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Footprints of Practice-Based Teacher Education:
Understanding Teachers' Development Through Practice

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Abstract

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This is a qualitative, multisite case study that seeks to understand the impact of a practice-based reading course on four teachers' development. This study traces teachers' development across three settings (practice-based coursework, student teaching, and first years of teaching). Findings from this study show that teachers developed conceptual understandings and pedagogical tools for teaching reading through mediated opportunities working with elementary-aged students in coursework. Teachers re-contextualized these understandings during their student teaching experiences and drew upon these understandings and pedagogical tools during their first years of teaching. Findings add to the growing body of research around university practice-based teacher education and teacher development.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

The “two-worlds pitfall” (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985) has been frequently cited as one of the central problems with learning to teach. In the traditional structure of university-based teacher education programs, teacher candidates complete the majority of their coursework at the university and finish their university-based program with a practicum experience in a school setting. Scholars and researchers have suggested several reasons why this structure is problematic. Among the many reasons, most pertinent to this paper are three: First, the notion these two worlds are driven by different goals, norms, and visions of teaching (Smagorinsky, Grossman & Valencia, 1999). As teacher candidates transition across settings, they are forced to negotiate relationships and approaches to instruction in their field placements that oftentimes prevents them from developing the knowledge that they learned in coursework (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Martin et al., 2011; Nesmer & Buchmann, 1985; Valencia, Martin, Place & Grossman, 2009). Second, teacher candidates may not have a clear frame of reference (Kennedy, 1999) for how teacher knowledge and ideas learned in coursework translate into action. Many times teaching ideas and principals taught in teacher education programs are not practiced in the field, thus the candidates do not have opportunities to try out these learned practices (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Kennedy, 1999). Last, some scholars have questioned the entire coursework to fieldwork structure, arguing that such structure suggests that colleges and universities maintain hegemony over the construction and dissemination of knowledge for teaching in teacher education (Zeichner, Payne & Brayko, 2012).

Given these conceptual and structural problems, some scholars and teacher educators advocate for *practice-based teacher education* (PBTE), a reform to university-based coursework

that in many ways aims to solve the “two-worlds pitfall.” Zeichner (2012) describes PBTE as follows:

[Methods courses are] taught in local public schools where instructors strategically attempt to connect academic and school-based expertise. For example, in addition to the usual practice of professors providing teacher candidates with the theoretical basis for particular teaching strategies and showing them video examples of teachers using these practices, teacher candidates also have opportunities in these courses to observe the professor or a classroom teacher using the teaching strategy with students, to plan and rehearse lessons using these strategies that they then go and teach with students, and to debrief their teaching with their peers, and with the professor and teachers in the school.

(p. 15)

The literature concerning PBTE is full of arguments supporting this pedagogical approach. One of the principle arguments of PBTE is that teacher candidates are able to see, experience, and teach concepts learned in coursework while in coursework. Kennedy (1999) writes that by providing opportunities for *practice* within coursework, teacher candidates will have a “frame of reference” (Kennedy, 1999) of how to enact ideas presented in coursework. Such opportunities for candidates to learn from and through practice could enable them to try out these practices in student teaching (Ball & Cohen, 1999) and eventually in their own professional practice.

Another argument for PBTE coursework is that teacher candidates receive content specific feedback from instructors and peers, helping them to develop pedagogical content knowledge in particular contexts (Valencia, Donat & Danielson, in progress).

Over the course of the last 16 years, scholars and researchers have conceptualized what PBTE entails (e.g., Ball & Cohen, 1999; Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Grossman et al., 2009;

Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; McDonald, Kazemi & Kavanagh, 2013). These conceptualizations include *how* to incorporate practice in coursework, including Grossman et al.'s (2009) *A framework for the teaching of practice* and McDonald et al.'s (2013) *the learning cycle*. Scholars and teacher educators have also conceptualized *what* should be taught by thinking generally about *core practices* (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009) and *high-leverage practices* (Ball, Sleep, Boerst, & Bass, 2009; Hatch & Grossman, 2009). Despite the extensive conceptual basis for PBTE, there has been little empirical research to investigate the nature and impact of the approach. The empirical evidence that exists tends to focus on the learning that occurs within the course itself. For example, Lampert et al. (2013) determined that rehearsals during PBTE mathematical courses provided opportunities for teacher candidates to “try on” ambitious practices for teaching, thus providing them with new frames of reference for teaching. Smith and Place's (2011) research on their PBTE literacy course demonstrated that teacher candidates were motivated by their work with students and had the opportunities to develop pedagogical content knowledge through their work with students in the course. Studies like these are important to understanding the nature of teacher learning that take place in practice-based coursework. What remains to be seen is if such coursework helps to bridge the two worlds of teacher education and how it might impact teacher candidates' understandings and practices beyond their teacher education programs.

Research Questions

This study consists of three parts. In the first part of this study, I examined teacher candidate learning during a PBTE reading course. Specifically, my questions were:

1. What were the participants' understandings of reading concepts and pedagogical tools experienced in a practice-based reading course? What experiences contribute to these understandings?

In the second and third parts of this study, I examined the teacher candidates' practices and understandings of teaching reading during their student teaching placements and during their first two years of teaching. Specifically, my research questions were:

2. How do teachers who have experienced a practice-based reading course engage and think about teaching reading in the student teaching context? How does a PBTE course focused on reading influence teachers' thinking and practices during the student teaching experience?
3. How do teachers who have experienced a practice-based reading course and student teaching think about and enact these reading concepts and pedagogical tools in the context of their first teaching job? How do the understandings and the practices for teaching reading change over time?

Literature Review

University-Based Teacher Education

As a practice-based reading course is a central focus of this dissertation, it is important to contextualize the field of university-based teacher education and the movement towards practice-based teacher education. Zeichner (2012) notes that the concept of PBTE is not a new idea. He writes that the “thinking and logic involved in studying the activities and practices in which teachers engage, as the basis for teacher education curriculum, is a strategy that has been used in some form for many years” (p. 376). Opportunities to learn about teaching through practice can be traced back to the 19th century. Formalized teacher education in the U.S. began with the establishment of *Normal Schools*, which premised that teachers needed to know content and the “art of teaching,” the “governance of teaching” (management, morality, order), and they needed to have opportunities to observe and practice good teaching (Fraser, 2007, p. 54). Teacher preparation consisted of 1-2 years of regular work with teachers in classrooms, accompanied by seminars in a school setting (Lampert, 2009). Opportunities to practice teaching in apprenticeship and laboratory settings were thus a crucial part of the Normal School’s curriculum.

Dewey (1904/1965) wrote extensively about the theoretical and practical preparation of teachers during the age of the Normal School. In his paper, *The Relation of Theory to Practice in Education* (1904/1965), Dewey writes that, “adequate professional instruction of teachers is not exclusively theoretical, but involves a certain amount of practical work” (p. 144). He outlines two types of practical work: 1) apprenticeship work, which provides opportunities for novices to develop the practical skills needed to do the job smoothly on a daily basis and 2) laboratory

work, which provides opportunities for novices to experiment with new practices and untested proposals. Each type of practical work serves a different purpose, yet Dewey (1904/1965) advocates for both to prepare teachers for the immediate aspects of their work (through apprenticeship work) and the ultimate aim of intellectual methods and good workmanship (through laboratory work).

In the 1920s, many normal schools became a part of state universities and colleges. This transition was in part due to the demand for a more elevated and credible status of teaching as a profession (Larabee, 2004). Lampert (2009) writes that at this point in time, teacher preparation curriculum combined theory and content knowledge with some practical experience. Clifford and Guthrie (1988), as cited in Lampert (2009), note that the disappearance of the normal school took away the autonomous professional school dedicated to the teaching profession and the dominating concern with practical pedagogy. Thus, the rise of the university teacher education program privileged theoretical knowledge about teaching while marginalizing practical opportunities to learn how to teach (Lampert, 2009).

The rise of university-based teacher education promoted the idea that teachers develop expertise by applying theories or principles to their practice (Kennedy, 1987). Zeichner (2010) writes that in the “historically dominant ‘application of theory’ model of pre-service teacher education in the U.S., prospective teachers are supposed to learn theories at the university and then go to schools to practice or apply what they learned on campus” (p. 483). Since the 1960s, this approach to teacher education has dominated the preparation of teachers, with the exception of alternative pathways to education that certify a small portion of the teacher force each year.

Over the last 20 years, traditional ideas about how teachers learn have been called into question and scholars have continued to examine the ultimate aim of teacher preparation.

Previous research has shown the difficulties that novices face in developing expertise through the application of theory into practice models (e.g., Feinman & Buchmann, 1987). Research has also discredited the notions that teachers develop expertise through the knowledge of concrete skills (for a fuller description see Kennedy, 1987). Contemporary scholars now write that the aim of teacher education is to develop “thoughtfully adaptive” (Duffy, 2002) teachers and prepare them for “adaptive expertise” (Hammerness et al., 2005; Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). Given these recent goals for teacher education, there are three problems, outlined by Hammerness et al. (2005), that university-based teacher education should address: 1) the problem of apprenticeship of observation 2) the problem of enactment 3) the problem of complexity. These problems, described below, are essential to understanding the genesis of PBTE.

Apprenticeship of observation: The first problem refers to what Lortie (1975) calls the problem of “apprenticeship of observation.” This term refers to a prospective teacher’s preconception of what it means to be a teacher based on his/her own K-12 in-school experiences as a student. Although these years of observation offer pre-service teachers insight into some aspects of teaching, they can also result in misconceptions about what teaching actually entails. Lortie (as cited in Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 62) highlights some of the fallacies that arise from these types of observations:

Students do not receive invitations to watch the teacher’s performance through the wings: they are not privy to the teacher’s private intentions and personal reflections on classroom events. Students rarely participate in selecting goals, making preparations or postmortem analysis. Thus they are not pressed to place the teacher’s actions in a pedagogically oriented framework. (p. 62)

This limited vantage point of teaching can cause pre-service teachers to think that teaching is “easy” and “produces a tendency to imitate the most easily observed aspects of teaching” (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 368).

Apprenticeships of observation are not only misleading, but they also are problematic when trying to implement educational reform. Kennedy (1999) refers to the apprenticeship of observation as the invisible element of the “received wisdom” model of teacher learning. In regards to received wisdom, she writes,

According to received wisdom, teaching is fundamentally a self-evident practice. What to teach should be obvious if you know your subject, and what to do at any given moment should be obvious from the situation. Therefore learning to teach consists of two main parts: you learn the subject you intend to teach through college-level library arts courses, and you refine your technique and personal style through experience in your own classroom. (Kennedy, 1999, p. 54)

Kennedy notes that the received wisdom approach provides teachers with a frame of reference (i.e., all their apprenticeship of observation years) for deciding what is appropriate and inappropriate classroom behavior. This becomes problematic when teachers are expected to learn a version of practice that they did not experience themselves as students. Specifically, for reforms in teaching to be implemented, teachers need to “shift their thinking so that they have different ideas about what they should be trying to accomplish, interpret classroom situations differently, and generate different ideas about how they might respond to these situations” (p. 56). If teachers are drawing from their apprenticeships of observations in order to teach, then the implementation of reform will be difficult.

Similarly, Ball and Cohen (1999) write that in order for teacher candidates to enact the educational reforms that they learn about in their preparation programs, they would need to overcome the apprenticeship of observation and the conservative lessons that they learn in the field. To do this, they write that teacher education would have to become an agent for “professional countersocialization.” They write,

Unless initial teacher education can prepare beginning teachers to learn to do much more thoughtful and challenging work, and unless ways can be found, through professional development to help teacher sustain such work, traditional instruction is likely to persist in frustrating educational reform, and reformers’ visions are likely to continue not to permeate practice broadly or deeply. (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 6)

The problem of enactment. The second problem in learning to teach that Hammerness et al. (2005) outline is the problem of enactment (Kennedy, 1999). This problem asserts that teachers will not be able to enact what they have learned at the university if their coursework does not provide a clear frame of reference in which teacher candidates learn about and do the work of a teacher. Kennedy (1999) writes,

Without a clear sense of how teachers’ ideals translate into classroom behaviors, with multiple ideas influencing their interpretation of classroom situations, with the vagaries of the language of classroom ideals, these teachers’ interpretations of classroom situations and their responses to them, will depend heavily on frame of reference we may never see and they may never be aware of. (p. 70)

Kennedy (1999) outlines three parts to this problem. The first part of this problem is that the language that teacher educators use to talk about their ideas can be used in the context of many

different frames of reference—as a result novice teachers may not fully understand the intent of teacher educators when learning about teaching ideas. The second part of the problem is that even within a particular frame of reference, most ideas are associated with a wide range of behaviors. Kennedy (1999) provides the example: “If you were to describe yourself as generous, I might envision any number of behaviors you might engage in. We could both be wrong in our behavioral translation of one another’s descriptions. So, too, with teaching, in which terms like ownership and caring can have numerous legitimate behavioral translation” (p. 71). Thus, the lack of shared language and shared understanding of that language leads to the problem of enactment. The problem of enactment occurs when novice teachers and university faculty draw upon different frames of references when they talk about teaching. Consequently, Kennedy writes that teacher education must strive to give teachers a new frame of reference and the behavioral enactments that accompany these ideas.

The problem of complexity. A final problem in learning to teach that Hammerness et al. (2005) outline is the problem of complexity. The work of teaching is challenging because teachers often need to solve multiple problems with one decision made in the moment of teaching. Lampert (2001) writes,

One reason that teaching is a complex practice is that many of the problems a teacher must address to get students to learn occur simultaneously, not one after another. Because of this simultaneity, several different problems must be addressed in a single action. And a teacher’s actions are not taken independently; they are interactions with students, individually and as a group. A teacher acts in different social arrangements in the same time frame. A teacher also acts in different time frames at different levels of ideas with individuals, groups, and the class to make each lesson coherent, link one to another, and

to cover a curriculum over the course of a year. Problems exist across the social, temporal, and intellectual domains, and often the actions that need to be taken to solve problems are in different domains. (p. 2)

Several other researchers have written similarly about this problem of complexity in teaching. Lampert (1985) writes of her own experiences in trying to solve problems of practice while teaching and refers the role of the teacher as a “dilemma manager.” Hammerness et al. (2005) write that teacher education must help prospective teachers learn to think systematically about this type of complexity.

A Possible Solution: Practice-Based Teacher Education

Traditional ideas about what teachers need to know and traditional theories about how they acquire this knowledge have failed to solve the aforementioned problems in teacher education. Increasingly, scholars have looked to *practice* as the vehicle for the addressing these problems (e.g., Ball & Cohen, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Shulman, 1998), with the ultimate goal of preparing thoughtfully adaptive teachers (Duffy, 2002). This emphasis on practice highlights that the idea that knowledge and enactment is situated in the complex world of practice, and therefore it must be learned in practice (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

In the subsequent parts, I review the literature around PBTE. First, I examine the different conceptions of “practice” and proposed frameworks for implementing practice in coursework. Next, I look at the debates around what types of practice to include in practice-based coursework.

Conceptions of “practice” and how to incorporate it? The term *practice-based teacher education* was first used in Ball and Cohen’s (1999) article, *Developing Practice, Developing*

Practitioners. In this first iteration of trying to conceptualize PBTE, Ball and Cohen (1999) advocate for a “centered in practice” approach that focuses teacher education learning around documentations of practice, such as student work and video clips of teaching and student discussions. It is interesting to note that their 1999 definition of “centered in practice” does not necessarily imply situations in school classrooms in real time. They write,

Although the bustle of immediacy lends authenticity, it also interferes with opportunities to learn. Being situated in a classroom restricts attention to the sort of teaching underway in that particular class. Further, being so situated confines the learning to minute-to-minute practice. Better opportunities can be created by using strategic documentation of practice. (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 14).

Ball and Cohen (1999) note that by centering novice teachers’ attention around a shared problem or document of practice, termed pedagogies of investigation, teacher candidates are grounded with a shared referent, a common vocabulary, and strong norms of analysis. This shared frame of reference addresses the problem of apprenticeship of observation by enabling candidates and instructors to talk about a shared vision of practice.

Despite the nod to the importance of having a shared language in teacher education, Ball and Cohen’s (1999) vision of teacher education centered in practice still did not fully address the problem of enactment. Even with the incorporation of pedagogies of investigation, Grossman and McDonald (2008) point out that “university educators are still leaving the development of pedagogical skill almost entirely to the field experiences, the component over which we have the least control” (Grossman & McDonald, 2008, p. 189).

Consequently, attention in the literature around PBTE began to shift away from pedagogies of investigation to pedagogies of enactment. Such pedagogies of enactment consist

of opportunities for novices to engage in “*deliberate practice*” (Ericsson, Krampe & Romer, 1993; Grossman & McDonald, 2008). Ericsson et al. (1993) write that deliberate practice allows for “repeated experiences in which the individual can attend to the critical aspects of the situation and incrementally improve her or his performance in response to knowledge of results, feedback or both from a teacher” (as cited through Lampert, 2009, p. 29).

This idea of deliberate practice represents what Grossman and her colleagues term “approximations of practice” (Grossman et al., 2009). This term emerged from Grossman et al.’s (2008) study of how people are prepared for professional practice in the clergy, teaching, and clinical psychology. Findings from this study demonstrate that in all preparation programs, educators expose their students to representations, decompositions, and approximations of practice. Like Ericsson et al.’s (1993) idea of “deliberate practice,” approximations of practice are purposively planned opportunities for novices to engage in professional practice. Grossman et al. (2008) write,

In part, approximations are designed to focus students’ attention on key aspects of the practice that may be difficult for novices but almost second nature to more experienced practitioners.... By definition, approximations of practice are not the real thing. They differ with regard to the level of completeness and congruence with which they approximate practice. (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2078)

In order for novices to engage in meaningful approximations of practice, Grossman et al.’s (2008) cross-professional investigation work also demonstrates that novices must have representations and decompositions of that practice. Representations of practice are examples from practice for which the novice is being prepared. This might include video clips of classroom instruction, photos of anchor charts, observations of teachers and students, and

examples of an assignment and the accompanying student work.

Decompositions of practice require the teacher educator to break down the practice into its essential parts. These essential parts are integral to the practice and can be improved through targeted instruction. Grossman et al. (2008) write,

One of the well-documented problems of learning from experience is knowing what to look for, or how to interpret what is observed... Novices may not know what to attend to in looking at interactions between therapists and clients, the unfolding of a math lesson, or an interview between a rabbi and a grieving congregant... We contend that the use of various forms of decomposition in professional education helps develop a sense of the anatomy of the practice to be learned. To use a different analogy, decomposition makes visible the grammar of practice to novices and may require a specific technical language for describing the implicit grammar and for naming the parts. (Grossman et al., 2008, p. 2069)

Grossman and colleagues' (2008) research and the work around pedagogies of investigation have recently been conceptualized together in the form of the learning cycle (McDonald, Kazemi & Kavanough, 2013). McDonald, Kazemi & Kavanough (2013) build on the conceptual work of many of the scholars already mentioned in this section to suggest a cycle of learning in practice-based teacher education complete with representations, decompositions, approximations of practice followed by reflection of the practice with peers and teacher educators.

Reading Teacher Education

Up until this point in this literature review, I have focused on conceptualizations of *how* teacher candidates can learn to teach. As this dissertation focuses on a practice-based *reading*

course, it is equally as important to review the literature concerning the content of reading teacher education coursework. Earlier literature reviews of reading teacher education found limited research done in the field of reading teacher education (Alverman, 1990; Anders, Hoffman & Duffy, 2000) due in part to the “low-status” of teacher education in the field of reading research (Anders, Hoffman & Duffy, 2000).

Hoffman et al. (2005) looked across six different reviews of the literature on teacher education (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; National Reading Panel, 2000; Pearson, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and found four major points of consensus. First, all reviews found support for on-going professional development and support for teachers in their first years of teaching, as well as a focus on the teacher as a learner during the course of his/her teacher education program. Second, coursework should build on the existing knowledge base for teaching reading that prepares teachers to be flexible, adaptable, and responsive to students’ needs in reading. Third, the reviews concluded that teacher education that is field based and emphasizes practicum experiences seems to have the most positive effects. Finally, the research reviews concurred that teachers “can learn what they are taught, though it is not always clear how long changes in teaching are sustained” (p. 269).

Hoffman et al. (2005) also acknowledge that all six of the reviews “lamented the rarity of longitudinal research that traces pre-service teachers’ learning into their first years of teaching” (p. 270). They cite Grossman et al.’s (2001) research as one of the few systematic studies of the long-term effects of teacher preparation. Grossman et al. (2001) found that the beginning teachers in their study used what they learned in coursework to help guide their thinking and decisions during their first years of teaching. Hoffman et al. (2005) argue that more research like

this is needed as there is still uncertainty about what constitutes effective practices in reading teacher preparation.

The knowledge base for teaching reading. Various studies and literature reviews have provided inconclusive information as to what should be taught in reading teacher education coursework, however, there is general agreement that there is limited research “available to guide teacher education programmatic design or specific course development” (Risko et al., 2008, p. 253). In this section, I look into the research on the knowledge base for teaching reading to better understand what content should be included in reading teacher education coursework.

In *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) write that “teacher preparation for the teaching of reading has not been adequate to bring about the research-based changes in classroom practices that result in success” (p. 289). They outline several conclusions from the research about the knowledge base of qualified teachers of reading, summarized below by Stickland (2001):

- They must have knowledge about how children develop and learn, what they know, and what they are capable of doing.
- They must have a range of teaching methods that they can use to meet the individual needs of children.
- They must be able to identify children’s individual strengths and weaknesses and to prepare instructional strategies that will enable each child to make progress.
- They must understand, master, and integrate the knowledge and concepts in the different content areas that young children study.

In 2000 the Learning First Alliance published *Teaching Reading IS Rocket Science: What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able to Do* (2000, available

http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/reading_rocketscience_2004.pdf). This report put forward a list of components to include in a core curriculum for reading teacher education, including:

- Understanding reading psychology and development;
- Understanding the structure of the English language
- Applying best practices in all aspects of reading instruction; and
- Using validated, reliable, efficient assessment to inform classroom teaching.

The National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) provided the field with concrete conclusions as to what should be taught to children, but was less conclusive as to what should be taught to teachers. Members of the National Reading Panel (NRP) concluded that effective reading instruction must include explicit and systematic phonemic awareness and phonics instruction, fluency instruction, indirect and direct vocabulary instruction, and the teaching of reading comprehension strategies (NICHD, 2000). The authors of this report concluded that teachers need instruction on how to teach these strategies *before* they enter the workforce. They write that “in order for teachers to use strategies effectively, extensive formal instruction in reading comprehension is necessary, preferably beginning as early as pre-service” (p. 16). However, there were only 11 teacher education studies reviewed for this report as the studies were restricted to be experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Thus, the authors concluded that there were too few studies to draw conclusions about the content of teacher education.

Highly valued programmatic factors in reading teacher education. In addition to understanding the research base concerning the knowledge base of the reading teacher education coursework, it is important to consider the programmatic factors in reading teacher education that support beginning teachers’ learning. One of the findings of the Risko et al. (2008) review

was the importance of situated and practical learning opportunities, specifically that instructional and situated learning opportunities can be catalysts for changes in beliefs around the reading process and reading instruction. Similarly, Clift and Brady (2005) found that, in general, interactions with students provide an experiential base for prospective teachers through course-based concepts and theories. They also found that teacher candidates benefit from mentoring and supervised teaching experiences, including mentoring from peer coaches.

More recently, Lacina and Block (2011) examined literacy teacher education programs that had been awarded the International Reading Association (IRA) Certificate of Distinction in order to find commonalities across programs. They found 14 programmatic features that consistently arose as important in highly successful programs. First on this list was the inclusion of consistent, carefully selected, and relevant field experiences that are closely tied to program philosophy, programmatic vision, and content presented in courses. Lacina and Block (2011) explain their findings in greater detail:

Course, field, and program experiences consist of repeated opportunities for full-time professors to model desired practices in methods courses or at public school campuses before teacher candidates are required to demonstrate their abilities to use them. Each literacy-related course contained field experiences. The faculty who taught the courses supervised most field experiences, and immediate feedback was given by this supervisor as well as by fellow teacher candidates. (p. 338)

Also on this list of highly valued programmatic features in reading teacher education programs that are pertinent to this study are the following: Teacher candidates learn to teach and assess children using a wide variety of strategies and assessment instruments (#2); Integrated, aligned,

and spiraling literacy curriculum (#3); Faculty are highly qualified and connect theory to practice (#4); Program emphasis on teaching diverse learners (#6); Rapport and close collaboration with public school professionals (#7). All of the abovementioned features were salient in the practice-based reading course that was the focus of this study. This course will be described in greater detail in chapter four of this dissertation.

Summary

In the preceding sections, I reviewed literature concerning university-based teacher education programs, practice-based teacher education and reading teacher education. The body of literature surrounding university-based teacher education programs outlines three clear problems with traditional university-based education: 1) the problem of apprenticeships of observation, 2) the problem of enactment, and 3) the problem of complexity. Proponents of practice-based teacher education argue that these problems can be addressed by including carefully selected, decomposed and guided opportunities to practice teaching in university coursework. Research on reading teacher education has specifically outlined the knowledge base needed to become a thoughtfully adaptive reading teacher (Duffy, 2002), and situated, practice-based learning opportunities seemingly allow for teacher candidates to develop the knowledge and practices to become thoughtfully adaptive. What remains to be seen is how the knowledge and practices that a teacher candidate develops in practice-based coursework influences his/her thinking and practices in student teaching experience and beyond.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theories of learning

Sociocultural theories of learning guided my research design and methods as I explored how teacher candidates develop their knowledge and practices for teaching reading from their practice-based coursework into their first two years of teaching. Educational scholars and researchers have often used sociocultural theories to help explain the complexities of teaching and learning in educational settings (Cole, 2010). Particularly relevant to this study are the ideas that sociocultural theories take into account 1) a conceptualization of learning to teach as a continual, mutually mediated process of appropriation and social action, where practitioners take on the cultural practices that are valued in the social situations of their development and 2) a recognition of transitions between settings in teachers' learning as important foci of analysis (Ellis, Edwards & Smagorinsky, 2010).

Sociocultural theories of learning depart from traditional theories of learning. Traditional views of learning and development explain learning as the transfer of knowledge (thought) to the application of knowledge (action). From the perspective of teacher education, in the traditional view of learning, teachers' minds become "storage devices" in which university learning and mentor teacher feedback are "inputs," and classroom teaching and learning is the "outputs." In contrast, sociocultural theories of learning are posited on the idea that social practices are situated and people learn through engagement in these practices (Ellis, Edwards & Smagorinsky, 2010, p. 1-2). In order to understand how a teacher learns how to teach reading across settings, my conceptual framework draws principally from the work of Stephen Billett (2003, 2004, 2006, 2013) who draws from various sociocultural theorists (e.g., Beach, 1999; Engeström, 1987,

2001; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky; 1978) to help explain how professionals learn through practice.

Billett (2003, 2004, 2006, 2013) offers compelling accounts for two central areas of foci of this dissertation. Concerning the first focal area, *understanding professional learning*, Billett (2003, 2013) draws from various sociocultural theorists to help explain how an individual learns through practice. Concerning the second focal area, *adaptability*, Billett (2013) is helpful in understanding the process that an individual undergoes to adapt his/her learning to other contexts. Each focal area is explained in the subsequent sections.

Understanding Professional Learning

I was initially drawn to Billett's (2003) conceptual framework for workplace learning because of his explanation of how an individual learns in and through practice. Building on the work of other sociocultural theorists, Billett (2003) proposes that engagement in goal-directed activities (e.g., teaching a reading lesson to a small group of students) "necessarily involves the reinforcement, refinement and/or transformation of individuals' knowledge structures" (p. 138). Opportunities for cognitive change (i.e., learning) arise in the moment through microgenetic actions, or in-the-moment decisions, made by individuals while engaging in goal-directed activities. For example, a novice teacher might learn more about scaffolding the reading of complex texts when, in the moment of teaching, she needs to clarify textual meaning in response to a student's misunderstanding.

These goal-directed activities, and consequently opportunities for cognitive change, however, cannot be understood as isolated instances that are separated from the social contexts in which they are practiced. Billett (2003) stresses that to understand cognitive change one must

understand the sociocultural factors and situational factors that shape the context of learning, as well as the life history of the individual. McDonald, Bowman and Brayko (2013) refer to these factors as domains, specifically the sociocultural domain, the situational domain, and the ontogenetic domain. In the subsequent paragraphs, I expand upon each of these domains.

Sociocultural Domain: Billett (2003) defines sociocultural practice as a practice that is derived historically or phylogenetically, which reflects a cultural need with an identifiable set of values, technologies, norms, and practices. Sociocultural practices are abstracted and disembodied from actual practices. Instead, they refer to the general expectations and cultural needs of the practice. In this study, the sociocultural practice that I am examining is the sociocultural practice of elementary grade teaching.

Situational Domain: Billett (2003) defines situational factors as those factors that shape a particular circumstance of a sociocultural practice. Regarding the relationship between the sociocultural domain and the situational domain, he writes: “Sociocultural practice in the form of a vocation is not uniformly enacted, as the circumstances of its enactment are likely to be diverse, and have distinct goals and requirements. For instance, how a medical practice is constituted differs according to its location (e.g. rural town, inner-city suburb, retirement community, remote Aboriginal community), its objects (e.g. characteristics of patients in terms of health, age, dispositions), and how the practice is organized (e.g. shared practice, community-based, availability of doctors in rural settings, etc.)” (p. 136). In this study, each setting (practice-based teaching course, student teaching, 1st/2nd years of teaching) has its own set of situational factors that shape the approaches to teaching literacy. In order to understand teachers’ learning, we also must also take into account these situational factors and how they may constrain and afford opportunities for learning.

Ontogenetic Domain: The ontogenetic domain refers to the on-going development of an individual's life history. According to this framework, sociocultural practices and situational factors constitute the goal-directed activities that individuals engage in throughout their daily lives. Opportunities for learning arise from an individual's participation in these goal directed activities. Billett writes that, "How individuals engage in activities—such as their paid work—which activities they engage in, and what they construct from these activities are mediated by their ontogenies or personal histories (Billett, 1997; Rogoff, 1990)—the ways of knowing and doing they have constructed throughout their lives" (p. 139).

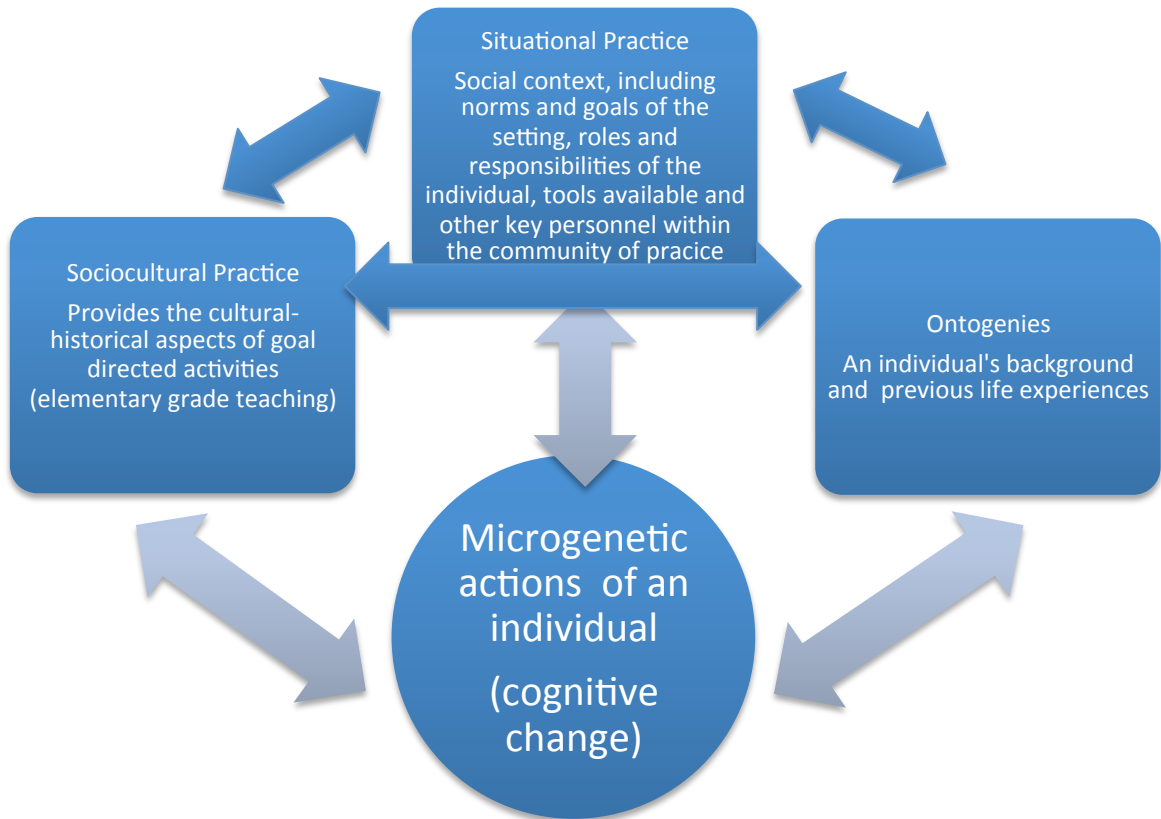


Figure 1: Interpretation of Billett's (2003) framework for Professional Learning

Figure 1 (above) depicts the relationships between each of these domains and their influence on the in-the-moment problem solving decisions of an individual. Each of these domains contributes to an individual's microgenetic actions (in-the-moment problem solving) while he/she engages in a goal-directed activity. Billett (2003) argues that how an individual engages in a sociocultural activity (i.e., teaching) is mediated by her/his microgenetic actions (or expressions of individual agency) stemming from his/her ontogenies, as well as the particular rules of engagement of that situational practice (situational domain). McDonald et al. (2013) write:

These microgenetic actions, which are expressions of individual agency, matter not only because they contribute to cognitive change (learning), which in turn feeds the

ontogenetic development of the individual, but also because they help shape situational activities and practice. Simply put, this framework offers us a way of seeing the relationship among an individual's experience and history, his or her actions in a specific context, and the factors or conditions of that context—all of which constitute and inform one another. From this perspective, all professional learning situations offer affordances that are invitational in quality: They invite participation in practices that are both novel and routine in that setting (Billett, 2009). Yet, individual decisions in the moment affect how those invitations are taken up: are they rejected as inconsistent or unrelated to the individual's learning goals? Are they accepted as an opportunity to develop particular capacities deemed fundamental to either the sociocultural or situational practice? From this perspective, we can conceptualize the problem of enactment not only as a way to describe the gap between one's vision of one's practice and the implementation of that vision, but as a moment when situational factors invite a novel practice and the individual either accepts or rejects the invitation and respectively either explores new practices and ways of participating, or relies on old habits and expectations of participation. (p. 7-8)

To continue with the aforementioned scenario, a novice teacher might learn more about scaffolding reading of complex texts when, in the moment of teaching, she needs to clarify textual meaning in response to a student's misunderstanding. Her understanding of this problem is shaped both by situational factors and her ontogeny. For example, the novice teacher might identify the problem (that her student doesn't understand the plot structure) because of her previous teaching experiences (ontogenies). The in-the-moment decision she makes to solve the problem (microgenetic action) is also shaped by situational factors and ontogenetic factors. For example, she may decide to continue reading with the students and not address the

misconception because she is trying to adhere to her scripted curriculum (situational factor). Or, she might choose to stop and clarify the meaning of the text because of previous experiences from her coursework (ontogenies). Or she may choose not to stop, letting the student read on to notice if he identifies the misconceptions on his own through metacognitive strategies.

Adaptability

Billett's framework, described above, helps me to understand how an individual can learn through practice. However, this study also examines how an individual develops his/her understandings and practices for teaching reading over time and across settings. In order to do this, I look at how an individual adapts and understands tools for teaching literacy, starting during the practice-based coursework and going through the first years of teaching.

The original concept of mediating tools is suggested by the work of Vygotsky, who argues that tools are a type of mediator that produces qualitative transformations in both individual and environments (Moll, 2014). Moll (2014) defines instrumental or tool mediation as “the use of artifacts, such as a spoon or a pencil, created culturally and inherited socially, to engage in human practices” (p. 16). Scholars and educational researchers have used the Vygotskian concept of tools to help understand mediating factors that shape teaching and learning (e.g., Smagorinsky, Grossman & Valencia, 1999; Valencia et al., 2004). In the realm of teaching, tools can be physical objects (whiteboard, textbook), concepts (homogenous grouping, scaffolding), and/or practices (mini-lessons, small group reading instruction) that shape interaction and daily practice.

As Duffy (1997) points out, a thoughtfully adaptive teacher sees knowledge and pedagogical strategies as “tools to be adapted, not as panaceas to be adopted” (p. 13). Billett's

(2013) article, *Recasting Transfer as a Socio-Personal Process of Adaptable Learning*, is helpful in understanding the process of adaptation. Billett (2013) writes that knowledge that is experienced (e.g., learning to teach guided reading in a practice-based course) is contextualized within particular circumstances (e.g., the practice-based reading course), and is also embedded within individuals' specific domains of knowledge. Adaptation of this knowledge includes "drawing out factors associated with the specific context or embeddedness (i.e. decontextualizing or disembedding it) and then re-contextualizing or re-embedding it in another circumstance (i.e., construction of new or refined knowledge) premised upon situational and personal factors" (p. 7). Billett (2013) refers to these processes as *construal*, *reconciliation*, and *construction*, all of which are mediated by situational factors and ontogenetic factors.

Construal refers to individuals' perception and action in "seeking to comprehend, categorize, identify and/or recognize what they encounter in the form of a task or suggestion or other kind of experience" (Billett, 2013, p. 11). For example, a teacher may construe that a student is struggling with reading, based on the student's reading of a short passage and inability to answer questions afterwards. Furthermore, the teacher may attribute the student's reading difficulties to his failure to monitor and clarify while reading. This designation is what Billett refers to as *reconciliation*. *Reconciliation*, or alignment, refers to "perception and action associated with aligning what is experienced with what individuals know about what has been comprehended, categorized, identified or otherwise recognized" (Billett, 2013, p. 11). Finally, as a result of the way in which an individual construes and reconciles a problem, the individual constructs a response to the problem hence determines the way in which he/she should progress. The teacher may decide to provide the student with direct instruction around comprehension

monitoring so that he better monitors his reading. This response is mediated by both situational factors and ontogenetic factors.

In this study, I hypothesize that the opportunities for learning about and using tools for teaching reading in PBTE coursework build a strong practical and conceptual basis for novice teachers that they can more readily apply and adapt in other settings. In order to do this, I look at how the participants' construe, reconcile, and construct responses to literacy tasks and problems in various settings (coursework, student teaching, first years of teaching).

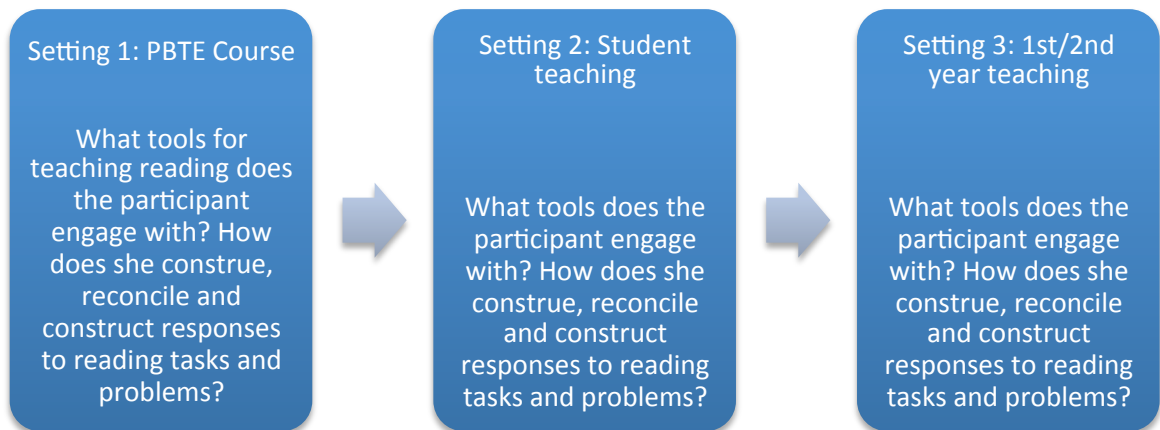


Figure 2: Building ontogenies for teaching reading across settings

In the figure above, each box represents a distinct setting in a participant's trajectory to first two years of teaching. By the time the participant moves across all three settings, she been a part of three different communities of practice. Her role in each setting is different (e.g., graduate student, student teacher, district/school employee) as are her supervisors, students, peers, goals (e.g., passing a course, fulfilling the goals of student teaching, educating a classroom of students

to meet district/school expectations) as well as the tools available to her for teaching literacy. By the time that she in her first year of teaching, her experiences in the practice-based literacy course and student teaching, and her understandings derived from these experiences, have become a part of her ontogenetic domain. How she construes, reconciles and constructs the problems and challenges for teaching literacy in her first year teaching depends on her present situational factors (activity system) and her ontogeny.

Chapter 3: Methods

To gain an in-depth understanding of the novice teachers' development of reading practices, I conducted a qualitative, multisite case study (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) defines case study as an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 41). In my study, the *bounded system* represents a group of novice teachers who all experienced the same practice-based teacher education course. The study is *particularistic* (Merriam, 2009) because it is uniquely situated in a practice-based teacher education course. It is *descriptive* (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002) because it yields a rich, "thick" description of the actions and understandings of the teacher candidates. Finally, the study is *heuristic* (Merriam, 2009) because it potentially illuminates the implications of a practice-based reading course on a teacher candidate's development.

This study is important for a number of reasons. First, there have been few empirical studies to investigate how novices develop their understandings and practices of teaching reading after engaging in practice-based coursework. Previous studies have demonstrated the difficulties that novices face when trying to develop understandings learned through coursework in fieldwork (e.g., Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985; Grossman et al., 2000; Valencia et al., 2009). Recent studies have focused on the development of understandings within coursework (e.g., Lampert et al., 2013; Smith & Place, 2011). However, none to my knowledge have traced the development from practice-based coursework to fieldwork and to beginning years of full-time teaching. In their review of student teaching's contribution to pre-service teachers' development, Anderson and Stillman (2013) point out the need for this type of study. They write:

Findings highlight the current dearth of, and resulting need for, longitudinal analyses that

capture more intentionally the *process* by which PSTs learn to teach, including the contributions of different *mediating* factors—and different *combinations* of mediating factors—to PSTs’ development over time. Such analyses must, of course, also involve efforts to look beyond preservice preparation at how preservice experiences, including but not limited to student teaching experiences, impact TEP graduates’ practices in urban, high-needs schools—how, for example, former PSTs “recontextualize” what they learned during preservice preparation as they move into different settings with different students. (p. 45)

Second, potential findings from this study may help teacher educators better think about and design learning experiences for teacher candidates. As I examined the participants’ development, I also looked at the contributing factors to their development. In chapter four, I outline some of the features of the practice-based reading coursework (e.g., communities of practice, content specific feedback, multiple enactments) that were put into place to help the participants’ learn from practice. Potential findings may illustrate the efficacy of these features and how these features did or did not contribute to participants’ learning.

Study Design: Settings and Participants

There were three phases to this study. These phases will be referred to as practice-based coursework, student teaching, and beginning teaching. In Table 1 below, I outline the phases for this study and the timeline:

Practice-Based Coursework	Student Teaching	Beginning Teaching
Fall, 2012 10-week course in	Spring, 2013 Participants in full-time	Spring, 2014 Fall, 2015

elementary school	student teaching placements (Three different schools, two different districts represented)	Participants in first year and second year of teaching (Four different schools, three different districts represented)
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Table 1: Timeline of Study

Settings of the study. This research project took place across multiple settings. The first setting, in the practice-based reading coursework phase, was the site of the practice-based reading course, housed in a public elementary school in Seattle. The second setting took place in four different student-teaching sites. The third setting took place in the four different schools in which the participants of this study received full-time beginning teacher jobs upon graduation. In the subsequent parts, I describe each setting in greater detail.

- Setting 1 (Practice-based coursework):¹ The PBTE reading course, taught by a tenured faculty member at a research university in the Northwest was a 10-week course for students in the Elementary Master’s in Teaching (MIT) Program. There were 31 students in the course, and each week they had an opportunity to learn from hands-on practical experiences with students. For example, these teacher candidates had the opportunity to conduct and analyze reading assessments for first and fifth-graders. They also had opportunities to create, enact and reflect upon guided reading lessons and decoding lessons with these first and fifth-graders. The course professor and the two teaching assistants (teacher educators) provided oral and written feedback on lesson plans, provided in-the-moment feedback for teacher candidates during rehearsals of their lessons. After the teacher candidates taught the lessons, the classroom teachers and the

¹ Here I provide a cursory summary of the practice-based reading coursework. The practice-based reading coursework is described in far greater detail in chapter 4.

teacher educators debriefed the lessons with candidates, discussing both aspects of instruction and of student learning.

In many ways, this practice-based setting allowed multiple opportunities for teacher candidates to construe, reconcile and construct knowledge for teaching reading. For example, each teacher candidate had an opportunity to teach a small-group decoding lesson. During this time, the candidates had to devise lessons based on the needs of their students, rehearse the lesson with a teacher educator and teach the lesson to the students. The lesson plan feedback, rehearsals and debriefs and collaboration with the teacher educators allowed the candidates guided opportunities to help them reconcile what they noticed while teaching, and then to construct knowledge around teaching decoding lessons. Billett (2003) suggests that the knowledge constructed from in-the-moment decision-making becomes a part of an individual's ontogenies (life experiences and history).

- Setting 2 (Student teaching):² The second set of settings, the *student teaching* phase, took place in the university's partner school classrooms in which candidates were placed in a yearlong practicum. In these settings, teacher candidates were responsible for following the expectations of the classroom cooperating teacher and school district, including utilizing the mandated curricula and instructional frameworks. In this portion of the study, three different schools are represented.

Previous research has illuminated the difficulties that teacher candidates have in applying knowledge learned in coursework to their fieldwork experiences (e.g., Valencia et al., 2009). However, given the fact that these participants had guided opportunities to teach literacy lessons

² The *student teaching* phase is described in greater detail in chapter 5, along with the findings from this phase.

in their methods courses, I hypothesize that these participants will have a clear frame of reference (Kennedy, 1999) from which to draw while student teaching.

- Setting 3 (First/Second year teaching):³ The third set of settings, the *beginning teaching* phase, are the four different schools in which the participants of this study received full-time teaching jobs upon graduation. All of the participants were rehired at their schools after their first year of teaching.

Participants. This is a comparative case study. As Merriam (2009) writes, “the more cases included in the study, and the greater the variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be” (p. 49). Four candidates were purposively (Merriam, 2009) chosen to fit the following criteria: 1) All of the participants were in the same cohort, meaning that they experienced the same courses and instructors throughout the program. Thus, they all participated in the same practice-based literacy course in the fall of 2012; 2) The participants represented a variety of grade levels and schools in their field placements; 3) From their previous coursework, the participants demonstrated a willingness to receive feedback. 4) I had built strong working relationships with each of these students and I felt that they would agree to sustain a working relationship with me for the next few years. 5) The participants were all planning on getting jobs locally after their Master’s In Teaching Program.

In the fall of 2012, I worked as one of the Teaching Assistants in the practice-based reading methods course. During this time, I got to know all the students, read and responded to their lesson plans, and provided them feedback on their teaching. I proposed this study after the completion of the course, and obtained permission from four participants who fit the selection criteria.

³ The individual school contexts are described in chapter 6, as are the findings from this phase.

The following is a description of each participant⁴:

1. Anna's student teaching was in a second-grade classroom in public school #1 in a large urban school district, the same site in which the practice-based reading course was taught. Her cooperating teacher was a graduate of the same program five years earlier. She was hired as a second-grade teacher in midsize suburb outside a large city in the Pacific Northwest.
2. Isabel's student teaching was in a first-grade placement in public school #1 in a large urban school district in the Pacific Northwest. Her cooperating teacher was the first-grade cooperating teacher in the practice-based reading course. She was hired to teach in the same school as her student teaching placement as a third-grade teacher.
3. Leira's student teaching was in a fourth/fifth grade placement in public school #2 in a large urban school district in the Pacific Northwest. Her cooperating teacher did not have extensive involvement with her Teacher Education Program. After graduation, she was hired to teach fourth/fifth grade in a small, private Montessori school.
4. Rachel's student teaching was in a first-grade placement in public school #3, in a midsize urban school district in the Pacific Northwest. Her cooperating teacher graduated from same Teacher Education Program seven years earlier. Upon graduating, she was hired to teach first grade in a large, suburban school district.

Data Collection and Methods

As aforementioned, there were three different phases of this study. In the subsequent sections, I provide an overview of the data collected during each phase.

⁴ Each of the participants is described in greater detail in chapter 4.

Data collected during practice-based reading coursework. There were several sources of data collected during the reading practice-based coursework from September 2012 – December 2012:

- **Video Records of Teaching:** Each of the lessons that the candidates taught during practice-based coursework was filmed. These lessons were coded and analyzed to understand the participants' development of reading concepts.
- **Audio-recorded debriefs:** Each of the group debriefs about the enactments was audio-recorded. These audio-recorded debriefs were coded and analyzed to better understand the participants' thinking and understandings of reading concepts.
- **Artifacts:** I collected lesson plans, written lesson plan feedback and written lesson reflections for each of the lessons that the participants taught. These artifacts were coded and analyzed to understand the development of reading concepts.

The different data points were often triangulated to compare and cross-check other sources of data, as well as to confirm emerging findings. For example, for each teaching cycle, I read the original lesson plan with the teacher educator's feedback, watched the video of the enactment, and then listened to the audio debrief of the enactment. Then, I made notes about the teachers' development before watching the second teaching cycle. The findings from these data are presented in chapter four.

Data collected during student teaching. In the winter and spring of 2013, I collected data to better understand the participants' reading development during their student teaching experiences. The following is an overview of the data collected during this time:

- **Observations of teaching:** I observed the participants teach reading lessons in their student teaching placements. For each participant, I observed at least one reading lesson

in person and collected one video-recorded lesson. Observations from these lessons were recorded, coded and analyzed.

- Semi-structured interviews: In the spring of 2013, I conducted semi-structured interviews that were accompanied by an interview guide (Patton, 2003). The interview guide helped to make interviewing a number of people more “systematic and comprehensive by delimiting in advance the issues to be explored” (Patton, 2003, p. 343). The initial content of these interviews focused on understanding the teacher candidates’ understandings of tools for teaching reading lessons. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded in the same fashion as the aforementioned data points.
- Artifacts: I collect lesson plans and lesson reflections that the candidates wrote during their student teaching experiences. These lesson plans were coded and analyzed to note the candidates’ development of teaching reading. I also collected videos of the participants teaching reading lessons in their student teaching placement that they had submitted for their winter coursework.

Data collected during first and second years of teaching: In the spring of 2014, during the end of the participants first year of teaching, I began collecting data for the third phase of this study. Data collection continued into the participants second year of teaching.

- Observations of classroom teaching: I observed each participant once a month in May 2014 and June 2014 and in the beginning half of the following academic year (September, October, November, December 2014). Specifically, I tried to observe the participants’ instruction during an entire reading block. During this time, I asked the participants to conduct “business as usual” in their classrooms. (They did not need to write additional lesson plans or include anything out of the ordinary in their teaching.) I

took notes that focused on the teacher's instructional moves, student learning, their responsiveness to students' understanding, curriculum adoption, questioning, and in-the-moment problem solving. I occasionally conferred with students to gain a more in-depth understanding of the lesson and their understandings of it. These notes were coded and used as a method of triangulation with the participants' interviews.

- Interviews with participants: Each month, I conducted a semi-structured interview (Patton, 2002) with each participant following their observation. Similar to the interviews conducted in the spring of 2013, the content of these interviews focused on the observed lesson for the purpose of discerning the teacher candidates' understandings and development of reading concepts and pedagogical tools. These interviews were transcribed and coded for development of literacy tools.
- Interviews with coaches/principal/mentor: In order to understand the situational factors (goals, curriculum, requirements for first-year teachers, etc.), I tried to conduct one interview with an instructional coach, mentor or principal. During this time, I hoped to gain insight into how the coach/principal understood reading instruction in the context of their school. When this proved difficult, I collected artifacts from principal observations to gain a deeper understanding of the coaches/principals' goals for reading instruction.
- Interview with Course Instructor: I also interviewed the course instructor of the practice-based reading course in order to learn the goals that she had for her students, as well as to clarify the reading conceptual understandings and pedagogical content knowledge that she highlighted in the course.
- Document Review: I collected several literacy related documents from the participants' classrooms during their first and second years of teaching. This included long-term

reading plans, curriculum maps, district-specific common core guidelines and daily lesson plans. These documents helped me better understand the situational factors of the participants' settings (e.g., goals).

Table 2 presents the data collection timeline and methods:

Table 2: Data Collection Timeline

Fall 2012 (Practice-Based Reading Coursework)
December 2012: Collect artifacts from the Practice-based reading course (including videos of participants teaching, audio recordings of group debriefs, lesson plans, and reflections)
Spring 2013 (Student Teaching)
March 2013: Collect data from winter coursework (videos of reading lessons taught in student teaching, lesson plans, written reflections)
April 2013: Contact student teachers and set up an observation and interview schedule with TCs, and CTs, if possible.
May 2013: Observe participants teaching reading lessons in their student teaching placements, and follow-up with interviews.
Spring 2014 (First-year teaching)
April 2014: Contact schools, teachers and districts for permission to site and to collect data
May 2014: Observation #1, Interview #1
June 2015: Observation #2, Interview #2

Fall 2014 (Second-year teaching)
September 2014: Observation #3, Interview #3
October 2014: Observation #4, Interview #4, Interview team teacher, interview principal
November 2015: Observation #5, Interview #5
December 2015: Observation #6, Interview #6

Spring 2015
May 2015: Interview with practice-based course instructor

Analysis

Data analysis was ongoing and iterative. All together, 95 documents (videos, field notes, transcripts, lesson plans, written reflections, audio-recordings) were collected and uploaded to ATLAS.ti. First, I began my analysis by reviewing the data collected during the practice-based reading coursework phase. As I describe in chapter four, each participant worked within an enactment group for three weeks. Each week, they completed one teaching cycle (plan, teach, analyze). For each teaching cycle, I read the lesson plans and the lesson plan feedback, watched the enactment and listened to the group debrief. I also analyzed the course written assignments, including the candidates' reflections on their teaching and the students' learning. Then, I reviewed the second teaching cycle and the third to understand how the group developed over time. As I read, watched and listened, I took notes on the candidates' understandings, misunderstandings, use of pedagogical tools, beliefs about teaching and learning, problem-

solving, and the nature of the teacher educators' feedback. I developed codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) for this data. Sample codes include: Participated generated question, procedural confusion, conceptual understandings (e.g., role of fluency, understanding the reader), pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical tools for teaching reading (e.g., explicit question, activating background knowledge), instructor feedback. I also looked at the ways that the candidates' construed, reconciled and constructed (Billett, 2013) responses to teaching reading. For each enactment group, I wrote a case study. Then, I looked within each enactment group to understand their development and across the case studies to discern patterns, themes and trends. At times, I looked back at the original data to confirm and disconfirm these patterns and themes. These cases are presented and discussed in chapter four.

Next, I analyzed the data from the student teaching phase of this study. I reviewed the data (video-recordings, lesson observations, interview transcripts and written reflections from course assignments) and developed codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) for this data. A few examples of these code names include: situational factors, reference to coursework, cooperating teacher's routines, questioning, scaffolding, reader's workshop, differentiation, understanding the reading process. I reviewed and coded the data, and analyzed the data to understand the participant's development and the factors that contributed to this development. I wrote a case study for each participant and looked across the participants to notice patterns and trends. As in the first phase, I often went back to the original data to confirm these themes and trends. These cases are presented and discussed in chapter five.

Finally, I analyzed the data from the participants' first and second years of teaching. I coded and analyzed the transcripts and the field notes. Many of these codes were similar to the codes previously developed, although there were several codes that surfaced. Examples of these

new codes included: student teaching reference, principal feedback, supplementation. I wrote a case study for each of the participants to understand their development and the factors that contributed to their development. These findings are presented in chapter six.

Ethical Considerations

All of the participants, schools, districts and school personnel were given pseudonyms in order to protect the identities of individuals. I openly conveyed the purpose of my study to my participants, often stating that I was trying to understand their development as teachers and the factors that contributed to their development (e.g., the approaches to teaching reading at their schools). I hoped that my openness would allow the participants to feel comfortable with the observations and interviews, and, that consequently they would openly share their challenges to teaching reading. Continued participation in this study was voluntary.

Chapter 4: Practice-Based Reading Coursework Overview and Findings

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the practice-based reading course, and I present my findings to my first series of questions: *What were the participants' understandings of reading concepts and pedagogical tools experienced in a practice-based reading course? What experiences contribute to these understandings?* These findings serve as a baseline to guide my understandings of the participants' development as they moved from coursework to student teaching to their first and second years of teaching.

Practice-Based Reading Course Design

In the fall of 2012, all four participants enrolled in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment in Literacy II, the second literacy course in their Master's in Teaching Program. This was a 10-week, practice-based reading course taught in a local public school. In chapter one, I outlined various conceptions of practice-based teacher education. In this section, I describe the thinking behind this particular practice-based teacher education course that focused on developing elementary reading teachers.

Conceptual Understandings

The course was designed around five research-based conceptual understandings necessary for elementary-grade reading teachers. These conceptual understandings most closely relate to what Shulman (1987) refers to as subject matter content knowledge. Phelps and Schilling (2004) propose that, in contrast to mathematics and science, teachers' content knowledge of reading has historically not been a major area of inquiry because 1) it is not clear what may count as content in reading; 2) fewer concerns exist about teachers' content knowledge in reading because most teachers are competent readers; and 3) research on content knowledge has been overshadowed by research on teaching methods, curriculum, and psychology of

reading. However, in order for teacher candidates to draw upon teaching methods and selectively adapt aspects of reading curriculum, they must have conceptual understandings of what it means to read and make sense of text in order to make informed instructional decisions. These conceptual understandings, taken from reading research outlined in chapter one, are described below.

The first conceptual understanding, *Understand that a student's reading comprehension depends on the interrelationship between the reader, activity, text and context*, comes from the work of Snow and the RAND Reading Study Group (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Snow and colleagues argue that reading comprehension consists of three interrelated elements: the reader (e.g., cognitive capabilities, motivation, linguistic knowledge, life experiences), the activity (e.g., purpose for reading) and the text (e.g., instructional level, length, genre) occurring within a larger, sociocultural context. They write that “effective teachers of comprehension enact practices that reflect the orchestration of knowledge about readers, texts, purposeful activity, and contexts for the purpose of advancing students’ thoughtful, competent, and motivated reading” (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, p. 29 – 30). Elementary-grade teachers must understand this concept as it guides their thinking as they select texts and plan instruction for specific readers. Additionally, it serves as a useful framework for understanding *why* students may or may not comprehend texts.

The second conceptual understanding of the coursework, *Understand that the reading process is comprised of the interaction of decoding, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary*, originates from a long history of reading research. This term *interactive* is most closely attributed to the work of Rumelhart (1977). Lipson and Wixson (1986) write that, “Rumelhart characterizes reading as an ‘interactive process’ in which readers vary their focus along a continuum, from

primarily text-based processing to primarily reader-based processing. That is, the processing of text is viewed as a flexible interaction of the different information sources available to the reader (Lipson & Wixson, 1986, p. 114). Subsequently, there has been great deal written about the reading process in reading research, and each of these components (decoding, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary) was extensively reviewed in the National Reading Panel report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Moats and the American Federation of Teachers (1999) write that, “teachers are not born knowing the relationship between basic reading skills and comprehension” (p. 12). Additionally, they write,

Although the purpose of reading is to comprehend text, teachers should also appreciate the relationships among reading components in order to teach all components well—in connection to one another and with the emphasis needed at each stage of development. A child cannot understand what he cannot decode, but what he decodes is meaningless unless he can understand it. If this relationship is realized, a teacher will teach linguistic awareness and phonics deliberately, while linking skills to context as much as possible. When appropriate, the emphasis will shift to increasing reading volume and teaching the interpretive strategies central to comprehension... (p. 18)

The third conceptual understanding, *Understand the Developmental Trajectory of Reading Development*, also comes from a long history of reading research. Phelps and Schilling (2004) writes that, “to date, research on content in the area of reading has largely examined the knowledge of language and text needed to teach children to read or decode words” (p. 33). Much has been written about the importance of explicitly teaching phonics to students (NICHD, 2000) and, in turn, teachers must understand the structure of the English language (Moats & AFT, 1999) in order to systematically support their students’ decoding development.

The fourth conceptual understanding, *Use understandings of reading skills, strategies, and processes to formatively assess students*, was outlined by Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. (See chapter one on the knowledge base for teaching reading.) Snow and colleagues argue that teachers must be able to identify children's individual strengths and weaknesses to prepare instructional strategies that will enable each child to make progress in reading.

The fifth conceptual understanding, *Use understandings of reading skills, strategies, and processes to model and scaffold instruction*, was also outlined by Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. They propose that teachers must have a range of teaching methods that they can use to meet the individual needs of children. Similarly, the authors of the NRP report (NICHD, 2000) write that teachers must be "skillful in their instruction and be able to respond flexibly and opportunistically to students' needs for instructive feedback as they read" (p. 16). They specifically reference two approaches, direct explanation and transactional strategy instruction, as important approaches for teachers to understand, preferably beginning as early as pre-service teacher education.

Instructional Routines (Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge)

In order to develop these conceptual understandings, situated learning opportunities were designed in the form of instructional routines. In other words, candidates had multiple opportunities to develop these conceptual understandings through the enactment of selected instructional routines with elementary-aged students. As expanded upon in chapter two, various scholars have written about the power of situated learning experiences in the construction of knowledge and the re-contextualization of this knowledge. Billett (2013) writes that,

Knowledge that is experienced is contextualized within particular circumstances, as well

as being embedded within individuals' specific domains of knowledge. Consequently, from such situational accounts, adaptation includes drawing out factors associated with the specific context or embeddedness (i.e. de-contextualizing or disembedding it) and then re-contextualizing or re-embedding it in another circumstance (i.e. construction of new or refined knowledge) premised upon situational and personal factors. (p. 7)

In addition to furthering conceptual understandings, these instructional routines also served to promote candidates' pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1987). Shulman (1987) writes that pedagogical content knowledge represents the "blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (p. 8). The instructional routines served as learning opportunities for candidates to learn more about how students develop and how to structure routines to scaffold student learning.

These practice-based reading coursework instructional routines included: small group scaffolded reading comprehension lessons, administering several types of assessments such as running records and diagnostic phonics assessment, and small group explicit word identification lessons. It is important here to note that these instructional routines are similar to reading instructional routines practiced in most elementary classrooms. Indeed, a routine like small group reading comprehension lessons is a research-based best practice to promote students' critical thinking and comprehension of text. Similarly, a routine like an explicit word identification lesson is a research-based best practice for teaching students to decode new sound-letter combinations. Thus, the instructional routines selected to further candidates' pedagogical content knowledge were also selected because of their proven relevance and efficacy as teaching

practices with elementary-aged students. Consequently, these routines themselves potentially served as pedagogical tools (Grossman et al., 1999) and frames of reference (Kennedy, 1999) for candidates.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge - Pedagogical Tools

A final component to the course design was the incorporation of selected instructional tools for teaching reading. Pedagogical tools are the tools in which teachers conduct and carry out teaching practices (Grossman et al., 1999). Historically, traditional teacher education programs have been criticized for not providing teacher candidates with enough pedagogical tools, specifically practical tools for teaching (Grossman et al., 2004). The purpose of focusing on pedagogical tools for teaching reading in the coursework was twofold. First, such a focus was necessary to support situated learning (i.e., the candidates needed to have specific pedagogical tools to teach these reading lessons to students and to engage students in productive instructional interactions). Secondly, by trying out certain pedagogical tools with students during instructional routines, the candidates could in turn develop pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) needed for teaching reading. Such a statement is supported by the work of Grossman et al. (2004) who argue that practical opportunities with students further and deepen teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. They write,

Providing teachers with pedagogical tools for teaching is important but not sufficient.

Teacher educators must provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience these tools in practice. Teachers' more refined understandings of the tools emerged through the activity of teaching and learning. (p. 658)

In other words, a candidate may try out the pedagogical tool of modeling how to blend short vowel words with children, and in turn, learn more about the ways children learn to decode (i.e.,

pedagogical content knowledge). In addition to the advancement of pedagogical content knowledge, I argue that such practice also furthers the candidates' conceptual understandings, specifically in this instance, their understandings of the developmental trajectory of word identification.

The following table provides an overview of the aforementioned course design components:

Table 3: Tools to Support Teachers' Development

<i>Conceptual Understandings for teaching reading</i>	<i>Pedagogical Content Knowledge Development</i>	
	<i>Instructional Routines</i>	<i>Pedagogical tools developed in and for practice</i>
Understand that a student's reading comprehension depends on the interrelationship between the reader, the task and the text and context	Small group reading comprehension lessons Running records	Asking questions to scaffold comprehension before/during/after the reading Asking questions to assess students' comprehension Building/activating background knowledge Planning stopping points to monitor and scaffold comprehension Turn and talks to encourage engagement Text analysis and anticipating textual challenges Facilitating talk to promote comprehension Creating content objectives Differentiating instruction to individual needs Representing student ideas Instructional grouping Text leveling
Understand the reading process, specifically that a student's making meaning of text is dependent upon the interaction of decoding,	Running Records with 1 st and 5 th graders Small Group Reading	Asking comprehension based questions during/after reading Whisper reading with students to learn more about

<p>fluency, comprehension and vocabulary</p>	<p>Comprehension Lessons with 5th graders</p> <p>Small group explicit word identification lessons with first graders (reading portion)</p>	<p>their decoding, fluency and comprehension</p> <p>Instructional grouping</p> <p>Text selection (gauge appropriateness of text)</p> <p>Addressing vocabulary (in context) to support textual meaning</p> <p>Text leveling</p>
<p>Understand the typical developmental trajectory of phonics, word learning and comprehension for elementary grade reading</p>	<p>Houghton Mifflin Diagnostic Assessment for Phonological Awareness and Phonics</p>	<p>Phonemic awareness activities (blending, isolating and segmenting sounds)</p> <p>Blending new sounds</p> <p>Incorporating developmentally appropriate words</p> <p>Presenting words in isolation and in context</p> <p>Instructional grouping</p> <p>Text leveling</p> <p>Understanding decodable and leveled books</p>
<p>Use understandings of reading skills, strategies, and processes to formatively assess students</p>	<p>Running records with 1st and 5th graders</p> <p>Houghton Mifflin Diagnostic Assessment for Phonological Awareness and Phonics</p> <p>Observations during small group decoding lessons</p> <p>Observations during small group scaffolded reading comprehension lessons</p>	<p>Anecdotal note-taking</p> <p>Informal assessments (whisper reading with students, one-on-one conferring)</p> <p>Asking questions to assess students' understandings</p>
<p>Use understandings of reading skills, strategies, and processes to model and scaffold instruction.</p>	<p>Small group word identification lessons</p> <p>Small group scaffolded reading comprehension lessons</p>	<p>Guided Release of Responsibility Framework (GRR)</p> <p>Scaffolded Reading Experience (SRE)</p> <p>Differentiation</p> <p>Conferring during lessons</p> <p>Creating reading process objectives</p> <p>Creating reading content objectives</p>

Practice-Based Reading Course Goals and Class Sessions

In order for teacher candidates to develop these conceptual understandings and their pedagogical content knowledge for teaching reading, the course instructor designed a practice-based course in which candidates would develop these understandings through practical opportunities of working with students. The 2012 syllabus outlined following goals for the students:

1. To develop more in-depth knowledge of the strategies and skills students apply when they are efficient, effective, and engaged readers;
2. To learn and to flexibly apply instructional strategies you can use to help students acquire and refine their reading abilities;
3. To learn to assess and respond to students' reading strategies and skills; and
4. To help students become engaged, motivated, strategic, self-directed readers. (Syllabus, 2012, p. 1)

Driving all of these goals was the hope that the teacher candidates would become “thoughtfully adaptive teachers” (Syllabus, 2012, p. 1).

During the nine weeks of the class sessions taught in a local public school, the course instructor partnered with a first-grade partner teacher and a fourth/fifth-grade partner teacher. In 2012 when the data for this study was collected, this was the second year that the course instructor had worked with these partner teachers. At that time, the fourth/fifth-grade teacher had been teaching for 15 years, mostly in the partner school. The first-grade teacher had been teaching for over 10 years, and had been a former graduate student of the course instructor. The course instructor worked hard to ensure that the partner teachers understood the course and felt

involved to the extent that they wanted to be included. For example, she arranged for a half-day substitute teacher for each of the teachers so that they had time to attend a portion of the class sessions. During this time, the partner teachers shared information about their students and provided feedback on the lessons that they observed. In 2012, the fourth/fifth-grade teacher demonstrated a whole class reading comprehension lesson for the candidates with her students. That same year, the first-grade teacher co-taught a strategy lesson with the course instructor.

As mentioned above, a main conceptual understanding of the course was *Understand that reading comprehension depends on the interrelationship between the reader, the task and the text*. In order to develop this understanding, there was substantial focus on learning about a *reader*. Each of the teacher candidates was partnered with a first-grade student and a fourth/fifth-grade student. The teacher candidates had the opportunity to build relationships with these students, try out reading related content work with them each week, and ultimately understand the student's zone of proximal development with respect to reading development (Vygotsky, 1978). Then, in collaboration with a team of peers, the candidates developed lessons targeted to meet the needs of the students. The course instructor hoped that sustained relationships with these students would lead to candidates' deeper understandings of the *reader*.

Each class session built on previous class sessions both conceptually and practically. In the subsequent section, I have outlined the chronology of the class:

Week 1, Institute: The 2012 course started with a two-day institute at the University. During this time, the course instructor began the development of the reading conceptual understandings by introducing the instructional routines focused on in the course and their related pedagogical tools. The pedagogical content knowledge topics and tools introduced during the institute were as follows: balanced literacy frameworks, analysis of text, scaffolding

comprehension, promoting comprehension through discussion, and assessment. The teacher candidates had opportunities to read about these topics, take notes during class mini-lectures, and discuss them in small group and whole group settings. The teacher candidates also had opportunities learn about scaffolding comprehension by seeing representations of small group comprehension lessons and trying to design a small group comprehension lesson with peers. After designing and receiving feedback on their small group lesson, the candidates did some microteaching of these lessons to their classmates. As the purpose of this work was to practice scaffolding reading comprehension, the instructor and teacher educators provided feedback around the content objectives, stopping points, and questions.

As one of the main pedagogical tools of the course was reading assessment, it became a central focus during the institute. The course instructor told the candidates that they would be paired with a first-grade student and a fifth-grade student. As the course progressed, the candidates would have the opportunity to teach their students in a small-group context. However, before small group work could take place, the candidates would need to understand the needs of their students in order to form need-based groups. Thus, on the second day of the institute, the candidates learned about pedagogical tools (running records, prompting, talking about text) that would help them understand their students' strengths and needs as a reader.

Week 2: During the second week of the course, the course was held at the partner school from 8:00 – 1:00. The teacher candidates and educators would continue to meet in this location for the remainder of the quarter. The class session was held in the school's afterschool program room that was mostly unused throughout the school day. Each week, the teacher educators set up a makeshift classroom with a projector and other AV equipment from the university, and hung up anchor charts that were relevant for the work that day.

The first half of the course centered on the first two reading conceptual understandings, *Understand that reading comprehension depends on the interrelationship between the reader, the task and the text* and *Understand the reading process, specifically that making meaning of text is dependent upon the interaction of decoding, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary*. The candidates had the opportunity to develop these understandings through the instructional routine of small group scaffolded reading instruction for fifth graders. During the first portion of the class during week two, the candidates continued to learn about pedagogical tools for instructional grouping (e.g., running records, conferring). The candidates also had the opportunity to meet with each of their students for 15 minutes, during which they began trying to learn a little bit about their students as readers and recorded their observations on a handout provided by the teacher educators. In order to learn more about the fifth-grade students, the course instructor arranged for a substitute for the fifth-grade partner teacher so that she could provide an overview of the students and help with the grouping. As this was the second week of the course and the candidates did not know too much about their students, the course instructor and fifth-grade teacher modeled their thinking and considerations (e.g., reading needs, instructional levels, management, size, compatibility) when forming the groups. Then, the candidates had the opportunity to meet with the four or five other candidates in their newly formed groups and start planning for the following week's lesson. The teacher educators provided the students with five different narrative texts and an annotated lesson planning template, and the teacher candidates' task was to select a text appropriate to their students, analyze the text, form content objectives, stopping points and questions. The teacher candidates also had to determine two candidates who would take the primary responsibility for teaching the lesson.

Week 3,4,5: The following three weeks of the course built conceptually on the foundation laid out during the institute. During these three weeks, the teacher candidates each took at least one turn lead-teaching the small group fifth-grade lessons. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will refer to the group work with the fifth graders as Teaching Team 1. Before the class session, these lead teachers had the option to submit a lesson plan ahead of time to the teacher educators. Upon arriving to class, the teacher candidates had the opportunity to rehearse their lesson in front of their group members and a teacher educator. Immediately following the rehearsal, the candidates had 30 minutes to teach their lessons to the students. The other candidates and teacher educators observed the lesson and provided feedback on the teaching and learning that took place. After the lesson, the candidates had at least 30 minutes to debrief the lessons with peers and the teacher educators and begin to think about the next week's lessons. Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to this as a teaching cycle. Each week, the teaching cycles increased in difficulty. For example, during the 2nd teaching cycle for the small group lessons, candidates were expected to whisper read with their buddies and make some informal observations about their students' decoding, fluency and comprehension. During the 3rd teaching cycle for the small group lessons, the candidates were challenged to design lessons for non-fiction text and to select a process object along with a content objective.

During these weeks, the candidates also were working one-on-one with their first-grade partner student. Each week, they were tasked to do something slightly different during their 15-minute sessions. For example, during week three, they had their first grader read with them from their independent book and they took notes on their student's fluency, decoding and comprehension. During week four, the candidates conducted a running record with their student

and analyzed the results. During week five, the candidates assessed their first graders using a phonics diagnostic and analyzed the results.

Week 6: Week six marked the halfway point in the course in terms of the work with students. During this week, the candidates reflected on their work in Teaching Team #1 (work with their fourth/fifth graders). They met in their teaching groups to analyze the teaching and learning of their scaffolded reading comprehension lessons to their fourth/fifth-grade students. Together they analyzed their group work and their individual lessons (assignment 1).

At this point in the course, the conceptual understandings shifted to the third reading conceptual understanding, *Understand the development trajectory of phonics and word learning* (with an emphasis on comprehension). The teacher candidates also reflected on their one-on-one work with the first graders. They utilized all the information that they had been gathering in the previous three weeks to paint a picture of their first grader's reading. With help from teacher educators and the partner teacher, the candidates analyzed the different data that they had collected and wrote a comprehensive report on their student's reading (assignment 2). The candidates arrived to class six with these reports in hand, and created a data wall with information about their student's needs (including reading level, recommendations for instruction). Together, led by the course instructor and partner teacher, all the candidates took part in grouping the students according to need. Then, the candidates met in their new instructional groups and planned for their explicit decoding lessons.

In order to support the candidates' understandings of the developmental trajectory of word learning and the corresponding pedagogical tools for teaching, the three teacher educators modeled explicit decoding lessons for three different stages of phonics development (sight words, CVC words, diphthongs). The course instructor also made different representations of

explicit decoding lessons available online, as well as provided examples of different lesson plans on the course website.

Weeks 7, 8, 9: The subsequent three weeks of the course revolved around understanding the developmental trajectory of phonics, although the candidates continued to develop other conceptual understandings. During this time, the candidates' taught in Teaching Team #2 - small group decoding lessons to the first graders. In addition to their teaching teams, they also led weekly one-on-one conferences with their fourth/fifth graders.

The format of the teaching cycle for the first-grade lessons was somewhat similar to the format of the fourth/fifth-grade lessons. This time, however, the candidates were required to submit a lesson plan ahead of time and the teacher educators provided feedback on the lesson plan before the class session. Upon arriving to class, the candidates were expected to have revised their lessons accordingly, and prepared all of the materials necessary for their lessons. During class, the candidates had opportunities to rehearse their lessons with their peers and a teacher educator, and then had time immediately after the teaching to debrief the teaching and learning. Finally, they were given time to begin the planning of their lessons, and the teacher educators and partner teacher circulated to provide guidance around objectives, text selection and word choice.

Like the fourth/fifth-grade lessons, the small group word identification lessons also increased complexity each week. For example, during week seven, the candidates were required to lead the first graders through the reading of a decodable text that aligned with the lesson objective. During week eight, in addition to reading a decodable text, the candidates were expected to lead the students through a word sort. During the final week of word identification

lessons, the candidates were expected to lead the students through a making words activity instead of a word sort.

At the same time, the candidates had the opportunity to continue learning about their fourth/fifth-grade student through one-on-one conferring. During week seven, eight and nine, the candidates conducted comprehension-based conferences with their students, each week attempting to try out something a bit different in the conference. For example, the first week, the candidates assessed their student by conducting a running record of their student's reading. In week eight, the candidates tried to push on their student's comprehension of the text by asking textually explicit and implicit questions.

Week 10: During the last class, the candidates got together and discussed the teaching and learning that occurred during their three weeks with their first graders in their Teaching Team #2. The candidates ultimately submitted an analysis of the teaching and learning for their individual lesson (assignment 3). Similarly, the candidates analyzed and synthesized their data and anecdotal notes of their work with their fourth/fifth graders. Ultimately, they wrote up the analysis and recommendations for future instruction in the form of a letter to the fourth/fifth-grade teacher (assignment 4).

Teacher Education Pedagogies in Practice-Based Coursework

The course instructor intentionally selected and developed pedagogies for the course so that the teacher candidates would have opportunities to develop conceptual understandings for teaching reading. Grossman (2005) broadly defines pedagogy into two separate categories: 1) classroom instruction and interactions during class time and 2) tasks and assignments. As it is difficult to make these two classifications here (all of the class interactions and tasks fed into the class assignments), I have formed one list to encapsulate the prevailing pedagogies of the course.

Listed below are the teacher education pedagogies utilized in this course to help facilitate candidates' understandings of these conceptual understandings and pedagogical tools.

Table 4: Pedagogical Features of Practice-Based Reading Coursework

Pedagogical Features of Practice-Based Reading Coursework	
Pedagogical Feature	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering communities of practice: Collaborative planning, analyzing and problem solving with a stable group of colleagues and children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates worked in two teaching teams with the same colleagues and students over a period of three weeks. They had multiple opportunities to plan, enact and analyze their teaching and students' understanding with each other.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close collaboration with school-based partner teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course instructor closely collaborated with first-grade teacher and fourth/fifth-grade teacher to help plan for instructional grouping and to further understand their students' needs. Partner teachers observed enactments, debrief with candidates and modeled lessons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering a focus on children's understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each candidate built a sustained relationship with a first-grade student and a fifth-grade student and met with this student for nine weeks. After each lesson, candidates used an analytical tool to help direct their attention to and analyze each student's learning and their teaching. Course assignments asked for in-depth analysis on student learning and understandings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple representations of practice (Grossman et al., 2009) to support adaption, <i>not</i> replication (teacher education demonstration lessons with students, video representations, cooperating teacher demonstration lessons) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When teaching about decoding lessons, teacher educators modeled three different types of decoding lessons to represent three different instructional strategies and lesson objectives, thus trying to show that not all decoding lessons will look the same depending on the developmental stage of the student. When learning about small group scaffolded comprehension lessons, the teacher educator provided video examples of these types of lessons at different developmental stages. She also did a scaffolded small group demonstration lesson with 5th graders from the partner school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public think alouds and decompositions (Grossman et al., 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After teacher educator modeled an instructional practice (e.g., small group comprehension lesson), she thought aloud in front of the candidates about

around representations of practice	her teaching moves and the student learning. Candidates had opportunities to ask about the various teacher moves in these lessons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific lesson plan feedback targeting both conceptual understandings and pedagogical tools (written) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each candidate was required to submit lesson plans to the teacher educators before they taught. They received in-depth written feedback and were expected to revise their lessons before teaching.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Lesson rehearsals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates were given time to rehearse their lessons with their community of practice before teaching the students. Teacher educators also provided in-the-moment feedback around word selection, pacing, think alouds, graphic representations and anticipating student difficulties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson enactments observed by peers/teacher educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates co-taught small group reading lessons and one explicit decoding mini-lessons to 1st and 5th grade students. Colleagues from the community of practice, teacher educators and cooperating teacher observed, at times offering in-the-moment feedback.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community of Practice Analysis of Teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All candidates analyzed the learning of each of the students who participated in their lesson immediately following the lesson and tried to connect this learning to their teaching. Teacher educators and cooperating teacher also listened, provided support and feedback to groups.

Conceptual Framing Revisited

Billett’s (2003, 2013) framework for professional learning guides my understanding of the participants’ learning in this course. In his 2013 article about transfer, Billett draws from the work of many sociocultural scholars to write about the significance of the learning environment for learning opportunities. He writes,

The social and physical circumstances, including the activities and interactions in which individuals (e.g. students) engage and through which they learn are important not only for the efficacy of learning, but the degree to which what is learnt is subsequently applicable (Beach, 1999). Whether referring to situated cognition (Brown, Collins, and Duguid,

1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991), anthropological accounts of embodying learning through practice (Jordan, 1989; Jordan, 2011; Marchand, 2008; Marchand, 2010a,b), embodied accounts of cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) or cognitive science accounts of grounded cognition (Barsalou, 2008), the circumstances in which individuals think, act and learn shape both learning and its recall, utilization or adaptability elsewhere. That is, there are consequences and legacies from social and physical circumstances where learning experiences occur. (p. 7)

Thus, as Billett (2013) suggests, by situating the course in a public school, designing mediated learning opportunities with first and fifth graders, and organizing the course content and pedagogies in a particular way that fostered learning when TCs were with children as well as away from them, the course instructor hoped to promote the outlined conceptual understandings and pedagogical content knowledge that the candidates would be able to recall, utilize and adapt at other times in their work with students.

For the teaching candidates, the overarching goal was to successfully pass the course, and consequently the participants acted in accordance with the situational demands of the coursework. For example, all the candidates utilized the lesson planning templates provided by the course instructor, and selected texts to read with their students from those that were pre-selected by the teacher educators. The teacher educators provided them with feedback on these lesson plans, and they were expected to make these changes accordingly. The graphic below applies Billett's framework for professional learning to the coursework. Note that the "situational practice" box is larger than the one presented in chapter two, as the candidates were expected use the tools and abide the by the expectations of the course when making decisions while teaching. However, it is also important to note that the candidates were encouraged to be thoughtfully

adaptive about their use of these tools in order to meet the needs of their students.

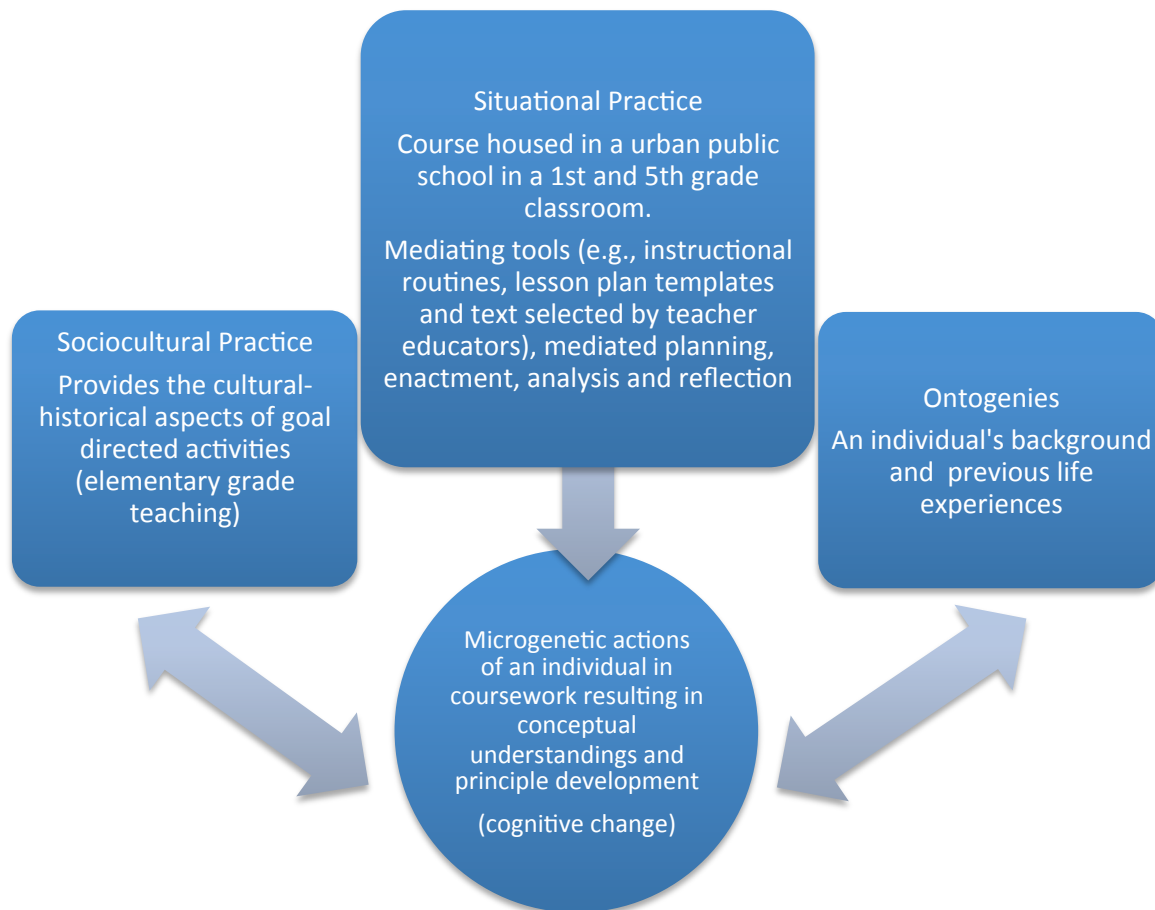


Figure 3: Adaption of Billett's (2003) Framework for Practice-Based Coursework

Findings

In the subsequent section, I present the findings of each participant's development during the practice-based course. Specifically, I answer the first question of my dissertation: *What were the participants' understandings of reading concepts and pedagogical tools experienced in a practice-based teacher education reading course? What experiences contribute to these understandings?*

Leira

Leira began the course very enthusiastic about teaching reading. Previously, Leira had taught for four years at a private, faith-based Montessori school, serving primarily East African students. She had decided to go back to school to earn her Master's in Teaching because her school was closing down and she felt that she needed to become a certified teacher in order to expand her job options outside of Montessori schools. She entered the program with a wealth of knowledge about children, and with lots of ideas about teaching and learning. Having emigrated from India at the age of 25, Leira was multilingual and showed a great interest in working with English Language Learners. She was a frequent contributor to class discussions and often stayed after class to talk with course instructors about questions that she had.

Team Teaching #1: Leira's work with fourth/fifth graders

In the second week of the course, the fourth/fifth-grade mentor teacher and the course instructor gathered the candidates together and modeled the process of using data to form instructional groups for the fourth/fifth-grade students. Based on reading levels and specific reading needs, Leira and three other candidates formed a group that would teach four students who were reading above grade-level.

Teaching Cycle #1: During the first teaching cycle, two of Leira's group members led a small group reading comprehension lesson using an excerpt from a novel. During the planning for this enactment, the group members specifically kept in mind Leira's buddy, Kabir. Kabir was often reluctant to share his thinking in small groups and read far slower than the other students. In the planning and enactment of the first lesson, the candidates tried hard to engage Kabir in the text-based conversations. However, in trying to engage Kabir, the pacing of their lesson slowed down. During one stopping point, the lead teachers realized that Kabir didn't know the answer to

a question because he hadn't had time to finish the reading. Consequently, the teachers tried to provide more time for Kabir to read the next section, resulting in a long delay of the lesson.

In the group debrief of this first enactment, the candidates seemed somewhat disheartened with their teaching. They discussed their pacing and concluded all their students, including Kabir, were bored with the lesson. A teacher educator talked with them about their enactment, and they discussed the problem of pacing to meet Kabir's need and how to engage everyone else while he was still reading. As they began to plan for the subsequent week, they grappled with the larger concept of the interrelationship between the reader, the text, and the activity. More specifically, they struggled with selecting a text that would be accessible to their readers ("*Can Kabir read this text?*" and "*It will be fine for Ellen...*"). Notably, the candidates talked about each of their students in relation to the two texts they were considering for the following week. By the end of the debrief, they narrowed down to a text that they thought three of the students would understand and enjoy, but they were still concerned about Kabir.

As the group members debriefed and prepared for their next lesson, they grappled with pedagogical tools that would support their students' learning. Specifically they discussed their stopping points and when and how frequently to stop during the reading, ("*We should do no more than two stopping points*"). They also struggled with selecting a content objective ("*I just have no idea what to write for a content objective for this text.*"). It is important to note these comments were fueled by their students' actions. Thus, in many ways, the candidates concerns and possible next steps were in response to what they perceived their students needed. The following excerpt from the group debrief highlights the way in which the candidates grappled with conceptual understandings (e.g., understanding their readers and the text) and pedagogical

tools (e.g., forming content objectives, planning stopping points and questions as a means to scaffold text):

Candidate 1: What we probably should do is plan this [referring to the harder and more challenging text option] and then adapt it for Kabir later, but not keep him as the focus as we are doing the actual planning.

Leira: I think so too. But the other thing is that we don't want to have more than two stopping points either, because, you see, at the end of this, Nick was bored. So if we have a longer text, we cannot have more than two stops.

Candidate 2: So let's all read this, and think of two stops and a content objective.

[Candidates read the text]

Leira: *[Referring to the selected text]* I think that we could ask a lot of questions about school and life back then.

Candidate 2: I can't think of a content objective.

Leira: I can't either.

Candidate 1: This story kind of nose dives off in the in ending. I feel like it is not a good ending.

Candidate 4: It could be a good question to ask after – make your own prediction of what is going to happen.

Candidate 1: Or how could you change this ending to make it more exciting?

Candidate 4: I cannot think of a content objective for this though. I mean, because it is already established that it takes place in the future.

Candidate 3: It could be something about the character, I mean, she does change.

Candidate 4: Like how she feels about school?

Candidate 1: Oh does she? Like she starts to like it at the end?

Candidate 4: Yes --

Instructor [making announcement]: OK, really quickly, we are out of time for today.

(Leira.BB.L1.debrief.2:25-7:55)

By the end of the debrief, the candidates felt they were in need of additional support on how to select an appropriate content objective for the text and how to tailor the lesson to fit their children's needs.

Teaching Cycle #2: In the week in-between classes, Leira and her co-teaching partner met with a teacher educator to discuss their upcoming lesson. They discussed the demands of the text, a content objective, possible stopping points, and how to differentiate their lesson to meet Kabir's needs. They also discussed ways to scaffold the students' understanding of this text and came up with the idea of representing the ideas from the text in a T-chart that they would collaboratively make with their students. Then, Leira and her co-teaching partner drafted a lesson plan that incorporated many of the ideas that surfaced in this discussion.

During the second lesson, the candidates took into account several of the revisions that they had discussed with the teacher educator. They scaffolded the text by setting a clear purpose for reading ("As you read, think about how this school is different from our school) and followed up on these questions during stopping points. The candidates also tried to facilitate meaningful text-based conversations with the students and visually represented the students' ideas on a chart. This time, when all the other students finished reading before Kabir, the Leira and her co-teacher were prepared to give the students a purposeful task while they waited. However, when they found themselves waiting too long, they moved on without letting Kabir finish the reading.

In the debrief of this second enactment, the candidates expressed that they felt better about their teaching and student engagement (“*they were really excited to talk about this text*”). One of the group members who observed this lesson brought up Kabir and how he was still struggling to read at the same pace as the other students, and often did not finish the reading before the stopping points.

Candidate 1: We noticed as far as Kabir, I mean we should pay attention to the other kids too, but Kabir needs more encouragement. But you guys were doing a good job during this lesson. I think that you were supporting him to just the right amount. Not too much to where it seemed all *Kabir*....

Leira: I actually thought that he was more engaged than the last time. What worked was he was sitting right in front of you [referring to the lead teacher]. You were constantly having his eye contact. In the first lesson he was on the side so he could get away, but today he could not get away. (Leira.BB.L2.debrief.0:14-0:34)

The candidates debated practical techniques that might help them (e.g., underlining the text vs. writing on sticky notes). They decided going forward that sticky notes would help engage the other students while Kabir finished reading. It is interesting to note here the candidates’ concern with student engagement and management, and their tendency to rely on external strategies to engage students, rather than focusing on the student learning of the text.

Teaching Cycle #3: While the 1st and 2nd enactments centered on fictional text, the focus of the 3rd enactment was on small group comprehension lessons of non-fiction texts. Leira had various concerns about writing a lesson plan for a piece of non-fiction text. In the rough draft of her lesson, the course instructor suggested that she rethink her introduction to the text to orient her students to reading “non-fiction.” Leira also struggled with the idea of scaffolding the harder

scientific vocabulary words that the text presented. The course instructor encouraged her to discuss the meaning of these words in context, and not to spend time pre-teaching the words.

In the enactment of this lesson, Leira took into account several aspects of the teacher educators' feedback. In her introduction, she built background for the text by introducing the title of the text and printing out several images that corresponded with the title. Then, she asked the students to examine the pictures and talk about their observations. She set a clear purpose for reading the non-fiction text (*"Today we are going to read about a factual article about Lockness Monster. Some people think it is real and some people think it is not. Scientists have been researching for evidence for the longest time and still can't agree."*) that got the students interested to read the article to find out more. As the students participated in a discussion, Leira and her co-teacher represented the students' ideas on a white board and pushed them to use evidence from the text to support their thinking. The students were eager to share their thoughts, however, Leira and her co-teacher had trouble facilitating a conversation in which the students' ideas built off one another.

The debrief of this third lesson had a remarkably different feel than the previous debriefs. The students had been much more engaged in this lesson, and were much more talkative than they had been in previous sessions. The candidates were surprised at how much background knowledge some of the students had with the content. All group members agreed that Kabir was much more engaged in the reading that day. Initially, the candidates discussed some of their lingering questions and goals about teaching small group reading comprehension lessons. Leira told the group, "now that we know our students and know more about guided reading lessons, we should focus more on the talk moves." Other candidates brought up questions around balancing participation. As the debrief continued, candidates began bringing up specific evidence around

what the students said during the lesson. Leira noted, “Even at the end, when we asked, what do you think about Nessie, they were pulling out facts from what they read, they weren’t not randomly saying bizarre things, they were pulling out evidence.”

What does this demonstrate? The experience of teaching a small group reading lesson allowed Leira and her group members the opportunity to develop conceptual understandings for teaching reading, specifically in thinking about the interrelationship between the reader and the text. The group members consistently raised concerns for Kabir’s placement in the group, and tried to figure out how to balance his needs with the needs of the rest of the group. This experience also pushed the candidates to explore the conceptual understanding of the reading process; specifically that Kabir’s making meaning of text was dependent upon slower reading (fluency) to monitor his comprehension. The candidates ultimately decided that, despite Kabir’s slow rate of reading, this group placement was fitting for him because he was able to access the content and deeper textual ideas when given enough time to complete the reading.

During these multiple enactments, the candidates also grappled with pedagogical tools to support their students’ understandings during the small group reading comprehension lessons. They struggled at times with text selection, identifying appropriate content objectives, and asking higher-level questions to push their students’ comprehension. As the focus of the text shifted from fiction to non-fiction, the group members struggled to apply what they had learned about fiction to meet the demands of non-fiction text (e.g., how to build background, approach difficult vocabulary words). However, this genre shift also provided additional insight into the relationship between the reader and text by allowing the candidates to see how students engage in non-fiction reading and how background knowledge can support and interfere with comprehension.

Across the three lessons, the nature of the debriefs shift from a focus on teacher actions and practical techniques (e.g., “we should use sticky notes” and “we should change their seats”) to student actions (e.g., “Did you notice that Kabir was reading faster today?” And “Did you hear that Ellen referenced the text when she was talking about sonar?”). This shift may be due to the candidates’ increased familiarity with their readers, the text, and the task as well as their increased familiarity with and flexible use of pedagogical tools that support scaffolded reading lessons (e.g., building background knowledge, representing student ideas, developing content objectives, determining stopping points).

After the three weeks of group work, Leira had the opportunity to work with Kabir for three more weeks. During this time, she conferred with Kabir about his independent reading and conducted a running record to assess how well he was able to read and understand a book he had self-selected. In her analysis of Kabir as a reader, she demonstrated knowledge of the reading process and was able to successfully integrate observations about his reading into meaningful conclusions about his strengths and areas for improvement. She wrote, “Although Kabir’s comprehension was strong, and was able to identify most of the words, characters, and events as more important to overall meaning, I noticed that he needed a lot of probing and prompting to communicate/ explain about the happening of the story and explain his reasoning. Sometimes his retelling was random and did not follow logical sequence. He only answered when asked a question.”

What does Leira’s continued work with Kabir demonstrate? Leira was able to utilize some of the pedagogical tools and instructional routines for teaching reading (analysis of running records, conferring, and questioning to monitor comprehension) to paint a picture of Kabir’s reading. Notably, on her recommendations, Leira did not address Kabir’s slow rate of reading,

which as evidenced above, was problematic for the small group scaffolded reading comprehension lessons. Most likely, Leira felt that this rate did not interfere with his comprehension when he was given ample time to read. However, if not addressed, Kabir's rate could eventually become problematic for his comprehension as texts increase in complexity. Leira needed additional help in understanding that his slow rate would need to be addressed for him to progress in his reading.

Teaching Team #2: Work with first graders

Leira worked with another participant, Anna, for the Teaching Team #2 cycles. Her development is analyzed with Anna's development in the subsequent section.

Anna

Like Leira, Anna also had a background in working with children in a school setting. Before entering in the Master's in Teaching Program, Anna had served for two years as an AmeriCorps literacy volunteer. During her time as a volunteer, she administered a variety of reading assessments and worked with students in need of remedial reading support on a one-on-one basis. She was really enthusiastic about learning more about teaching reading, and was a frequent contributor to class discussions.

Teaching Team #1: Anna's work with fourth/fifth graders

Lesson Cycle #1: For the small group reading comprehension lessons, Anna worked with a group of four students who were reading on grade level. For their first lesson, Anna and her co-teacher designed a lesson using an excerpt from a novel. They created a content objective to focus the students' understandings on the sequence of events. They planned purposeful stopping points to support the students' comprehension and to try to engage the students in discussion of

the text. It is important to note that this teaching team did not hand in rough drafts of lesson plans, for this was not a requirement at this point in the course.

During the first enactment, Anna and her co-teacher worked hard to adapt their lesson to meet the needs of their students. At times they weren't quite sure if their students understood their questions as only one student, Peter, consistently answered their questions. The candidates rephrased and restated their questions to try to engage the other students in purposeful talk around the text. At one point, Anna and her co-teacher whisper-read with the students to assess whether or not the text was at the right level for the three other students. When the students were more reluctant to talk, the candidates jumped in and shared their own thinking, at times doing some of the hard thinking for their students. Ultimately, the lesson was very teacher-centered.

During the first debrief, Anna her group members discussed their wonderings about the relationship between the reader and the text. Due to their use of the pedagogical tool of whisper reading, they discerned that their students could read the text, so they were unsure why the students were reluctant to share their thinking. At one point in the debrief, the candidates turned their attention to their questions and discussed the possibility that their questions were worded somewhat confusingly. Anna and her co-teacher talked about how, in the moment of teaching, they realized their questions didn't quite capture a main understanding of the text. Her co-teacher explained: "It struck me, as we were doing the lesson, not when we were preparing, maybe what would give them a sense of that would be taking about the feeling behind it. That's why I interjected with the question 'have you ever dreaded something so much that you imagined it happened' although maybe that was unclear" (Anna.BB.L1.debrief). When the teacher educator entered the debrief, she joined the conversation about the questions that the candidates asked and pushed the candidates to think about the purpose behind their questions. Ultimately, the

candidates realized their content objective didn't encapsulate the main understandings of the text. They also realized that they had scaffolded their questions too much. Anna concluded the debrief by stating the importance of knowing your kids. "We didn't know who we were dealing with today – now we know the importance of knowing your kids" (Anna.BB.L1.debrief).

Lesson Cycle #2: During the second lesson, two of Anna's colleagues took the lead on the planning and the enactment. This time, the candidates selected a harder text because they felt they could push their students more developmentally. During the lesson enactment, it became evident that the candidates did not have a clear lesson objective and consequently didn't push their students toward the essential understandings of the text. For example, the building background questions that they asked had little to do with the main idea of the text. Their questions drew their students' attention towards different textual ideas and ultimately it was unclear what the students understood from this lesson.

During the debrief of this lesson, the candidates who taught the lesson were overly concerned with the lack of participation. The lead teachers lamented that the students didn't want to participate and the candidates focused their attention towards strategies to improve participation and engagement. They failed to make the connection between the students' lack of engagement and participation to the students' understandings of the text. When a teacher educator arrived to debrief with the candidates, she encouraged the candidates to think about how they might have taught this lesson differently. One of the lead teachers mentioned that she would have "asked more direct questions" but still failed to link these questions to the bigger problem of their unclear content objective.

Lesson Cycle #3: For the final lesson, the candidates selected a non-fiction text to read with the students. At the beginning of the lesson, the candidates tried to build background to the

text by drawing students' attention to the features of non-fiction text (e.g., they had the students look at the headings, photographs and captures to think about what the text would be about). Although they understood the purpose of building background, they directed the students' attention to many different aspects of the text and thus the purpose of their background building questions was somewhat unclear. Throughout the lesson, however, the co-teachers tried to push the students towards the essential understandings of the text and asked the students to provide specific evidence to support their thinking. However, the candidates failed to anticipate the challenges with this particular non-fiction text (e.g., different scientists had different theories about the mystery animal) and at times it was hard for the candidates to follow the students' thinking.

During the debrief, the candidates reflected that this lesson "felt harder" for them to teach. But, as Anna mentioned, this lesson most likely pushed the students' thinking in ways that the previous lessons hadn't. She said, "You were pushing them to their limits of thinking, whereas in my lesson I felt like I was beating a dead horse. In your lesson, they were struggling, but that was good for their learning" (Anna.BB.L3.debrief). The candidates debated whether or not the questions that they asked were "too leading" and a teacher educator complemented them on thoughtfully adapting questions in the moment to purposefully scaffold comprehension.

What does this demonstrate? Anna's work in Teaching Team #1 demonstrates the candidates' developing conceptual understandings of the reader, text and task. Noticeably, Anna and her colleagues struggled with discerning the main ideas from text and creating appropriate content objectives for their students. Consequently, they struggled at times to engage students with purposeful questions that promoted comprehension. It is important to note, however, that by the third enactment the lead candidates had more clarity on their overall lesson objective and

thus asked more purposeful questions to scaffold comprehension. Anna's teaching team was extremely supportive of each other's teaching, however, they could have benefited from explicit feedback on their lesson plans *before* they taught to better understand how to create content objectives that captured main textual ideas and how to align questions to these objectives. Arguably, the candidates could have even benefited from a tool to analyze text that might have helped them discern main ideas and anticipate challenges.

Teaching Team #2: Anna and Leira's work with first graders

Immediately after the three weeks of teaching the small group reading comprehension lessons to the fourth/fifth graders, the candidates began to plan for small group decoding lessons for their first-grade students. Upon assessing their little buddies using the Houghton/Mifflin diagnostic, participants Anna and Leira (who was her partner in this work) analyzed their data and concluded that both of their buddies would benefit from explicit instruction of short vowels and digraphs. Thus, both participants worked in the same teaching team while teaching the primary-aged students. Throughout their group's three weeks of teaching phonics to their first graders, Anna and Leira taught the first lesson together, observed their peers teach the 2nd lesson, and taught the final lesson together.

Lesson Cycle #1: Anna took the primary responsibility for planning the first lesson for the first graders. Overall, she demonstrated a developing understanding of the typical trajectory of learning phonics. She also demonstrated related pedagogical content knowledge in designing learning experiences that included phonemic awareness, explicit instruction, modeling, guided practice and pushing on comprehension in decodable texts. In a written comment on Anna's first lesson plan, the course instructor mentioned that Anna would need to model blending the words when having the students read them in isolation. In multiple written comments, the course

instructor advised Anna to pay attention to the responses from the students – thus encouraging her to use these tools flexibly in the moment of teaching.

Anna and Leira’s enactment of the first lesson demonstrated beginning understandings of the pedagogical tools (e.g., phoneme isolation, incorporating developmentally appropriate words, providing opportunities for students to practice reading new words in isolation and in context) associated with explicit decoding lessons. Anna noticeably, however, did not model how to blend the word thus not responding to the feedback from the course instructor. For example, during the enactment, the students read the words somewhat successfully when the /th/ digraph appeared at the beginning of the word, but the students were unsure of what to do when they got to a /th/ digraph at the end of the word. This might have been avoided had the candidates modeled how to blend words that both start *and* end with the /th/ digraph.

Noticeably, the majority of Leira and Anna’s first debrief focused on student learning and the needs of their students. This focus on student learning is a shift from the more teacher-centered debriefs evident in Leira and Anna’s earlier lessons in Teaching Team #1 (the first three lessons with their fourth/fifth-grade students). For example, from the beginning, group members expressed concern for Julia, a first grader, and her placement in the group. Anna and the other group members struggled to make sense of Julia’s running record data, and the cooperating teacher’s recommendations for this student. This conversation surfaced confusion around decodable texts and leveled texts, and candidates questioned the accuracy of book leveling (“level D seems harder than level E”). Similarly, the conversation surfaced questions about the accuracy of running records (“I mean – I only had the opportunity to read six short pages with her, my results might not be accurate.”) The group did a fair amount of problem solving together

revealing their deepening conceptual understandings of the reading process, and using their understandings of reading skills, strategies, and processes to scaffold instruction.

When the course instructor came to talk with the group, she helped to further the candidates' pedagogical content knowledge by both clarifying some of their misconceptions and providing feedback on the teaching. First, she clarified the difference between leveled texts and decodable texts. She also continued ask questions about Julia's reading and continued to think with the candidates about Julia's placement in this group.

In terms of providing feedback on the teaching, the course instructor first praised the clarity of their teaching and the pacing of the lesson. Then, she commented on the blending and pushed Anna to think about modeling blending the words. Anna agreed that a "more hands on" approach would benefit the students. The course instructor also commented on the choice of words used in the lesson and a long conversation around word choice ensued (how to pick words, and the idea of teaching for generalization). At the end of the debrief, the candidates expressed concern for how to differentiate in the guided reading portion of the lesson. The course instructor encouraged their various ideas for differentiation and exited the debrief leaving the decision of how to differentiate up to the candidates.

Lesson Cycle #3: By the third lesson, Anna and Leira had figured out ways to keep their students more actively engaged with the lesson. They modeled how to blend the new sound at the beginning of a word (e.g., chat, chin) and modeled how to blend the new sound at the end of the word (e.g., pinch, punch). They carefully selected only short vowel words to use in the lesson, as these types of words represented the students' developmental stage. They provided opportunities for the students to decode the words in isolation and in-context, and also were attentive to word meanings (e.g., "Does anyone know what the word chum means?") Thus, over

the course of the three lessons, the candidates demonstrated deeper understandings of the developmental trajectory of word learning and the pedagogical tools (e.g., word selection, blending, decoding in-context and out-of-context) associated with explicit decoding lessons. During the final debrief, their discussion moved into a sophisticated analysis of the interaction between word identification, fluency and comprehension. Leira noted that her student read extremely slowly, however, the group, prompted by a teacher educator, agreed that this was because she was trying to apply the new decoding skill while reading. The debrief ended with AV talking about the important of making meaning – especially in decoding lessons.

What does this demonstrate? Anna and Leira’s experiences planning, enacting and debriefing the first-grade decoding lessons demonstrate that the candidates were deeply trying to make sense of their individual readers, and attempting to target instruction to support their needs. Each debrief focused on observations and evidence of learning from their students. Their case also demonstrates that the enactments with students surfaced problems of practice (e.g., text leveling, homogenous grouping, word selection) and fueled conversations that were mediated by teaching team members and teacher educators.

Anna and Leira’s experiences also demonstrate the importance of multiple enactments with the same group over time in developing reading conceptual understandings and pedagogical content knowledge. For example, although Anna was directed to do more blending in feedback on her first lesson plan, she was unable to incorporate this feedback into her first lesson enactment. However, in the first debrief, her colleagues pointed out that some of the kids had trouble blending, and the course instructor also mentioned the importance of modeling and guided practice around blending. By the third enactment, Anna clearly modeled blending, and provided the students several opportunities to do so.

During the last three weeks of the course, Anna worked with Peter, a fifth grade student, who, she wrote, was an “intelligent young man and an excellent reader” (Anna, coursework, assignment 4). Similar to Leira, Anna demonstrated understandings of the reading process through this assignment. For example, in her analysis of Peter’s reading, Anna was thoughtful about the role that fluency played in Peter’s comprehension. She wrote: “He read in large, meaningful phrases with attention to punctuation and with appropriate intonation. He read the text with appropriate changes in voice expression that reflected comprehension of the text and added dramatic emphasis” (Anna, coursework, assignment 4).

In contrast to Leira, Anna did offer specific instructional strategies that she believed would aid Peter’s comprehension. She wrote that he would benefit from explicit instruction around “making predictions” and “self-monitoring for vocabulary.” However, she herself noted that she wasn’t sure that Peter couldn’t do these things; she just didn’t see specific evidence of him making predictions and figuring out unknown words during their time together.

Rachel

Rachel entered the Master’s in Teaching Program without extensive previous work with children in school settings. She had been working as an administrative assistant and nanny for three years before deciding to go back to school to get her teaching degree. She worked extremely hard while in the program, and often reached out to the course instructor and teacher educators with questions. She was an active listener during class discussions and lectures, and was open and receptive to feedback on her lesson plans and her teaching. She often mentioned how she felt much more comfortable working with first graders (the grade of her student teaching placement), and how nervous she felt working with the older students.

Teaching Team #1: Work with fourth/fifth graders

During her work with the fourth/fifth graders, Rachel and her colleagues worked with a group of four students reading below grade level. Although data is somewhat limited on her work with the small group scaffolded reading lessons with fourth/fifth graders, the available data (Rachel's written lesson reflection, audio debrief from lesson cycle #3) suggests that the group members struggled creating targeted learning opportunities for their students. During the first two enactments, the group members expressed concern to a teacher educator that their students were "fake reading." At times, they questioned whether or not the students actually understood the text. The third enactment, however, marked an improvement from the previous two enactments. Below is an excerpt from the final group debrief in which the candidates try to understand their readers' increased engagement by analyzing the readers, the text and the task:

Candidate 3: I felt like Luke was more engaged today than before. I don't know if it was non-fiction...

Rachel: Or that Tima was gone....

Candidate 2: It could have been a different roster, or more engaging material.

Candidate 1: He seemed really engaged with the KWL chart.

Candidate 2: I was so excited that Luke was engaged, I kind of forgot about Noelia.

[Skip ahead]

Rachel: I think we all did a great job.

Candidate 1: It felt like a good day.

Rachel: I mean, while there were moments that were harder, like when they were talking too long, or fidgeting with the paper, but I felt like they got a lot out of this one.

Candidate 2: Me too.

Rachel: I mean, they were referring back to the chart, and, we got off topic when they were talking about scraps of metal and making homes, but I feel like for the most part they got it.

Candidate 3: I mean, towards the end, I noticed a lot of talking about others' ideas, like, I'm going to add on to that, it was really cool to see. (Rachel.BB.G2.D3.0:11 – 2:52)

As evident from this debrief, the candidates began their conversation with references to student engagement and then transitioned into discussing a more focused moment of student learning. A little later on during this debrief, a teacher educator came to join their debrief. The teacher educator had been present during their third lesson enactment, and had worked with the group during the previous few enactments. As this group struggled a fair bit more than the other groups, the teacher educators spent a lot of time debriefing and coaching this group of candidates. Upon entering the debrief, the teacher educator complemented the candidates' on their text choice (e.g., "the text seemed like a good length for your students") and on the specific ways they scaffolded the text to make it available to the students (e.g., drawing students' attention to text features, highlighting important ideas, stopping points). She also asked some questions to push on the candidates' thinking. Below is an excerpt from the debrief:

Teacher educator: We talked previously about how you felt like some of them [the students] don't really read the text and aren't able to summarize in their heads what is happening. So when you ask them what is happening, the students go back and just read you lines from the text. Did you notice that today?

Candidate 3: I didn't really notice that today.

Candidate 4: I noticed that with Alex. However, Noelia did a good job of telling me in her own words what was happening when I asked her.

Candidate 3: I think that the KWL chart might have really helped with that, because they had to summarize what they were reading.

Teacher educator: Yes, the visual representation of text ideas really helps.

Rachel.BB.G2.D3.8:11-8:52

The teacher candidates and teacher educator continued to talk about the pedagogical tools that worked well for their students (e.g., they showed pictures help build more background about the topic of the text; they selected a text on which the children had lots of background knowledge; they visually represented student ideas; they asked questions to promote content understandings) and discussed possible solutions to lingering questions about lesson implementation (e.g., how to curtail lengthy responses; how to ensure students answered questions using their own words). It is evident during this debrief that this was the first time the candidates felt like their students were successful in understanding the text.

What does this demonstrate? Rachel and her group members initially struggled in understanding their readers (e.g., how to scaffold their lessons to meet their needs and promote learning). During the first two lessons, the candidates were unsure if their students actually comprehended the passages that they were reading. The candidates were also thrown by the management problems that ensued, and were unsure of how to redirect the students in the moment of teaching. By the third enactment, Rachel and her colleagues had selected a text that the students could access and designed learning opportunities to help support their comprehension of the text. A teacher educator spent time with the group during the debrief to ensure that Rachel and her group members understood the teacher decisions and actions that lead the students to success (e.g., text selection, types of questions, visuals). In comparison to her colleagues, Rachel often seemed to focus more on teacher actions and student behavior (“*my CT*

handles this situation like this;” “the kids were playing with the papers and fidgeting a lot”).

Although the group as a whole made improvements in their instruction and consequently student learning throughout the three weeks, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which Rachel attributed this improvement to instructional decisions or management decisions.

Teaching Team #2: Work with first graders

Rachel’s concerns about management and student behavior are also evident throughout her small group work with her first-grade students. Upon assessing her first-grade student, Tim, using a phonics diagnostic, Rachel successfully identified him as a student in need of sight word instruction. She grouped Tim with two other students with similar needs and together they formed a group that focused on the needs of emergent readers.

Lesson cycle #1: Rachel was the first candidate in her small group to teach an explicit decoding lesson. On the rough draft of her lesson plan, she struggled in understanding the developmental trajectory of phonics and pedagogical tools associated with teaching decoding (e.g., how to select words and guided practice activities that were developmentally appropriate for her students; how to push students’ comprehension in word work lessons). On this first draft of her lesson plan, the course instructor addressed several of these misunderstandings by writing many comments (21) on Rachel’s lesson plan to push her thinking.

Rachel’s enactment with her small group proved challenging for her. Although she tried to implement many of the instructor’s suggestions on the lesson plan, it was clear that she didn’t understand the developmental needs of her group of students. Throughout her teaching of the lesson, she struggled to maintain the students’ engagement, in part because she didn’t understand how to teach sight words to emergent readers. She tried to emulate some of the pedagogical strategies that she saw in a class demonstration lesson, however, due to her lack of

understandings of principles and pedagogical tools, she was unable to adapt these instructional strategies to the needs of her group of students. One of the instructor's comments on the lesson plan was to do more guided work with the words in context; however, Rachel chose to spend more time with the sight words in isolation. This suggests that Rachel lost sight of the purpose of reading (making meaning) and implemented a pedagogical tool without thinking deeply about its purpose. Consequently, she lost the focus of her students, and management problems ensued.

In Rachel's group debrief of the lesson, she and the other candidates initially commented on all the management and behavioral issues that surfaced during the teaching. They began their debrief by sharing behavior management ideas ("sticker chart") that would motivate the students to stay focused during the small group work. In terms of gauging their students' understanding of the decoding lesson, Rachel commented, "when we whisper read with them [the students], they got it but I don't know if they [the students] really learned the words" (LB_G1_L1_audio debrief). At this point, the teacher educator present guided the debrief conversation to have the candidates think about the conceptual approach to teaching sight words. However, once she left the debrief, the candidates' conversation returned to management strategies to try out the next week.

Lesson cycle #2: In the following week's lesson, Rachel observed another group member teach the same group of students. Like Rachel, this group member struggled conceptually with understanding the developmental level of these students. The group member tried to contextualize the sight words based on the instructor's feedback, but only had a surface level understanding of the appropriate instructional strategies. For example, at one point, the candidate had the kids touch, say, and spell the sight words, but did not push the students to look at the sight words as they attempted to spell them. At this point, the instructor stepped in to the lesson

and asked the students to point to each letter as they spelled the word. In this lesson, the candidate implemented two new management techniques, a sticker incentive chart and whisper phones, to try to help with the management. In their debrief of the lesson, RP and her colleagues agreed that the management was “better” but still needed some work. As the candidates discussed steps for next week, they grappled with how to include a “making words” routine into their lesson. Consequently, they decided to shift the emphasis away from sight words and decided they would focus on a word family in a subsequent lesson. (It is interesting to note that the teacher educators had encouraged Rachel and her colleagues to think about teaching the students word families from week one.)

Lesson cycle #3: In the final lesson, the third candidate proved much more successful than the previous candidates. She decided to teach an “at” word family lesson, based on the guidance of the instructor and the requirement to incorporate “making words,” a blending instructional technique, into the lesson. This candidate also emphasized book reading far more than the previous two candidates, thus demonstrating that she understood that the purpose of reading is to construct meaning of text. The students were actively engaged throughout the lesson and were excited to be able to successfully read a book at the end of the lesson. RP remarked to the 3rd candidate in the debrief, “you didn’t even do any special management stuff” (LB_G1_L3, audio). At the end of the debrief, the teacher educator present remarked, “When you know your students, you can really get to their zone of proximal development.” To which Rachel replied, “You just brought in Vygotsky! Amazing!”

What does this demonstrate? Although Rachel initially struggled with understanding the needs of her readers and the pedagogical content knowledge and tools associated with readers at this developmental level, by the end of the third week, she had started to understand the

importance of designing lessons that met the needs of her group of students and the importance of providing them with meaningful experiences to comprehend text. Initially, the group had unsuccessfully adopted pedagogical tools for teaching reading that they had observed in demonstration lessons or had read about in texts. However, by the end of the third lesson, they were able to adapt these tools for their students. Conversations, lesson plans, and debriefs with teacher educators directed these candidates to think about adapting these tools and helped to deepen their understandings of these tools. The feedback from the course instructor also helped the candidates view their initial struggles as conceptual problems, rather than management issues.

After the three weeks of teaching the fourth/fifth-grade groups, Rachel continued to work with her 5th-grade student, Tima, to learn more about his reading. On multiple occasions throughout a class assignment, she noted that Tima needed work on comprehension, although she did not fully elaborate on what that would entail. She mentioned that throughout their work together, Tima would read past unknown words without trying “to stop and determine what that word means.” She wrote that “together we worked on using metacognitive strategies to ensure that he understands everything he is reading and going back to try and use strategies when he doesn’t. While his basic understanding of the plotline seems strong, I think continuing to practice metacognition could really help him with the details and intricacies within the book”(Rachel, coursework, assignment 4). Thus, Rachel clearly labeled the problem of this student, demonstrating an understanding of her reader and the reading process. Noticeably, she also attempted to pinpoint instructional goals for her student’s comprehension.

Throughout her work with Tima, Rachel was successfully able to use some of the pedagogical tools for assessing reading (completing running records, conferring, using data to

analyze a student's strengths/areas of need) that were targeted in this course. She also thought deeply about the role that motivation and engagement played in her student's reading. RP demonstrated beginning understandings of reading comprehension instructional strategies, which seem to align with her status as a novice teacher. Her inability to reconcile his difficulties with comprehension to specific more instructional strategies could be due in part to the fact that she had not had any opportunity to practice explicit strategy instruction. By the end of the class, the teacher candidates had read *about* specific strategy instruction, but had not yet had the opportunity to teach comprehension strategy mini-lessons, or had mediated opportunities to select strategy mini-lessons based on student need. In other words, Rachel was not familiar enough with reading strategies as an instructional tool and conceptual tool - and consequently could not identify possible lessons for Tima.

Isabel

Isabel entered the Master's in Teaching program after three years of working as a business consultant. She was passionate about teaching and working with students, although she did not have extensive experience working with students in school settings. She was a frequent participator in class discussions, and viewed as a leader by members of her cohort. She was an extremely hard worker, and often stayed after class to ask the teacher educators questions about her instruction or about the course content.

Teaching Team #1: Work with fourth/fifth graders

Although data is somewhat limited on Isabel's work with her fourth/fifth-grade students, evidence from existing data (a revised lesson plan and written reflection) suggests that the work with the small group helped to develop Isabel's understandings of several of the pedagogical tools associated with small group scaffolded reading comprehension lessons. For example, Isabel

and a colleague taught in the second lesson cycle and demonstrated understanding of the pedagogical tools of understanding of building background before reading, setting a clear purpose for the students and trying to facilitate a text-based discussion. At one point, when the students did not understand an essential component to the story, Isabel adjusted her lesson plan in the moment so that she could ask a question that would address this misunderstanding. In this particular enactment, it seemed that Isabel and her colleague were challenged by balancing participation and by keeping the essential understandings of the text at the forefront of the conversation. The group members noted these challenges in their group summary writing:

For the next lesson, we would work on pairing and seating of the students for more effective and even participation. With this group, we could also use more turn and talks to allow everyone to share. The students made strides in their ability to use the text for evidence and to be able to share those ideas, but we could still work on implementing and acknowledging use of group norms. These students could also use more emphasis on connecting the parts of the story across the whole text and not focus so much on the single sections separately. (Isabel.BB.G3.writtenreflection).

Teaching Team #2: Work with first graders

After the three weeks of group work with the fourth/fifth graders, Isabel transitioned to focusing on first-grade small group decoding lessons. Upon assessing their little buddies, Isabel and her colleagues determined that they would all benefit from explicit instruction of words with short-vowel patterns. Throughout her three weeks of working with this groups of students, Isabel observed her colleagues teach the first lesson, co-taught the second lesson, and observed her colleagues teach the third lesson. (Data for this teaching team is also somewhat limited. The

following analysis stems from rough and final lesson plans, written reflections and videos of these lessons.)

Lesson cycle #1: In the group's first enactment of the small group explicit decoding lesson, Isabel's colleagues struggled in both their conceptual understandings of the developmental trajectory of teaching phonics and in the scaffolding of the explicit teaching of their lesson. For example, they had difficulty identifying a specific objective to teach to their students. On the rough draft of their lesson plan, they mentioned wanting to teach the short /a/ sound and the short /I/ sound, however, they didn't write how they planned to model the sound nor did they provide any guided opportunities for the students to practice. Similarly, the words that they selected for their word sort were a mixture of CVC words and blends. The teacher educator provided directive feedback on the lesson plan. For example, to encourage modeling she wrote: "Model how you blend the short /i/ sound in CVC words. 'Watch as I blend this word using the /i/ sound like igloo. /P/-/I/-/G/ – what word – PIG! Watch me do another one: /B/-/I/-G/ What word? BIG!' You might do a few more to model" (Isabel.LB.LP1). The candidates, however, did not incorporate this type of modeling into their teaching during the first enactment.

Lesson cycle #2: When Isabel took the lead during the second enactment; she too struggled with how to incorporate components of explicit teaching into her written lesson plan. This time a different teacher educator provided written feedback on her lesson, also telling her directly that she needed to model blending the words and provided her examples of how to do this work. During the enactment, Isabel incorporated this feedback by adopting the exact same words and examples the teacher educator had suggested. As a result of taking up this feedback, Isabel consequently had new insights about the difficulties some students have when learning how to blend new sounds to make words. Upon reflecting upon this aspect of her teaching, she

wrote: “Some students really had trouble here, but were drowned out by others. Give time for individual practice here” (Isabel.LB.analysis of teaching).

Lesson cycle #3: By the third enactment, the candidates seemed to have a much better grasp on some of the pedagogical tools (e.g., modeling, word choice, in-context reading opportunities) associated with the explicit decoding lessons. In the rough draft of their plan, the candidates included opportunities for modeling and guided practice, as well as sentences for the students to practice reading the words in context. Although the modeling component was somewhat rushed in the enactment, the lead teacher was able to do some reteaching on the spot, based on her informal assessments of the students. (Interestingly, the teacher educator had predicted this might happen and had commented on the lesson plan that the teachers may need to do more modeling.) By this third enactment, the candidates seemed to have a better conceptual sense of the developmental needs of their students, as evidenced by the words and texts that they selected to read with their students.

In her own reflection on the teaching of these lessons, Isabel analyzed the students’ learning using evidence from their in-context and out-of-context reading, and was able to tie in other parts of the reading process (e.g., fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) into her overall analysis of student learning. Interestingly, Isabel identified student engagement (e.g., using colorful visuals) as a strength in her teaching and pacing as an area for improvement. While these were certainly areas of strength and improvement, Isabel did not talk about the role that modeling and guided practice played in her students’ understanding, thus not explicitly connecting her teaching actions with the student learning.

What does this demonstrate? It is clear that Isabel and her colleagues struggled initially in making sense of the needs of their readers, and how to explicitly teach phonics to their students.

Even when the teacher educators gave clear and directive feedback (model *this* way using *these* words), the candidates initially had difficulty understanding this feedback and incorporating it into their lessons. However, by the third enactment, the Isabel and her colleagues demonstrated improvement in their understanding of explicit teaching. Most likely, multiple opportunities for practice (three enactments) and multiple occasions and modes for feedback (written lesson plan feedback, rehearsals, lesson debriefs) contributed to the eventual understandings. However, it is interesting to note that Isabel's analysis of her teaching and the student learning does not actually reflect some of the deep learning that took place in her work with the students over the three weeks.

Looking Across Cases in Reading Practice-Based Coursework

Ontogenetic Development (Cognitive Change)

Leira, Rachel, Anna and Isabel developed conceptual understandings and pedagogical content knowledge throughout the practice-based coursework. These participants entered the program with different background experiences, but, to varying degrees, they were able to utilize and adapt pedagogical tools for teaching reading presented in the coursework during the teaching of their students. The opportunity for mediated use of these tools through selected instructional routines furthered the participants' pedagogical content knowledge. Below, I discuss important findings from the analysis of each participant and attempt to understand these findings through the lens of my conceptual framework.

Rachel entered the course with definitive ideas about student engagement, management and learning. Initially, her reflections on her work with both the intermediate and primary students seemed to focus on management and techniques for improving management, rather than on the content of the instruction and the developmental needs of her students. Thus, her initial

sense-making (or construal) of the teaching and learning stemmed from ontogenetic beliefs about management and learning. Although she initially tried to reconcile the teaching and learning problems to management problems, the teacher educators consistently pushed her and her colleagues to think about the developmental needs of her readers. By the end of the group work, her group adjusted the focus of the instruction and management problems subsequently decreased. The decision to adjust their practice can be attributed to the situational factors of the course (e.g., mediation of the teacher educators, demands of the lessons, multiple enactments, debriefs and analysis with members of the community of practice). Rachel's comment at the end of the last debrief about adjusting instruction to meet the needs of learners indicates a shift in her thinking. In Billett's (2003) words, Rachel's and her group members constructed knowledge through moment-by-moment problem solving, which consequently led to ontogenetic development (cognitive change). This shift suggests that the mediated, practice-based experiences in the coursework allowed Rachel to develop conceptual reading understandings, specifically the concept of understanding the interrelationship between the reader, text and task.

Similar to Rachel, the practice-based coursework advanced Leira's pedagogical content knowledge and thus produced a change in Leira's thinking about the relationship between student engagement and instructional content. Leira and her group members' concern about Kabir's learning and engagement dominated the group's planning and debriefing sessions. As in Rachel's case, Leira and her group members initially made decisions to try to engage Kabir and the other students based on their ontogenetic experiences and beliefs about student learning. However, in the third enactment, Leira and her group members experienced an enormous increase in student engagement as a result of providing the students with a less challenging, non-fiction text. The decision to switch genres and to choose a less challenging text can be attributed

to the situational factors of the course. The teacher educators highly encouraged these candidates to read a shorter text with their students. The course instructor also required the last enactment to center around non-fiction. The changes that the group members made during the last debrief resulted in much more engaged and inquisitive students. Consequently, these mediated learning opportunities positively impacted Leira's ontogenetic development by furthering her understanding of the relationships between the reader, the text and the task.

In terms of Anna's case, her understandings of the reading process and pedagogical content knowledge developed throughout the practice-based experiences and mediated debriefs in the course. Data from Anna's case frequently shows that Anna was grappling with understanding the relationships between a student's fluency, word identification, vocabulary and comprehension. As she had previously worked as an AmeriCorps reading tutor, she entered the program having assessed many students in reading. One of the tests that she frequently administered was DIBELS, an assessment that focuses on a student's word identification and rate (words per minute). (It is important to note that the DIBELS assessment has been criticized for its lack of comprehensiveness – on many versions of the assessment that schools employ, there are no measures of comprehension.) Throughout the quarter, Anna used different reading assessment tools presented in the course (decoding diagnostic, running records, whisper reading, informal questioning) to try to understand her student's reading for the purpose of instruction. During the last debrief, Anna worked hard to reconcile the difficulties she noticed her student had with fluency to the student's decoding and comprehension abilities. At the end of the debrief, Anna understood that her student was reading so slowly because she was working hard to decode words with the sound she had just taught. Anna, thinking in terms of assessment *for* instructional purposes, concluded with a teacher educator that it would be a worthwhile exercise to have the

student read the text twice – the first time to practice decoding the new words in context, and the second time to read with greater ease and attention towards comprehension. This cognitive change in Anna’s understanding of teaching reading can be attributed to situational factors of the course – Anna was expected to assess students so that she could better adapt instruction for the needs of a student. The experience of problem solving with teacher educators and her colleagues during the debrief proved to be a moment of mediated construal, reconciliation and construction (Billett, 2013). The teacher educator helped Anna construe what she had just experienced in the moment of teaching, and helped her reconcile these observations to conceptual understandings of the reading process, and helped her construct ideas of how to move forward with instruction.

Situational Factors Contributing to Learning

A few notable themes emerged when looking across the cases at the situational factors that contributed to the development of these understandings.

First and foremost, the mediated experiences of working with and teaching to elementary-grade students served as valuable opportunities for the participants to develop their conceptual understandings, pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical tools for teaching reading. For example, Rachel and her colleagues initially designed decoding lessons for their students that developmentally did not match the needs of their readers. Their students’ disengagement with the lessons and inability to reach the teaching objectives pushed the candidates to better understand the needs of emergent readers and to adapt pedagogical tools to teach emergent readers. Similarly, Anna had an important realization about the relationship between fluency, decoding and comprehension when she whispered read with a student after a decoding lesson. Upon hearing her student’s labored reading of the passage, Anna realized that her student’s expression and rate was impacted by her slow decoding of the new sound in

context.

Another theme that emerged was the importance of multiple enactments with the same group of learners. For example, in Leira's work in the small group reading comprehension lessons, the candidates were originally unsuccessful in trying to engage their students in text-based conversations. Throughout the three weeks, however, they became more familiar with leading small group reading lessons and they learned more about the needs of their students. Consequently, by the third week, Leira and her colleagues were able to design and implement lessons targeted to meet their students' needs.

Similarly, when looking at one enactment in isolation, it is difficult to gauge the candidates' understandings of the developmental trajectory of phonics. However, the participants were expected to develop lessons that built off one another, and the resulting questions like, *did they get it?* and *what should we focus on next week?* focused their attention to their students' learning and needs. For example, after two enactments of focusing on sight words, Rachel and her colleagues switched the focus of their lesson to teaching their students the *-at* word family. This third enactment provided Rachel's group with a deeper insight into the needs of emergent readers ("they loved reading the big book and they felt so successful"), and also demonstrated to Rachel and her colleagues the connection to management and appropriately targeted lessons ("there weren't any management problems today!"). Thus, multiple enactments enabled the candidates more time and experiences working with students to develop their understanding of the phonics trajectory.

A third theme that continuously emerged was the importance of the community of practice, and, more specifically, ample time to debrief with group members and teacher educators after each enactment. Each participant's group spent a large amount of time problem

solving about the teaching and learning that occurred in the enactments. Group members offered positive feedback (e.g. “That was a really good question”) and constructive feedback (e.g., “I think that the text we picked was too hard”). These conversations often surfaced problems of practice that went beyond the scope of the enactments (e.g., how do leveled texts correspond with decodable texts? How accurate is one running record and is it enough data to use when forming need-based groups?). Often times, candidates asked these types of questions to the teacher educators when they came to join the group debrief. Thus, the enactments and debriefs surfaced questions and conversations about teaching reading that otherwise would not have occurred in the absence of these opportunities.

A final theme that emerged in each case was around the nature and the efficacy of the instructors’ feedback. Within this theme, I discuss the two forms of feedback (written and oral) provided in the practice-based coursework.

Oral feedback: The teacher educators took on different roles, at times acting as collaborators, at times acting as coaches (Lipton & Wellman, 2007) during the debriefs. Often, the teacher educators took a collaborator stance in which they co-developed solutions and next steps with the teaching teams. As the teacher educators were not present for the entire lesson or debrief (they moved between two groups), they usually asked the candidates to “fill them in” on their teaching and reflections, rather than entering the conversations with specific points of focus. This approach facilitated critical reflection and encouraged the candidates to thoughtfully utilize pedagogical tools instead of implementing them because they were instructed to do so. At other times, the teacher educators took a coaching stance in which they provided teacher candidates with explicit recommendations for next steps. Often this stance was taken with candidates who struggled in their lesson enactments and didn’t yet have the pedagogical content

knowledge to do sufficient problem solving. For example, during the first and second lesson enactments, the candidates frequently reflected that their pacing, student management and student engagement “were off.” During these moments, the teacher educators took a coaching stance to direct the candidates in thinking why pacing, management and engagement seemed problematic (e.g., text level, text selection, types of questions asked, students’ background knowledge, in need of more scaffolding).

The teacher educators and partner teachers purposively provided oral feedback to different teaching teams each week. This offered teaching teams different perspectives on their teaching and problem solving. At times, the candidates noted congruence across the different sources of feedback (“*that’s was Ms. Laura told us last week*”). Hearing similar perspectives from different sources often made the feedback more powerful. Particularly noteworthy was the sense of legitimacy that the partner teachers brought to the debriefs. Candidates expressed appreciation from hearing about what the partner teachers “*actually*” did with students and from learning more about their individual students. At times, however, the candidates interpreted contradictions in oral feedback (“*we never received feedback that our questions were too hard, this is the first we are hearing about this*”). Although the teacher educators and partner teachers worked hard to share a similar vision of teaching and learning, these contradictions at times became problematic and potentially represented moments of illegitimacy (e.g., candidates feeling like what they learned in coursework didn’t actually represent real aspects of teaching).

Written feedback: For Teaching Team #1 (the enactments with the fourth/fifth graders), the candidates were not required to submit lesson plans before they taught their lesson. Findings from Teaching Team #1 suggest that the candidates struggled during these lessons in their own analyses of the selected texts and their development of content objectives. Subsequently, in

several cases, poor analyses of texts and ill-matched content objectives led to inappropriate questioning and ineffectual teaching. I argue that pedagogical tools like text analysis and content-objective development should be developed *before* enactments. While enactments with students further pedagogical content knowledge and deeper understandings of pedagogical tools, candidates can only develop this knowledge by working from well thought out lesson plans. Having observed this pattern in Teaching Team #1, the course instructor required that the candidates submit lesson plans before the enactments in Teaching Team #2. As a result, each teaching team received feedback on their lessons via email before they taught, and this feedback was forwarded to every member of the group. Looking at the differences across Teaching Teams #1 and Teaching Teams #2, the quality of instruction seemed to improve. This could be attributed to two reasons: 1) the candidates had received in depth written feedback on their plans ahead of time and 2) the cumulative coursework experiences that enabled the candidates to be more thoughtfully adaptive in the second-half of the course.

Upon looking closely at the written feedback, it is important to note that at times the candidates received written and oral feedback that they were unable to implement right away. In two instances, the nature of the feedback was conceptually based around the developmental needs of the learners. For example, on one lesson plan, a teacher educator wrote: *“For kids at this level, I would also want to include some phonemic awareness in the lesson, maybe some letter sounds as well (do they know their consonant sounds yet?) or a basic decoding lesson using the –at family. Three sight words is a good number of sight words but not enough for a 30-minute lesson. These kids need more opportunities for instruction and LOTS of guided practice.”* In other instances, the feedback was much more directive. (*“The biggest issue is that there isn't modeling and guided practice --teaching the sound and how to apply it to CVC words*

to read these new words. It's something along the lines of: Now that we've practice hearing the /o/ sound, I want you to watch as I read words with the "o" sound! t - o - p Stretch the sounds T-O-P. Teacher uses it in a sentence to be sure the kids understand meaning.") In both instances of directive and non-directive feedback, the candidates struggled in understanding how to implement this feedback when teaching their lessons. In many ways, the feedback was intended to model problem solving and to provide the candidates with ownership of the solutions. However, it became clear that at times the candidates didn't have the pedagogical content knowledge on their own to understand and adapt this feedback. Such findings raise questions such as: Is a protocol needed to help candidates make sense of lesson feedback? Is there another, more effective way, of providing lesson plan feedback so that it will better support the informed used of tools and the development of pedagogical content knowledge?

Chapter 5: Findings From Student Teaching

(Winter and Spring Quarter, 2013)

This chapter focuses on my findings from the participants' student teaching experiences. Specifically, I am seeking to answer the questions: *How do teacher candidates who have experienced a practice-based reading course engage and think about teaching reading in the student teaching context? How does their experience in a practice-based reading course interact with their student teaching experience to influence their thinking and practices during student teaching? How do situational factors constrain or afford opportunities to develop these understandings?* In order to answer these questions, first I provide a general overview of the situational factors of the participants' student teaching placements. Next, I describe the coursework and programmatic demands of the candidates during the winter and spring quarters. Then, I present and analyze the findings from each participant's student teaching experience. Finally, I look across the cases to understand the participants' development and factors that contribute to their development.

Situational Factors of Placement

The four participants were placed at university partner schools for their yearlong student teaching placement. Leira, Anna, and Isabel were placed in the same large, urban school district, and Rachel was placed in a suburban district closer to her hometown. Their cooperating teachers ranged in years of teaching (4-20), and also ranged in their experience mentoring teacher candidates. Three of the four cooperating teachers were alumni of the same Master's in Teaching Program, but none had been enrolled in a PBTE course.

In addition to the majority of the cooperating teachers having strong ties to the university, each of the partner schools had a fairly strong university presence. Anna and Isabel were placed

at Stone Hill K-8 School, the same school in which the practice-based reading course was taught. Isabel’s cooperating teacher served as the cooperating first-grade teacher in the methods course, and thus had first hand knowledge of what the candidates learned in their literacy coursework. The site coordinator at Stone Hill was also a cooperating teacher for the math methods practice-based course. She took her job extremely seriously and each month held meetings with the eight teacher candidates at the school site to talk about teaching and problems the candidates were facing in student teaching. Similarly, Leira was placed at Lake View Elementary School with six other teacher candidates. Lake View Elementary School was also the site in which the other cohort of the elementary Master’s in Teaching Program met for both the reading and the math methods courses, although their mentor teachers hadn’t participated in any PBTE coursework. Finally, Rachel’s placement school, Seahurst Elementary School, was somewhat of a recent partner school, however there were six other teacher candidates in the building. See Table 5 for a more detailed description of the participants and their school settings.

Table 5: Overview of Student Teaching Placements

Participants’ Student Teaching Placement, Cooperating Teacher, Supervisor and School Background								
	Grade/location	CT Teacher Yrs/ Number of Student Teachers	CTs connection to University	University Supervisor : Yrs as supervisor	School Percentage Mtg Rdg Standards	School Percentage Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	School Percent Students of Color	Reading curriculum
Leira	4 th /5 th urban	20/5	Non-alum	3	62%	60%	75%	TC Reader’s Workshop
Anna	2 nd - urban	4/1	Alum	20	77%	39%	45%	TC Reader’s Workshop
Rachel	1 st - suburban	6/2	Alum	2	65%	68%	76%	Journeys – strict adherence
Isabel	1 st - urban	8/3	Alum	20	77%	39%	45%	TC Reader’s Workshop

In terms of the reading curriculum utilized in the placements, Leira, Anna and Isabel’s cooperating teachers all utilized (to different extents) the Teacher’s College Units of Study

(Calkins et al., 2010) and described their reading program as Reader's Workshop. In general, when these participants talked about "doing reader's workshop," they meant that each day they taught a whole class reading mini-lesson that focused on some type of comprehension strategy, and then the students tried to apply the reading comprehension strategy in independent level (or "just-right") texts of their choice. While the students read independently, the teachers conducted one-on-one conferences with individual students or led small group reading lessons with students grouped by need. In contrast, Rachel's district adopted the Houghton Mifflin Journey's Curriculum, which Rachel's cooperating teacher utilized to help her teach reading. The district also mandated all first grade teachers to utilize a phonics program, which Rachel's cooperating teacher used on a daily basis. While the practice-based reading coursework did not adhere to a specific curriculum nor did it name a specific approach, the course focused on the conceptual development of learning to read in the hopes that the candidates would be able to utilize these understandings in whatever context they taught. (These understandings are described in greater depth in chapter four.)

Programmatic Components During Student Teaching

In January 2013, the participants began the third quarter of their Master's in Teaching Program. During this time, they attended classes at the University on Monday and Tuesday. One of these classes was the third and final literacy course in their Master's in Teaching Program, which primarily focused on writing. Nevertheless, the first assignment in the course was a reading assignment, which, in many ways, was an extension of the practice-based reading course. For this assignment, the candidates were expected to teach a reading strategy mini-lesson and a follow-up small group comprehension lesson in their placement classrooms. The pedagogical content knowledge associated with these instructional routines (e.g., scaffolding

comprehension of the text, differentiating reading instruction to meet the needs of learners, understanding the reading process) had been the focus of the practice-based reading coursework, and the hope was that this assignment would provide the candidates with an opportunity to meaningfully apply these concepts and re-contextualize them in their placement classrooms. As a part of the assignment, they submitted lesson plans to the course instructor before they taught the lesson. The course instructor and teaching assistant provided detailed feedback on the lesson plans, the candidates revised the lesson plans accordingly, and then taught the lesson in their placement classrooms. Ultimately, each candidate submitted a video of their teaching, a written analysis of the teaching and learning and a revised lesson plan. This assignment was an important data point for this study as the nature of the assignment pushed the candidates to demonstrate adaptive learning in a context outside of the course.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of the winter 2012 quarter, the candidates went to their placements. As the quarter progressed, they took a more active role in the planning and teaching in their classrooms. The candidates were observed three times by their University supervisor during the winter quarter. As noted in Table 5, the experiences and the backgrounds of the university supervisors varied greatly. Both Isabel and Anna were coached by a supervisor who had extensive knowledge about the expectations of the program, as well as extensive knowledge about general practices of elementary teaching. Rachel's supervisor was in her 2nd year of coaching and identified her area of expertise as elementary mathematics. In fact, Rachel's supervisor had never taught elementary reading. Finally, Leira's supervisor had taught elementary school for 13 years, and was involved in both the math and literacy programs at the university. However, she described her area of expertise as multicultural education, and did not consider literacy as one of her areas of concentration. Consequently, although each of the

university supervisors held extensive knowledge and experience with elementary school teachers and students, none of the supervisors considered reading as an area of expertise.

In March of 2013, the participants completed their university coursework and moved into the fourth and final quarter of their Master's in Teaching Program. During this time, the candidates were in their student teaching placements Monday – Friday and were expected to lead-teach for the majority of the day. As a part of the program requirements, the participants were observed for four times during the 4th quarter. The participants also completed the Teacher Performance Assessment (Stanford Center for Assessment Learning and Equity, 2012) otherwise known as the edTPA, a nationally available performance assessment of readiness to teach for novices. The edTPA required the candidates to design, implement, and reflect upon three to five consecutive lessons in either math or literacy. All four participants were randomly assigned literacy for the subject of their edTPA and all chose to focus on reading.

The following case studies document the experiences of the participants as they moved into their full time student teaching. As noted in the methods section in chapter three, I interviewed and observed the candidates twice during their student teaching experiences. I also conducted informal interviews and observed the majority of their cooperating teachers while they taught whole class lessons or worked with students. Finally, I reviewed various documents and artifacts such as written lesson plans and written reflections on teaching. These interviews, observations, and documents were coded and analyzed to help me understand how the participants engaged and thought about teaching reading in the student teaching context. I wrote a case study for each participant, and looked to understand their develop of reading principles and pedagogical content knowledge. In the subsequent sections, I present these findings and then I discuss the similarities and differences across these unique cases.

Rachel

Overview

In interviews with Rachel about her student teaching placement, she often pointed out how happy she was about her classroom, school and cooperating teacher. Her cooperating teacher, Christina, was a graduate of the same Master's in Teaching Program and was "really supportive" of Rachel's development. Christina was also the site coordinator for the university, and demonstrated a deep commitment to helping the student teachers in her building. Rachel once mentioned in an interview that she felt so "lucky to be placed with such a supportive and wonderful teacher" (Rachel. ST#1.interview).

Rachel reflected that the practice-based reading coursework was important to her development as a teacher because it allowed her more opportunities to understand first graders and their reading development. In an interview, she said:

I mean I tell people who have gone through other teacher preparation programs how much experience that we get with kids before we actually have to do it with our kids in our placements and I feel like that's incredibly helpful. To get that practice. And to get to try it out before we come here. (Rachel.ST#1.interview.lines288-291)

Demonstrating Thoughtfully Adaptive Teaching

An analysis of Rachel's data suggests that the practice-based coursework helped Rachel thoughtfully adapt her teacher's phonics lessons so that she could meet the needs of the students who needed extra decoding and linguistic support. During my one observation of Rachel's explicit phonics instruction, I observed Rachel utilizing understandings from her practice-based coursework to help her construe, reconcile and construct responses to teaching phonics in her

student-teaching placement. For example, when describing the phonics lessons in her classroom, Rachel used the practice-based coursework as a frame of reference to help explain the type of instruction that was happening in her classroom. She mentioned that the phonics lessons done in her placement were similar to the ones she had done in the methods courses, but the lessons were taught whole class instead of in small, need-based groups. Rachel thought that the whole class lessons done in her placement were necessary because “most of the kids needed phonics” (Rachel. ST#1.interview). However, in an observation of Rachel teaching this phonics lesson, Rachel demonstrated attention to individual differences and needs when she pulled a small group after the phonics lessons and provided extra scaffolding of the blending of the particular sound. She explained that this was a slight adaption of her cooperating teacher’s routine – however, she felt it necessary to hold a few of the kids on the carpet so that she could continue working with them until they “got it.” Thus, even though the approaches to phonics lessons in her student teaching placement were structurally different than the ones that she had learned about, Rachel was able to reconcile (or make sense of) the phonics lesson in her placement and construct responses that met the needs of her learners.

Situational Constraints on Rachel’s Development

In other instances, Rachel construed and reconciled what she was experiencing to what she learned in the practice-based coursework, but she was unable to construct responses that aligned to what she learned in the coursework because of constraints in situational factors. One such example of this can be seen in Rachel’s perceptions of the guided reading instruction in her placement. Ms. Christina had organized her students into six reading groups and tried to meet with at least two groups a day. Rachel explained that these groups were similar in some ways to the small group reading comprehension lessons done in the coursework, but also somewhat

different. They were similar in terms of the process of forming need-based groups; as in the methods class, Ms. Christina and Rachel assessed their students and formed groups depending on the instructional reading level of the students. They were different in terms of instructional approaches; during guided reading, Ms. Christina had each student read a page aloud and then retell the story as opposed to the coursework approach of asking comprehension questions as a way to scaffold reading comprehension and trying to foster some discussion after reading. Rachel noted that initially she had been doing guided reading like she had learned in coursework, but Ms. Christina “wasn’t that into that. So, instead of the way we learned it when the kids will be reading to self and we will stop and talk about what we’ve read, hers is more like a round robin kind of thing. So, I’m upholding her wishes” (Rachel.ST#1.interview.lines 121-124). Rachel verbally expressed her desire to try out some of the pedagogical tools that she had learned in coursework, like asking a variety of questions to promote and further comprehension and stopping and talking about the content of the book, but she also wanted to respect her cooperating teacher’s methods. She mentioned that these types of lessons frequently “took longer” and she wanted to keep to the tight schedule of the reading groups. Thus, Rachel’s actions and responses in the moment of guided reading tended to align more with the situational factors of her placement.

There are two ways to explain what contributed to Rachel’s rationale. First, Rachel felt that she needed to “negotiate terrain” (Valencia et al., 2009) and felt that her role was to mimic and imitate her cooperating teacher. The second explanation is that Rachel did not fully understand how to adapt these pedagogical tools for teaching reading in her placement classroom, perhaps because she hadn’t developed these understandings well enough in the practice-based reading coursework.

Challenges to Teaching Reading

In the previous two examples, Rachel was able to draw upon her experiences and principles from the practice-based coursework to help her construe and reconcile the reading instruction in her placement. Although she was sometimes unable to construct responses that she felt were appropriate due to perceived situational constraints or limited understandings of pedagogical tools, her experiences from the practice-based coursework made her think more deeply about approaches to phonics instruction and small group scaffolded comprehension lessons in her placement.

In contrast, Rachel had much greater difficulty trying to teach explicit comprehension lessons to her students because her cooperating teacher did not teach these types of lessons and she did not have opportunities to design, implement and reflect on these types of lessons in the practice-based coursework. The absence of the teaching of explicit reading comprehension strategies in her placement became problematic during the first field-based assignment for *Teaching and Learning Literacy III*. As a part of this assignment, the candidates were expected to design and implement a reading comprehension strategy mini-lesson and a follow-up small group reading comprehension lesson. This was the first time that the candidates were expected to teach a mini-lesson for their coursework, although they had seen and discussed multiple examples of mini-lessons in the practice-based reading course in the fall practice-based class.

This task was a point of tension for Rachel. In an interview about the reading instruction in her placement, Rachel commented: “Ms. Christina’s focus has mostly been on phonics – I haven’t found that she teaches a lot of strategies. Which, if you want an example of a disconnect of what I’m learning at school to what I’m doing in the field – she really isn’t, or at least I

haven't seen her, maybe she has when I'm not here, teaching the strategies"

(Rachel.ST#1.interview, lines 23-27).

This task also lacked concrete frames of reference for Rachel. Rachel had previously demonstrated thoughtful adaption of phonics lessons and had demonstrated deep thinking around small group reading comprehension lessons in her placement, but had relied on her practice-based coursework to help her understand these approaches. Unfortunately, the candidates did not have opportunity to teach mini-lessons in their practice-based coursework, and instead, learned about explicit strategy instruction through course readings, lectures and representations of practice. Thus, for this assignment, Rachel was not re-contextualizing explicit comprehension lessons, but rather contextualizing these lessons for the first time.

To help her understand how to do this work in her classroom, Rachel reached out to the course instructor and asked for help in designing her reading lesson. Specifically, she had problems identifying a reading process objective for her lesson, making her modeling of the strategy "student-friendly," and understanding how the students could apply the comprehension strategy in the lesson. A teacher educator and Rachel met to discuss this plan and to address some of Rachel's misunderstandings and to figure out how to contextualize this lesson in Rachel's placement. Thus, Rachel needed a lot of support in realizing this lesson as she did not: 1) have a model of explicit teaching of strategies to construe in her placement, and 2) did not have a frame of reference from the practice-based coursework to draw upon.

In addition to needing help in the design and implementation of these lessons, Rachel clearly needed help *understanding* the learning that occurred in her lesson. Unfortunately, Rachel did not feel successful about the implementation of this field-based assignment and inadvertently, the experience reinforced two false beliefs. First, Rachel felt that the lesson

“failed” because of behavior issues and alluded to the idea that these types of lessons were not developmentally appropriate for first graders. For example, she felt that the lesson went on for too long, and as result her students were not engaged in the lesson. She wrote that she needed to:

Find a balance between meeting expectations for the assignment, and keeping the lesson brief enough to not lose student’s engagement. At almost the end of the video, I am significantly losing attention of students and potentially their meeting of the desired objective because of this. (Rachel.ST.assignment1reflection, lines 615-620)

It is interesting here that Rachel reverts back to former beliefs about the relationship among management and engagement and learning. During her coursework, when her lessons did not go well, she initially blamed the students’ behavior and pedagogical tools rather than thinking deeply about the appropriateness of those tools in relation to the students’ development. During coursework, Rachel’s colleagues had long discussions about the students’ behavior in their lessons and teacher educators focused them to think about the instructional moves and scaffolding to help explain and solve management issues, rather than focus on management issues alone. In the comprehension lessons, Rachel’s focus returns to management issues to help explain why her students struggled in the lesson, most likely because she needed additional mediation in helping her to understand how she might have taught the lesson differently.

The second false belief that emerged as a result of this experience was the idea that explicit comprehension lessons are not appropriate for students still learning to decode. This is evident from Rachel’s analysis of her guided reading lesson. Rachel concluded that four of her five students needed additional practice with the strategy, while one student, Karol, seemed to really understand the ideas of making inferences while reading. Rachel wrote:

Karol also has the highest reading level of all of the students in the group, which means that this lesson formatting was most appropriate for her... Karol has a high interest in reading and has told me before that her favorite part of school is small group reading, which could have an influence on her engagement and subsequent understanding of this reading strategy. (Rachel.ST.assignment1 reflection, lines 587-595)

It is interesting to note Rachel's underlying assumption about teaching reading comprehension strategies to emergent readers. She attributed Karol's success in the comprehension lesson to the fact that Karol was a strong reader (i.e., decoder) and therefore ready for comprehension instruction. Here, we see Rachel express a belief that first a child needs to learn to decode before they can focus on comprehension. While one of the purposes of this assignment was to demonstrate to the candidates the importance of comprehension instruction at any age, Rachel was not accustomed to seeing comprehension instruction in her classroom and needed additional mediation to help her understand the importance of teaching comprehension strategies to first-grade students. Unfortunately, her coach did not have a background in elementary reading and could not support Rachel in understanding that decoding instruction was just one part of a complete reading program. Even though Rachel had demonstrated an understanding of the reading process (the relationship between comprehension, fluency and decoding) in coursework, she didn't have any frames of reference from coursework about what it looks like to teach teaching comprehension strategies to first-grade students.

Anna

Overview

Anna was originally placed at Glendale Elementary School, however, due to administrative and personnel changes at the school, the program director at the University

switched her placement after the winter vacation. Thus, in January 2013, Anna began her student teaching experience at Stone Hill K-8 in a second grade classroom. Her cooperating teacher, Jennifer, had been teaching for four years and was an alumna of the same Master's in Teaching program. Anna often expressed her gratitude for being in such a "warm and inviting classroom" and "felt really welcomed into her new school community" (Anna.ST.#1.interview).

Anna described the reading instruction in her classroom as the "Calkin's reading workshop model" (Anna.ST#1.interview.line10). For Anna, this meant that each day she would teach a strategy mini-lesson from the Units of Study curriculum, and at the end of lesson the students would go back to their seats and apply the strategy to their independent reading books. Anna did a lot of one-on-one conferring, and either she or her CT met with one reading group per day in which they led a small group strategy lesson. Two years prior, Stone Hill School had adopted the Teacher's College Units of Study for the school's reading curriculum and most of the teachers followed the curriculum. Before teaching each unit, Jennifer, Anna and the other second grade teachers got together and discussed the upcoming unit and wrote out the teaching points for each day on a calendar. They did a fair amount of collaborative lesson planning each week and worked hard to stay on the same pacing schedule in their respective classes.

Anna reflected that the practice-based coursework was helpful to her because it forced her to think more deeply about the instruction that took place in her classroom. She specifically referenced the small group scaffolded reading comprehension lessons done with the 1st and 5th graders as helpful to her in thinking about pushing kids' comprehension through asking a variety of questions.

Situational Constraints on Anna's Development

An analysis of Anna's data from her student teaching demonstrates that the coursework did in fact shape Anna's thinking and understandings of her classroom instruction. Due to her status as a teacher candidate, however, Anna did not always feel like she could act on these understandings as she felt they went against her cooperating teacher's way of doing things. Anna felt confined to follow her cooperating teacher's mini-lesson structure, but she knew that conceptually this mini-lesson model did not allow her to be responsive to student's needs. Anna expressed this frustration after an observation in which she demonstrated a lack of responsiveness to students' misconceptions. During this observation, Anna's objective for the students was to identify the problem and solution of a story. During the explicit teaching of the lesson, she had explained and defined the terms problem and solution. Then, she began reading "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and she asked the students to put their thumbs up when they heard the problem in the story. As she read, students put their thumbs up when they thought they heard the problem. Anna did not stop reading to address the fact that so many of the students thought they heard the problem and were visibly confused (as there are many perceived problems in the story). Although Anna's lesson had the surface features of the guided release of responsibility instructional scaffolding, she did not address the fact that many times stories have multiple problems and solutions, nor did she engage students in a meaningful discussion around the problem and the solution in the text. Thus, upon observation, Anna seemed like she was "going through the motions" of teaching a reading mini-lesson, without demonstrating a deep understanding of the strategy or responsiveness to students' misunderstandings

In the debrief following the lesson, Anna mentioned feeling frustrated at the rigid mini-lesson structure that she perceived the curriculum demanded she follow. Anna mentioned that

she felt responsible to teach in the same way as her cooperating teacher. Jennifer tried to adhere to a ten-minute mini-lesson, and Anna had felt rushed to complete the mini-lesson in ten minutes and to keep to Jennifer's structural routines. She alluded to the fact that the curriculum's mini-lesson structure did not allow time and space to address students' misunderstandings:

One thing that I struggle with Reader's and Writer's is doing a short mini-lesson that packs a lot in 10 to 15 minutes and teaches the whole group, while still making sure that ELL students and students with special learning needs are getting everything and understanding everything that they should be understanding from this short lesson where they are not even allowed, I mean, they turn and talk. And then we just say, "I think this, or I heard that" so there's not eliciting answers. (Anna.ST#1.interview.lines 198-203).

Here, we see a contradiction between ontogeny and situational factors – Anna expressed wanting to stop, ask more clarifying questions and focus more on the content of the story, but she felt that this type of responsive teaching wasn't supposed to happen during reader's workshop. .

Interestingly, the cooperating teacher did not intervene to help Anna address these misunderstandings, which could be due to a few possible factors: 1) her own limited pedagogical content knowledge; 2) feeling unclear about her role as a teacher educator in Anna's development; 3) not wanted to intervene during an observed lesson. Anna constructed a response that was in alignment to the situational factors she perceived in her placement and went against her stated ontogenetic beliefs and experiences from coursework. Consequently, she had limited opportunities to develop her own pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical tools for teaching. As noted in Rachel's case, although Anna blamed situational factors for inhibiting her ability to be thoughtfully adaption, another possible explanation is that she lacked the knowledge on *how* to be adaptive in the moment.

Demonstrating Thoughtfully Adaptive Teaching

In a second observation, however, Anna was able to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the pedagogical tools of scaffolding comprehension. In this lesson, Anna taught a follow-up small group mini-lesson to three EL students. She began this lesson in a similar fashion to the whole group lesson that she had just taught by asking the students to put their thumbs up if they heard the problem in the story. Soon into the reading, she began scaffolding vocabulary in the text. She explained the meaning of a few key words as she read, and then stopped to ask comprehension- monitoring questions to her students. After this lesson, Anna talked about why she focused more on the content of the story in this small-group lesson. She explained:

So I knew going into it that I would have to do some scaffolding. So I thought about scripting and looking through my questions before hand, but that is not something that I would normally do unless I knew you were coming in, so I decided not to do it. So as I was reading, and coming across words like ball, part of my questions on that, or I would explain what a ball was because I could guess that they probably didn't know what one was. Some of my comprehension questions were a quick formative assessment because if they aren't understanding the story, how are we going to talk about the problem and the solution? And then some of them were like, oh, maybe you didn't understand this part. Let me ask a question and if you hadn't understood we will talk about that.

(Anna.ST#1.interview.lines325-333)

Anna's ability to provide in-the-moment scaffolding shows that she had both the pedagogical tools and the conceptual understandings of how to scaffold student learning while engaged with texts, determine essential content understandings, and assess and respond to student understandings. She felt less constrained in this lesson because of the more fluid structure to the

small group work in her placement and the fact that she designed this lesson with the three specific learners in mind. In her interview, she specifically referenced the guided reading lessons that she taught in the practice-based coursework as helpful in guiding the design and implementation of this lesson. She explained:

I think, one thing that I think about, especially in the guided reading, is the guided readings that we did with Ms. T's class and with Laura's class. As far as how to pace the guided reading and how to think about the three different kinds of questions.

(Anna.ST#1.interview.lines.270-272)

Anna's coach, Catherine, had been working in the elementary teacher education program for over 20 years and was supportive of Anna's teaching. Although she did not have literacy-specific background, on multiple occasions she did push Anna to elicit more responses from students during her lesson. Anna acknowledged that this was a tension that she often felt between her situational demands at Stone Hill and the outside expectations from her University. She mentioned that "whenever Catherine comes in and observes me in Reader's or Writer's she says, "elicit some examples of this vocabulary to ensure that all students understand it." But the reader's and writer's models don't really allow for this..." (Anna.ST#1.interview.lines.203-206).

During Anna's student teaching, she demonstrates knowledge of reading principles and some thoughtful adaption of pedagogical tools to support her students' learning. In student teaching, she was able to draw upon her experiences and understandings in coursework to help her be more adaptive to her students' needs during small group reading lessons. Anna's perceptions of what was allowed by her cooperating teacher and curriculum somewhat limited her further development of pedagogical tools for teaching reading. She perceived differences in goals and approaches, and at times was unable to be thoughtfully adaptive because she didn't

have sufficient pedagogical content knowledge to support her understandings of the curriculum and what she saw her cooperating teacher doing. Anna could have benefited from curriculum support, and additional reading-specific feedback around her teaching and ideas for adapting instruction to meet the needs of her students in mini-lessons.

Isabel

Overview

Like Anna, Isabel began her student teaching at Glendale Elementary School, but was switched to Stone Hill School in the winter of 2013. She was placed with Ms. Laura, the first-grade teacher who was the cooperating teacher in practice-based reading course. Ms. Laura was a graduate of same Teacher Education Program many years earlier, and had previously mentored three other student teachers from the university. Isabel and Ms. Laura got along very well and both expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work together.

Isabel perceived the elements of the coursework to be helpful when she felt that they directly impacted and aligned with her student teaching classroom. For example, Isabel felt that working with the first graders in coursework really helped her once she got to her first-grade placement classroom. She said:

The biggest thing, where I feel confident to do that was our real practice that we did in first-grade. I mean, I'm also in a first-grade class, and that was so helpful to see that and practice doing that and the language with just that small group.

(Isabel.interviewST#1.lines206-208)

Additionally, Isabel commented that the practice implementing and analyzing the running records assessment in the coursework was really helpful because she saw it done in her student teaching setting. She explained,

I am so glad that we did the running records stuff. And the assessment stuff. And having to keep track of data and what's out there. Because... I've seen like all of that. Those different ones, and a few other ones. And I feel so much more confident just talking about them... (Isabel.interviewST#1.lines266-271)

Re-contextualizing Understandings in Student Teaching

An analysis of Isabel's data suggests that she was able to deepen some of her understandings from coursework by re-contextualizing these understandings and practices in her student teaching placement. During two observations and two interviews, Isabel demonstrated an understanding of the reading process through her instructional decisions and analysis of students' understandings. One such example of this can be seen in her rationale for selecting a text for a small-group strategy lesson. She said:

This text is perfect for this group of students because it is at independent/instructional level for all of them. The students can all decode the story easily, so they can focus on using the comprehension strategy and learning the content rather than working on decoding the text or reading with fluency. (Isabel.Winter Assignment.lines31-34)

Similarly, Isabel demonstrated an understanding of the reading process when she conferred with two students about a book that they were reading together. After having the students read aloud to her, she asked them a series of explicit and implicit comprehension questions and concluded that the students were not monitoring their comprehension as they read. In an interview after the observation, she explained:

The two boys, Harry and Max, fly through books, but when you say what happened they are not really sure. So I was like, I want to challenge you. Try to slow down and see if you can keep track of what's happening. Go back to the beginning of the book and see if

you can tell me what happened first. So I'm trying to work with them.

(Isabel.G.ST#1.interview.lines95-98)

Finally, in the spring of 2013, I observed Isabel complete a running record with a student during a one-on-one reading conference. Afterwards, she was able to clearly articulate what she learned about the student's reading and identified a number of next steps to work on with the student in small group reading instruction. She made a note to herself to talk to Ms. Laura about potentially switching the student's reading group as she felt like he could be pushed to read more difficult instructional level texts.

Challenges in teaching explicit lessons: Construing and reconciling "procedures"

Like Rachel, Isabel was challenged in understanding how to plan and teach explicit comprehension lessons. Where as Rachel did not have any frames of reference to draw up, Isabel's cooperating teacher felt strongly about how these types of lessons should be taught, and encouraged Isabel to use the Teacher's College curriculum (Calkins et al., 2010) to help her plan these lessons. Ms. Laura's classroom utilized the Teacher's College Units of Study, however, Ms. Laura did a fair bit of adapting and modifying of the curriculum to meet the needs of her first graders. Isabel perceived Ms. Laura's area of expertise to be Reader's Workshop, and attributed everything that she learned about Reader's Workshop to her. When she explained what she meant by Reader's Workshop, she likened it to what she had learned in coursework, with some differences. She said: "[My Reader's Workshop here is] just more of a shortened format. So like each lesson, and this might just be for first graders, but its like a connection, a small teaching point, really focused in, and a reading strategy, like comprehension, or things like that. So you model it twice, you have them try it twice, like the guided practice, and then they do it independently. And you assess it in different ways" (Isabel.interviewST#1.lines217-220). Isabel

subscribed heavily to her cooperating teacher's procedural approach to Reader's Workshop and found it to be a successful approach to explicit reading instruction.

Isabel's attachment to her cooperating teacher's approach to explicit strategy instruction and her unquestioning appropriation of her curriculum made the field-based assignment especially difficult for her. On her rough draft of her lesson plans for the course assignment, Isabel struggled to make sense of what she had learned in coursework with what she was experiencing in the field. She had difficulty distinguishing between content and process objectives, and didn't understand if her curriculum's written objective focused on the reading content or the reading process. The course assignment required the candidates to deeply think about the purpose of a reading strategy and to cognitively model authentic use of this reading strategy with students. Isabel's rough draft demonstrated superficial adaptations and it was clear that she didn't understand the purpose of the lesson from her curriculum. In the written feedback, the course instructor pushed her to think deeply about *why* she was teaching the lesson, and how this lesson would help her students become better readers.

In her reflection of the lesson for the course assignment, Isabel pointed out that the majority of her students understood the lesson objective, however, she mentioned on multiple occasions that the structure of her lesson was problematic. She wrote:

Both of these lessons were successful overall, however there were some specific problems within each. One of the biggest problems was that students are used to a different format for both mini-lessons and guided reading. Because they are only in first grade, students needed more scaffolding/explicit teaching around the norms and routine for these kinds of lessons. I believe this negatively affected their ability to comprehend

and be completely engaged and focused in both lessons.

(Isabel.winter.assignment1B.lines301-306).

It is unclear from the data what specifically Isabel felt was problematic about the structure of this lesson, especially considering the fact that most of the students successfully understood the objectives. The course instructor's feedback on the rough draft intended to push Isabel to think more deeply about why one might teach this strategy to first graders. Isabel's reflections, however, were less about the strategy and specific student understandings, and more focused on her students' engagement and behavior. When considering what she might do differently in this lesson, Isabel wrote: "I would try to stick more closely to the Reader's Workshop format for the mini-lesson and guided reading follow up as the children have been taught these routines and are more used to them. Or, I would make sure to explicitly teach the norms for this "new" kind of lesson so the students were not ever confused or distracted"

(Isabel.winter.assignment1B.lines313-316).

Isabel's reflections and takeaways tended to be procedurally based about the format of the lessons, rather than on the pedagogy of the lessons themselves. From the video of this lesson, it is unclear *what* exactly did not work – other than the fact that Isabel was disappointed with her management and student engagement. Here, it seems that additional mediation might have assisted Isabel in parsing out what *did* work in her lesson, and also help her understand the factors that contributed to the management issues and student disengagement. It might also be worth pointing out that these management issues did not ultimately detract from the students' understandings of this lesson.

Leira

Overview

Leira's student teaching placement was in a fourth/fifth-grade classroom at Lake View Elementary School. Leira had requested to work at Lake View Elementary School because of its proximity to the school that she had previously worked in and because Maria Montessori had heavily influenced the school's philosophy. Her cooperating teacher had been teaching at Lake View Elementary for several years, and was extremely supportive of Leira's development. In many ways, Leira was an experienced collaborator in classrooms as she had co-taught in a Montessori classroom for the four years prior to entering the Master's in Teaching program.

Leira perceived the practice-based coursework to be useful because it shed light on other reading practices that her cooperating teacher did not utilize in her classroom. For example, Leira mentioned that her cooperating teacher did not teach small-group lessons. Instead, she mainly relied on one-on-one conferring to check on students' understanding and to provide additional instruction. Leira mentioned that she was grateful for the practice-based coursework as it provided the opportunity of "going beyond what is not done" (Leira.interviewST#1.line655).

Leira explained,

I don't think that I would feel confident about reading or writing if I hadn't done the courses. Done guided reading and things like that. Everything was useful. I haven't done all of it... like I haven't done small group lessons. Like the guided reading. She [cooperating teacher] doesn't do that. But I know how it is done. I know how to set it up to do this in my own classroom. It [the practice-based coursework] also goes beyond what is not done (Leira.interviewST#1.lines650-655)

Thoughtfully Adaptive Teaching

Leira felt that she was able to thoughtfully adapt reading lessons during her student teaching experiences, partially because her cooperating teacher allowed her a lot of flexibility and partially because Leira was confident in her instructional decisions. Leira's classroom was what she described as a Reader's Workshop classroom, and Leira and her CT followed the Teacher's College Units of Study for the Intermediate grades. Leira described the format of her lessons in ways similar to Anna, but unlike Anna, she did not feel the need to adhere to the structure as strictly. In fact, Leira joked that most of her mini-lessons went on forever because she had a hard time fitting in everything that the students needed to learn in ten minutes. She often had to "go over" the allotted time because she felt that she hadn't explained and modeled the strategy effectively, and in part because she had to address the students' misunderstandings.

The data from Leira's student teaching experience is not as complete as the other participants because she struggled with health issues early on in the winter quarter and needed to take short leave of absence. Thus, the majority of this analysis stems from interviews and video observations. Admittedly, I know the least about Leira's situational constraints and cooperating teacher. However, in her interview about her student teaching, she mentioned that her CT gave her a fair bit of freedom when it came to planning lessons. Each week, she and her CT would sit down and discuss objectives for the upcoming weeks and then Leira would be tasked to plan those lessons. Leira described the following in regards to her process of planning her reading lessons for the edTPA:

So I sat with my CT and laid down some lessons. What she wanted me to cover. She gave me an oral idea of what to cover. So then I looked at Common Core and state standards and I thought – I get it. I didn't get into details, but I just wanted to know where they

were at. I started looking at lesson plans on line and resources to get ideas.

(Leira.interviewST#1.lines518-522)

When planning for her lessons, Leira spent a long time analyzing her students' understandings and using these understandings to plan new lessons. In a debrief of a reading mini-lesson in which Leira introduced the ideas of similes and metaphors and how they can help the reader more deeply understand the poem's meaning, Leira described a comment that her student made that lead her to believe she understood the objective. She said:

Ellie was talking about, there was this line in the poem where it says "the swings are hanging like skeletons" and it's a poem about cold winter. And so she is like, "you know how when it s cold the swings are like banging. There are no children there. You know like how skeletons are hanging. Its that kind of feel. Like children are really not playing in the playground. There is like nobody there. It is like dead." That's what she was going for. I was like, this is so good! She just hit it! That's what she was talking about. And then, the other people that said, oh. (Leira.interviewST#1.lines285-281)

For many of her lessons, Leira differentiated the assessments depending on the needs of her students. In many ways, Leira displayed a confidence about student teaching and lesson planning. Her confidence and sense of comfort and flexibility with her cooperating teacher seemed to give her a sense of ownership over her lessons. In regards to her planning process, she said:

I just feel like I have to feel the lesson. If I don't feel it I can't deliver it. The way I do it is when I bring myself into the classroom. My identity. Like what do students know about me? And I don't want to stop there. I want to bring students in the lesson too.

(Leira.interviewST#1.lines180-182)

Overall, Leira seemed less concerned about doing the “right thing” and more concerned about meeting the needs of her students. While she still aimed at teaching shorter mini-lessons and knew the importance of giving the students time to work and think independently, her main focus was how to tailor her instruction to meet the needs of her students. However, as previously mentioned, I had limited opportunities to observe Leira during student teaching and most her student teaching data comes from interviews and videos of her teaching.

Looking Across Student Teaching Cases

Looking across the cases, several themes and patterns emerged from the data. These themes and patterns are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Perceptions of Practice-Based Coursework

One pattern that emerged in the interviews was that all of the candidates’ perceived elements the practice-based coursework to be useful, however, there was variation as to what they thought was useful. In terms of utility, all four candidates agreed on a few things. First, without a doubt, all of the candidates valued the experience working with real children during coursework. Second, all of the candidates agreed that the extensive feedback and debriefing was incredibly useful to their practice. Finally, several of the candidates felt like the coursework prepared them for their edTPA work.

When the coursework appeared to align to the situational factors of the candidates’ placement school, all the candidates, Isabel in particular, perceived the nature of the coursework to be helpful. For example, Isabel felt that working with the first graders in coursework really helped her once she got to her first-grade placement classroom. Similarly, Rachel felt that

working with first graders in coursework gave her a step up to understanding their development when she started her student teaching.

When the coursework didn't align with what they experienced in the field, Anna, Rachel and Leira expressed that they still valued and felt what they learned in coursework was important because they had seen, experienced, and been guided through this work with students in coursework. In many ways, this is a departure from previous research that highlights the disconnect between what students are taught in campus courses and their opportunities for learning to enact these practices in their school placements (Zeichner, 2007).

Construal - Frames of Reference and Construing Labels

An important theme that emerged from the student teaching data was that pedagogical tools and instructional routines from the practice-based coursework became frames of reference (Kennedy, 1999) for the candidates during their student teaching experiences. The participants began their student teaching having experienced instructional practices for teaching decoding lessons and scaffolding reading comprehension. During the practice-based coursework, they were consistently pushed to differentiate and adapt their instruction based on the needs of their students. As they spent more time in their placement schools, they worked hard to reconcile what they were experiencing in the field to what they had learned about in their practice-based coursework. In their explanations about the reading instruction in their placement classrooms, the participants referenced the practice-based coursework as a point of comparison or contrast to what they were experiencing in their placement classrooms.

When closely examining the participants' points of comparison and contrast, Isabel, Leira and Anna often referred to the procedural aspects of instructional routines or pedagogical tools, rather than on the conceptual underpinnings of those routines and tools. For instance, it was

common for the teacher candidates to talk about the differences between formats (e.g., “We do mini-lessons too, just more of a shortened format” (Isabel.ST#1.line 217); “Guided reading... she doesn’t do that” (Leira.ST#1.interviewlines623). It was also common for all the candidates to describe their reading instruction in terms of the general approach (e.g., “we do reader’s workshop”). The participants didn’t always highlight the conceptual similarities and differences, although Anna and Leira did at times point out the need for instructional scaffolding of text and the importance of responding to the needs of their students. What is potentially problematic about this, as seen in Isabel’s case, is the possibility that candidates walk away from their practice-based course thinking that they learned *instructional routines* in the coursework, rather than the idea that the instructional practices were a vehicle to further reading conceptual understandings and pedagogical content knowledge.

For the most part, Isabel, Anna, and Rachel were able to look past the labels of the instructional routines of “guided reading” and “small group decoding lessons” and appropriate the pedagogical tools (Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999) of the instructional routines. In part, this may be due to the repeated experiences that the candidates had trying out these practices in practice-based coursework and continuously modifying their lessons in response to teacher educator and peer feedback, student responses and self-analysis so that they could meet the needs of their kids. The communities of practice in coursework helped the candidates reconcile what they experienced in the teaching of their lessons, and helped the candidates construct new solutions based on what they felt the students needed. Thus, these repeated opportunities to reflect on lessons with students, and plan targeted lessons with the same group of students encouraged problem solving and adaption, rather than adoption. Consequently, in student teaching, candidates approached these structures with flexibility and responsiveness to

students. For example, Anna flexibly adapted the structure of her small group lesson by asking a variety of questions “on-the-spot” to promote deeper understandings of the text. Similarly, Rachel adapted her teacher’s phonics lesson so that she could provide extra opportunities for her students to practice blending.

In contrast, the same degree of flexibility is not apparent with the teaching of the explicit comprehension strategy lessons during student teaching. The field-based assignment to teach an explicit comprehension strategy lesson was meant as an extension of the practice-based work, and it is important to note that there were some teacher education pedagogies set into place to support the learning for this assignment (e.g., the candidates had to video their teaching, the teacher educators provided feedback on lesson plans drafts, the candidates were required to reflect on the teaching and learning in this assignment). However, the instructional routine of explicit comprehension lessons and their accompanying pedagogical tools were not a part of the fall practice-based work. Thus, the candidates did not have repeated opportunities in practice-based coursework to develop these types of lessons and adapt them as they had with the small group scaffolded comprehension lessons and the decoding lessons. Isabel, Anna and Rachel struggled to make sense of how to adapt their curriculums and understand their cooperating teacher’s approach to these types of lessons. Anna seemed to understand the limitations of her cooperating teacher’s approach, but did not feel like she could adapt the structure due to her status as a student teacher. Isabel got caught up the superficial differences (e.g., “So like each lesson... we do a connection, a small teaching point, really focused in, and a reading strategy, like comprehension, or things like that. So you model it twice, you have them try it twice, like the guided practice, and then they do it independently”) and she felt unable and unwilling to modify this approach to be more responsive to her students perhaps because she did not

understand how this was done successfully. Her CT often demonstrated thoughtful adaptation of the curriculum, but perhaps did not make this thinking as visible as Isabel needed. Additional mediation would have helped her understand why she needed to adapt and ideas of how to do so within the parameters of her curriculum.

Finally, Rachel didn't understand how these types of lessons would work in her classroom, as her cooperating teacher didn't teach small group explicit comprehension lessons. She struggled to understand how to scaffold strategy instruction for her first graders and, consequently, she enacted the lesson as if it were a procedure, rather than thoughtfully-adapting it to make it more engaging to her students. In part, this can be explained because she had not had repeated opportunities to debrief and analyze this type of teaching in a context mediated by peers and teacher educators. This can also be explained by the lack of support that Rachel had from her cooperating teacher in trying to implement these types of lessons.

Although it is clear that the demands of this assignment pushed the candidates to think more deeply about reading strategy instruction, findings from this part of the study demonstrate the limitations of these types of assignments – the teacher educators or community of practice members were not present to offer feedback on the lesson and the candidates were forced to make sense of what happened in their lesson on their own. The written feedback and oral communication *about* the lesson offered opportunities for the candidates to learn more about strategy instruction, however, Isabel, Anna and Rachel could have benefited from in-the-moment problem solving about their lessons or immediate debrief with peers. Instead, Isabel and Rachel tried out instructional routines and pedagogical tools that the course instructor recommended and, when they didn't work, they blamed the instructional routines and the tool, rather than investigating the reasons *why* they felt like their lessons were unsuccessful. Similar patterns are

present in the initial enactments of the practice-based coursework, however, mediating factors like collegial and teacher educator support and repeated opportunities to practice, helped the candidates to understand the root causes of the problems and ultimately to develop deeper understandings and more adaptive practices.

Negotiating Terrain

A final theme noticed across all four candidates was what Valencia et al. (2009) term “negotiating terrain.” For the most part, the candidates saw themselves as guests in their cooperating teachers classrooms, and tried to adhere to the norms and the structures followed by the cooperating teachers and mandated by their districts. Anna, Isabel and Rachel worked hard to “fit in” with their cooperating teachers and follow their routines to the point of teaching in ways that directly contrasted with their beliefs about teaching and learning. Thus, in many ways, even though they had frames of reference to draw upon, the decisions that they made in student teaching stemmed from the situational factors of their placements. For example, Anna was critical of the structure of reader’s workshop because she felt like it didn’t attend to the needs of her learners. Yet, she did not feel like she could deviate from that structure to attend to the needs of her students. Similarly, Rachel knew that comprehension instruction was a key component of learning to read, but felt that she couldn’t insert comprehension instruction into her placement classroom, in part because it was not a part of her cooperating teacher’s routines and in part because she herself hadn’t developed the pedagogical content knowledge and tools to do so. Such findings add to the research around student teaching and, more specifically, to what Valencia et al. (2009) call “lost opportunities for learning.” They write that, “when student teachers are not able to experiment and not guided by their mentors to become thoughtfully adaptive teachers (Duffy, 2005), they lose an opportunity to deepen their understanding of

pedagogical approaches they have studied in coursework and to learn by interrogating new approaches they experience in the field” (p. 27). Thus, although the practice-based coursework provided the candidates with frames of reference for interpreting classroom reading instruction, the candidates were sometimes unable to try out some of these pedagogical routines and tools and thus sometimes unable to deepen their conceptual understandings and pedagogical content knowledge.

Chapter 6: Findings from First Years of Teaching

This chapter focuses on my findings from the participants’ first and second years of teaching. Specifically, I address the questions: *How do teachers who have experienced a practiced-based reading course and student teaching think about and enact these reading concepts and pedagogical tools in the context of their first teaching job? How do the understandings and the practices for teaching reading change over time?*

In order to answer these questions, I provide a case study of each of the participants’ experiences of teaching reading during their first two years of teaching. As mentioned in chapter three, I observed each candidate six times towards the end of her first year and the beginning of her second year of teaching. See Table 6 for a more detailed description of the participants and background about their schools. At the end of each case study, I seek to understand each participant’s development across practice-based reading coursework, student teaching and beginning years of teaching.

Table 6: Context of Participants’ Schools

Participants’ Teaching Position and School Background						
	Grade/ location	School’s connection to University	1 st year mentor?	School Percentage Mtg Rdg Standards	School Percentage Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	School Percentage Students of Color
Leira	4 th /5 th – Suburban, Private	None	Yes	N/A	Data not available	Data not available
Anna	2 nd Suburban, Public	None	Yes	78%	40%	50%
Rachel	1 st – Suburban, Public	None	Yes	65%	68%	76%
Isabel	1 st Urban, Public	Partner school	Yes	77%	39%	45%

Anna

Overview

Anna began her teaching career in Evergreen School District, a large school district in the Pacific Northwest. Towards the end of her student teaching, she applied to many jobs throughout the region and, during the summer after the completion of her teaching program, she received several calls from elementary principals in the Evergreen School District. She ultimately agreed to teach first-grade at Lakeridge Elementary School because she had “heard great things about” the principal and the district. Anna began the 2013-2014 academic year teaching first grade, however, in the third week of school, Anna’s principal switched her to second grade because of student enrollment numbers. Anna explained that her principal thought this would be a beneficial move for her because Anna’s student teaching experience had also been in second grade.

Although on paper Lakeridge Elementary School seemed similar to Anna’s student teaching placement school, Anna felt like the transition was difficult for two main reasons. First, Anna perceived the teachers at Lakeridge to be “excellent,” yet she felt that they were far less collaborative than the teachers at her student teaching placement. Second, Anna struggled to make sense of the many demands that her district required of her as a reading teacher. For example, her district mandated the use of a basal reading curriculum, which was new to Anna. Consequently, she spent a lot of time in her first year of teaching trying to understand the components of the curriculum and ways to implement it. Her district also required all students and teachers to participate in “success time,” a 30-minute intervention period each day in which students were grouped by reading need. Furthermore, Anna was expected to teach at least two

reading groups each day, which Anna found to be difficult to fit in with all the other district reading requirements.

Challenges in the First Year of Teaching

Anna faced several challenges to teaching reading in her first and second years of teaching. The first challenge, as alluded to above, was trying to understand her curriculum materials and balance everything that the district demanded of her while trying to meet the varying needs of her students. Her students' reading levels varied greatly, and she struggled to understand how to use the curriculum to support her students' needs. Anna had 130 minutes a day allocated for reading instruction, but she felt that she wasn't able to use that time as effectively as she wanted to. Instead, she followed the curriculum closely and tried to do everything that she was "supposed to do" according to her school and district.

Another challenge Anna faced in her first year was classroom management. As a result of trying to follow her curriculum closely and do everything she was "supposed to do" while managing a new classroom for the first time, Anna struggled with classroom management. Ultimately, Anna found that she couldn't teach the way she wanted to because of her difficulties in with student behavior. She reflected:

The management has been really challenging and the behaviors. That wasn't hard for me in my student teaching, but I was walking into a classroom that had all the routines already set up. The management's been hard. First year teacher, that's kind of par for the course. I should have expected it. I think finding the time has been really hard. Knowing that there's a lot that I should be doing that I learned at UW, but not always being able to fit it in or having time to make things and supplement the curriculum with these things,

make exit tickets, all that kind of thing, just having to let stuff go has been hard. You have to. (Anna.T#1.4.48.14.lines623-632)

A third challenge that Anna faced had to do her limited pedagogical content knowledge on how to work with remedial readers. In Anna's first year of teaching second grade, she had far more struggling readers than she had in her second grade student teaching placement. For example, during her student teaching experience, Anna had led small group guided reading lessons that focused primarily on comprehension because her students were not in need of decoding support. Thus, during student teaching, Anna did not have the opportunity to develop conceptual understandings learned in coursework by working with students in need of decoding support. On the other hand, in Anna's first-year of teaching classroom, about half of her students needed remedial support with decoding. Anna identified this difference, as well as her challenge of what to focus on during small group work. The quotation below highlights Anna's difficulties in adaptation:

I think the biggest thing for me has been the guided reading. I don't know why because I know we spent a lot of time on it in literacy. Especially the guided reading with the more emergent readers, I think I haven't always known how to help them move. I feel like I see so many needs that I don't know what to focus on. I don't know what's most important and I feel like I meet with them every day but I haven't seen the growth I would like to see. I might just have unrealistic expectations but I would like a little more. Maybe not more instruction from the literacy class. I might just not remember a lot of what we learned about guided reading and decoding strategies. (Anna.T#1.4.48.14.lines690-698).

Situational Factors Limiting Development

A number of situational factors limited Anna's development during her first and second year of teaching. First, Anna felt that her school and district lacked the support structures to help her. Her school had a full-time reading specialist whose job was to provide assistance and guidance to the classroom teachers; however, Anna felt that the reading specialist was ineffectual. She said:

She'll [the reading specialist] tell you herself that her specialty is not in reading it is in administrator leadership. She's learning about reading, but she is not ... She taught for a long time at 5th grade and she was a principal for a year. I think that she didn't want to work with kids anymore. She has a lot of good points, a lot of good things but she is not someone I would go to if I had a reading question...She will throw a whole bunch of resources at you because she gets a load of resources at her meetings, but she doesn't really know how to utilize them or how to teach it. [Anna.T#4.10.15.14.lines368-373]

Anna's principal and vice-principal also did not provide the guidance that Anna needed. During her first year of teaching, Anna's principal observed two literacy lessons, but seemed more concerned about student management and engagement during the lessons, rather than on the content and pedagogy of the lesson. Anna's vice principal checked in with Anna to ensure that she was keeping to the pacing calendar, but did not offer specific lesson support or ideas for remediation.

Midway into her first year of teaching, Anna became friendly with Caroline, another second grade teacher on her team. Eventually, Anna began to see Caroline as a mentor and spoke with Caroline daily about her students and sought out advice on the curriculum and district requirements. Caroline and Anna often talked together throughout the school day, and Anna

described Caroline as an extremely helpful in her day-to-day practice. In a group interview with Anna and Caroline, however, it became clear that Anna and Caroline had somewhat different perceptions as to what was required from their district. The following is an excerpt from their interview:

Anna: I feel like the expectation is that we teach three guiding reading groups a day for an hour a day. Do you feel like that's the expectation?

Caroline: I don't feel like that.

Anna: Another expectation is that you are doing the shared reading and that you are sticking to the calendar. I would think that they understand we can't all...

Caroline: The message is that you also need to do what's best for your kids. Staying close to the calendar but... especially in our literacy calendar, there's some flexibility... [Anna.T#5a.Co-teaching.11.12.14.lines96-101, 136-138]

Finally, in the year and a half that Anna had worked in the Evergreen School District, Anna had never attended a professional development that focused on reading. She had often received binders and resources to help her teach teaching, but she had never been coached on her reading instruction or given formal guidance on how to work with her most struggling readers. Taken together, it is clear that the support systems set up by Anna's district did not help her navigate through the challenges of teaching reading that Anna faced in her first year and a half of teaching. Anna had to rely on her own background knowledge to help her make connections and adapt a new curriculum to meet her students' needs. At times, Anna didn't have the depth of pedagogical content knowledge needed to do such adaptations.

Evidence of Adaptation

Although Anna was somewhat on her own in understanding and making complex instructional decisions, there are instances in the data when Anna draws from ontological experiences to make sense of her students' reading. For example, Anna often showed thoughtful attention towards grouping students due to her early understandings of their developmental needs. One student, in particular, Donovan, had been assessed as a level 1 (early kindergarten) on the DRA and was still learning the names of the letters and their corresponding sounds. Anna had two other students who had scored around level 3 and level 4 (early first-grade) on the DRA, but Anna was nervous about putting the three students together in a guided reading group as their needs were developmentally different from one another. She demonstrated thoughtful attention to these needs in an interview:

I've already started meeting with him [Donovan] every morning and going through letter names and flash cards and writing them, and tracing them, that kind of thing. Because my 3 and 4 [DRA level students], they know letter names. They know letter sounds. There's a huge gap so I've been thinking a lot. I'm a little concerned about that. He'll be part of that more emergent reading group but then, also, additional interventions.

(Anna.T#1.4.48.14.lines171-177).

Another such example was Anna's critical stance on her district's assessment policy with regard to fluency. In a conversation about a small group fluency lesson that she taught, she mentioned that on the district assessments, she was supposed to record the rate of each student's oral reading, and, if the student did not read fast enough, she was instructed to stop the assessment and not ask the comprehension questions. Anna noticed that there were several problems in this approach to reading assessment. More specifically, Anna pointed out that ending the assessment at this point gave her no information as to the students' comprehension.

Furthermore, with such a high stakes focus on fluency, Anna concluded that teachers were more apt to encourage fast reading than careful comprehension of the text. Anna said:

It is complex a little bit scary to teach because I don't want to over emphasize the rate part of it. Last year I had a girl that she would, I guess she did a lot of; according to her mom she did a lot of timed readings in first grade and now when she would read, she would repeat every other word. She would be like, Rash- Rasheed, and, and, it was weird, but she would repeat words and I had the speech teacher look at her and everything and they said it's not a speech thing and it was only when she was reading. Her mom thought it was because she had done all this time readings and she was like she was just trying to read really fast, but she wasn't quite at the point where she could decode as fast as she felt that she needed to read. It's hard when you have to time kids.

[Anna.T#4.10.15.14.lines269-278]

Drawing from her experiences in coursework, Anna realized that rate alone did not provide a comprehensive understanding of a child's reading, and recognized that there needed to be a comprehension measure included in the assessment. Anna did not feel like she could deviate from the assessment guidelines, so she decided to include an informal comprehension measure when she conducted her running records assessment.

Anna also relied on background knowledge and experiences from coursework and student teaching to help her adapt her curriculum. Anna noted that her curriculum had her teach reading strategy mini-lessons, however, there was little follow-up with the students about whether or not they were using these reading strategies as they read. She found it problematic that the curriculum didn't provide independent or guided activities for practice. During her first year of teaching, she tried to follow the curriculum closely, however, midway through her

second year, she started to make some adaptations, including incorporating elements of metacognition to the kids independent reading time. She explained:

Last year I wasn't doing that at first. I was just following the curriculum and then I kind of realized what was missing in that there is no follow up. It doesn't have them apply the skill to their actual reading, ever, and so I try to do that sometimes, depending on time. I try to at least say when you're reading to do this or whatever. (Anna#5.11.12.14.lines25-29)

A third example of Anna adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of her students came in the form of her guided reading lessons. As already noted, Anna felt most challenged by trying to understand what to do during her guided reading lessons. Anna had been given many different forms and lesson planning templates from her school's reading specialist to help her plan for these lessons, but didn't feel like these lessons were as helpful as she would have liked. Given the range of her student needs, she felt like she didn't quite understand how to differentiate her guided reading structures for her emergent readers. She knew that they needed help with decoding, but was unsure how to incorporate the decoding lessons into her guided reading block.

During Anna's last observation, she rearranged her reading block so that I could see the new structure of her guided reading lesson. During this lesson, she introduced new sight words to the students, introduced a word family by blending the onset and rhymes, and had the students read a leveled book. She had purposefully and thoughtfully designed this type of lesson for these students because the combination of sight words, decoding and leveled reading was what she felt her students needed. She said:

This is the lesson plan [template] I was given and then I kind of follow. Except I add in word families to it, the word family thing is mine... I think it's working more or less. I

like that there's a lot to do because I think especially at this level you want to keep moving. I feel like it's working. I just want to know if there's anything you would add or take away. [Anna.T#6c.12.9.14.lines84-87]

This lesson exemplified thoughtful adaptation of many of the pedagogical tools (e.g., blending, leveled books) used in the explicit decoding lessons during the practice-based coursework.

Understanding Anna's Development

In many ways, Anna's aforementioned adaptation done in her second year of teaching demonstrates the twisting path of conceptual development (Smagorinsky et al., 2003). Two years earlier, Anna had opportunities to teach decoding lessons in the practice-based coursework similar to the one she "figured out" how to do in her second year of teaching. There is a practice-based coursework video of Anna explicitly teaching a decoding lesson in which she utilizes pedagogical tools such as blending, modeling and reading decodable texts. Her reflections from that course demonstrate that she was beginning to understand the complex relationship between fluency, decoding, and comprehension on the reading process. So, one might ask, what did it take Anna two years to "figure out" how to do something that she had previously done?

Through the lens of Billett's (2003) framework, one might argue that situational factors played a large role in Anna's difficulties in understanding how to teach reading at her school. Anna found herself working in a new school in which situational factors (e.g., curriculum, district demands, community of practice, student needs) were extremely different from Anna's student teaching experience. Anna did not have the opportunity to work with emergent readers during her student teaching placement, thus she had not had mediated opportunities to develop

some of the conceptual and pedagogical understandings presented in coursework during student teaching.

Consequently, Anna was drawing upon ontogenetic knowledge learned in coursework, specifically reading principles and pedagogical content knowledge, but was unable to remember some of the specific instructional practices and pedagogical tools that would have helped in teaching her most remedial students. However, on her own, Anna construed and reconciled the problems she encountered in teaching to concepts learned in her practice-based coursework (e.g., the idea that emergent readers need sight word instruction, coupled with short vowel instruction, in order to read the most basic leveled books; the idea that fluency must be understood in relation to comprehension). Anna did not always know how to construct solutions, but the tensions that she construed during teaching can be traced to knowledge developed during the practice-based coursework. Thus, for Anna, we see footprints of practice-based teacher education in how she understood and interpreted the needs of her most emergent readers during her first and second year of teaching.

Isabel

Overview

In the summer before Isabel's first year of teaching, Isabel was hired at Stone Hill School, the same site as her student teaching. Isabel had purposefully waited to apply for jobs because she had been told that there might be a last minute opening at Stone Hill. Working at Stone Hill was Isabel's first choice, and Isabel was thrilled to join the staff as a third-grade teacher. In our meetings during the spring of her first-year of teaching, Isabel seemed eager to talk about her school and, on multiple occasions, she expressed how well her first-year of teaching was going.

In general, Isabel felt really prepared to teach reading at Stone Hill. She was thankful to have worked with the same curriculum in her student teaching placement, and she was also grateful that her cooperating teacher helped her learn how to utilize the curriculum while she was in her student teaching classroom. She said: "I had a lot of practice. [My cooperating teacher] had me write some units, and we did a lot of work with that like, "How do you plan it out?" I felt prepared. It just takes time" (Isabel.T#1.5.7.14.lines50-52).

Isabel also felt extremely supported by her principal and her colleagues at Stone Hill School. She mentioned that teachers were given a fair bit of freedom in their instructional choices, but were supported by curriculum materials and colleagues if needed. The teachers, Isabel included, felt empowered to collaborate and discuss problems of practice with each other and the administration. One such problem of practice arose in Isabel's first year of teaching when teachers expressed concern over the reading assessment used school-wide. Isabel mentioned that she and a numbers of teachers felt concerned that their main reading assessment, Teacher's College Assessment, didn't provide enough information about the students' comprehension. As a result, the principal encouraged teachers to form a PLC and learn more about other assessments. The PLC recommended other reading assessments and consequently Isabel had access to a different assessment and was encouraged to use the assessment if she felt that it provided more information about her students' comprehension.

Adoption and adaption

During Isabel's first years of teaching, there is evidence that she adopted many of the procedures and instructional routines of her first-grade student teaching classroom. For example, Isabel credited her cooperating teacher for providing her with her with important routines and procedures for reader's workshop. Throughout her first year of teaching, Isabel's principal

praised Isabel on the implementation of these procedures, specifically on her routines for silent reading and on her accountability structures set up so that the students used this time productively.

Given the sense of professional freedom that Isabel had when it came to making instructional decisions in her classroom, Isabel felt empowered to supplement the curriculum when needed. For example, Isabel's curriculum did not have a guided reading component, and consequently, the other third-grade teachers did not focus on guided reading. Isabel, however, felt that it was important to form guided reading groups and book clubs so that she had time to read with students in instructional level texts. Again, Isabel attributed the importance of doing "guided reading" to what she had learned in her first-grade placement classroom and sought to include this structure in her third grade classroom.

These adoptions, coupled with the fact that Isabel remained in the same school and was familiar in navigating situational factors (i.e., curriculum, school and district demands) made Isabel's transition to classroom teaching appear far smoother than Anna's. However, late into her first year of teaching and into her second year of teaching, the problematic nature of these adoptions surfaced. For example, Isabel expressed that her greatest challenge in terms of her reading instruction in her first year of teaching was how to fit everything in. She worked hard to find the balance between strategy mini-lessons, guided reading, conferring, independent reading and partner reading. She said:

I've just found it a bit hard to fit everything in, and I know everyone says that. I have ...
You know my guided reading groups. I started out trying to have everyone in the guided reading group and I just couldn't fit that in along with the mini lesson of the day, and then

trying to conference with certain kids, and give time for them to practice reading out loud not just with me, and all that stuff. (Isabel.T#1.5.7.14.lines56-61).

Here, Isabel implicitly acknowledges the challenge of adopting instructional routines from her first-grade student teaching placement to her third grade classroom. In her first-grade placement, she had seen her cooperating teacher lead 10-minute guided reading lessons for multiple groups of students each day. However, due to the developmental differences and needs of her third graders (she noticed that as texts became longer and more complex with reading development), it became impossible for Isabel to meet with guided reading groups as frequently as she had in her first-grade placement. Eventually, she learned she needed to differentiate how she supported each group. She met with her most struggling readers multiple times a week, and, with her more independent readers, she formed book clubs. Thus, although Isabel initially superficially adopted a routine for guided reading, her understandings of reading principles coupled with her pedagogical content knowledge of different developmental stages of reading helped her eventually adapt this routine to meet her students' needs.

There were other routines and instructional practices that Isabel struggled to understand how to adapt. For example, in Isabel's student teaching placement, an important reading routine was partner reading. Isabel took this routine into her 3rd grade classroom, and multiple times a week, she had the students partner read with each other. Isabel explained:

I'd seen it done with [my cooperating teacher] in first [grade]. That's a little easier when they're the small books, to like, I'll read one you ... Or something. I was trying to figure out how do I do that because a lot of the kids, especially the higher kids, they just kind of read on their own but then they don't ... They haven't read out loud in a long time sometimes. Using expression... (Isabel.T#1a.5.7.14.lines117-121).

What Isabel eventually realized was the partner reading in third grade poses some developmental differences than partner reading in first grade. As Isabel mentioned, partner reading in first-grade usually meant students would be able to read the entire book on their own. Most of Isabel's third graders, however, were reading chapter books, and reading the book in its entirety would be impossible. Isabel needed help in understanding how to make the instructional routine of partner reading developmentally appropriate for her third-graders.

There are a few possible explanations to explain Isabel's struggle to initially adapt these instructional routines. First, Isabel did not do much thoughtful adaptation in her student teaching experience. Her cooperating teacher was very clear about the way Isabel was to instruct, and for the most part, her cooperating teacher's vision for reading instruction aligned with Isabel's understandings. Secondly, Isabel's cooperating teacher and Isabel were both praised for their efficient and well-managed instructional routines. Thus, Isabel received was lauded for these routines, even though they didn't match the developmental levels of her students. However, we see glimmers of thoughtfully adaptive teaching in Isabel's first years of teaching due to moments of contradiction, when Isabel realized that she had to make changes to her routines, as they did not actually support what she knew about reading development.

The Desire for Additional Support

Throughout her second year of teaching, Isabel opened up to the challenges of having such a flexible curriculum and lots of freedom in its implementation. After being observed for a lesson that Isabel felt she "bombed," Isabel expressed frustration at not having enough guidance on what to teach when. She said,

In one way I love it, [our principal's philosophy] is like, I trust you to use the curriculum. We write our own units, but because we're a new team and there's not a lot to start with

it's been hard. For this [lesson], I should have split it into two days. I'm still figuring out how to use that curriculum or make my own. If I had better calendar, outline or something that I made it with someone else who I respected and could talk through, I think that would be better. I'm like okay, I'll teach this. I think is a good way to go but I don't have enough experience to be sure.

Isabel felt like she was “on her own” in terms of developing as a reading teacher. During the three observations she had with her principal she had been praised for her teaching and told she was doing an excellent job. She felt, however, that she had a lot to learn and hoped to receive continued professional development from the district. Her third grade team was not very collaborative, so she often sought help from her first-grade cooperating teacher. This lack of support stood in direct contrast to Isabel’s experience in the practice-based reading course in which Isabel had a community of practice to bounce ideas off of and teacher educators to help guide her thinking and instructional decisions.

Understanding Isabel's Development

When looking across Isabel’s development from coursework, to student teaching to certificated classroom teaching, we see Isabel making decisions stemming from situational factors (i.e., following the curriculum, adopting routines from student teaching). It is important to recognize that Isabel remained in the same school across all three experiences (coursework, student teaching and certificated teaching). Isabel did not face the same tensions and contradictions in settings as Anna had, and consequently, was not pushed (with the same sense of urgency) to negotiate and adapt her understandings to new settings. Thus, Isabel’s development of concepts remained somewhat on the surface, and we see evidence of Isabel adopting practices rather than adapting them.

This is not to say that Isabel was not an effective reading teacher, or that her students were not engaged in meaningful learning opportunities. On the contrary, Isabel's students made significant growth in their reading abilities and were excited to talk about what they were reading and learning. We see footprints of practice-based teacher education emerge for Isabel through the few observed moments of "tension" – when Isabel construed that something was not working for her students. In those moments of tension (e.g., partner reading), Isabel sought to adapt instructional practices and relied upon conceptual understandings to help her reconcile what was not working.

Leira

Overview

In the spring of her student teaching, Leira received a job offer from her placement school. After thinking deeply about whether or not to take the position, Leira decided to turn down the offer and look for a job closer to home. She applied to many schools in her area, and ended up taking a position in a private Montessori school as a 4th/5th/6th-grade teacher. As mentioned previously, Leira had taught in a different Montessori school in the four years prior to entering her teaching program. She was excited to be working in a Montessori school again and felt excited to bring what she learned in her program to her classroom.

Leira described her classroom as built around the idea of differentiation. The 20 students in Leira's classroom were divided into 5 groups based on academic and social needs. Each student had an individual work plan, and, judging on a student's progress, the teachers changed his/her work plan and group members accordingly.

First Year Challenges – Difficulties in Adaptation

Leira struggled a lot in her first-year of teaching, which she attributed to difficulties in collaboration with her co-teacher. She and her co-teacher had different management styles and it was difficult to be consistent with the students that they shared. Leira's co-teacher had been trained by Montessori programs, and was not state-certified, nor had she studied in a Teacher Education Program. Consequently, Leira found it difficult to persuade her co-teacher to do anything outside of the Montessori parameters.

Another challenge that surfaced during the first year observations and interviews was how different her school's approach to reading instruction was in comparison to her experiences in student teaching and practice-based coursework. As a result, Leira felt that literacy was one of her weakest areas of instruction. She felt that her school had an outdated approach to teaching reading (which is explained in further depth below) and, as a result, she felt that she wasn't able to incorporate what she learned in her reading coursework into her teaching. As a first-year teacher, she also did not feel like she could change or alter the type of reading instruction at her school.

In her first year interviews, Leira was critical that her school's integrated approach to reading instruction seemed very focused on activities, not teaching. For example, Leira described two approaches to reading instruction at her school, the first approach was learning reading through research projects. An underlining philosophy at her school was to integrate reading and writing in the content areas, and one of the ways that the teachers did this was to assign social students projects to students. She said,

We don't teach, but the way these students learn is through research. We have lots of history projects. You can see right now they are working on state projects.... They have

been researching on that. They have resources and that's how they read. They try to understand, figure it out [Leira.T#1.5.6.14.lines436-442]

Leira pointed out that a flaw in this approach was that there was never any explicit instruction in reading skills or strategies. Throughout her interview in the spring of 2014, she talked at length wanting to do more “fusion” with what she learned at her placement school and her teacher education program and what was practiced at the Montessori school. She said,

One of the things that I thought was super valuable for these kids to have is structured reading and writing time every single day. In an ideal world, I would have morning 9-12 for their choice time where they are choosing math and science and history and maybe grammar because they are individual lessons but afternoon time I would from 1-1:15 or 1:20 there should be a reading strategy lesson we should do a reading workshop.

[Leira.T#1.5.6.14.lines362-365]

Leira was also critical about the “book clubs” routine, a second approach to reading instruction at her school. Leira found the students were bored during the mandatory book clubs, and many of them needed more scaffolding in understanding the deeper meanings of their books. She attributed this to the fact that the students were able to select their book club text, and the teachers paid little attention to the instructional level of the text. As a result of this, she said that several of her students did not have access to their book club book and needed much more scaffolding to understand the basic plot line.

Leira wanted her book clubs to be similar to the small text-based discussion groups that she taught in the methods classes that encouraged discussions and higher levels of comprehension. However, she was clear that she didn't set up the book clubs to do that. She said,

I didn't give them tools to do that. We do have the groups and every month we give them choices and according to those choices they will form their groups. See there is a flaw here again. If I am giving them choices there are low readers who are picking high-level work, [how can they] be talking about it? (Leira.T#1.5.6.14.lines391-395)

Leira multiple times referred to wanting to do “guided reading” as she had learned about in the practice-based reading coursework. She felt like her students could benefit from instructional level grouping and deep comprehension of text.

While Leira did not understand how to adapt the existing structures in her classroom nor did she feel she had the license to do so, she did support the literacy specialist in thinking about how to support her struggling readers. When Leira noticed that some of her most struggling students were not improving in reading, she met with the reading specialist who pulled out the group of struggling readers. She explained:

This is one good thing I've done. We have reading specialists here... We identified some students in the upper elementary level whose comprehension is really low but who also have trouble with writing or spelling, things like that. She specializes in that. She does, twice a week she pulls out those students and does spelling with them. Spelling patterns. However, I realized that kids are not moving in reading. Spelling is fine, but how do I help them read better or more or how do I move them up? I don't have any way to figure that out. I think that they are not reading enough or they are not learning enough about reading. I talked to my specialist and I said, "Look, something that I've learned is that they've got to know these strategies." Reading strategies. I know that that helps students. That helps students to build vocabulary, that helps students to have conversations. They are thinking about it whenever they read those things. I said, "We need to do this." She

was like, "I agree." We talked to our administrators and she identified some students who are on low comprehension and now she is doing reading strategy class, pull out. We just started after our Christmas break. (Leira.T#1.5.6.14.lines561-579)

Thus, although Leira does not clearly demonstrate understandings of the reading process in *her teaching*, her advice to the reading specialist demonstrates her understanding of the reading process, as well as demonstrates her understanding of related pedagogical tools (i.e., reading comprehension strategy instruction) that would assist her most struggling readers.

Looking across Leira's first year reflections on her reading instruction, Leira demonstrated that she understood important components of literacy instruction by critical thinking about her school's approaches to reading, but was limited in her understanding of how to adapt these structures to make them more instructionally-rich. It is interesting to note that during this first year, Leira's tendency was to *supplement* to the existing structures. For example, Leira didn't think to include a short mini-lesson that would model for students some skills and strategies that they might need during their "research" time, instead she wanted to include an additional "reading block" in which she would teach reading strategies to her students. Similarly, Leira didn't think that she could level her book club groups and guide the students during the reading; instead she wanted to include "guided reading" groups. Finally, Leira's solution to helping her struggling readers was to work with her reading specialist to help her teach explicit strategy lessons.

Second Year of Teaching – Making adaptations

During Leira's second year of teaching, Leira continued to call into question the existing structures for teaching reading in her classroom. This year, however, Leira felt she had more

liberty to adapt and adjust due to her good relationship with her new co-teacher. Leira and her co-teacher, Karen, expressed mutual admiration for one-another and supported each other in their planning and teaching. Although Leira's co-teacher was very much invested in her school's approach to literacy instruction, she supported Leira and her efforts try out new strategies. This, in part, could be due to the fact that Karen also saw some of the problems that their struggling readers were facing, but she herself didn't know how to support them.

In the fall of 2014, during Leira's second year of teaching, Leira taught a lesson to her 4th graders that demonstrated thoughtful-adaptation of existing structures in her situation combined with her knowledge of reading. Using some of the materials that she had in the classroom, she gathered the students together on the carpet and taught a lesson around thinking about the author's mood and tone in a short, instructional-level text. Leira mentioned that this was not quite guided reading, as the students did most of the reading on their own. She mentioned that this was not quite book clubs, as she had an explicit content and process objective, however it was not quite the workshop model either because all the kids were reading the same text. Although Leira did not have label to describe what *type* of lesson she was doing, she felt that this was a lesson that she could do within the structures of her school and also meet the needs of her learners. Thus, Leira demonstrated an understanding of the reading process and thoughtful consideration of the reader, text and the task. She also demonstrated thoughtful adaptation of related pedagogical tools (i.e., guided reading of responsibility framework, instructional grouping, purposeful text selection).

Understanding Leira's Development

Using Billett's (2003) framework, it is clear that Leira felt constrained by situational factors (e.g., school philosophy, curriculum) in her approach to teaching reading. As a classroom

teacher in a private Montessori school, she felt like she had little agency to change the instruction in her classroom during her first year of teaching, but she did help the reading specialist (with less situational restrictions) think about adapting her practice to support her most struggling readers. We see footprints of practice-based reading coursework through Leira's understandings of the reading process and through her flexible adaptation of pedagogical tools to fit in with her school's approach to reading instruction during her second year of teaching. However, it is clear that it took a long time for Leira to both understand how to make these adaptations and to feel comfortable implementing them. Although Leira did show evidence of her ability to thoughtfully-adapt what she believed to be important about reading instruction during a small group-reading lesson, Leira herself stated, this type of instruction was not the "norm."

Rachel

Overview

Rachel happily returned to her hometown after completing her Master's in Teaching program to take a first-grade position in a local public school. At the time, the population of her hometown was expanding, and she took a job in a relatively new elementary school with eight first-grade classrooms. She described how different her school was in comparison to her student teaching placement. She said,

I knew I could get a job easily here because [the population] was growing. It's a very demanding [district that requires] a lot of data, like you have to be willing to do a lot and work really hard. I have every resource known to man at my fingertips. It's really different from what I learned at [TEP]. It is a very different population; we only have like I think 9% free and reduced price lunch versus 75% at [Lakeridge]. It is different.

[Rachel.T.#1.5.1.14.lines62-68]

Thoughtful Adaptations

In many ways, throughout Rachel's first year of teaching, she tried to stick closely the demands expected of her in her new school. At times, however, she makes thoughtful adaptations to existing curriculum. For example, Rachel made a conscious effort to differentiate her word study groups, although this was not the norm among the first-grade team. Her school had recently adopted the *Words Their Way* curriculum and each teacher was expected to use the curriculum when teaching word study and spelling. Rachel mentioned that the teachers felt pressed for time so most teachers had all of their students working off the same list of words. Rachel, however, did not feel this was developmentally appropriate for the variety of students in her classroom. She said,

Nobody told me to do differentiated groups but I have kids who, one of my girls is operating at the level of fourth grader and one of my students is being referred through special ed testing and she can barely remember short vowels because there is something else going on that we don't know yet. I have to do two groups or else I am going to have some kids bored to tears or some kids who are like, "what?"

[Rachel.T.#1.5.1.14.lines156-162]

Rachel mentioned that in order to make time for these two groups she had to "sacrifice" time with her guided reading groups. She still managed to work with two guided reading groups each day, however, she cut back time working with some of her more developmentally advanced readers because she realized she could "get them started" in guided reading groups, and then they could continue to read independently at their seats. For her students needing more support in word identification, she still met with them in their small groups for the entirety of the reading group time because she needed to prompt them both graphophonically ("let's look at the first

letter of word”) and semantically (“does that make sense?”) [Rachel.obs4]. These decisions reflect Rachel’s understandings of different developmental stages of learning to read. These decisions also reflect thoughtful adaptations on Rachel’s part. During student teaching, she and her cooperating teacher had met with their reading groups each day. Rachel, however, found that she had to prioritize her groups and thus she adapted accordingly.

Rachel also demonstrated thoughtful adaptations to her reading comprehension curriculum. Her district and school were far more focused on reading comprehension than in her students teaching placement. She found that she was able to follow the curriculum and found it to be helpful in breaking down reading strategies to her students. The curriculum was very “process” focused. For example, during a read aloud, the curriculum provided ideas for the teacher to model the strategies and provided guided opportunities for the students to practice. In her enactment of the curriculum, however, Rachel demonstrated flexibility with the pedagogical tools of questioning when inserted her own questions to ensure that her students understood the content of the story. When asked about this adaptation, Rachel mentioned that she was simply being responsive to the confusion that she perceived her students were having around the content of the book. Thus, we see footprints of practice-based reading coursework in Rachel’s responsiveness to her students’ misunderstandings and recognition of the importance of building content and process understandings, pedagogical tools focused on during the practice-based coursework.

Tensions – Flying Under the Radar

At times, Rachel identified tensions that she felt between situational factors (her district and school demands) and her previous experiences. For example, Rachel was critical of her school’s assessment measure of comprehension. Her first-grade team had voted to use “Words

Their Way” as a grade-level assessment of reading. Rachel was concerned that this assessment did not assess the students’ comprehension. She described the following conversation with her principal:

We do a *Words Their Way* assessment at the beginning... the grade level one is Words their Way for reading. I had a qualm with that at the beginning of the year but she [my principal] was like, "This is what it is, and if you can read and write those words then you'll comprehend better." I don't know, I'm not going to argue.

[Rachel.T#2.9.18.14.lines275-280]

In many ways, this exemplifies Rachel’s general approach to these moments of tension and contradiction. Rachel hoped to stay working at her school, and thus wanted to do things the “right way.” However, in the privacy of her own classroom, she made small adaptations that reflected thoughtfulness around the reading process.

Understanding Rachel’s Development

In trying to understand Rachel’s development as a reading teacher, Rachel might be described as a “quiet questioner.” Rachel sought to make sense of what she saw and what she experienced, and in doing so, she often perceived tensions and contradictions across settings. When possible and in her realm of control, Rachel made small adjustments and adaptations that she thought would help her students grow as readers (e.g., creating differentiated groups for *Words Their Way*), but she also was realistic as to what she could manage as a new teacher (e.g., she created two groups for *Words their Way*, not five).

In many ways, Rachel’s transition across settings (coursework, student teaching, first-year teaching) strengthened her understandings of the developmental needs of first graders. In all three settings she worked with first graders, and thus she had the opportunity to learn about and

make sense of the reading process for early readers. The tensions that she experienced in student teaching (e.g., how to incorporate comprehension instruction with students learning to decode) became less of an issue during her classroom teaching as her district and school were so heavily focused on comprehension instruction. I would argue that the tensions that Rachel faced early on helped her make sense of her curriculum in her first years of teaching.

Chapter 7: Cross-Case Discussion

In this final chapter, I look across the participants' experiences to understand their development as reading teachers from practice-based coursework to student teaching into their first two years of teaching. Specifically, I discuss the affordances and limitations of practice-based teacher education and the twisting path of concept development. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this study and the implications for further research.

The Affordances of Practice-Based Teacher Education

Concept Formation Through Practice

Across the three years of this study, the participants deepened their conceptual understandings of teaching reading through practice.⁵ The practice-based coursework began the work of concept development. Through their practice-based coursework, the participants began developing conceptual understandings for teaching reading (e.g., *Understand that reading comprehension depends on the interrelationship between the reader, activity, text and context*), pedagogical tools (e.g., questioning as a means of scaffolding), and were provided opportunities to practice these concepts through concrete instructional routines (e.g., small group scaffolded reading comprehension lessons). Multiple instances in the data suggest that the relationship between conceptual development and practice was not linear, but rather was reciprocal; conceptual understandings informed practice, and practice informed and furthered conceptual understandings. For example, while Anna taught her small group-decoding lesson in coursework, she observed one of her students struggling to fluently read the new decodable words in context.

⁵ In her article, *Learning Teaching in, from and for Practice: What Do We Mean?* (2010), Lampert outlines the many different ways the word “practice” is used in teacher education and in teacher communities. For the purposes of this chapter, I use the word “practice” to refer to an enactment with students. However, the word “practice” is not used in contrast with theory, or conceptual knowledge, as explained further in this chapter.

This practical experience raised questions for Anna about the relationship between fluency, decoding and comprehension. During her debrief, she had the opportunity to discuss the questions that arose for her through these moments of practice and consequently deepened her conceptual understanding of the reading process.

The finding that the practice-based coursework furthered conceptual knowledge development is consistent with sociocultural theories of learning. Vygotsky (1987) teaches us that “direct instruction in a concept is impossible” (p.170). He writes that instruction in principles alone will not result in the development of a concept; rather, knowledge of abstracted governing rules must come in conjunction with empirical demonstration, observation, or activity. It is through moments of practice that conceptual understandings are challenged and further deepened. Smagorinsky et al. (2003) explain:

Practice serves as the worldly experience through which a concept derives its grounding, coherence, and meaning. Practice is thus central to the interplay within the learner’s conceptual field that integrates scientific and spontaneous concepts and enables one to generalize more broadly from immediate experience to new experiences through which a concept may be more formally and discriminatingly refined. (Smagorinsky et al., 2003, p. 1408)

Frames of Reference and Pedagogical Tools

In addition to providing the participants with ways of thinking and understanding, the practice-based coursework afforded participants with specific frames of reference to draw upon during student teaching and during their first years of teaching. The student teaching data show that the participants made sense of the reading instruction in their placement classrooms by comparing and contrasting it with the lessons done in the practice-based reading coursework.

The practice-based coursework became important on a pedagogical tool level, particularly for Rachel when she needed to implement small group lessons for her edTPA and relied on the instructional routines and pedagogical tools from practice-based coursework to help her structure her lesson. Similarly, Leira mentioned that the practice-based coursework helped her understand how one would go about teaching explicit decoding lessons as decoding lessons were not taught in her placement classroom.

Features of Practice-Based Teacher Education that Support Concept Development

It is important here to note that these practical experiences or “opportunities to learn through practice” alone did not deepen conceptual understandings. This became evident during the field assignment in the winter quarter when the participants were required to enact an explicit strategy lesson with students in their field placement. Although many support systems were in place for the participants (e.g., they were given extensive feedback on their lesson plans, they video-recorded their teaching, and had opportunities for individual reflection), this field-based assignment did not further conceptual understandings as much as hoped, in part, due to issues of re-contextualization and in part because some of the salient features of practice-based teacher education (described below) were not present.

An analysis of the practice-based coursework data suggests that several features of the coursework contributed to the participants’ concept development. In other words, there were several features in place that allowed the participants to learn in, from and for practice (Lampert, 2010). First, the data revealed the power of a shared teaching experience with school-aged children. The small-group reading lessons that the participants lead during the practice-based coursework inevitably included what Hatano and Inagaki (1986) call ‘built-in’ randomness. The participants could not always predict how the students would react or respond to their lesson

plans, and thus the participants were forced to make decisions in the moment of teaching, which at times, furthered conceptual development. For example, Anna and Leira did not realize that their students needed extra support blending the words until they heard their students' struggling to read them aloud in context. In the moment, both Leira and Anna informally retaught the students how to blend the new sound, and later reflected upon the importance of modeling the pedagogical tool of blending when explicitly teaching decoding lessons.

The data also reveal the power of a stable community of practice whose members were encouraged to thoughtfully adapt lessons in order to promote student learning. Members of the community of practice who observed the lessons often offered valuable perspectives and observations that focused on student learning. All members often did a fair amount of collective problem solving after the lesson, which furthered the participants' conceptual understandings. It was clear through these debriefs that the goal of these lessons was student learning. The teacher educators suggested routines and pedagogical tools to try with the students; however, they recommended that the participants thoughtfully adapt these practices to help the students reach their goals. Thus, in many ways, "active experimentation" (Hatano & Inagaki) or "guided experimentation" (Valencia et al., 2009) was encouraged.

Another salient feature of the practice-based coursework was the content-specific feedback the participants received from teacher educators. This content-specific feedback is essential for enhancing domain specific knowledge, and, as Billett (2012) cautions, "no amount of general problem-solving capacity or higher-order requirements (as in formal operational thought) within a particular set of activities, such as occupational tasks, can compensate for an absence of domain-specific knowledge, although the former enriches the latter" (p. 7). During the coursework, teacher educators often played an essential role in helping the participants

construe and reconcile their teaching experiences, as well as in helping the participants construct responses that would further student understandings. The importance of this type of feedback becomes amplified when one takes into account the candidates' experiences after this course. Findings from this study and others (e.g., Anderson & Stillman, 2010; Valencia et al., 2009) show that the participants rarely receive content-specific feedback from university supervisors during student teaching. Anderson and Stillman (2010) write that the student teachers in their study "craved—and, we argue, needed—more explicit, critical feedback from adaptive experts, who could demonstrate TEP coherent practice and effectively support student teachers to deepen knowledge of learners, subject matter, and teaching in the context of urban, high-needs schools" (p. 131). I would argue that the participants from this study also needed feedback from adaptive experts on how to construe and reconcile what they experienced in student teaching and during their first years of teaching.

Finally, the practice-based coursework data also reveal the importance of multiple enactments with the same group of students while receiving feedback from teacher educators and colleagues. Looking across the literature, this may most closely relate to what Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993) refer to this as deliberate practice. They write,

Deliberate practice [italics added] would allow for repeated experiences in which the individual can attend to the critical aspects of the situation and incrementally improve her or his performance in response to knowledge of results, feedback, or both from a teacher. (p. 368)

I would argue, however, that while deliberate practice in the practice-based coursework changed the participants' actions while teaching, it more importantly furthered their conceptual development. For example, data from the first enactments usually showed surface level

understandings about teaching reading. The participants' first lessons usually were not very effective (the routines were new and they did not know their students) and the participants' conversations about these lessons focused on behavior management and pacing. By the third enactment, however, the participants began understanding their students' strengths and areas of needs as readers, and began adapting their instruction to meet the needs of their learners. Thus, their teaching improved as a direct result of their deepening conceptual understandings, and their conceptual understandings deepened as a result of their teaching. It is evident here how the concepts inform the practice and the practice informs the concept.

Thus, an analysis of the data suggests that 1) a shared teaching experience with students 2) communities of practice 3) content-specific feedback, and 4) multiple opportunities for deliberate practice were salient features of practice-based teacher education to promote conceptual development. While each of these features is important, I argue that the power of practice-based teacher education comes when all of these components are used in tandem.

The Nature of Concept Development: A Twisting Path

The participants' concept development over time is best characterized as a "twisting path" (Vygotsky, 1987 as cited in Smagorinsky et al., 2003). Findings from this study support a long history of theoretical and empirical evidence that one does not simply learn a concept and flexibly adapt the concept to new environments. As the participants moved into their full-time student teaching and first-years of teaching, issues of re-contextualization challenged their conceptual understandings. Using Billett's (2012) framework for thinking about adaptability, or transfer, the data shows that the participants' sought to use these conceptual understandings as they construed (saw or experienced), reconciled (aligned or made sense of) and constructed (generated) responses while teaching. At the same time, however, the extent to which the

participants were able to draw upon these understandings was dependent upon situational factors (e.g., curriculum, cooperating teachers' styles of teaching, reading routines, school goals and demands) and ontogenetic (or personal) factors.

Construing Procedures

Noticeably, the participants initially construed (Billett, 2012) reading instruction in terms of procedures. For example, during the first enactments in practice-based coursework, the participants and other teacher candidates focused on the procedural aspects of the routine in their debriefs (e.g., pacing, order of teaching moves, student management) rather than on the concepts themselves. The same is true for the participants during student teaching. For example, Anna and Isabel talked about the differences in the fieldwork/coursework approach in terms of the procedural components in their placements (e.g., “first we do the teach and active engagement and the closure and the after workshop share” [Anna.ST#1.lines16-17]).

I argue that learning and understanding the routine or procedure is an important stepping-stone to concept development. Vygotsky (1987) might distinguish this level of development as a “pseudoconcept.” Similarly, Grossman et al. (1999) would most likely categorize these types of understandings as “surface level appropriations.” Hammerness et al. (2005) write that “developing routines can be helpful and can free up teachers’ attention for other aspects of their work” (p. 360). Generally, I found this to be true in the practice-based coursework. By the third enactment, the nature of the debriefs shifted from discussions about the procedural aspects of the work to the deeper conceptual understandings that the enactments surfaced. I believe that this can be attributed to a few things: 1) the candidates increased fluency with the routines, 2) the aforementioned components of practice-based teacher education that supported the work of concept development, and 3) the nature of the routines themselves.

Developing and understanding procedural teaching routines are part of the “twisting path” of concept development. For example, Leira demonstrated thoughtful adaptations to her small-group reading routine during coursework, and flexible adaptations during student teaching, but she struggled to understand how to make her routines in her first and second years of teaching more meaningful for her students. Thus, concept development can deepen as a result of changes in setting and experiences, but it is also challenged by changes in setting and experiences.

The Role of Tension in Concept Development

Moments of tension, or contradiction, in student teaching and during the beginning years of teaching added some of the “twists” in the path of concept development. Engeström (2001) writes that, “Contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions... [that] are sources of change and development” (p. 137). In this study, participants experienced contradictions when their ontogenies (or background experiences and knowledge) seemed at odds with their situational factors.

Throughout this study, it is interesting to note the degree to which tension played in concept development. I would argue that Isabel’s conceptual development was somewhat hindered by lack of tension. Isabel’s setting remained consistent throughout her teaching career; her practice-based coursework, student teaching and first-years of teaching were all completed at Stone Hill School. Her first-grade experiences in the practice-based coursework made her feel more confident and prepared to teach reading in her first-grade student teaching placement. During student teaching, there is evidence of her adopting, and perhaps, mimicking, her cooperating teacher’s actions and decisions. Isabel resolved any perceived tensions or contradictions in settings by aligning herself with her cooperating teacher’s ways of acting.

In her first two years of teaching third grade, Isabel tried to mimic her cooperating teacher's approaches to teaching reading. While her teaching appeared smooth and her students were compliant, her lessons lacked rigor and depth. Eventually, however, she realized that the majority of her third graders had different needs than her first graders. This tension forced her to think more deeply about her reading instruction, and draw upon her conceptual understandings of the reading process to help her make thoughtful adaptations to her teaching. Thus, without this tension, Isabel might have never moved past what Grossman et al. (1999) define as a "surface level appropriation" or understandings.

On the other hand, Anna perceived tensions and contradictions in settings from the beginning of her student teaching. For example, Anna felt that her curriculum in student teaching did not leave room for differentiation and felt that her cooperating teacher didn't do enough to support their ELLs. In student teaching, Anna struggled to resolve these tensions by differentiating her levels of questions and scaffolds for vocabulary for her ELL students in small groups. As Anna transitioned into her first and second year of teaching, she perceived many more tensions in her setting. Arguably, Anna had come to attribute teaching with problem solving and realized that she was going to have to try different approaches before she got them "right." Although she struggled in her first years of teaching with these tensions, I argue that she also developed strong pedagogical content knowledge in the process.

Limitations of Practice-Based Reading Coursework

Although this practice-based coursework addressed the three problems of teacher education (apprenticeships of observation, enactment and complexity) addressed in chapter one, it is important to note that there were several limitations to the practice-based reading course that became apparent in the findings of this study. Some of these limitations are explained below.

First, given the limited time and resources of the university coursework, important reading conceptual understandings, instructional routines and pedagogical tools were left out of the practice-based coursework. Particularly noticeable in this study was that explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction was not part of the teaching teams' work. Consequently, throughout student teaching, the candidates did not have frames of reference to draw upon and were less able to thoughtfully adapt these types of routines in their classrooms.

Another limitation of the practice-based coursework was the lack of attention given to curriculum adaption due to time constraints of the coursework. During the practice-based coursework, the focus was on certain instructional routines meant to further conceptual and pedagogical content understandings. Thus the candidates did not experience the process of how to adapt existing curricular materials to support student learning, and eventually some of the participants struggled in how to reconcile curriculum materials and approaches to reading instruction to what they learned about in the practice-based reading coursework.

Another problem that surfaced from the practice-based coursework relates to the important of shared language (Ball & Cohen, 1999). At times, participants got caught up in the labels of instructional routines and issues of relevancy and legitimacy emerged. For example, during student teaching, Isabel questioned the efficacy of some of the instructional routines from the practice-based coursework because "they were done differently" in her placement classroom. Over the years, the course instructor has changed the labels of instructional routines to try to capture the conceptual purposes of the routines and to try to avoid direct procedural comparisons. However, as labels and procedures are often an important stepping-stone to concept development, differences in labels and lack of a shared language remains somewhat problematic in this particular instantiation of practice-based teacher education.

Limitations of the Study and Implications

There are several limitations of this study. First, I studied the development of four teachers and thus my findings cannot be widely generalized. Instead, my findings shed some light on how one learns concepts across settings. During the findings sections when I analyze instances of thoughtfully adaptive teaching, it is important to recognize that these were just that – instances. I cannot attest that the participants were thoughtfully adaptive all the time or in all aspects of their reading instruction. My limited time spent with the participants offers just a small insight into their teaching practice and understandings of teaching reading.

It is also important to note that this was not a comparative case study. All of my subjects participated in the same practice-based coursework, which does not allow me to understand the conceptual development of pre-service teachers in the absence of a practice-based course. The coursework assignment done in winter quarter, however, did provide me with unexpected insight into the challenges that the participants faced when attempting to teach explicit comprehension lessons without having conceptual understandings and pedagogical tools from practice-based coursework to guide their thinking and enactments. However, additional research with subjects enrolled in practice-based coursework and subjects enrolled in more traditionally structured coursework (and perhaps even enrolled in alternative pathways) would allow for comparisons across different pedagogical approaches.

An important limitation of this study was my initial limited understandings of contextual factors, specifically in the student teaching portion of the study. At the time that I collected the student teaching data, I didn't fully understand the importance of situational factors and their role in teachers' development. Although I became more attentive to situational factors in the last data

collection phase, I recognize that I was still an outsider trying to understand the inner workings of school districts and schools in which I had never worked.

Another limitation is my own positionality as a researcher. I served as the teaching assistant in the participants' coursework and got to know these participants very well during that time. They viewed me as someone who could offer help and guidance to their teaching, which in turn provided me with invaluable insight into their thinking and reasoning. However, I am mindful that the participants also were aware of my views and beliefs around reading instruction. While I told the participants to conduct "business as usual" during my observations, I am mindful that they were still aware of my conceptual orientation to reading instruction.

Given these limitations, findings from this study do not offer specific ideas for practice, but do raise a number of important issues and questions.

First, there is the question of size and scope of practice-based teacher education coursework. The practice-based reading course of study was a 10-week course, which meant that there were several reading conceptual understandings that were left out due to time constraints. However, practice-based coursework requires many resources and expert personnel, including dedicated faculty, teacher educators and willing school partners. In a one-year program, such as the one in which the participants were enrolled, there is limited time and resources to do this type of work. Missing from this study and from the larger body of research on practice-based teacher education is the empirical data on which high-leverage concepts to teach in practice-based elementary reading teacher education coursework.

Given that some concepts will be left out of practice-based coursework and that candidates will struggle with issues of re-contextualization, there will always be the pressing needs for more "critical feedback from adaptive experts" (Anderson & Stillman, 2010, p. 131) as

pre-service teachers transition to full-time student teaching. The data from this study shows that during student teaching and beginning teaching, the participants tried to make sense of what they saw in their classrooms and how to reconcile that with that what they learned in their practice-based coursework. Candidates particularly grappled with understanding curriculum and grappled in understanding instructional routines that appeared very different to them than the routines they had learned. At times, these misconceptions provided important opportunities for learning. At other times, the candidates didn't have the necessary mediation to make sense of what they learned in student teaching and thus we see, what Valencia et al. (2009) call lost opportunities for learning.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the goal of practice-based teacher education is conceptual development, not solely the development of instructional practices. Findings from this study demonstrate that two years after coursework, footprints of practice-based teacher education can be seen in participants' conceptual understandings, however different the participants' instructional routines and practices may be. From a sociocultural lens, it is widely accepted that different school settings will vary greatly in terms of goals, student population, curriculum, and approaches. Thus, it is impossible for teacher educators to select instructional routines that will mirror routines done in placement classrooms. However, for novices who just look at the surface features of routines presented in practice-based coursework and compare them to what they see in their placement classrooms, university practice-based teacher education potentially could further dichotomize the two worlds of teacher education. Practice-based teacher education's power comes in its development of concepts and corresponding pedagogical tools. It is essential that this goal be communicated to participants of practice-based coursework so that they seek to adapt, not adopt, practices.

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