroom context during the practicum.

These MTs felt the need for a different mentoring model that included instructional time as time during which the MT also could mentor. In addition, these MTs’ responses demonstrate there seems to be a need for someone from the outside with a different perspective about teaching and learning to come in an “rip open” what is considered the norm for mentoring in order for change to become allowable/ possible, regardless of whether it would include a coach to the mentor.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The goal of this project was to illuminate how MTs view themselves as teacher educators, how they engage in and make sense of their mentoring practice, the challenges they encounter and how they address those challenges.

In Chapters Five through Seven I investigated how the dual responsibilities MTs have to their students and TCs shaped their mentoring practice, and how collective reflection and inquiry afforded them ways to address this tension and others. In this concluding chapter, I step back and discuss these findings as a whole, in light of my conceptual framework. I begin by addressing the absence of interactions between the MTs and their TCs during instructional time and how the tensions MTs experienced cut short opportunities for reflection-in-action with the TC. This is followed by a discussion of the role reflection with the MT reflection and inquiry group played for the MTs, and why increased reflection-in-action could improve both MTs' as well as the TCs' learning. I then discuss the implications of these findings for the ways the teacher education enterprise imagines and supports the role of the MT. To this end, I discuss literature reporting on teacher education in other nations, which offers alternative models of mentoring. In addition, I report on alternative mentoring models suggested by two MTs from this project. This leads to a discussion about implications of the findings for TEPs who wish to support MTs in their mentoring work, including the design principles of a group such as the MT R&I group and potential challenges for making it a regular part of mentor teachers' work. Lastly, I address areas for future research that emerged from this project.

Managing Dual Identities and Practices in One Context

As I elaborated in Chapter Five, the MTs experienced a conflict in their identities as classroom teachers to their students and MTs to their TCs. Understanding teachers' identities as

practice-linked identities (Nasir & Hand, 2008) that exist in a nexus of multimembership (Wenger, 1998) helps us to understand why those demands on the MTs' identities created tensions for them.

There is a crucial link between identities and practices, and different contexts call for different practices, thus identities. However, an MT's classroom houses two contexts at once for the MT. It is the context in which she is expected to teach students, and the context in which she is expected to teach the TC. The duality of the context requires a dual set of practices. What became evident in Chapter Five is that MTs seem uncertain how to enact their dual practices at once in the context of the classroom, with their students as well as their TCs in it. The demands of both types of learners in the same context led to a conflict of identities for the MTs. The MTs enacted mentoring outside of instructional time in helpful and constructive ways; they engaged their TCs in what appeared to be productive practices in planning for and reflecting on their budding teaching practice. Yet, the majority of the time the MT and TC spend together is during classroom instruction, and mentoring during that time was nearly absent. There were instances in which MTs explicitly mentored their TCs in the presence of students, and those moments, as reported in Chapter Six, provided a window into the identity tension developing in real time, so to speak. When MTs decided to "step in", that is, coach the TC in the presence of students, MTs, on the whole, reported they felt that they undermined the TC's authority.

Just as Wenger (1998) described it, the multiple identities in the nexus of multimembership did not necessarily exist in harmony but were in tension with one another, and (at least on the days I observed) the tension led the MTs to mute the very identity – that of the MT – whose purpose is to facilitate the TCs' learning. Muting their MT identity in the presence of students seems to have been the MTs' attempt to accommodate or respond to the identity

tension they experienced: When they felt they could, some MTs physically stepped away from their students in order to activate their identity as MT. When they stepped in and acted as the MT, they felt they may have undermined the TC. Others did not act on their identity as MT in the presence of students at all and expressed frustration and dissatisfaction with the situation. More generally, as reported in Chapter Five, when MTs muted their *identities* as mentor teachers, they muted the very set of *practices* they needed in order to act in their role as mentor teacher. On the whole, there was minimal opportunity for the MT and the TC to reflect in action, in the context of the classroom. Instead, the MTs engaged in their classroom-teacher practices with the TCs observing.

Yet, as Lortie (1975) and Feiman-Nemser and Buchman (1985) pointed out, teaching cannot be learned from watching someone teach. In fact, recall in Chapter Five when Art pointed it out himself: Marek watched Art teach and thought he could teach the next class without having really delved into Art's lesson plans, without having thought through the plans. Marek taught what he saw but he did not understand how the pieces of the lesson were connected and why. Marek seemed to think that what he saw Art *doing* was sufficient in order to teach the lesson to the students, when in fact he needed access to Art's rationale –the purpose of the lesson, the sequence of content and activities, and how to assess student learning. None of these aspects that are paramount to good teaching are obvious to the untrained eye, that is the TC, by merely observing the mentor teacher. However, reflection-in-action and out-loud-thinking between Art the MT and Marek the TC could have supported Marek's growth in the moment of teaching students. For example, students' questions could have served as learning opportunities in real time (during instruction) for Marek's skills in assessing student learning, with Art facilitating

Marek's and the students' learning. Reflection-in-action could offer a way to tackle the tension between the MT's identities as teacher to students and teacher to the TC.

The Value of Reflection In- and On-Action

As reported in Chapter Seven, the process of collectively reflecting on and inquiring into their practice afforded the MTs opportunities that they typically do not have, and they described the many ways in which the MT R&I group was meaningful and useful to them. Their articulations strengthen the case for establishing such groups in schools where numerous teachers serve as MTs and could support one another in their mentoring work. Engaging in collective reflection-on-action resulted in more in-depth engagement with the work of mentoring as described by all MTs, and especially by both Art and Charles in Chapter Seven.

However, the group also revealed a potential shortcoming of reflection-on-action. Much like reflecting after the fact is necessary but not sufficient for the MT to teach the TC about teaching and learning, reflecting after the fact for the MTs was necessary (as they attested to in Chapter Seven) but not enough to solve the frustration they experienced during instructional time when their identities as classroom- and mentor teachers conflicted. It appears that the MTs also could have benefitted from increased reflection-in-action, that is, reflecting during instructional time so as to identify mentoring moments for their TCs in the presence of students. My coaching experiment with Ginny as reported in Chapter Seven represents an example of reflection-in-action for the MT that turned into opportunities for the MT to engage in reflection-in-action with her TC.

Of course, reflection-*in*-action cannot and should in no way replace reflection-*on*-action. Orienting the teachers' thinking before as well as after teaching, whether teaching students or TCs, is integral to good teaching, and the vignette about Charles and Moira clearly illustrated the

value of this type of reflection. The point here is that the lack of reflection *during* teaching seems to lead to many foregone opportunities for learning to teach and learning about teaching, for both the MT and the TC.

Considering This Case in Relation to Alternative Models of Teacher Education

In drawing conclusions from this project's findings, it is important to bear in mind its context. This study operated in a U.S. teacher education context that can be described as "typical", by which I mean the TCs went through "college recommending programs sponsored by a college or university after completing an undergraduate or post-graduate teacher education program of at least a year in length" (Zeichner & Bier, 2014, p. 21). Approximately two-thirds of teachers entering the U.S. public school system do so via a college-recommending route (Zeichner & Bier, 2014), and as illustrated in this dissertation, this route has its limitations vis-à-vis the MT's role as teacher educator as well as the TC's opportunities for learning to teach. The MTs in this project were recruited through four different TEPs, and as illustrated in Chapter Four, across programs the amount of communication between MTs and the TEPs, as well as support for the MTs from the TEPs was similarly minimal. The MTs did not have ongoing opportunities to connect with other MTs outside of this project's group, which is typical (Ambrosetti, 2012, 2014; Arnold, 2002; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008).

There are, however, examples – especially international – where pre-service teacher education is integrated more deeply into schools. Schools in Finland (Sahlberg, 2011, 2013), Singapore (Goodwin, 2013), and Canada (Levin, 2013) are considered learning organizations for students as well as for teachers (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2013), a stance that means teachers are differently prepared for and inducted into teaching as a learning profession. For example, in Finland MTs have to demonstrate first their competency to work with TCs and

closely collaborate in the TCs' education with the TEPs' university faculty before they are considered for the role of mentor and teacher educator (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Sahlberg, 2011, 2013).

International alternatives to the typical college-recommending TEPs in the U.S. convey that teachers, including MTs, spend more time of their daily working hours on planning, diagnosis, and evaluation of their teaching practice than their U.S. colleagues. In Finland (Sahlberg, 2011, 2013), Singapore (Goodwin, 2013), and Japan (Fernandez, Cannon, & Chokshi, 2003) teachers teach fewer hours over the course of the school day than their U.S. peers and spend time instead on analysis of and reflection on their teaching practice, individually as well as collaboratively (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2013). This structural difference translates into practical implications. Rather than tacking reflective work on to the end of the day and making it an option and addition to the work of teaching – as is often the case in the U.S. context, thus relegating it to a less important piece of the work of teaching – in the aforementioned countries, reflective work is integrated into the daily teaching practice and elevated to the vital part of doing the work of teaching that it is.

Considering the different structures of teacher education in those countries and knowing that the typical U.S. teacher induction route does not come with “built-in” space for professional learning for the MT, the question is what is doable within the U.S. context. An alternative context to the typical college-recommending route is that of Teacher Residency programs, in which TCs receive a stipend as well as free tuition to their TEP. In exchange, they commit to teaching for three to five years in the school district where they complete their internship. Over the course of their year-long induction, the MT plays a critical role as their teacher educator in close and equal collaboration with the university-based teacher educators Zeichner (2010)

described Teacher Residencies as an example of “a hybrid” or “third space” in which “an equal and more dialectical relationship between academic and practitioner knowledge in support of student teacher learning” exists (p. 92). A third or hybrid space strives for “integration of what are often seen as competing discourses in new ways—an either/or perspective is transformed into a both/also point of view” (p. 92). Practitioner and academic knowledge are fused into complementary knowledge about learning to teach – both integral kinds of knowledge – and representatives of both the school and the university collaborate in the education of the TC. The structure of Teacher Residency programs dedicates more time and weight to the MTs involvement in the teaching of the TC. In other words, the MT’s need for reflection and professional learning in the role of the MT is treated as integral to the TC’s *and* MT’s learning.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs (TEPs)

Still, within the typical, U.S. college-recommending context, it is challenging to meet the MT’s need for reflection and professional learning, and TEPs need to understand the challenges MTs face in their mentoring work, in particular how the tensions between their identities shape their mentoring practice. Alternatives to the current mentoring model that respond to the challenges and support the MTs are called for.

In Chapter Seven, I described how Ginny and Charles offered two different models for mentoring that have the potential to function *within* the current constraints most MTs have to operate in. Both have the potential to allow MTs to accommodate their practice-linked identities as teachers of students as well as teachers of their TCs in the presence of students.

In Ginny’s case, I functioned as a mentor-coach and our work together gave her, as she described it, permission to act in her mentoring role with students and TC in the classroom at once. That is to say, I supported Ginny in identifying moments during instructional time that

offered themselves as opportunities for her to mentor her TC Emma right then and there. My role as coach to the mentor seemed to have lessened or taken away the effect of ‘undermining’ the TC when Ginny stepped in while Emma was teaching.

Charles’ alternative mentoring-model did not require an outside mentor-coach. It reframed the role of the MT during instructional time as a coach for the TC to engage in ongoing reflection through asking questions about student learning and TC learning in the presence of students. In Charles’ model, the MT would not only demonstrate teaching practices in the presence of students, but also engage in and demonstrate reflection-in-action during which the TC would be an active participant. The TC would be asked to periodically articulate her questions and sense-making of her own as well as the students’ learning in relation to the teaching she observes.

While Ginny found the coaching of her as the mentor useful and expressed excitement about it, it comes with challenges. Who could/should be the coach for the MT? Whose responsibility is the provision of such a mentor-coach – the school’s, the TEP’s, the or the school district office’s? What circumstances would need to be in place for the MT and her coach to build a strong, trusting relationship? Ginny having trusted me seems to have been a vital prerequisite to the success of our coaching experiment. There are numerous questions that need to be clearly answered before such a model could be implemented. However, both Charles’ and Ginny’s models offer TEPs new ways to imagine what the practicum could be like, namely a time of less observation and more active involvement of both the MT and TC with one another, from the beginning to the end of the practicum.

As Chapter Seven also demonstrated, the MTs are concerned with the expectations the TEPs communicated, and the ways in which those expectations were communicated. It would be

judicious of TEPs to learn from their MTs what they expect of the TEPs in terms of partnership and support for the duration of the practicum. TEPs could ask MTs how they could more effectively communicate with one another. Art's case is a helpful illustration of this need. His TC Marek wanted to drop out of his program, and Art felt he received useful advice from his colleagues in the MT R&I group. It is unclear, however, whether the TEP tried to partner with Art in counseling Marek in his decision-making process. Considering the heft of the MT's role in the TC's learning to teach and the amount of time MT and TC spent together every day, collaboration between the MT and the TEP would be to the benefit of all three.

Additionally, Chapter Seven revealed the usefulness of the MT R&I group to the MTs. It would be important for TEPs to enter into a partnership with MTs to learn what the MTs discuss in order to provide them with appropriate support and to gain a more complete understanding how the ebbs and flows of the school calendar creates different challenges at different times. In other words, a link would need to be established between the group and the TEPs.

Successfully introducing and establishing a professional learning community for MTs to a school with already set structures is built on a number of assumptions and premises. Firstly, the school's culture would need to be one of reflection and self-inquiry. In the case of Luddington High School, the teachers were comfortable and familiar with the expectation and practice of reflection. Luddington's school culture supported the establishment of the MT R&I group. Secondly, the role of the facilitator would need to be occupied by a non-evaluator. It needs to be someone the MTs can trust will not judge or evaluate them, and so it could not be an administrator because the successful facilitation of the group depends on the facilitator's positional power in relation to the group's members. If an administrator, for example the principal, were to facilitate the group, the members' trust in facilitation grounded in learning and

inquiry is potentially unattainable. This trust, however, is critical to the members' willingness to openly discuss their practice – successes as well as failures – and to approach their practice from an inquiry stance. A fellow MT with the ability to zoom into to the details of the challenges as well as situating the challenges in the larger context of the of the practicum and the teacher education enterprise would be the wiser choice as facilitator of such a group. Lastly, the importance of this kind of professional learning would merit an extra planning period dedicated to the MT as facilitator. Having time to reflect on the group's meeting afterwards, and pulling questions and observations from the meeting in preparation for the next meeting is crucial to identifying the topics, concerns, question, and collective problem solving for this kind of professional learning community.

Future Research

A number of questions for more research have emerged from the findings of this project. If TEPs took up the implications I articulated above, it would be critical to study the ways in which mentoring “inside the action” (Schwille, 2008) came to bear on this re-imagined kind of teacher education. What would the effect(s) be on the TC's developing teaching practice? In what ways would mentoring during instructional time shape the MTs' and the TEPs' vision of high-quality teaching? How would this type of mentoring affect MTs' and TEPs' abilities to name and examine practice? How would mentoring as ongoing engagement in reflection-in-action inform the MTs' developing mentoring practice, as well as their teaching practice? Charles indicated that mentoring and engaging in reflection on mentoring interacted with this thinking and enactment of his teaching practice overall.

To approach the practicum with such a re-imagined role for the MT would require TEPs to invest deeply in partnership with MTs, and an important question to ask for such a partnership

is what TEPs would do with the feedback from MTs engaged in ongoing reflection-on and in-action. How would TEPs respond to the MTs' learning needs and their expectations of the TEPs and the practicum?

Considering the vital role MTs play in the teacher education enterprise, it is of paramount importance that we understand better what the work of mentoring a TC entails for the MT. The increasing emphasis on the practicum makes it even more urgent for university-based teacher educators to understand the complexity of mentoring in the context of school classrooms and the challenges MTs encounter in their mentoring work.

Epilogue

One year after the conclusion of this dissertation project, I am excited to report that some members of the MT R&I group decided to continue the work from our time together.

Eleanor decided to take a break from mentoring a TC for the following school year, and instead stepped in as the facilitator of the MT R&I group. Together with other group members Eleanor successfully convinced Luddington's principal that mentoring is critical professional learning and should be treated as such. As a result, MTs could join the MT R&I group as their Professional Learning Community of choice. While the members of the group this year are all different from the ones in this project, the work that happened in this project's group served as blueprint for the new group. Eleanor and Charles reported to me that integration of the TC via open and frequent reflection-in-action together with the MT and the students is growing as a practice of the MTs who make up the new group.

Charles took on facilitation of a reflection and inquiry group for the TCs who joined Luddington for the duration of their practicum, and he told me with excitement that it is fascinating to engage in reflection-on-action with the TCs.

I continue to stay in touch with the MTs from this research project and follow their explorations and inquiries with great curiosity and joy.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Protocols – MT Interviews

Interview Protocol #1 – Mentor teacher’s history and current perception of role and responsibilities

Preamble: *I used to be a high school teacher and often was the unofficial mentor to our new teachers. I learned a lot about myself as a teacher that way, and my experiences made me wonder how teachers actually become mentor teachers. Now I’m a doctoral student and have developed research ideas about mentor teachers. The purpose of this interview is for me to learn about your history as a mentor teacher, and to that end it’d be great if you could talk about your experiences being mentored as a student teacher, as well as about your experiences mentoring a student teacher.*

Everything you say during this interview is and remains confidential. You are free to skip questions and to stop the interview and its recording at any time.

Let’s start with your experience as a student teacher. Please talk to me about your experiences **having had** a mentor teacher during your student teaching.

1. Tell me about your own student teaching experience. What was it like?
2. In what ways did you feel prepared to step into the classroom as the teacher of record after you completed your student teaching?
3. In what ways has your own student teaching experience helped to prepare you for your role as mentor teacher?
4. In your view, what are the hallmarks of a successful student teaching experience? [Probe: Successful for you as the mentor and successful for your student teacher?]

5. How would you describe the roles of the mentor teacher and the student teacher and their relationship in a successful student teaching experience?
6. What was your first time mentoring a TC like? Tell me about that experience. [Listen and probe for challenges, conflict of interest between ensuring the *student teacher's* successful learning and ensuring the *students'* successful learning.]
7. In your view, what are you [in your role as the mentor teacher] responsible the teacher candidate learns while s/he with you? [Probe: Is that same or different from the TEP's?]
8. Please take a moment to think about how you would define what a mentor teacher is and what a mentor teacher does. Please write the definition down. [Provide paper and writing utensil for participant.]

Interview Protocol #2 – Mentor teacher’s assessment of practicum and involvement in Mentor Teacher Critical Friends Group (CFG).

Preamble: *We have spent a few times meeting in our CFG now, and the purpose of today’s interview is to learn from you what it has been like for you to be part of this CFG. I’m interested in hearing more about two aspects specifically: One is what your assessment is of the practicum/internship/student teaching time thus far, and the other has to do with your involvement in the mentor teacher CFG.*

Everything you say during this interview is and remains confidential. You are free to skip questions and to stop the interview and its recording at any time.

1. Tell me a bit about how the semester has been so far, mentoring your teacher candidate. [Probe and listen for peak experiences, i.e. particularly successful and unsuccessful moments.]
2. How has the Mentor Teacher CFG contributed to your thinking about what you need to know and understand in order to mentor your TC well? [Listen and probe for substance and process. Listen and probe for language regarding pedagogy and philosophy about teaching TC to teach.]
3. In what ways has it been challenging to be part of the CFG? What would need to change for it to be meaningful and useful to you? [Probe for distinctions between technical challenges, such as limited time, and adaptive challenges.]

The next question is going to loop back to our first interview when I asked you to define in your words what a mentor teacher is. I brought your definition back today because I'd like to know if anything has changed in your understanding since then. I'll give a few minutes to read it. Then I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about it and will ask you to add or edit your original definition.

4. At the end of the first interview I asked you to define “mentor teacher”. I have your definition here, and I would like you to tell me in what ways your definition or understanding has changed or deepened since then. [Probe: Why did it change or deepen? What was/is the impetus for the change/deepening? If nothing changed, why do you think nothing changed?]

5. In what ways have the CFG meetings contributed to your understanding of being a mentor teacher? [Probe: Is it evolving? Why do you think that is?]

Interview Protocol #3 – Mentor teacher’s look back and reflection on participation in Mentor Teacher CFG and its effects.

Preamble: *This is our closing interview, and its purpose is to take stock of your experience with the CFG. I’m interested in learning from you in what ways you found your participation in the CFG useful and/or challenging, and how it has or has not contributed to your understanding of your mentor teacher role.*

Everything you say during this interview is and remains confidential. You are free to skip questions and to stop the interview and its recording at any time.

1. In what ways was the CFG supportive in your work with your TC? In what ways was it challenging?
2. In what ways has the CFG changed how you understand who you are as a mentor teacher and what you do in that role?
3. a. For you, when you hear the word “teacher educator”, what comes to mind?
b. In what ways do you view yourself as a teacher educator? [Listen for distinctions made between “mentor teacher” and “teacher educator” and other distinctions the MT might make.]
4. What are your recommendations/what is your advice for mentor teachers who are about to go into mentoring a TC for the first time? [Probe: Are there certain dispositions that you think make it easier or more difficult to be a mentor to a TC? Are there ways in which a teacher can or should prepare to step into the mentoring role?]
5. If you could participate in a mentor teacher CFG again, how could the CFG be structured differently to better support you as a mentor teacher?

The next question is going to loop back to our first and second interview when I asked you to define in your words what a mentor teacher is. I brought your definition back today because I’d

like to know if anything has changed in your understanding since then. I'll give a few minutes to read it. Please take as much time as you want to re-work your definition of mentor teacher in any way you deem necessary and important.

6. Please talk to me about the changes you made to your definition or didn't make, and why or why not you edited it.

Appendix B – Interview Protocols – TC Interviews

Interview w/ Teacher Candidates @ Ludington High School

Preamble: Thank you for your time. As you know, I'm in the midst of data collection for my dissertation project about the work of mentor teachers. So that I can paint as full a picture of the context in which my participants operate as MTs as possible, I would like to ask you a few questions about your experience as the teacher candidate in the care of your MT.

Everything you say during this interview is and remains confidential. You are free to not answer questions and to ask me to stop the interview and its recording at any time.

1. How did your placement with your mentor teacher come about? [probe for TEP involvement in finding/determining placement]
2. What did you expect the practicum would be like?
3. In what ways have your expectations been met, or not been met?
4. How would you describe the relationship with your MT? [probe for hierarchy – is the MT the boss of the TC?]
5. What have you learned from your MT about becoming a teacher? [Probe for specific examples of support or challenges from MT. Listen and probe for substance and process.]
6. How do you feel about your MT leaving the room while you are teaching? [Probe: In what ways is it helpful or unhelpful?]

Appendix C – Interview Protocol – Principal Interview

Interview w/ principal @ Ludington High School on Thursday 1/4/2018

Preamble: Thank you for your time. As you know, I'm in the midst of data collection for my dissertation project about the work of mentor teachers. So that I can paint as full a picture of the context in which my participants operate as MTs, I would like to ask you a few questions about the history of mentoring TCs at your school and about the philosophy you have and your staff has about mentoring teacher candidates.

1. **Briefly**, just to create a bit of context, what is the school's history of mentoring TCs? [for how many years? how many TCs are here on average every school year? what programs do the TCs come from?]
2. To what extent is the placement of TCs at your school something desirable? [Or are they placed here because it's always been that way?]
3. To what extent is the school as a whole, that is all educators in the building, involved in mentoring the TCs?
4. In what ways are you involved in the mentoring of the TCs?
5. How are MTs selected and by whom?