

Literacy Content and Core Practices: Teacher Educator Pedagogy as the Bridge Between  
Knowing and Doing

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**Abstract**

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Mary Kennedy (1999) introduced the *problem of enactment* to describe how novice teachers often struggle to put what they have learned in coursework into practice in the field. One approach to this problem is to put practice at the center of teacher education by specifying core practices of teaching around which to structure novices' learning opportunities. A core practices approach includes addressing the content and the pedagogy in preparing teachers.

While research has been conducted on the use of core practices in mathematics, science, history, and secondary English Language Arts, there is currently a gap in the research in elementary literacy. In addition, most research available on elementary literacy methods courses includes information about the content of the courses but little literature is available on the teacher educator pedagogy in those courses. The literacy community has a large body of research on how children read and best practices to teach children to read. However, we don't have knowledge on the best ways to prepare teachers to do this work. In order to ensure all students are reading we need to better understand how to prepare teachers for this complex work. This dissertation begins to address this gap by investigating an elementary literacy methods course that includes core practices.

Importantly, this dissertation introduces a framework for understanding the types of decomposition in teacher education. This framework emerged in the interplay between concepts from sociocultural theory and data analysis. Sociocultural theory directed the attention to the relationship between knowing and doing and extended that concept considering the context in which learning takes place. Using a sociocultural lens to analyze data, patterns emerged within decomposition illustrating nuanced complexities that led to the development of the framework.

This dissertation addressed the broad questions: How does an elementary literacy teacher educator learn the work of teaching core practices in a teacher education program? What pedagogical practices does one teacher educator use when preparing teacher candidates to teach reading? How do teacher candidates enact literacy practices when working with children? Does a literacy methods course that includes core practices produce changes in candidate knowledge on reading and the teaching of reading? I answered these questions through a mixed-methods study at State University, a larger research-focused university in California.

This study draws on data collected from October 2014 – February 2015 – the first quarter of the program and part of the second. Drawing from interviews of five faculty members, interviews of eight candidates, ten course observations, and six field observations, data was analyzed to understand how the course instructor began using core practices, the relationship between content and core practices in the course, teacher educator pedagogy, and the ways in which candidates enacted practice. When analyzing these data, I looked across sources for triangulation.

In this dissertation, I first present findings related to decomposition, a specific pedagogy used by the teacher educator. The study develops a framework of decomposition in teacher education that highlights the different dimensions where complex practice is unpacked into

integral parts when preparing teachers. Based on concepts from sociocultural theory, this framework highlights conceptual and practical ideas that are decomposed and how practices of varying grain size are unpacked for candidates. Conceptual ideas are the larger ideas and principles behind literacy instruction and practical tools are those that can be used in the classroom with children when teaching them to read. This framework provided an analytical frame to understand the teacher educator pedagogy of decomposition in the course.

A second theme was around enactment, historically viewed as a one shot deal where candidates sink or swim. This study revealed enactment is much more complex. I introduce a continuum of enactment. In order to support candidates in enacting practice, the teacher educator made thoughtful decisions to ensure all candidates had an opportunity to teach children what they were learning in the methods course. The teacher educator did this by including enactment at a lab school within the course. The teacher educator made intentional decisions to provide candidates with supports in this initial enactment. Grounded in sociocultural theory, the enactment continuum begins with highly designed settings on the left end and the traditional sink or swim on the right.

My analysis indicates that a core practices approach engages teacher educator pedagogy that can serve as a bridge between knowing and doing in different contexts in a literacy methods course. Teacher educator pedagogy as a bridge supports candidates in understanding how they can put what they have learned in their methods course into action in the field with children. This dissertation makes several contributions to theory and practice. First, it illustrates the importance of teacher educator pedagogy. The framework for decomposition in teacher education and enactment continuum can both be used as a guide by teacher educators and as an analytical tool for researchers. This dissertation highlights how the inclusion of core practices

can work towards ameliorating the problem of enactment. While this dissertation advances research on the use of core practices in an elementary literacy methods course, it recognizes there is much more to learn and understand about high quality literacy teacher education.

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## **Chapter 1: The Landscape of Teacher Education and Literacy**

*“Because, you know, I have the knowledge of these subject matters but then it's how is the best way to organize them or to express them to your students and tapping into these teaching moments. It's, kind of, when do [you] pick and choose to jump in or when do you let them go, when do you put them in groups. So, I don't know, kind of, I guess the, I don't know, the inner workings of the classroom, I guess. “ – Mason, pre-service candidate at State University*

### **Introduction**

Mason's concern is quite common for novice teachers; simply knowing the content that will be taught to children is not enough; novices also need to know how to teach it. Current research demonstrates that teacher candidates are struggling to put what they have learned in coursework into practice in the field (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). Kennedy (1999) has termed this the *problem of enactment*. While candidates learn about the content and practice of teaching in their courses, they struggle to put that knowledge into practice teaching children - enactment. One idea to ameliorate this problem of enactment is to put practice at the center of teacher education. One approach is the use of core practices.

The core practices movement seeks to create a common language in the field, align teacher education with what is expected of candidates in schools, and highlight both content knowledge and practice (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). Core practices are practices that occur with high frequency, can be used across curricula, allow candidates to learn about students and teaching, preserve the integrity and complexity of teaching, and are research-based to potentially improve student achievement (Grossman,

Hammerness, & McDonald). Core practices have gained increased attention as research explores their use in teacher education in mathematics, science, and secondary language arts (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Grossman, 2011; Hiebert & Morris, 2012; Kazemi, Franke, & Lampert, 2009; Windschitl, Thompson, & Braaten, 2011; Zeichner, 2010 & 2012).

The current body of literature, though informative, does not include examples of the use of core practices in elementary literacy. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to begin to gain an understanding of how an elementary literacy method course includes core practices. The following questions guide this study:

- How does an elementary literacy teacher educator learn the work of teaching core practices in a teacher education program?
- What pedagogical practices does one teacher educator use when preparing teacher candidates to teach reading?
- How do teacher candidates enact literacy practices when working with children in the context of their methods course and in their field placements?
- Does a literacy methods course that includes core practices produce changes in candidate knowledge about reading and the teaching of reading?

In this dissertation, I address these questions by exploring an elementary literacy methods course at a large research university, which has begun to include core practices.

In this introductory chapter, I seek to articulate a conceptual understanding of practice-focused teacher education and literacy education by reviewing the current literature base. First, the historical context of practice-focused teacher education will be presented. In addition to understanding the lineage of practice-focused movements in teacher education we also need to

understand the problems in the field that continue to highlight the need for a focus on practice. Therefore, a continual predicament in teacher education, the problem of enactment, is discussed to illustrate the importance of and need for further practice-focused research. Fourth, practice-based teacher education (PBTE) is reviewed, noting and discussing different strands within PBTE and their benefits and limitations; this section will specifically focus on the core practices approach within the practice-based movement. Then, a brief discussion around the research on literacy knowledge, specifically on reading, is presented to begin to explicate the type of work teachers engage in while teaching reading. Sixth, a review of the literature on literacy methods courses in all types of teacher education programs will be discussed. After analyzing current research on literacy methods, the literature base will be assessed in regards to PBTE. The paper will end with a brief summary of the study and conclude with an overview of the dissertation.

### **History of Practice-Focused Teacher Education**

For decades there was no specialized preparation for teachers in the United States (Lortie, 1975). Teachers in schools were at times college graduates or individuals with good moral character, but had little preparation for the work of teaching (Fraser, 2007). The earliest institutional forms of preparing teachers were through normal schools that originally came from reforms to establish a state board of education in Massachusetts (Fraser). Normal schools were the first instance in teacher education where practice was a focus. The idea of organizing teacher education around practice was evident in normal schools, the Commonwealth Teacher Training study, and within the CBTE movement. Each of these movements will be discussed to understand past practice focused movements and their conceptualization of practice.

## Normal Schools

The first focus on practice, as noted above, occurred with the creation of normal schools. The Massachusetts normal schools were created to prepare teachers in understanding both “what to teach and how to teach” (Fraser, 2007, p. 49). While variations existed among the schools, the design sought to put engagement in the practice of teaching as an essential and dominant component of the program (National Education Association, 1899). The first normal school was in Massachusetts where then Governor Edward Everett noted four core components of the normal school instructional program during the schools opening: a high level of content knowledge, “the art of teaching” which gave pedagogy equal weight with course content, “the government of the school”, and the opportunity to observe and practice good teaching (Fraser, p. 52-54). This aligned with Horace Mann’s belief that candidates needed to understand pedagogy in addition to content (Fraser). The explicit inclusion of pedagogy along with content made practice a central focus of normal schools.

This conception of practice – which includes both the content and pedagogical of elements of teaching – influenced the creation of normal schools with a focus on practice-oriented education for candidates (Fraser, 2007). However, the amount of practice candidates received in normal schools varied greatly by program (Blauch & Bonner, 1919). One example of teaching practice, from the State Normal School of San Diego (1919), is included in the work of reading for the primary grades noting, “To insure careful reading habits by asking for interpretation of subject matter read silently, in terms of oral explanation, reports, dramatization or oral reading” (p. 10). The San Diego curriculum did not further explain how a teacher would go about questioning a child on the book they read or have a discussion about a text. With an opportunity to practice while preparing these elements may have been included. Given the lack

of articulated teacher educator pedagogy in normal school, the role of practice varied among normal schools. While normal schools focused on practice, they simply noted *what* candidates should learn not *how* they would learn to do it.

As university based teaching preparation grew, normal schools lost popularity as they were scorned for low entrance conditions (Saylor, 1976). As more teacher education programs moved to universities many normal schools became departments of education or multipurpose universities, leaving very few normal schools to prepare teachers. Another prominent example of the focus on practice in teacher education came in The Commonwealth Teacher Training Study. We now turn to a discussion of the study and findings.

### **The Commonwealth Teacher Training Study**

The Commonwealth Teacher Training Study sought to uncover traits and activities of strong teachers and influence teacher education course development. (Charters & Waples, 1929; Saylor, 1976; Zeichner, 2005). The study sought to uncover what teachers needed to understand and be able to do to engage in the work of teaching. Their findings noted 83 teacher traits and 1,001 activities that teachers engage in such as “defining general objectives for the grade or subject” (Charters & Waples, p.565). The Commonwealth Teacher Training Study aimed to provide teacher education curriculum recommendations that emerged from their research on teachers and the practices they engage in. While there was a focus on the practice of teaching, a theoretical base was missing from the work.

The study authors noted that teacher educators should use the findings of the study to design their programs and create courses that would address the traits and activities they discovered. For example, the 42<sup>nd</sup> teacher activity is “Using interesting methods of instruction” however the study does not outline ways in which candidates might do this or how teacher

educators would teach candidates to engage in interesting methods (Charters & Waples, 1929, p. 313). In addition while considerations of “pupils’ abilities, interests, and needs” were taken into account, connections were not made to student progress (Charters & Waples). As an influence on course creation, another goal of the study, the large quantity of activities and traits creates an overwhelming checklist of competencies for programs to include thus weakening the influence on design (Saylor, 1976). In addition, the findings did not provide any guidance on the teacher educator pedagogy to be used in courses. The Commonwealth Teacher Training Study created a foundational collection of what should be in teacher education but neglected to address how to provide instruction around the body of knowledge, leaving the teacher educator pedagogy up to individual programs. Despite the shortcomings, the study was foundational in articulating the work of teachers with a focus on practice. An attempt to outline what teachers should learn and therefore know, did not occur again until the 1960’s; we now turn to a discussion of that movement.

### **Competency Based Teacher Education**

In the 1960’s we began to see a movement in teacher education around competencies.

#### **Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE)**

...is education that focuses on students’ acquisition of specific competencies. In other words, the educational program includes a set of learning objectives that are stated so that their accomplishment can be observed in the form of specified learner behaviors or knowledge. Minimum levels of achievement of these objectives are established as a criterion of success (Hall & Jones, 1976, p. 10).

With this focus on teaching candidates certain competencies to employ in the classroom, field-based experiences were included in the program (Hall & Jones). One key feature of CBTE was

that the competencies were specific actions that could be taught and observed by teacher educators in preparing candidates thus a similar concept to the traits and activities that came out of the Commonwealth Teacher Training Study. A component of CBTE meant that knowledge would be transferred in the classroom through the adept ability of teachers to engage in certain skills. It is important to note CBTE, often times used interchangeable with performance-based teacher education (PBTE), was mandated for use in teacher education by many states (Zeichner, 1983).

CBTE was considered part of the social efficiency tradition of teacher education (Zeichner, 1993). CBTE programs were explicit about what candidates would learn and be able to do by the end of their program (Houston & Howsam, 1972; Zeichner, 1993). This explicitness supported the evaluation and feedback of candidates as candidate performance in regards to their acquisition of the competencies was used to determine their readiness for the classroom. In discussing the social efficiency tradition Zeichner (1993) summarizes comments by Feiman-Nemser (1990) about a distinction between movements within the tradition,

...a technical version in which the emphasis is on skill training to a minimum level of mastery and a deliberative version in which the hope is to foster teachers' capabilities to deliberate about the use of research-based skills along with other factors within a conception of teacher as decision maker (p. 5).

CBTE was part of the strand that focused on technical skill preparation and did not work to develop candidates' knowledge around the context in which they were teaching. This behavioristic approach does not consider specific students, the curriculum, and the school in determining which skills to use or how to adapt skills for particular situations. Therefore, while

the CBTE provided a clear objective for teacher education it did not work to support teachers to meet the needs of all students in varying environments.

CBTE was criticized for its view of learning as acquisition of specific skills out of context which fragmented the complex understanding of teaching for candidates, thus candidates were left without a complete picture of what the practice of teaching was (Broudy, 1970, as cited by Zeichner, 2005; Saylor, 1976). In CBTE the notion of practice was about specific competencies that teachers would learn and then, theoretically, do in the classroom. However, this notion of practice did not help teachers understand how to engage the competencies with particular groups of students. The CBTE movement, similar to the findings of The Commonwealth Teacher Training Study, lacked a theoretical base (Zeichner, 1983). While the conception of practice worked to articulate components of practice for candidates, the *what*, it did not provide support for teacher educators in the *how* – practice was conceptualized as a list of things that one would learn and then do.

While the CBTE movement sought to better prepare teachers by teaching specific skills and providing field-based experiences to practice, it fell short of meeting its goal. Candidates continued to struggle to put what they had learned in coursework into practice in the field, what Kennedy (1999) has termed *the problem of enactment*. We now turn to a discussion of the problem of enactment in order to further understand what was occurring in the field to spark a return to practice. It is important to have both a historical context of teacher education and understanding of candidates' struggles as they move into teaching positions in order to comprehend the emergence of PBTE.

## **The Problem of Enactment and Teacher Learning**

One possible explanation for this turn again towards PBTE is what Kennedy (1999) describes as *the problem of enactment*; the difficulties candidates have engaging in the work of teachers, in a classroom with K-12 students. Candidates are struggling to put what they have learned in coursework into practice in the field (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). We discuss this research to help us better understand the shortcomings of previous practice focused movements and the need to further develop teacher education focused around practice.

Teachers' knowledge is only valuable if they are able to put it in action and instruct children. When examining teachers' diaries Lortie (1975) found that candidates' main concern was whether they could enact practice. We have little research that finds a causal relationship between teacher education and candidate enactment (Wilson & Tamir, 2008). Much of the literature around candidate learning examines teacher candidates' beliefs and feelings about practice rather than the candidates' actual practice. (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Doyle, 1990).

Regardless of content, research shows candidates struggle with enactment even when enactment occurs within the context of a course (Lampert, 2010). One possible cause of the problem of enactment may be a disconnect between university courses and candidates' field experiences (Zeichner, 2010). Research has shown that candidates often struggle to see the alignment between their experiences in university courses and their experience working in schools (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009). Candidates struggle to connect what they have learned in their preparation programs with what they do in classrooms to teach children.

Candidates often learn subject and pedagogical content in their methods courses but don't have the opportunity to practice what they have learned in the context of the course as professors often assume candidates have the opportunity to practice what they are learning in the field. However, candidates often work in cooperating teachers' classrooms where they are unable to enact what they are learning in their methods courses (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009). In examining interactions during student teaching, Valencia et al. found "student teachers didn't have opportunities to grapple with difficult content and pedagogical decisions which are among the most important and difficult tasks for beginning teachers, especially so in the language arts" (2009, p. 19). Without opportunities in field placements to practice, candidates often leave teacher education programs without applying the knowledge they have learned. This gap in application of new learning may impact candidates' uptake and enactment of practice.

Once candidates begin teaching, they often feel they are unprepared for the daily teaching demands in schools (Korthagen, 2001). As a result of the struggles they face teaching, teachers often fall back on what they are most familiar with, their experience as students in K-12 schools, rather than strategies taught to them in their teacher education program (Korthagen). Lortie (1975) labels this notion of falling back on what we know and learning by watching as an apprenticeship of observation. Candidate knowledge is based on their perceptions from experience rather than the content and pedagogy of their teacher education program (Lortie). This contributes to the problem of enactment in our schools when teachers fail to fully understand the pedagogical approaches they may use to instruct students.

In an effort to support candidates in enactment, there has been a shift back towards focusing on practice in teacher education. This shift aims to provide teachers with more

experience in schools and with engaging the theory they are learning in their courses with students – aiming to ameliorate the problem of enactment by not only focusing on the *what* but the *how* (Hammerness et al, 2005). With the need to better support teaches to enact practice, I have arrived at PBTE. Looking at the historical development of PBTE, elements of past endeavors such as the CBTE movement are present. However, unlike normal schools, the results of the Commonwealth Study and CBTE, PBTE not only focuses on *what* candidates need to learn, but *how* to teach candidates. We now turn to an in depth review of the literature on PBTE.

### **Practice Based Teacher Education**

Teacher educators are once again turning to the idea of designing teacher education around practice, what is being called practice based teacher education (PBTE) (Zeichner, 2012). Ball and Cohen (1999) discuss the importance of a focus on practice in preparing teachers noting, “much of what they have to learn must be learned in and from practice rather than in preparing to practice” (p. 220). PBTE not only focuses on teaching candidates content knowledge, but also specifically focuses on candidates’ enactment of practice. (Zeichner, 2012). Unlike CBTE which focused on the technical version of the social efficiency tradition, PBTE is more deliberate focusing on both the *what* and *how*. (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Zeichner, 1993).

PBTE has taken multiple forms, sometimes working in alignment, focusing teacher education on specific core or high leverage practices and placing teacher education courses within schools (Zeichner, 2012). PBTE expands the conception of practice, creating moments in which candidates learn practices, having the opportunity to engage in them as part of the course, either during the session or as an assignment, and then reflect on and refine their practice. For example, rather than noting candidates should engage students in text discussion, PBTE supports

candidates in how to engage students in text discussions and gives them opportunities to enact the practice with children and reflect on their work.

The PBTE movement presses teacher education to design itself in a way that explicitly engages candidates in the act of teaching while learning to teach, creating a focus that expands beyond academic knowledge to include other knowledge bases (Zeichner, 2012). This creates an authentic learning experience for candidates to engage with content – both subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge within their teacher education program. In learning to become teachers it is essential that candidates actually engage in the practice of teaching (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). Within PBTE, there are two strands, field-based courses and programs and courses designed around core practices. Before beginning a discussion around the two strands of PBTE it is important to note why some other approaches are excluded.

Two teacher education approaches often associated with PBTE are Doug Lemov's (2010) *Teach Like A Champion* and practice based residency models. While some might see Lemov's "49 techniques that put students on the path to college" as a focus on practice, Lemov only discusses the *what* and not the *how* thus excluding the work from the PBTE movement. Lemov's techniques take a behavioristic approach to teacher education, similar to the CBTE movement noting what teachers should be able to do but not expanding on how to go about it (Zeichner, 1983). In addition, Lemov's work does not have a theoretical base, a similar problem Zeichner (1983) pointed out with the CBTE movement.

Teacher residencies are modeled after medical school preparation in which residents spend most of their time in classrooms working with mentor teachers and only a small portion in university based classes. Residency programs are often organized with some form of collaboration between school districts, universities, or community organizations and create

opportunities for candidates to spend most of their time alongside a mentor teacher (Papay, West, Fullerton, & Kane, 2011). Some residencies note that they are practice based; an example of this model is the Boston Teacher Residency (Papay, West, Fullerton, & Kane). Currently, there is little information available about teacher residencies and how they prepare teachers (Papay, West, Fullerton, & Kane). It is possible, that with more information on residency programs, practice based residency models may emerge as a separate strand of PBTE. However, at this time, they will not be included in the discussion of PBTE.

The next sections will examine the two strands within the PBTE movement, field-based courses and courses designed around core practices. Both strands will be discussed noting the strengths and shortcomings of each approach. With an interest specifically around the core practice movement, this strand will be discussed in more depth. Given that the *how*, the pedagogy of teaching, is critical to PBTE, we will then discuss the professional pedagogy aligned with the PBTE movement.

**PBTE: Field-based courses.** As noted above, a disconnect between university courses and field experiences continues to exist for candidates (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009; Zeichner, 2012). One attempt to ameliorate this problem has been to move classes to the field; field-based courses, also termed clinical courses, are courses housed at a K-12 school where candidates engage with K-12 students as part of their coursework. Field-based courses have a focus on practice and allow candidates to engage in the work of teaching within the context of their university course.

At the University of Washington course instructors shifted their courses to become field-based after noticing the struggles candidates were having in connecting their university work with their practicums (Zeichner, 2012). In order to mediate this, instructors changed the design

of their courses to be taught at local elementary and high schools giving candidates the opportunity to both observe and engage in the practices they are learning in the course within the course sessions. This supports candidate learning by creating opportunities for candidate enactment and for teacher educators to coach and reflect with candidates. Similar work has been done at other institutions such as Michigan State University and the University of Wisconsin – Madison (Zeichner, 2012).

It is important to note that not every methods course housed in a K-12 school is practice based (Zeichner, 2012). It is possible that a course uses a classroom at a school for space but is not designed around practice and does not engage with the student population. Therefore, physical setting alone does not qualify a course as part of the field-based strand of PBTE. While field-based courses allow for different engagement they do not necessarily support candidates in naming and understanding the specific practices they are working on. Next, we discuss the second strand, which focuses on core practices.

**PBTE: Core practices.** The second strand within PBTE is core practices. In recent years, the idea has again gained increased attention as researchers note that engaging candidates in core practices is critical to learning in the profession (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Hiebert & Morris, 2012; Zeichner, 2010 & 2012). Work has been done exploring core practices in mathematics, science, and secondary language arts (Grossman, 2011; Kazemi, Franke, & Lampert, 2009; Windschitl, Thompson, & Braaten, 2011). While many practices in education may be considered core, they may not be considered core practices within the core practice movement. Grossman, Hammerness, and McDonald (2009) outline criteria for core practices noting that they are:

- practices that occur with high frequency in teaching;

- practices that novices can enact in classrooms across different curricula or instructional approaches;
- practices that novices can actually begin to master;
- practices that allow novices to learn more about students and about teaching;
- practices that preserve the integrity and complexity of teaching; and
- practices that are research-based and have the potential to improve student achievement. (p. 277)

The above criteria will be used as the operational definition of core practices when discussing the approach in this paper. It is also important to note that while these practices at times are often termed high-leverage practices, the term core practices will be used for this paper. This definition and an explicit focus on specific practices in course design are foundational in the strand.

Focusing teacher education around core practices supports a common language in the field, aligns teacher education with what will be expected of teacher candidates in schools, and highlights the importance of teacher practice and strategies in addition to content knowledge (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Grossman & McDonald, 2008). Dewey (1904) noted, “Teachers, actual and intending, flock to those persons who give them clear-cut and definite instructions as to just how to teach this or that” (p. 152). The core practices movement seeks to do just that by explicitly articulating the practices candidates need to teach in addition to the content. We now turn to a discussion of the benefits of a core practices approach to teacher education.

***Creating a common language in teaching.*** Researchers have discussed the lack of a common vocabulary in the teaching profession as a possible barrier to candidate learning (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Lortie, 1975; Singer-Gabella, 2012). In 1975, Lortie noted the

lack of a “technical culture” and accompanying vocabulary to describe aspects and actions within the profession of teaching (p.73). Grossman and McDonald (2008) noted that a lack of a common language contributes to the struggles teachers face. The disjointed language used in the field not only affects teacher education but practice. Teachers struggle to articulate the practices they engage in in their classrooms and how or where they learned about such practices (Shulman, 1987). Without a common language to articulate practice, candidates hear different words that describe the same action in courses and don’t necessarily make connections between them or struggle to transfer learning between different contents. Currently, there is not a set of agreed upon practices in the field that all teachers are to learn about and enact (Labaree, 2004). The core practices movement aims to fill this gap and create practices that can be taught to and enacted by all individuals regardless of inert character traits and previous experience.

***Connecting learning and enactment.*** If candidates are to learn how to enact practices in varying contexts teacher education courses must create opportunities for candidates to do just that (Shulman, 1998). Therefore, the pedagogy of teacher education needs to be designed in a way that can create moments in which candidates struggle and reflect on their actions - moments in which they are engaged in practice. Core practices place the learning of content and pedagogy in the work of teaching, by teaching candidates the practices within bounded moments of instruction. Candidates will benefit from learning to teach by having opportunities to enact the practice of teaching (Hiebert and Morris, 2012).

***Valuing content knowledge and practice.*** Teachers, unlike other professionals in the United States such as doctors and lawyers, do not have agreed upon professional standards and preparation (Lampert, 2010). It is not only necessary for candidates to understand the content they will be teaching, but also to understand how they will teach the content (Ball & Forzani,

2009). A strong foundation of content knowledge is not sufficient in preparing candidates to work with K-12 students (Holt-Reynolds, 1999; Joshi et al., 2009; Wilson & Bai, 2010). When we are examining competencies for teaching both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge must be included, the use of core practices creates opportunities to engage candidates in these multiple types of knowledge.

***Connecting the core practices to content.*** Given that core practices can be used across content areas, they must be engaged and adapted within a specific content in teaching these practices to candidates. This can be done through the use of instructional activities (IAs) (Lampert & Graziani, 2009). Lampert and Graziani (2009) found “the instructional activities enabled both teachers and students to take the kinds of risks associated with working on authentic problems because they carefully specified the kinds of student performance that students would be expected to produce” (p. 493-494). IAs are bounded activities that engage the core practices and subject content allowing teacher candidates to learn and enact within a scaffolded structure (Ball, Sleep, Boerst, & Bass, 2009). In addition to supporting candidate enactment, IAs provide a structure for teacher educators to reflect on their own work and collect data on challenges and strengths of candidates that teacher educators can use to drive their instruction thus supporting both teacher educator and candidate learning around enacting core practices within specific content areas (Lampert & Graziani). Instructional activities are containers that address both the *what* and the *how*. For example, an IA in elementary literacy is an interactive read aloud which focuses on text features, reading strategies, and text based discussions and allows candidates to work on the core practice of eliciting and responding to students (Danielson & Schutz, 2014).

It is possible that core practices begin to work towards improving the problem of enactment in teacher education by providing more opportunities for candidates to engage in the actual work of teachers. IAs provide a bounded teaching moment that can be evaluated to not only gauge content knowledge but engagement of core practices, enactment (Ball, Sleep, Boerst, & Bass, 2009). This allows opportunities for the field of education to work toward ameliorating the problem of enactment.

While there are strengths in a focus on core practices, there are also concerns. The core practices movement creates valid concerns that arise in regards to the position of content in teacher education when such a focus is placed on practice. Content is equally as important as pedagogy. However, content knowledge alone is not enough (Holt-Reynolds, 1999; Joshi et al., 2009; Wilson & Bai, 2010). Core practices does not change the content, rather it changes the way in which candidates engage with the content. We now turn to a discussion of the concerns with PBTE in general.

### **Possible Concerns of PBTE**

In discussing the practice based movement Zeichner (2012) cautions against creating a system in which teachers are prepared to implement a specific type of instruction and are not taught to make in the moment changes based of the students in front of them and the context of their practice. It is possible that Zeichner's concern might arise in both field-based and core practice focused courses or programs given that candidates are taught specific ways to engage in practice. However, without further exploring how pedagogy focused on PBTE connects with candidate competencies and enactment we will not know if this concern is realized. It is quite possible that the PBTE movement may suffer many of the problems similar to CBTE. Further research will need to be conducted to better understand this.

We now turn to a discussion of the way in which course content, the *what*, the pedagogy, the *how*, are connected in PBTE. This component is vital as the inclusion of the *how* is what differentiates the PBTE movement from previous practice focused programs that only outlined the *what*. PBTE extends the conception of practice beyond a list of traits, activities, or actions found in previous movements to help candidates understand how to enact knowledge in classrooms with specific groups of students. One way this occurs is through the use of practice focused teacher educator pedagogy.

### **Pedagogy of Professional Practice**

When practice is an important component of what will be taught, the way in which it is taught is just as important. One way the PBTE movement moves beyond historical movements that focused on practice is by including an articulation of the pedagogy of practice. Duffy (2004) notes, “learning is enhanced when people are aware of what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how to do it” (p. 8). The incorporation of an explicit way of learning in PBTE occurs through teacher educator pedagogy.

In examining research on pedagogical practices Grossman (2005) found that most research focuses on the *what* rather than the *how*. This gap is evident in literature on teacher education (Charters & Waples, 1929; Hall & Jones, 1976; Houston & Howsam, 1972; Saylor, 1976; Steiner & Rozen, 2004; Walsh, Glaser, & Wilcox, 2006; Zeichner 1983 & 2005). We must move beyond only examining *what* is taught in teacher education programs to include *how* candidates are taught. The *how* involves an understanding of the ways candidate are being engaged in becoming teachers, PBTE seeks to do just that. The *how* also incorporates opportunities to examine candidate enactment as it becomes a part of the course design and

pedagogy. Grossman et al. (2009) provide us with a way to understand *how* PBTE courses are being taught by understanding professional preparation that focuses on practice.

Grossman et al. (2009) engaged in a cross professional study of teaching practices, specifically focusing on professions where “...practice depends heavily on the quality of human relationships between practitioners and their clients” (p. 2057). Three key pedagogical concepts were identified in their study: representations, decomposition, and approximations of practice (Grossman et al.). Next, each of these components will be discussed.

**Representation.** Representations such as modeled lessons, videos, or case studies are examples of practice. Representations provide candidates with the opportunity to see what professional practice looks like in action, the enactment of a profession. In addition to seeing representations Grossman et al. (2009) note that teacher candidates need time to debrief and reflect on the representations in their professional preparation. In the context of teacher education, professional preparation is mainly comprised of methods courses thus these should include representations and time for reflection.

**Decomposition.** Decomposition of practice is the act of unpacking the complex work of teaching into manageable pieces that candidates can understand and learn (Grossman et al., 2009). Decomposition allows candidates to see the different components of practice, helping them to understand the complexity of the whole. For example, when teaching candidates about interactive read alouds, the activity can be decomposed into before, during, and after reading to help candidates understand each component and the practices engaged in them.

**Approximation.** Once candidates have an understanding of the practice, they are able to attempt engaging in it by participating in approximations. As Grossman et al. (2009) explains, “Approximations of practice refer to opportunities for novices to engage in practices that are

more or less proximal to the practice of a profession” (p. 2058). For example, in elementary mathematics students approximate their practice through rehearsals (Kazemi, Franke, & Lampert, 2009). Rehearsal as an approximation of practice allows candidates to teach their lesson to fellow candidates prior to enacting it in the classroom, receiving immediate feedback and multiple opportunities to refine their lesson and therefore their practice (Kazemi, Franke, & Lampert). The inclusion of approximations of practice allows a way for candidates to work on their enactment. With an understanding of *how* we might engage candidates in practice, the PBTE movement pushes beyond other movements focused on practice that only outlined *what* would be taught.

While there have been many movements within the history of teacher education, only four have focused on practice. Normal schools were the first teacher preparation institutions to focus on practice, followed by the findings of the Commonwealth Teacher Training Study, and Competency Based Teacher Education. The most recent movement is PBTE. In examining PBTE, we find a small literature base thus calling for more research. Given and understanding of the development of practice focused teacher education, specifically the core practices strand within the new PBTE movement, we now must connect that work to elementary literacy. The next sections will examine literacy teacher education in order to situate the content within the PBTE movement and look for gaps in the research that are content specific.

### **Literacy Teacher Education**

While the history of teacher education, practice based teacher education (PBTE), and core practices have been discussed in the previous section we have not reviewed research in the specific context of literacy. Seeking to understand the knowledge around literacy methods in relation to PBTE it is important for us to first understand research around literacy teacher

education and the pedagogy to teach reading. Given this section focuses on literacy teacher education, research on the history of how reading has been taught, approaches within the field of reading, and a complete review of research around the knowledge necessary to teach reading will not be discussed.

There is a large body of knowledge on the content of literacy, both what candidates should learn and approaches and strategies for teaching students to read (Barone & Morrell, 2007; Calfee & Drum, 1986; Duffy, 2002a; Duffy, 2002b, Grisham, 2000; Holt-Reynolds, 1999; Israel, Block, Bauserman, & Kinnucan-Welsch, 2005; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005; Wilson & Bai, 2010). However, there is a much smaller literature base on how to teach this body of knowledge to teachers, not only for them to have a strong understanding of content knowledge but in a way that teaches candidates to successfully execute their learnings when teaching a group of students (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). The International Reading Association (IRA) (2003) notes that a quality teacher is the key to literacy learning in schools. Therefore, this literature review will give an overview of one perspective on the knowledge necessary to teach reading and then focus on what we know about teaching candidates to teach reading.

### **Teacher Knowledge**

The IRA (as cited by Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005) noted that excellent reading teachers ...understand the definition of reading as a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires the following:

- The development and maintenance of a motivation to read
- The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning form print

- Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension
- The ability to read fluently
- The ability to decode unfamiliar words
- The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes or speech sounds are connected to print (p. 215-216)

The field has an understanding of what teachers need to know about the process and teaching of reading, the content. There are differing opinions on a teachers' knowledge base, but they only vary slightly (Pearson, 2001). In addition to understanding literacy content knowledge, it is important that literacy courses include pedagogical knowledge. Research shows that candidates must not only have a deep understanding of content in order to teach someone, they must understand, pedagogically, how to provide instruction around the content (Holt-Reynolds, 1999; Joshi et al., 2009; Wilson & Bai, 2010).

Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005) note, "We cannot, we believe, eliminate the achievement gap in our schools without closing the knowledge gap in our profession" (p. 223). The field of reading has an understanding of how to teach a child to read and professional standards for reading teachers (ILA, 2010; NRP, 2000). The gap in the literature base is around how to teach candidates to teach a child to read, the pedagogy of teacher education. There is little research on teachers as learners (Pearson, 2001). We now turn to a discussion of literacy methods courses in order to understand what knowledge around preparing candidates is currently available in the field and what research is needed.

## Elementary Literacy Methods Courses

When specifically looking at literacy methods in teacher education, regardless of approach, only a small body of literature exists; research around the content and methods of programs and research on teacher learning is needed (Pearson, 2001; Snow, Griffin, and Burns, 2005). Research conducted on literacy methods courses has mostly been examined in an attempt to determine *what* or *where* teacher candidates are learning rather than *how* candidates are learning (DeGraff, Schmidt, & Waddell, 2015; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Nelson, 2012; Smith & Place, 2011; Steiner & Rozen, 2004; Thompson 2006; Walsh, Glaser, Wilcox, 2006). Given that strong teacher education is necessary for candidates to be able to provide high quality reading instruction it is important for us to understand what is occurring in literacy methods courses, understanding both the content and pedagogy (IRA, 2003; Snow, Burns, Griffin, 1998). We will first examine the research around literacy methods courses focused on document review, then move to an examination of qualitative studies that looked at course design including the context, pedagogy, or both, and end with a summary of a quasi-experimental study that sought to document effective programs features incorporating both the content and pedagogy of literacy methods.

**Document review research.** The largest studies, in regards to the number of programs included in analysis, are those that focused on document review. These studies contain large sample sizes and focus on course documents, specifically syllabi, to analyze course content. The studies sought to determine what candidates are or are not learning in literacy methods (Steiner & Rozen, 2004; Walsh, Glaser, & Wilcox, 2006). We will review research conducted by Steiner and Rozen followed by Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox's study.

*Steiner and Rozen.* In looking at top ranked teacher education schools, Steiner and Rozen (2004) reviewed course syllabi from 61 reading courses examining the content covered and course assignments included. Their analysis specifically looked at content in regards to the “theoretical knowledge and practical ability” courses provided teachers in regards to teaching reading (Steiner & Rozen, p. 132). Steiner and Rozen conclude that candidates do not receive enough instruction in the systematic teaching of phonics and strategies to teach children to read. Their findings also indicate that programs do not contain ways to determine candidate competency in the knowledge of teaching children to read (Steiner & Rozen).

In addition to noting shortcomings in the course content, Steiner and Rozen’s findings indicate that only a quarter of the course assignments include some sort of enactment component where the candidates engage using skills or strategies taught in the course. However, it is important to remember that Steiner and Rozen only examined the content that was outlined in the syllabus; it is possible that professors moved beyond cursory knowledge in the context of the course sessions. Without further research, we are unable to answer this question.

In addition to analyzing reading courses, Steiner and Rozen (2004) analyzed other content areas such as social foundations. In response to the outcomes of the social foundations syllabi review, which portrayed a similar dismal outlook to literacy, Butin (2004) replicated and extended Steiner and Rozen’s social foundations component of the study. Butin sought to replicate the work due to the assumptions Steiner and Rozen made about causal connections between course syllabi and what is taught, learned, and transferred into practice from the course. While Butin’s study does not add to the literature base on literacy methods, the concerns raised about Steiner and Rozen’s study are important to note in understanding the validity of the research. We now turn to the second study that focused on document review.

**Walsh, Wilcox, and Glaser.** The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) conducted a study examining elementary reading course syllabi and course texts in 2006 titled “What Education Schools Aren’t Teaching Teachers About Reading and What Teachers Aren’t Learning.” In this study Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox (2006) examined the syllabi and texts of 223 randomly sampled required reading courses to analyze content, each item being analyzed by two reviewers. The authors found schools of education were failing to effectively prepare teachers to teach reading. This finding came out of the lack of most schools to address components of the science of reading in course content or texts. In addition, it was found that there was very little agreement on texts used in reading courses.

The study’s findings provide evidence that candidates are leaving their literacy methods courses unprepared in the content necessary to teach reading in the field. In addition, the study found very little practical application of learning through course assignments. Therefore stating that reading courses not only needed to improve on the content, but the ways in which students are asked to engage with the content. This study, along with that conducted by Steiner and Rozen (2004), argue for program improvement, specifically in regards to reading. However, both studies have significant shortcomings when seeking to understand what is occurring in literacy methods courses.

**Shortcomings of content focused research.** It is important to highlight that both these studies only focused on the analysis of syllabi, the documented course content, rather than analyzing what was actually happening in the course. These studies do not provide any information teacher educator pedagogy in the courses examined. While assignments were reviewed and both studies noted a lack of attention to practical application, we don’t have data to

indicate whether any practical application occurred in the context of the course. In addition, both studies reflect a particular view of reading instruction known as the science of teaching reading.

The focus of their research was to examine the inclusion of the body of knowledge from the 2000 National Reading Panel (NRP) report. The panel sought to examine research and convene panels to examine whether phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary instruction, guided reading instruction, comprehension strategy instruction, motivation, and teacher education increase student achievement. As a result of their findings the NRP noted that effective reading teaching includes instruction on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). These five components are the criteria used by Steiner and Rozen (2004) and Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox (2006). While important, this criterion is not comprehensive of what should be included in literacy methods courses. Due to a lack of attention to diverse populations and inclusion of only experimental and quasi-experimental studies some researchers have critiqued the findings of the NRP report (Gee, 2004; Luke, 2003). Knowing a more comprehensive approach is necessary to provide instruction to all students there is a large gap in the NRP report (Gee, 1999; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

While critiques of the NRP report raise important issues and are of concern, the five major findings are still relevant in outlining a portion of the content knowledge necessary to teach elementary literacy (Joshi et al., 2009). In relation to teacher education, the information is important in understanding what should be included in literacy methods courses, but only part of it. Therefore, the findings by Steiner and Rozen (2004) and Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox (2006) are limiting given their narrow lens. A more comprehensive research approach is needed to understand what truly is occurring in methods courses, one that not only examines the content

knowledge, including content excluded from the NRP report, but the course pedagogy. We now turn to a review of literature that attempts to examine content and pedagogy.

**Design and pedagogy focused research.** Three qualitative studies have been conducted to examine the pedagogy of literacy methods courses (Nelson, 2012; Smith & Place, 2011; Thompson 2006). Two qualitative studies focused on the design or context of a literacy methods course (DeGraff, Schmidt, & Waddell, 2015; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014). Unlike research conducted on the content of courses that included large samples sizes, these studies each analyzed a single case. In addition, while the above research only focused on content, it is important to note that the foci of the following studies is on the design or pedagogy.

**Thompson.** In examining the pedagogy of a literacy methods course, Thompson (2006) observed three course sessions and conducted interviews with two candidates and the course professor. Thompson sought to understand how course pedagogy supported candidate learning. Thompson observed that the teacher educator often modeled best practice for the students within the context of the literacy methods course. Thompson's (2006) findings indicate that course pedagogy can be just as powerful as course content. This research supports the importance of not only examining the *what* of literacy methods but the *how*, noting the impact of pedagogy on candidate outcomes in the course. However, this study did not address what candidates had learned. Without attention to both content and pedagogy leaving one wondering about the connection of the *what* and *how*.

**Smith and Place.** In examining what is occurring in their literacy methods course Smith and Place (2011) sought to answer the question: "Does the promotion of an inquiry approach, focused on individual children, influence the development of teacher candidates and, if so, how?" (p. 306). The researchers collected course documents, observation notes, and student

feedback data around this question as they taught. Smith and Place found that having candidates examine individual students as part of the class supported their understanding of literacy. While this study gives some insight into the teacher educator pedagogy in a practice based literacy methods course, the researchers focused more on candidate learning and experience in the course rather than pedagogy. While this provides evidence on how candidates' perspectives can be changed it does not inform us about how this then influences their enactment of literacy teaching. In addition, focusing more on the impact of the design on candidates' perspectives, the findings shed little light on the actual pedagogy employed.

**Nelson.** Nelson (2012) sought to understand teacher educator pedagogy in a course that was recognized for excellence by the NTCQ study, noted above, conducted by Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox (2006). Nelson observed course sessions, interviewed the professor and candidates in the course, and collected course documents, including assignments for analysis. Nelson found that the course professor modeled instruction and provided useful feedback to candidates. While Nelson's study extended the work of Walsh, Glaser, and Wilcox to see what was happening in the context of a literacy methods course, with only one sample we are unable to look for trends and patterns in the pedagogy. We also have no information about the type of course Nelson studied, whether there was or was not a focus on practice. In addition, as with the study by Smith and Place (2011) and Thompson (2006), Nelson's (2012) work did not extend their research to examine how courses influenced candidate enactment.

**Matsko and Hammerness.** In considering the design of a teacher education program, Matsko and Hammerness (2014) wondered if programs should prepare candidates for all teaching contexts or specific contexts, specifically urban contexts and the students within them. Matsko and Hammerness use the term *context-specific teacher preparation* to describe programs

that are designed to meet the needs of specific environments. The study investigated three teacher education programs collecting program documents, conducting interviews with program directors, faculty, and graduates. In discussing one of the programs in the study Matsko and Hammerness found that there are many opportunities for candidates to learn about the district, children, neighborhood and larger community when teacher preparation is designed to prepare candidates for a specific context. This study considered the *what* of teacher education, focusing on aspects of a program that provide opportunities for candidates to learn about a specific context. In addition, the study noted teacher educator pedagogies used such as modeling and video representations. However, teacher educator pedagogies were simply noted, the study did not go into detail around the *how* of teacher education.

***DeGraff, Schmidt, and Waddell.*** DeGraff, Schmidt, and Waddell (2015) examined the design and implementation of a field-based literacy methods course. The authors discussed their use of Grossman and colleagues (2009) pedagogies of professional practice in supporting candidates to learn about interactive read alouds and guided reading. This study, unlike the others, directly discussed the teacher educator pedagogy used in the course. The study found that despite challenges, a field-based approach with practice focused pedagogies supports candidates in understanding the connections between theory and practice.

***IRA report.*** The only study that extended to include research around candidates once they entered the classroom as teachers is the IRA's (2003) National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction's report that documented qualities of effective teacher education programs. Understanding that teachers in quality programs were better prepared, the study sought to uncover program features that contributed to candidate success (International Reading Association, 2003, p. 2). The study was a quasi-experimental,

three-year longitudinal study. Out of 28 four-year bachelor programs that applied to be part of the study, eight were selected that the IRA found to have outstanding credentials.

After collecting data on the literacy methods courses, 101 of the graduating candidates from differing programs were followed into the classroom. In analyzing data, the study found “Eight Critical Features of Excellence in Reading Teacher Preparation Programs: 1. Content, 2. Apprenticeship, 3. Vision, 4. Resources and Mission, 5. Personalized Teaching, 6. Autonomy, 7. Community, and 8. Assessment” (IRA, 2003, p. 11). While these features are important and were further explained in the study, many of the recommendations were around program and course design rather than noting specific pedagogies the teacher educators in the programs engaged. In addition, the study did not note how design impacted candidate competence and enactment. Therefore, while this study contributes important longitudinal information to the field around literacy methods, there are still questions about specific design decisions and pedagogies teacher educators engaged in that contributed to candidate learning. In addition, this study only examined four year bachelor programs, raising questions about the generalizability to master’s programs.

### **Summary of Literacy Research**

Despite this research, we still don’t have a strong understanding of the teaching occurring in elementary literacy methods courses and how this relates to candidate practice. Few studies have been conducted on literacy methods courses and those that have only consider one aspect. Not one study found analyzed the course content and pedagogy in relation to one another, let alone candidate learning. The limited research that does exist does not provide us with a complete picture of how teacher educators are or are not engaging teacher candidates in the practice of teaching. A gap in the research exists in looking at what is occurring during literacy

methods course sessions and how teacher candidates learn and engage with both content and practice.

### **Literacy Methods and Practice Based Teacher Education**

In discussing the teaching of reading, Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005) outline key principles for teacher education programs noting, “Programs that help teachers apply what they have learned in teacher-education programs to particular contexts and students ease the transition to classroom teaching” (p. 216). This principle highlights the importance of a focus on practice in teaching candidates to teach reading. In examining the current research on literacy methods courses, three studies, DeGraff, Schmidt, and Waddell (2015), Matsko and Hammerness (2014), and Smith and Place (2011), were identified as practice based, falling under the field-based courses strand. Given the research around what teachers of reading need to understand, this limited research on practice focused literacy methods courses is concerning (Duffy, 2002b; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). More than strong content knowledge is necessary to provide effective instruction thus research around literacy methods courses is critical as it aids the field in understanding how to teach candidates to teach reading (Holt-Reynolds, 1999; Joshi et al., 2009; McCardle & Chhabra, 2004).

While there is little research around the pedagogy of literacy methods courses with a practice focus, work has been done to examine teacher preparation which accounts for the importance of practice in the context of literacy (Duffy 2002a, 2002b, & 2004). In examining teacher preparation, Duffy (2004) noted the view of teaching, as a technical profession, is insufficient given the complex demands of classroom instruction. Duffy (2004) compares the preparation of teachers to teach reading to that of teaching children to read noting that just as it is essential for children to be engaged with texts when learning to read, teachers must be engaged

with the action of teaching. Duffy (2004) notes teacher education “is primarily a matter of doing teaching” (p. 21). This view of teacher education puts practice at the focus of preparing teachers to teach reading. With little research existing on practice focused elementary literacy methods courses, it seems an important area to explore.

The goal of teacher education is to prepare candidates who can use their knowledge of content, pedagogy, and students to make thoughtful judgments in their practice rather than act in prescribed ways (Shulman, 1987). This view of preparing teachers to be thoughtful practitioners aligns with Duffy’s (2002a & 2004) view of what is important in literacy teacher education. We must not teach teachers one way to provide instruction but teach them to be thoughtful and adaptive in meeting students’ needs. It is possible that core practices provide an avenue to prepare thoughtfully adaptive teachers. It is also possible that the core practices movement may narrow the role of teachers to enact specific skills without considering their context (Zeichner, 2012). Without research on elementary literacy methods in PBTE we won’t know. For this reason, among the others previously stated, elementary literacy teacher education within the core practices strand of PBTE is an important area to study to have an understanding of the impact it has on candidate learning.

### **Conclusion**

Understanding content knowledge alone is insufficient, the core practices movement seeks to explicitly teach not only content but specific practices, which allow candidates to learn how to engage students in the content (Holt-Reynolds, 1999). Research in reading documents the need for multiple forms of knowledge (Holt-Reynolds; Joshi et al., 2009; McCardle & Chhabra, 2004). Knowing this, might the core practices movement be a successful approach in teaching teachers to teach reading?

While the body of research is continually growing around PBTE, currently there are large gaps in the literature base, specifically in regards to elementary literacy. While we do have some information on field-based courses in elementary literacy this is not the case within the core practices strand (Smith & Place, 2011; Zeichner, 2012). Given the current body of literature on core practices, though informative, it does not include any examples from elementary literacy. Therefore, while research around PBTE in literacy is needed in all areas, the largest gap is around the core practices strand.

### **Overview of the Study**

At a time when practice-focused teacher education offers a potential approach for improving enactment of new teachers, it is particularly important to gain a better understanding of the following questions:

- How does an elementary literacy teacher educator learn the work of teaching core practices in a teacher education program?
- What pedagogical practices does one teacher educator use when preparing teacher candidates to teach reading?
- How do teacher candidates enact literacy practices when working with children in the context of their methods course and in their field placements?
- Does a literacy methods course that includes core practices produce changes in candidate knowledge on reading and the teaching of reading?

This dissertation examines these questions through a mixed methods analysis of a literacy methods course that includes core practices. This research focuses on an elementary literacy methods course at a large research institution in California; the course was selected as it includes core practices and focuses on reading.

The focus of this study on both the teacher educator pedagogy and candidate learning called for a research design that provided an in depth analysis of the course and a way to analyze candidate's change in knowledge. To capture data in both these areas, this study draws on data collected from October 2014 – February 2015, including 26 interviews of participating faculty and case study candidates, observations of each course session during the ten week quarter, four observations of candidates teaching in their placements, review of program documents such as candidate assignments and teacher educator slides; and a pre and post content knowledge assessment that was administered to candidates. I systematically coded the data along descriptive and theoretical categories that were generated by the conceptual framework, but also emerged through the iterative process of data analysis. (See Chapter 3 for a detailed description of the methodology for this research.)

This in depth study of the inclusion of core practices in an elementary literacy methods course provided insights on teacher educator pedagogy and candidate learning. This dissertation offers a framework – grounded in sociocultural theory – for understanding the different ways in which teacher educators can decompose practice for candidates. The framework indicates that decomposition of practice occurs from the conceptual to the practical, and from the general to the specific. This analysis considers the different ways teacher educators may decompose practice for candidates and the benefits of each approach, noting a combination of types of decomposition are best suited in preparing candidates. In addition, this study offers a new view of enactment, rather than viewing enactment as a one shot sink or swim experience for candidates, this study proposes an enactment continuum. This finding acknowledges the different opportunities for enactment candidates have in practice-focused methods courses. This study highlights that an

elementary literacy methods course provides opportunities for candidates to both learn about and engage in the practice of teaching as they prepare to enter the field.

### **Dissertation Overview**

The dissertation begins with a problem statement and review of relevant literature, the current chapter. This chapter is followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework for the study. Chapter three outlines the methods of the study. Chapter four is the first findings chapter, discussing a framework of decomposition for teacher education. Chapter five discusses the second theoretical finding, the enactment continuum. The dissertation ends with a discussion of the findings and implications of the study.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Underpinnings**

### **Introduction**

Teaching is a profession centered on learning (Darling-Hammond, 1999). In viewing teaching as a learning profession it means that individuals do not learn all that they need to know about teaching and then go do it. Rather, learning is a continuous process. The doing supports the knowing. There is a relationship in teaching between the knowing and the doing. This relationship between knowing and doing has been a long-standing challenge in understanding teaching and remains a central question in the field (Dewey, 1904). The field has yet to discuss what this relationship means for novices and in order to gain the deep understanding about a course designed around core practices and influences on candidates this study seeks, it is important to look at knowing and doing in isolation as well as in relationship with one another.

In viewing teaching as a learning profession, a learning theory is needed to conceptualize this study. Given that the relationship between knowing and doing occurs in different contexts and these contexts influence that learning, I draw on a sociocultural perspective to incorporate the contexts. Sociocultural theory's consideration of theory and practice also aligns with the investigation of the relationship between knowing and doing. This paper will outline sociocultural theory and discuss its use as a theoretical framework for the proposed research questions:

- How does an elementary literacy teacher educator learn the work of teaching core practices in a teacher education program?
- What pedagogical practices does one teacher educator use when preparing teacher candidates to teach reading?

- How do teacher candidates enact literacy practices when working with children in the context of their methods course and in their field placements?
- Does a literacy methods course that includes core practices produce changes in candidate knowledge on reading and the teaching of reading?

This chapter will first discuss sociocultural theory, outlining the broad concepts. I will then turn to a discussion of those concepts in relationship to the field of teacher education and the work of learning to teach.

## **Sociocultural Theory**

### **History**

Sociocultural theory emerged through the work of Lev Vygotsky a Russian psychologist who sought to understand the learning of diverse student populations (Moll, 1990). Vygotsky trained in the field of law and then worked as an instructor at a normal school in Russia, exposing him to teaching and learning prior to his venture into psychology (Moll). Marxism and the work of V. A. Wagner influenced Vygotsky with their beliefs that people are innately social and that engagement with others influences development (Luria, 1979). This development occurs through cultural mediation of individuals' experiences and use of cultural artifacts (Vygotsky, 1978).

While Vygotsky was a leading Marxist theoretician, in many ways his thinking departed from this tradition (Werstch, 1985). For example, the emphasis he placed on mediation differed from a traditional Marxist tradition (Werstch, 1985). Vygotsky found speech to be a more prominent element than most Marxist approaches, increasing the importance on the use of signs in mediation (Werstch, 1985). Vygotsky's perspective further evolved through his work in the

university and clinical settings, making the connections between theory and practice central to his work (Moll, 1990).

Vygotsky's view shifted “from biological to social factors” as he engaged in his work (Werstch, 1985, p. 20-21). Sociocultural theory is not about banking knowledge, learning is a process that occurs through experiences over time. Wertsch (2010) notes three characteristics of Vygotsky’s work:

- Cognition must be understood developmentally (i.e., genetically) in terms of its origins and subsequent development at individual and cultural levels of analysis.
- Cognition is mediated by semiotic mechanisms, especially natural language.
- Higher (i.e., uniquely human) mental processes such as problem solving, memory, and voluntary attention have their origins in social activity (p.231).

Sociocultural theory seeks to understand the relationship and influences of history, culture, and context on development (Werstch, 1985). Vygotsky’s work sought to account for the complexity and relationships among things that occur during learning (Vygotsky, 1978). As individuals operate in the world, the experience is mediated through the use of tools. It is through the use of tools and signs that individuals learn and grow, engaging in “qualitative transformation” (Wertsch, 2007).

### **Mediation**

Mediation is a central concept in sociocultural theory. In looking at Vygotsky’s work, Werstch (2007) noted that the concept of mediation appeared in many different ways, possibly due to different thoughts he had on the concept as his work progressed. Wertsch (2007) discusses the ideas of explicit and implicit mediation in an attempt to explain Vygotsky’s work in this area. There is not a tangible tool or sign used in implicit mediation, an example language.

Explicit mediation occurs with a tool that is “intentionally and overtly introduced into problem solving activity” (Wertsch, p. 191). Tools mediate the relationship of knowing and doing.

**The Role of Tools.** Vygotsky’s work around the use of tools in learning was influenced by the work of Friedrich Engels (Vygotsky, 1978). In sociocultural theory appropriation relates to the use of a tool, the Russian word Vygotsky used for appropriation means “the process of making something one’s own” (Herrenkohl & Wertsch, 1999, p. 418). It is the relationship between the contexts in which one learns about the tool and uses the tool.

Artifacts, tools and signs, are a way in which individuals mediate their learning in specific contexts (Herrenkohl & Wertsch, 1999). A child, or adult learner, may use a tool in a specific way before fully understanding the meaning, but it is through this practice that one develops understanding of the tool; it is through this that appropriation of a tool occurs (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Herrenkohl & Wertsch, 1999). Pedagogy is an important element of Vygotsky’s sociocultural learning theory (Moll, 1990) as the way in which the course is taught influences the tools available for appropriation and the mediation that occurs.

### **Zone of Proximal Development**

In discussing sociocultural theory up to this point, I’ve been talking about the collective nature of the learning. It’s also important to consider individual learning. Vygotsky’s notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is drawn on to understand individual learning. The ZPD “...is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 86). The ZPD is where learners will make the most gains with support. Cazden (1997) extended the thinking

around the ZPD. Vygotsky and Cazden's work helps us further understand the importance of viewing knowing and doing together and separately when understanding learning.

Cazden's (1997) idea of *performance before competence* emerged through examining Vygotsky's ZPD. In examining children's discourse, Cazden (2001) found that even though children did not fully comprehend a task, they still were able to engage in it (Cazden, 2001). These ideas are important to consider as we think about adult learners, as adults often begin the doing as they are still learning the conceptual ideas. The doing is an important aspect of building knowledge, as individuals engaging in an activity, the doing, they learn more about it, the knowing. Examining the knowing and doing individually and together provides a view of the role they each take in the relationship and how they support one another. This section reviewed sociocultural theory. We now turn to the next section, discussing sociocultural theory in the context of learning to teach.

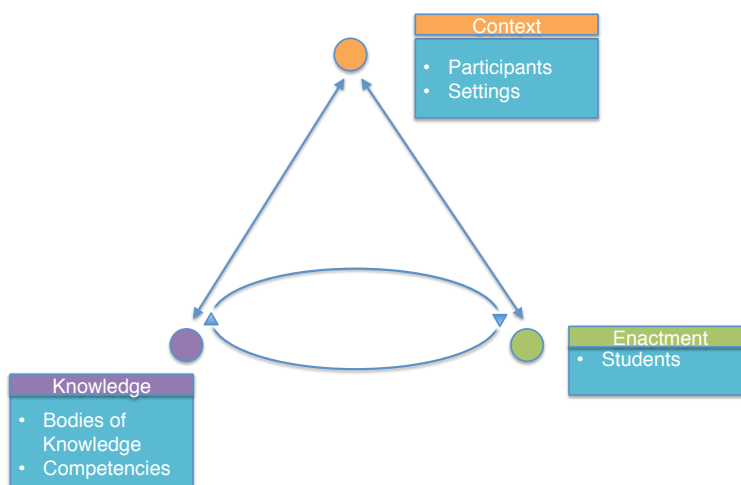
### **Sociocultural Theory in Teacher Education**

Historically in learning we have focused on this problem of knowing and doing. When we think about learning to teach we think about the problem of enactment and that is highlighting the relationship between knowing what to do and how to do it (Kennedy, 1999). In this study, I am framing the doing as the problem of enactment (Kennedy, 1999). Candidates can have a concrete understanding of the multiple bodies of knowledge for teaching, yet still struggle to effectively teach, to enact (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Kennedy, 1999). This is a useful concept because the relationship between knowing and doing is actually about understanding the way people appropriate these ideas in enactment; the doing can exist without fully knowing (Cazden, 1997). In this study the knowing will be referred to as knowledge. For

the purposes of investigation I delineated this into knowledge and enactment but in terms of understanding conceptually I consider them as occurring in practice together along with context.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between these concepts in regards to the development of a candidate's enactment of teaching. These three components and the relationships among them comprise practice. Therefore, this framework can be used as a lens to investigate how candidates learn about practice and the teacher educator pedagogy that influences this learning.

**Figure 1: Sociocultural Framework of Teacher Candidate Learning**



As increased knowledge improves enactment, enactment in turn supports the growth of knowledge. This deeper relationship has roots in the ZPD, the concept of *performance before competence*, and in understanding the relationship between thinking and doing in professional practice (Cazden, 1997; Schon, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978 & 1987). A candidate's knowledge and enactment develop over time during the course of learning to teach. As their knowledge base and experience enacting grows, candidates are better able to understand what they are teaching and

how to teach it (Berliner, 1994). This development occurs within the context of the course, in relation to their engagement in the different settings and communities.

### **Context**

In understanding the knowledge and enactments which candidates engage, it is important to understand the multiple contexts in which candidates learn about the practice of teaching reading (Chaiklin, 1993; Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Vygotsky, 1987). These include historical contexts and the contexts that the learning occurs in (Vygotsky, 1987; Werstch, 1985). Given the multiple complex contexts in which candidates engage, sociocultural theory is an ideal frame to use in conducting the research. The inclusion of multiple settings allows many of the influences on candidate knowledge and enactment to be examined in seeking an understanding of the relationships in development (Chaiklin, 1993). Since professionals work and learn in communities it is important to consider how those factors play out in their preparation, especially since research shows the positive influence of a community on candidate learning in teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007).

In examining the multiple contexts of candidate engagement we must consider the design of the teacher education program, the design of the course, the specific context of literacy, and the schools and districts where candidates enact their practice. These settings must be examined together, rather than in isolation, to understand their potential impact on candidate learning including the differences that may arise if some settings, outside of the specific course setting, are different for candidates (Moll, 1990).

The component of context seeks to address the first three questions in this study that ask how the teacher educator begins to learn about core practices, how a teacher education program supports the use of core practices, and how the use of core practices influences the design and

implementation of a literacy methods course. The examination of different settings in relation to one another along with historical contexts provides an appropriate lens for data collection. In addition, the inclusion of multiple contexts allows an open approach to data collection that is well suited for an area that lacks a literature base. Therefore, one must approach the research with a wide lens to examine the multiple contexts that influences learning in order to fully investigate the case.

### **Knowledge**

This study not only seeks to understand the knowledge taught in the context of the course but the knowledge candidates gain and are able to articulate and use during enactment, recognizing these elements are developed in relation to one another. This view expands knowledge to also include what teachers need to understand and respond to students in a moment of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). The knowledge component seeks to address research question two which asks how candidates develop knowledge of reading and the teaching of reading in a course designed around core practices.

In order for candidates to begin to understand the content they will teach and how they will teach it they must have a strong, diverse knowledge base (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). The categories of knowledge teachers should know include content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Given that these categories illustrate the knowledge base for teachers, this is the content they must learn and understand in order to work as teachers. This study sought to understand how courses designed around core practices supports candidates in becoming competent in ideas and

practices, different categories of knowledge necessary to teach reading. The learning and understanding of knowledge is important given that it is difficult to enact lessons for children if candidates do not truly understand the content they are trying to teach (Shulman, 1998).

It can be difficult to articulate learning in professional preparation since it is often demonstrated through action (Schon, 1983). However, given that it is important for candidates to be able to explain content and thinking to students in enactment it is important for them to be able to articulate the knowledge used in their enactment. The ability to engage in the action of teaching is not enough. Candidates' understandings must allow them to explain the content taught and practices engaged to teach.

Each candidate's experience in the course and experiences prior to the course influences individual and group learning (Vygotsky, 1978). The influence of candidates' experiences as students in school themselves, part of their personal history, has been shown to greatly influence the way in which they view and engage in teaching (Lortie, 1975). In addition, candidate's past experience specifically influences their beliefs about reading (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000).

Vygotsky views learning as a social process; thus it is necessary to account for the ways in which community members contribute to the learning of others. In the context of a literacy methods course, community members are fellow candidates in the course. In processing new information, candidates are influenced by the knowledge and experiences fellow candidates bring to and share in the course. This also includes the support candidates receive in their ZPD from collaboration and assistance from peers. Candidate development occurs through supports from many other individuals.

While the different categories of knowledge are important, they are not enough. Research demonstrates that knowledge alone is not sufficient to effectively teach students (Holt-Reynolds,

1999; Shulman, 1986). This is the problem that occurred with historical movements focused on practice; they only attended to *what* should be taught (Charters & Waples, 1929; Fraser, 2007; Saylor, 1976; Zeichner, 2005 & 2012). Therefore, it is not enough to only examine candidate knowledge; we must also examine candidate enactment and the relationship between these two elements as they are engaged in a reciprocal relationship.

### **Enactment**

In order to understand how candidates appropriate the tools they learn in their methods course we must view their enactment. The work of teaching is not only about being competent in the bodies of knowledge, but also the enactment of practice. Thus the relationship is essential in seeking to understand what and how candidates learn in a course designed around core practices.

As candidates' understanding of knowledge deepens, they are able to make connections between content and pedagogy in relation to groups of students, allowing them to enact practice (Shulman, 1987). Therefore, enactment is defined as putting the knowledge base of teaching into action with children. While candidates might engage in the practice of teaching through approximations of practice such as rehearsals or microteaching, these moments are not moments of enactment as candidates are not teaching children (Grossman et al., 2009; Kazemi, Franke, Lampert, 2009).

For teachers, professional learning includes new theoretical knowledge and learning from experience, both of these include sets of challenges (Shulman, 1998). One of the four major sources of the knowledge base that Shulman (1987) points out comes from practice itself thus the enactment further deepens a candidate's teaching knowledge base, highlighting the relationship between knowledge and enactment. Candidate enactment extends thinking, in turn impacting enactment; there is a reciprocal relationship between doing and thinking (Schon, 1983).

Candidate knowledge drives enactment, which all occurs within a particular context that also contributes to the ways in which teachers respond, thus a reciprocal relationship exists between context, knowledge, and enactment which together, is the practice of teaching. Practice “...incorporates both technical and moral elements, negotiating between the general and the specific, as well as between the ideal and the feasible” (Shulman, 1998, p. 519). Enactment involves selecting information to use and share based off the population in front of you (Shulman, 1986). Enactment allows us to understand the working knowledge base of candidates and the practices they have taken up. It provides a space to see which tools they have appropriated.

Tools are about mediating the relationship of knowing and doing so in order to understand enactment we need to consider tools. Lesson plans are a tool used by both teacher educators and candidates. Teacher educators may provide candidates with a lesson plan or the template for a plan to help candidates appropriate the knowledge they have learned. These purposeful tools provided by the teacher educator support candidates in understanding the relationship between knowing and doing.

Given the specific articulation of practices noted in the core practice movement, the tool of language is important to consider in this study (Cole, 1996). Historically in education we have lacked a common language to describe practice (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Lortie, 1975, Singer-Gabella, 2012; Shulman, 1987). The core practices movement seeks to create a common language to support teacher educators and candidates in being able to articulate the work of teaching (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009).

For example, it might be found that the teacher educator decomposes the practice of eliciting and responding to students by using talk moves such as adding on or repeating (Chapin,

O'Connor, Canavan-Anderson, 2009). This use of language as a tool to scaffold learning supports candidate understanding by providing explicit teacher actions the candidates can name and engage in. This in turn supports candidate articulation of practice, which historically has been difficult given a lack of a common language (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Lortie, 1975, Singer-Gabella, 2012; Shulman, 1987). The language of the core practices is a tool for teacher educators to support candidates in understanding knowledge and enactment and serves as a tool for candidates to appropriate for enactment.

### **Framework for Professional Practice**

Up to this point, sociocultural theory helped me frame how I would go about investigating the questions themselves. As I began my analysis of the data, I developed a sociocultural theory framework that would support me in analyzing the data. This framework was built to further help me understand my study. My analytic process included multiple rounds of coding where patterns emerged in the data and I needed a conceptual structure to help further analyze the patterns. Engaging in this process led to the development of an analytic tool for researchers and teacher educators. Researchers may use this tool to further analyze teacher educator pedagogy. Teacher educators may use this tool when they are considering the pedagogy and content of their course and how that content might be sequenced. I used this framework in the analysis to think about the types of decomposition the teacher educator was engaging in and the types of knowledge that candidates were appropriating.

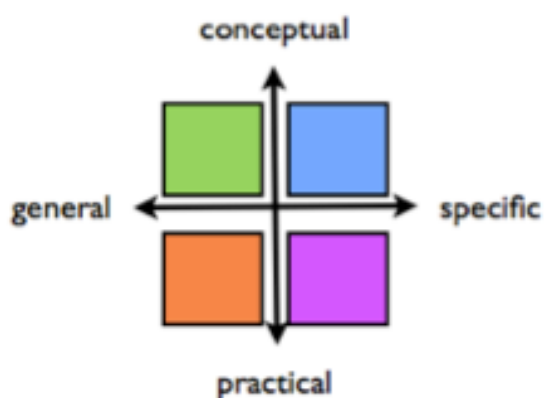
This framework is based on the work of Grossman and colleagues (2009). Grossman et al. (2009) engaged in a cross professional study of teaching practices, which identified three key pedagogical concepts: representations, approximations, and decomposition of practice. Representations are examples of practice such as videos and case studies. Approximations are

“opportunities for novices to engage in practices that are more or less proximal to the practice of a profession” such as micro-teaching (p. 2058). Decomposition of practice is the act of unpacking the complex work of teaching into manageable pieces that candidates can understand and learn (Grossman et al., 2009). As patterns emerged it became apparent that decomposition was much more complex, nuanced differences within decomposition became apparent in the data. Underlying assumptions of this study are that learning occurs over time and prior learning influences new learning. This framework, accounts for those assumptions in further explaining the dimensions of decomposition in teacher education.

### **A Framework for Describing Decomposition in Teacher Education**

Decomposition of complex practice supports candidates in understanding the integral components. Figure 2. Represents a Framework for Describing Decomposition in Teacher Education. This framework provides a more explicit way to understand the different types of decomposition that take place in teacher education and the relationships among them.

**Figure 2: Framework for Decomposition in Teacher Education**



The horizontal dimension captures the grain size in which a practice is decomposed. These ends are defined general and specific to articulate how detailed the decomposition has become, ranging from chunking a day to how to engage with students in a five minute lesson introduction.

The vertical line delineates the dimension of conceptual and practical. Dewey (1904) and Shulman (1998) both discuss the importance for teachers' theoretical understandings and the opportunity to engage in practical work. The definitions of these ends come from the work of Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) who described how conceptual and practical tools are utilized in teacher preparation. For example, on the conceptual end: decomposing theory on the process of reading; on the specific end: an in-the moment question you might ask a student working on decoding.

There are different types of practice to decompose when preparing teachers. Mapping those ways we look at the work on two perpendicular dimensions of general to specific, and conceptual to practical, encompasses those different ways and helps us understand the relationship among them. This framework also helps us further understand the relationships between context, knowledge, and enactment.

When we are thinking about preparing new teachers it is important to analytically pull apart knowledge and enactment, it is important for us to consider the dimension of conceptual and practical. However, in practice, they are together; they cannot be separated. The dimensions of this framework help us analyze the teacher educator pedagogy of decomposition by further unpacking it. The framework also helps us understand how, in the moment of enactment in a classroom, theory and practice are one.

Each dimension end is defined below:

**Conceptual:** “Principles, frameworks, and ideas about teaching, learning and English/language arts acquisition that teachers use as heuristics to guide decisions about teaching and learning” (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999, p.14). Ideas that are conceptual greatly depend on the way the teacher educator talks about them – it is not just introducing a framework but the work of decomposition that occurs with it to support candidate understanding.

**Practical:** “Classroom practices, strategies, and resources that do not serve as broad conceptions to guide an array of decisions but, instead, have more local immediate utility” (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999, p.14). These are the tools that are presented to support candidates in understanding specific work done in classrooms with children.

**General:** Relating to the main or major parts of something rather than the details. The most general is decomposing what will be taught in reading in a school year then moving towards a literacy unit and day, taking into consideration the developmental sequence of learning to read and breaking it down into specific components to be taught as we move away from the general end.

**Specific:** Clearly defined or identified, this is the smallest level of decomposition in regards to grain size. This end breaks theories and strategies down into small parts. The specific is the smallest size at which we examine theories or moments of teaching. Decomposition of vowel patterns and lessons on decoding individual sounds are near the specific end.

Together, these dimensions create four quadrants of decomposition.

**Conceptual/General.** Items being decomposed in the conceptual/general dimension include the larger research base around reading and reading instruction in elementary school. Theories, principles, and ideas around teaching that influence what happens in the classroom, but discussed

in a broad way that does not support candidates in necessarily understanding what they would then do in the classroom.

Teaching the National Reading Panel's "Big Five" of literacy is an example of a decomposition that would take place in the conceptual/general dimension. The knowledge base of literacy would be decomposed into five areas for candidates:

- Phonemic Awareness: Teaching phonemic awareness through explicit instruction to children significantly improves reading more than instruction that lacks any phonemic awareness.
- Phonics Instruction: Systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for kids in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, including low-achieving students, students with low SES and students with disabilities.
- Fluency: Guided repeated oral reading procedures have a significant and positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across a range of grade levels.
- Vocabulary: The studies reviewed suggest that vocabulary instruction does lead to gains in comprehension.
- Comprehension: Reading strategies like comprehension monitoring, cooperative learning, using graphic and semantic organizers, answering questions, generating questions, using text structure and summarizing are helpful in teaching students how to read. (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

In this quadrant these components would not be further decomposed, rather the teacher educator would work with students to help them understand the differences and relationships among these five components of reading and how they support students in learning to read. For the conceptual understanding the teacher educator needs to move beyond introducing and explain why ideas,

frameworks, or principles are important, going deeper to give candidates a sense of why these five components are important in teaching children to read.

**Conceptual/Specific.** The conceptual/specific dimension examines a smaller grain size of theory. It looks at the conceptual ideas that are specific to one of the larger components introduced in the conceptual/general dimension. As you move down the horizontal dimension from the origin to specific, what is being looked at becomes more precise. As you move up the vertical dimension the decomposition goes deeper in the conceptual work.

For example, further decomposing the comprehension component of the big five to support candidates in conceptually understanding the gradual release of responsibility (GRR) (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) model in teaching reading strategies. The teacher educator would share the concept of the GRR, unpack the components, and further explain how the GRR helps students learn. Decomposition in this dimension must support candidates in understanding the complex theory behind the GRR and how it support student comprehension.

**Practical/General.** The practical/general dimension is where decomposition of practical tools for the classroom takes place in broad terms. For example, examining a piece of the day, such as a writing lesson that fits into the larger unit, candidates might watch a video representation that they then debrief to understand the larger components.

**Practical/Specific.** A specific moment of teaching, such as writers' workshop that is decomposed by unpacking the lesson into smaller chunks to support candidates in understanding moment-to-moment components of instruction is the type of decomposition that occurs in the practical/specific dimension. Teacher educators decompose to the level of specific moves made within a lesson.

## **Quadrant Relationships**

Sociocultural theory helps us examine learning that takes place over time and includes the history of learning. This theory supports the relationships among the quadrants, which connects to the larger relationships between knowledge and enactment in teaching. Helping candidates understand practice requires that decomposition takes place in all of the dimensions. These relationships also illustrate the need to separate theory and practice analytically in preparing teachers even though they are one when teaching children.

Work must be done in all four quadrants to support candidates in understanding practice so they may become thoughtfully adaptive teachers. It is important that candidates have a sense of the components of reading and reading research (conceptual/general), understand the reading strategies we use when engaging in metacognition and how they help children (conceptual/specific), know the components of literacy instruction in the classroom (practical/general) in order to fully be able to understand the decomposition that occurs in the practical/specific quadrant around an interactive read aloud to understand the moves to make with children in the classroom and why candidates would engage in those moves. It is important for teacher educators to understand the different dimensions and the role they play in supporting candidates to learn the practice of teaching.

Sociocultural theory supports the relationship between the conceptual and practical – as it connects to the larger idea of understanding the knowing and doing. Candidates begin to develop a conceptual understanding of reading comprehension and as they use the practical tools with children related to reading comprehension it deepens their conceptual understanding. This lineage, this historical understanding of literacy ideas, principles and frameworks are important to understand. If we only provide a conceptual understanding then candidates might struggle to

understand how to share that knowledge with students or use it in a way that is meaningful to them. However, if we only provide candidates with practical tools, if this is the only decomposition we are doing, there might not be an understanding of the larger research body these are set in which will limit in candidates moment-to-moment decision making as the lesson occurs to best meet the needs of all students.

### **Conclusion**

Duffy (1994) notes, “learning is enhanced when people are aware of what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how to do it” (p. 8). This framework for decomposition helps answer these questions for candidates – the relationship among the dimensions support candidate understanding in the what, why, and how. Decomposition in each of the quadrants is needed for this.

Decomposing practice supports individuals in understanding the work in the profession; it helps candidates appropriate knowledge. This framework can help us better understand the different components that are decomposed in teacher education. This framework can be used as a lens to investigate the pedagogy of decomposition at a smaller grain size, gaining a more nuanced understanding of how a teacher educator unpacks complex practice for candidates. In the upcoming chapters I will use this framework as a tool in analyzing and framing my findings.

In discussing socio-cultural theory, Lave (1993) notes “...*changes in knowledge and action* are central to what we mean by *learning*”; a process over time in which change is able to occur (p. 5, author’s emphasis). This study seeks to understand the pedagogy used in a literacy methods course and the development of candidates as they progress through a given course; given that this study is interested in changes in knowledge and changes in action over time a

sociocultural lens is best suited to investigate the proposed research questions. In addition, it allows us to explore the relationships among context, knowledge, and enactment.

In the next chapter I will outline the study including data collection and analysis. This will be followed by two findings chapters, one that further discusses the framework for decomposition in teacher education in relation to the study data. The final chapter will discuss the study's findings and implications for future research.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Introduction

The goal of this study was to begin to develop the knowledge base of elementary literacy methods courses that include core practices, specifically examining the relationships between contexts, knowledge, and enactment in the course. Illustrated in the conceptual framework, this study sought to further investigate the relationship between knowing and doing in different contexts as novices learn to teach. I was interested in understanding the teacher educator pedagogy used in the course to support candidates in learning how to teach reading. Also, I investigated candidates' views of the course and candidate enactments. In this chapter, I describe the research design and methods I used to investigate the study's research questions:

- How does an elementary literacy teacher educator learn the work of teaching core practices in a teacher education program?
- What pedagogical practices does one teacher educator use when preparing teacher candidates to teach reading?
- How do teacher candidates enact literacy practices when working with children in the context of their methods course and in their field placements?
- Does a literacy methods course that includes core practices produce changes in candidate knowledge on reading and the teaching of reading?

I begin with a discussion of the research design, including sampling procedures for site selection. I describe the methods used to investigate the research questions and note data sources. I conclude with a discussion of the data analysis process.

## Research Design

This study is a mixed-method study that includes a qualitative case study and quantitative quasi-experiment. This approach is best suited for the questions the study aims to address. Given some of the research questions this study seeks to uncover a rich, thick description of what is occurring in a literacy methods course that includes core practices, a qualitative approach is best suited to investigate them (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). A qualitative approach allows researchers to collect data in a natural setting (Yin, 2006). This supports the study's focus of examining what is actually happening in literacy methods courses. In addition, given that the researcher will be the main instrument of data collection the proposed study further aligns with a qualitative orientation.

Within qualitative studies, one unit of analysis is a case. Miles and Huberman (1994) “define a *case* as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p.25). Given that a methods course is a bounded activity, a case study is the best qualitative approach (Merriam, 2009). Given that candidate learning and an understanding of the contexts cannot be separated from what occurs in the course, this must be our unit of analysis. A case study accounts for the relationships among contexts, knowledge, and enactment, aligning with the theoretical frameworks of this study. Case study also allows those elements to be studied overtime during the length of the course.

While a qualitative case study would provide us with a rich, thick description of what is occurring, there are limitations (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). These limitations include researcher bias, as the researcher is the only instrument of data collection, and generalizability, given the small sample size. In addition, a qualitative approach does not provide us with a numerical measurement of knowledge candidates have gained from taking the course.

Given this study also seeks to understand the change in knowledge that occurs during the course, a quantitative component needs to be included. A quantitative approach to research increases generalizability and reduces bias, as the researcher is not the only instrument of data collection. In quantitative research, a specific hypothesis is stated which can be proved generally true or generally false (Porter, 1997). Given the fourth research question in this study, a hypothesis could be stated: Designing a course around core practices is associated with a positive change in candidate knowledge of reading and the teaching of reading. An experiment could prove this statement to be generally true or generally false. A quantitative approach provides a statistical analysis to determine the effects an elementary literacy course designed around core practices has on candidate knowledge.

While a quantitative approach would allow us to find out if the course increased candidate competence around reading, it wouldn't help us understand why the growth in knowledge had or had not occurred. Therefore, a quantitative approach does not provide a way to answer all of the study questions. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods allows us to understand what happens in the course in addition to understanding the competencies candidates gained in the course. Therefore a mixed methods approach seems best suited for what this study seeks to understand.

Not all candidate competencies will be evident through interviews and observations of enactment; however, these observations are critical to understanding what is happening in the course. Adding a quantitative component to the multi-case study provides a way to further understand the knowledge candidates have gained during their experience in the course. The quantitative component will be quasi-experimental given that random assignment to courses is not possible (Shadish, Luellen & Clark, 2006). By explicitly assessing the knowledge candidates

have gained in the course this component will help us understand if, in fact, a focus on core practices limits the literacy content knowledge learned in a course. However, it is also important to note that no assessment of knowledge can be comprehensive enough to fully assess each body. The combination of methods will provide a more complete picture of candidate development in the course. Understanding that candidates come in with varying degrees of background knowledge and wanting to understand the learning that occurs from the course a pre-test and post-test will be used.

Pre-existing conditions on participants is called a covariate as it is said to co-vary with the dependent variable. Given that candidates enter with different understandings of and beliefs about literacy (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000), it is important to consider the covariate of prior knowledge. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is a method used for adjusting mean differences by using a covariate (Kirk, 1982; Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). A one-way ANCOVA and Aptitude-Treatment Interaction (ATI) study design lets us adjust for the variable in seeking to understand the competencies gained in the methods course. By accounting for prior knowledge we are able to ascertain a truer picture of the learning that occurred from the course rather than wondering if candidates came in at higher performance levels (Kirk, 1982). This covariate design increases statistical power for detecting the independent variables effect on the dependent variable. Also, given that candidates in literacy methods courses are intact groups it helps decrease the differences between these groups when comparing them.

Therefore, in this context mixed methods allows us to understand both what candidates learned and why that learning may have occurred. In addition, mixed methods allows for triangulation of data by using one method to confirm another (Borman, Clarke, Cotner, & Lee, 2006).

## **Sampling**

In this section I discuss the rationale behind sampling decisions, decisions about where data will be collected, who the participants will be and the time data is collected (Merriam, 2009).

**Site and course selection.** Given that the study sought to learn about a course that includes core practices purposeful sampling was employed to select a site. Purposeful sampling allows an information rich case to be selected, a case from “which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). The criteria for the site included the use of core practices in the course and that the course focused on reading.

Four sites met the criteria for the purposeful sample. Of the four sites two were immediately excluded, one because the course would not be offered during the year of data collection and the second course was excluded because it would have resulted in self-study. Of the two remaining courses, both institutions were contacted about participation. The selected study for research was the site that had participant agreement.

**Selection of case study teaching candidates.** Once the case was selected, it was important to select individual candidates to follow. The sampling criteria for candidates were that they were enrolled in the course selected for the case study. During the first course session I introduced myself, gave some background on the study, and asked for participants. Participant consent forms were passed around and those candidates interested in participating completed the forms and left them with either the course instructor or myself. The study hoped to have at least five candidates agree to participate but all candidates who consented would be followed in order to account for possible attrition. Of the 24 students nine initially agreed to participate, with one

candidate deciding to leave the study towards the end of the course, ending with a total of eight case study teaching candidates. Pseudonyms are used for all subjects in the study.

### **Methods**

This qualitative inquiry was conducted in a way that allowed for analysis at different levels including the program, the course, and individual candidates. Data collection for this study began in October at the start of fall quarter and ended five months later during winter quarter in February. This time frame allowed for all pre and post course interviews to be collected and for some field placement enactment observations to take place.

#### **Data Collection**

I conducted course observations, candidate enactment observations, interviews, and document collection in order to best understand what was occurring in the program, course, and with candidates. Course observations were conducted using an observation protocol that changed based on information collected during previous observations. Detailed notes were taken during each observation and cleaned up before the next course session in order to best capture what occurred and use the data collected to modify the observation template. While my role in the course was mainly as an observer, at times I did participate when a candidate needed a partner or when there were specific literacy questions the instructor thought I might know. While at times I was a participant observer, during the majority of sessions I was just an observer (Merriam, 2009).

In conducting interviews I used a semi-structured protocol (see appendices A and B), this allowed for me to adapt the interview in the moment based on what the interviewees said to further explore ideas or themes that emerged that had not been anticipated but were important data to collect. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed by a professional. Interview

transcripts were reviewed with the original audio to clarify inaudible sections or field specific vocabulary that was unknown to the transcriber.

Multiple sources of data, observations, interviews, and document collection allowed for triangulation of data to support internal validity (Merriam, 2009). This type of triangulation allowed for observation data to be compared to interview data, both confirming what was observed and ensuring that my own biases were not affecting what was being noticed in the course. Course slides and handouts were essential to further verify the authenticity of the course observation notes. While there is always some bias in qualitative methods, the multiple sources allowed for triangulation of data to reduce that reduces this validity concern.

### **The Program**

In order to address how a literacy instructor begins to learn about core practices and how the program supports such efforts, data was collected on the program as a whole to understand the context and relationships. It was important to conduct interviews with program faculty and include specific programmatic questions in interview protocols with the course instructor and candidates.

Interviews were conducted with the program director, a faculty member, a current literacy instructor, current social studies instructor, and a math instructor who previously taught in the program. Attempts were made to interview the literacy instructor for the other cohort but were unsuccessful. However, data on the other literacy section naturally came up in candidate interviews and course observations. While it was evident it would be important to interview the program director from the start of the study, other faculty and instructors were asked to participate based on those individuals that the course instructor or program director noted in their

interviews. This approach aligns with the interactive process of qualitative design (Merriam, 2009).

One interview was conducted with each of these participants. The instructor interviews focused on their background, influences on their work in teacher education, the course they teach in the program. The program director's interview focused on her background, programmatic features, and the history and design of the program. As noted below, all eight candidates were also asked program specific questions in their interviews. Program document collection included the student handbook and information available on the program website. Each program participant interviewed and her role is noted in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Program Participants and Roles**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Role</b>
Audrey	Exiting Program Director, Former Social Studies Teacher Educator
Anne	Faculty, Educational Psychology and Mathematics Teacher Educator
Cora	Former Mathematics Teacher Educator
Claudia	Current Social Studies Teacher Educator

### **The Course**

In an effort to understand how the instructor include core practices in the course and engaged pedagogies I observed course sessions, conducted interviews with the instructor, and collected all documents which included the syllabus, handouts, and assignments.

The course included ten sessions, all of which were observed. Of the ten sessions, five were observed in person and five were observed through an online video hangout. Given that data was collected out of state, it was not possible to conduct all observations in person. In

person observations allowed for brief check-ins with the instructor, Julia, before and after the class and allowed for relationships to be built with candidates.

The course instructor was interviewed three times, once before the course started, once during the course, and once after the course had ended. The first interview focused on her past experience, influences on her work as a teacher educator, program design, how she learned about core practices, and the design of the course. The second interview focused on what was happening in the course, specific instructional decisions, and key learning's from candidates. The final interview focused on course reflection.

All documents from the course were collected including slides used by the instructor, handouts around content, and assignments. All these data provided information on both what was taught, how it was taught, and why it was taught. In addition to data collected during the course, emails and phone conversations were used to clarify information after data collection.

### **Teaching Candidates**

In order to understand candidates' experiences in the course and the knowledge they gained about reading content I used qualitative interviews, observations, and document review. In addition, I used a Literacy Knowledge Assessment, which was created by combining two different measures, one on word identification developed by Dr. Sheila Valencia and another around comprehension developed by Dr. Annemarie Sullivan Palinscar and colleagues.

As noted earlier, eight candidates agreed to further participate in the study. I interviewed each of these individuals twice during the literacy course, once at the beginning and once at the end, after their lab school enactment. The first interview focused on the candidate's path into teaching, reasons for selecting the program, and what they had learned and experienced in the first two literacy sessions. The second interview focused on their experience teaching a read

aloud at the lab school, what they found most beneficial in the course, what they might change, and what they still feel they still need to learn.

Given the sociocultural lens on this study it is important to have an understanding of the focal candidates prior experiences. The focal candidates included six women and two men. Four of the women were Latina, one was Asian American, and one was Caucasian; both men were Caucasian. The focal candidates represented the diversity in the course. Here I will briefly provide the individual contexts for the eight focal candidates:

- Elena: Elena grew up in the area around State University. Elena was inspired to be a teacher by the character Miss Honey in the children's book *Matilda* by Roald Dahl. As a Latina student Elena experienced injustices in her and her friends schooling as children. These experiences further motivated her to become a teacher. Elena was attracted to State due to their focus on social justice and bilingual-credential program.
- Eva: Eva first learned to read in Spanish and was labeled as "ESL" as a child in school. As a student, both Eva and her parents were frustrated with the education she was receiving and so her mother went to the school to demand Eva be put in more challenging classes. Eva then had her "ESL label" removed and was able to enroll in honors courses where she finally felt challenged. These experiences in school motivated Eva to become a teacher. Eva was attracted to State because it was close to where she grew up, had a focus on social justice, and offered a bilingual credential.
- Lucita: Lucita always enjoyed spending time with children at family events and was often told she should be a teacher. In reflecting on her schooling experience

she noted remembering learning to speak English in Kindergarten. After graduating from college Lucita worked as a teaching assistant in State's local district and realized she wanted to learn more about teaching. Lucita went to South Korea to teach for a year before enrolling at State. Lucita selected the program at State because it was close to home, offered a bilingual credential, and had a social justice focus.

- Mason: Mason on grew up in a large urban city on the east coast. Mason moved to California after graduating from college to work in the film industry but soon felt the work lacked purpose. As he worked on a documentary about education Mason realized he wanted to change careers and become a teacher. Mason was attracted to the program at state due to their focus on social justice.
- Mayra: Mayra was initially inspired to be a teacher by her aunt. Mayra volunteered reading to children at an elementary and learned more about the importance of “engaging communities” in education. Mayra was attracted to the program at state due to their explicit focus on social justice.
- Reese: Reflecting on her own schooling Reese noted, “I didn't have very positive experiences learning about race and my own identify in school.” Reese's experiences as a student motivated her to become a teacher so she could create positive spaces for all students. These experiences also inspired Reese to seek out a credential program that had a social justice focus.
- Ryan: Ryan was one of three males in the case study course. Ryan was attracted to teaching due to his love for working at summer camps and teaching children music and drama. When Ryan decided he wanted to become a teacher he had to

go back to school to earn his bachelors before he could enroll in a credential program as he had previously dropped out of college. Ryan enrolled in community college and then moved to a four-year institution to obtain his bachelors and begin a credential program. Ryan was dissatisfied with this initial credential program, as he did not feel it was challenging and felt his fellow students were not excited about becoming teachers. Ryan applied to State University due to the prestige of the program and the explicit focus on social justice.

- Sienna: Sienna grew up in a family of teachers; both of her parents were teachers along with so many other family members they call teaching “the family business.” After serving in the Peace Corps Sienna knew she wanted to become a teacher and sought out a program in which she could be credentialed to teach in Spanish-bilingual programs. Sienna was attracted to State due to their focus on bilingual and dual education.

Although each focal candidate has a unique background, they all noted they were drawn to the program at State due to their explicit focus on social justice.

In addition to the interviews, I observed four candidates enacting their lab school lessons. Given that all the teachers were teaching at about the same time, it was impossible to observe all of them and I did not have permission to video the lessons. However, I was able to listen to all candidates debriefing by using audio recorders after the lesson and being present for the whole group debrief.

Along with the lab school enactment observations, I attempted to observe candidates in their teaching placements in the winter once they began participating more in their placement

classroom. However, given that candidates were in two placement cohorts, not everyone had begun taking on teaching responsibilities in their placements. In addition, candidates in the program were completing the edTPA during the winter quarter. Therefore, I was only able to observe four candidates teaching in their placements, three in person and one through a video the candidate filmed for the project. In addition to the placement observations I conducted a third interview with these candidates focusing on the lesson I saw them teach and the connections to the course. I had intended these observations to provide the opportunity to see candidates enacting learnings from the course, and while that was possible with a couple, given the context restraints at partner schools and at times by cooperating teachers, I was only able to see two candidates conduct a read aloud and one candidate introduce one. However, the cooperating teachers at their placements heavily influenced the content of both of these lessons. The following table, Table 2, outlines the exact data collected for each focal candidate:

**Table 2: Candidate Data**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Lab School Observation</b>	<b>Placement Observation</b>
Elena	3	1	1
Eva	3	1	1 (video)
Lucita	2		
Mason	3		1
Mayra	2		
Reese	3	1	1
Ryan	2	1	
Sienna	2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

### **Ongoing and Early Qualitative Data Analysis**

After each observation session, the field notes were reviewed in order to clean them up to ensure that they were understandable and to elaborate on any details while the course session was still fresh in my mind. During this process, the notes were generally coded with what was observed; for example, at the end of paragraphs I might note core practices or video representation in parentheses. As the core session progressed more and more codes were added to the field notes. Given these codes grew over time, after completing all course observations and cleaning up all notes, I went through them one more time with the larger code list.

This initial coding led to the first code list to be used formal coding began. Once all the data (course observation notes, enactment observation notes and transcripts, and interview

transcripts) were uploaded into Dedoose, a data management software, the initial codes were added into the code book with definitions. One round of coding was done using the initial coding scheme. This initial round led to more codes being added to the codebook and further specification in the code definitions. After this a second round of coding was completed.

In reviewing the second round of coding, it was evident that some codes needed to be broken down into sub codes to account for nuanced differences that were emerging in the data. The decomposition code was one area that needed further analysis, as trends were emerging within the code. In order to better understand what was occurring in the case study a matrix display was created. A descriptive layout was used for the matrix in order to see what was in the data and start to consider potential trends or differences among the data points. As patterns emerged I began looking at categories and variables within this subset of the data. Once some initial categories began to emerge, I went back through the data only coding for decomposing and then writing a memo on what was being seen. This process allowed for initial categories to be created. With these initial categories I went back through the data to recode keeping these categories in mind and further describing the variables. Once patterns emerged and data confirmed the variables were correct, new sub codes were created, and the data was coded for a fourth time.

### **Developing Analytic Categories**

Once multiple rounds of coding took place and patterns emerged, a matrix display was created for each finding. As data was re-coded for each major finding, data points were mapped out on a display. These displays represented theoretical findings in the study and became analytical tools in which data was then re-coded for. To confirm the analytical categories data was re-coded twice after creating the data maps.

## **Limitations**

One limiting factor is that this is a single case study. Given the limited sites that met sampling requirements, multiple cases were unable to be studied, thus affecting the “deeper understanding of processes” that multiple sites can provide (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 26).

It is also important to note the limitations that occur given the role of the research in qualitative work. I bring my own biases to the project having been a former elementary school teacher and current teacher educator of literacy methods, It is important to note that these experiences affect my role in data collection.

I think it is important to note that despite these limitations, this study still provides us with information that the literature bases is currently lacking on the use of core practices in elementary literacy methods courses. This case gives us one specific example to consider but also provides numerous theoretical findings that we can consider analytically on a larger scale. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that the “most useful generalizations from qualitative studies are analytic, not “sample-to-population” (p.28). Its important to consider what we are able to learn from this study while acknowledging the limitations.

## **Quantitative Data**

It was important to consider candidate knowledge growth over time, so a quasi-experimental component was added to the study to complement the qualitative case study approach. In this section I outline the assessments used, administration, and data analysis. This assessment was administered in the hope it would provide me with background information the candidates entered the program with and the knowledge the content knowledge they gained during the ten week course. While content knowledge was discussed in interviews, this provides

a less biased approach to understanding candidate knowledge growth around reading and reading instruction and how it changed over time during the course.

**Instruments.** In regard to teaching reading there are multiple bodies of knowledge needed (Shulman, 1987). Attempting to assess these bodies of knowledge is difficult. No assessment will cover all that one must know about reading and teaching reading. Therefore, a combination of assessments will be used to take as comprehensive approach as possible. The study's assessment was a combination of multiple choice and constructed response. Two different content assessments will be combined to understand what was learned in the course, both of which have been created by leading experts in the field of literacy. One focuses on foundational reading skills and one focuses on text-based discussions. These two knowledge bases and assessments will be discussed below.

***Foundational reading skills.*** Phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition form the foundational base for learning to read and therefore are important topics for candidates to understand (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Two components of effective reading instruction found by the National Reading Panel (NRP) are phonemic awareness and phonics (National Reading Panel, 2000). The importance of these skills is also highlighted in the new Common Core State Standards Reading: Foundation Skills Standards that include phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). In order to assess foundational reading skills the Word Identification Quiz (Valencia, 1992) will be used. This instrument assesses candidate understanding of phonological awareness, phonics, and word identification. The assessment is predominantly multiple-choice with a few constructed response questions.

***Text based discussions.*** Text-based discussions are complicated and complex tasks that require specialized knowledge to engage in (Kucan, Hapgood, Palincsar, 2011). There are multiple types of knowledge needed to engage in text-based discussions, thus multiple types of knowledge must be assessed in attempting to understand what candidates know. The Comprehension and Learning from Text Survey (CoLTs) was developed and used by Palincsar, Spiro, & Magnusson during the 2003-2005 school year to assess teachers' understanding of text and text-based discussion (Kucan, Hapgood, Palincsar). While the CoLTs assessment provided some information on this knowledge the use of it demonstrated the assessment could be improved. Currently, Palincsar and colleagues are working on a new assessment the Knowledge Assessment of the Pedagogy of Discussion (KAPoD) to improve the instrument (A.S. Palincsar, personal communication, July 9, 2013). For this study, the assessment under development, KAPoD, will be used.

**Assessment Administration.** Since it was not possible to administer the assessment as part of the course, it was set up on a secure online platform that allowed each candidate to log in with an individualized passcode and take the assessment online. The assessment opened after the first class session, when candidates were informed of the assessment. After the initial course meeting an email was sent to candidates with a link to the online assessment and information about logging in. Reminder emails were sent to candidates twice after the initial notice and case study candidates were asked to take the assessment after initial interviews. The post assessment opened after the final class session. Again, all candidates in the course were emailed with a link to the assessment and log in information. At this point only case study candidates were emailed as a reminder to complete the assessment; just as with the pre assessment candidates were reminded of the assessment twice and during final interviews.

**Data analysis.** In the design I had planned to use a one-way ANCOVA using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions/Predictive Analytics SoftWare (SPSS/PASW) computer software. The descriptive statistics, homogeneity of variance, and estimates of effect size were to be calculated. In addition, z-scores would have been used to standardize the pre-test scores. A one-way ATI was also planned using SPSS/PASW given that it adjusts for the covariate and interaction term. The use of ATI would have also provided information to determine if the ANCOVA results were invalid. Once results had been calculated the ATI would have been used to determine the interaction of pre-test and post-test performance of candidates. This would have also allowed me to see the effect, if any, that the pre-test scores may have had on post-test scores. All SPSS/PASW output would have been copied and pasted in a document in order to track what tests were run and that accurate data was entered into the program.

However, given issues with participation in data collection this was not possible. Only one candidate completed the pre-assessment in the permitted time frame and five completed the post assessment. Therefore, it was not productive to input the data in to a software system such as SPSS for analysis and go through the originally planned process above. While the five post-tests can give us some information, this statistical work was done by hand to look at candidate knowledge. Given that lack of participation in the pre-test comparisons to look at knowledge growth over time are unable to be made.

**Validity issues.** A main validity issue in this study is that a random sample is not used thus creating a quasi-experiment rather than a true experiment. Given what this study seeks to understand, it is not possible to randomly select candidates or assign them to groups. Another issue of validity is that only one candidate took the pre-assessment and only five of the candidates in the course took the post-test. In proposing the study it was hoped that it would be a

course requirement for all candidates to take both assessments. However, that was not possible so candidates took the assessment on a voluntary basis. While the number is small, it still provides some insight into the learning of candidates. There are also other validity issues, both internal and external which will be discussed below.

***Issues of internal validity.*** Issues of internal validity are “...concerned with correctly concluding that an independent variable is, in fact, responsible for variation in the dependent variable (Kirk, 2013, p. 16). One potential threat to internal validity is selection given that groups may have pre-existing differences. The covariate will not fix selection bias but works to ease the effect it has on results. Another potential issue of internal validity is a testing effect. A testing effect can occur from using the same measure multiple times. Since the pre-and post-tests are the same instrument this is a concern. However, given that there will be significant time in between the two tests this is unlikely to happen (Shadish, et al. 2006). In addition, candidates will only be taking the assessment twice and will not explicitly be told it is the same.

***Issues of external validity.*** Issues of external validity affect the generalizability of results across subjects and settings (Kirk, 2013). One potential external validity threat is an interaction effect on testing, which occurs when a pre-test orients candidates to pay attention to specific content in the course. One design issue that will help mitigate this is the mixed-methods approach, which will also provide qualitative data on knowledge and enactment creating a more complete picture of what candidates understand from the course.

Another possible external validity issue is interaction of setting and treatment, “the unique characteristics of the setting in which results are obtained may restrict the generalizability of the results to settings that share the same characteristics” (Kirk, 2013, p. 19). Given that the study is being conducted in a specific setting, literacy methods courses that focus on core

practices, the results will only be generalizable to this type of setting. While these threats to validity are of concerns, steps are being taken within the design to provide the strongest data possible in order to understand what is occurring and being learned in the course.

***Variables:***

Independent Variable: Literacy Course Groups

Dependent Variable: Literacy Knowledge Post-Test Score

Covariate: Literacy Knowledge Pre-Test Score

**The Program**

The elementary teacher education program at State is a two year graduate program. Candidates spend the first year taking their university based courses to obtain their teaching license and are then supported in their first year of teaching as they complete their Masters in Education. The program has an explicit focus on social justice and preparing teachers for urban schools; the program aims to “integrate coursework and field experiences.” During their first year candidates take courses for three quarters beginning in fall and candidates are in two field placements. At the end of their first year candidates must take the edTPA and the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) in order to obtain their California Teaching License.

Faculty in the elementary program noted that three core practices were used program wide: opening moves, eliciting and responding, and orienting students to one another. Of the three faculty members and two instructors interviewed, all five noted the core practices. While the former program director noted, “all the instructors use them in their methods courses” as data collection continued it was found that not all instructors include the core practices in their courses. While the use of core practices are presented as a programmatic initiative, they are not

yet persuasive in all courses of the program. This disconnect seems to occur due to individual instructor choices rather than lack of programmatic effort.

### The Course

The literacy methods courses met each week during the ten week quarter, Monday afternoons from 1:00-4:00pm. As noted in the syllabus, “This course focuses on the theoretical principles and pedagogical strategies necessary for developing and maintaining a balanced, comprehensive literacy program for elementary aged children.” The first nine classes met in a university classroom and the tenth class took place at State’s Lab School. Given the last session took place at the lab school the course met earlier in the day.

Below is a chart from the syllabus, Table 3, outlining the guiding questions and goals for each class session. It is important to note that since Julia was unsure if she would be able to arrange the lab school visit at the start of the course it is not included on the syllabus. Therefore, instead of discussing critical literacy on December 8<sup>th</sup>, candidates enacted their first interactive read alouds at the lab school.

**Table 3: Course Calendar and Course Session Guiding Questions**

Date	Guiding Questions /Class Agenda	
10/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to be literate?</li> <li>• How do we build a classroom literacy community?</li> <li>• How do we come to know our students’ strengths and needs as literacy learners?</li> <li>• What are the elements of balanced literacy instruction?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Overview</li> <li>• Getting to know each other as readers and writers</li> <li>• Elements of balanced literacy instruction</li> <li>• High leverage practices</li> </ul>
10/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are different ways to organize literacy instruction?</li> <li>• How are literacy assessments used in California?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Reading/Language Arts Framework and Common Core Standards</li> <li>• Recommended Literature, Pre-K through Grade 12</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>
10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do teachers read books aloud most effectively?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Alouds</li> </ul>
10/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do teachers foster emergent/early</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonological awareness and phonics</li> </ul>

Date	Guiding Questions /Class Agenda	
	literacy skills (reading, writing, spelling)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are phonological awareness and phonics skills assessed?</li> <li>• What are different approaches to phonics instruction?</li> </ul>	
11/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do students become fluent readers?</li> <li>• How is reading fluency assessed?</li> <li>• How do teachers support students that struggle with reading fluency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decodable Text</li> <li>• Building Fluency</li> <li>• Leveling Books and Building a Classroom Library</li> </ul>
11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the relationship between vocabulary development and reading?</li> <li>• What are effective ways of teaching vocabulary?</li> <li>• What are some ways to assess vocabulary learning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word study</li> <li>• Vocabulary Development</li> </ul>
11/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do students use comprehension strategies to understand what they are reading?</li> <li>• How do teachers teach comprehension strategies?</li> <li>• How is reading comprehension assessed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehension strategies instruction</li> <li>• Conferencing with readers</li> </ul>
11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do readers use comprehension strategies with content area texts?</li> <li>• How are writing strategies used to learn in the content areas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content Area Literacy (text features, instructional techniques)</li> </ul>
12/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can teachers effectively assess and support struggling and advanced readers?</li> <li>• How can teachers create intervention programs for students according to their assessed instructional needs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated Instruction</li> <li>• Grouping for Literacy Instruction</li> </ul>
12/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is critical literacy?</li> <li>• What strategies can we use to help students become critically literate?</li> <li>• How do I work with my students to use their literacy skills as a means for social action?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Literacy</li> </ul>

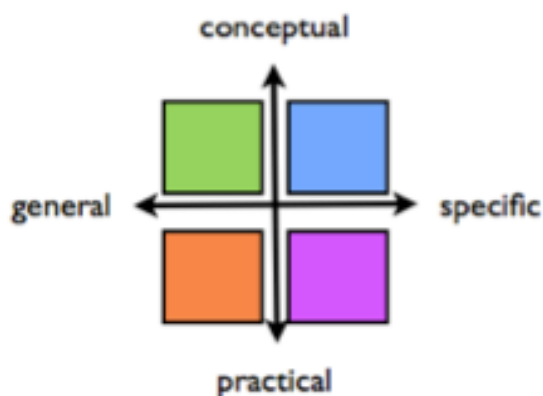
## **Chapter 4: The Composition of Decomposition: A Framework**

### **Introduction**

Historically in teacher education, we have discussed the relationship between knowing and doing – theory and practice - knowledge and enactment (Dewey, 1904). Regardless of the terms used the relationship is the same – how do we think about the way that theories influence the work of teaching, and in return how does the work of teaching further develop understandings of theories. The framework for describing decomposition in teacher education, presented in chapter two, is a tool that can be used to help us think about this relationship between knowing and doing and how teacher educator pedagogy can serve as the bridge between knowledge and enactment.

This framework, developed out of the study data, is used to examine the teacher educator’s pedagogical moves. Grossman et al. (2009) define decomposition as “breaking down complex practice into its constituent parts for the purposes of teaching and learning” (p. 2069). As I analyzed data what became clear was that Grossman and colleagues’ concept of decomposition was prominent and much more complex than anticipated. This framework can be used to distinguish the different types of decomposition that occur in teacher education courses. The framework for decomposition outlines two dimensions of decomposition that create four quadrants of teacher educators engaging in different types of decomposition. Below, in Figure 3, you can see the framework graphic.

**Figure 3: Framework for Decomposition in Teacher Education**



I will begin with a discussion of the framework and then go into each quadrant, elaborating on the description and providing examples from the data. Then, I will turn to a discussion of the relationships between the decomposition that occurs in each dimension and how these relationships support us in understanding the relationship between knowing and doing. In the section on relationships, I will outline the core practices used in the course and how they support decomposition. This chapter will end with a discussion of the implications of this framework for teacher education.

### **Decomposition**

The teacher educator pedagogy of decomposition is a purposeful move made by the teacher educator. There are moments in teacher education when complex practice is discussed but not decomposed. There are also moments when topics are broken down, but they are not complex ideas purposefully unpacked for candidate learning. Decomposition is a moment when a teacher educator intentionally unpacks complex practice into integral parts for “the purpose of teaching and learning” (Grossman, 2009, p. 2069).

Historically, we have focused on what is taught in literacy methods courses rather than how it is taught (Steiner & Rozen, 2004; Walsh, Glaser, & Wilcox, 2006). Simply listing or sharing with candidates the content they need to know does not include an unpacking that supports their understanding. Simply breaking down ideas in a methods course, does not mean decomposition is occurring. I provide two vignettes from the course to serve as examples of what is not decomposition.

In one session Julia, the teacher educator, discussed vocabulary instruction with candidates. One component of this discussion includes a moment in which Julia provides candidates with strategies for vocabulary instruction. Julia had a slide which listed ten strategies and she noted there was a handout on the course website which discusses each of these. While it might seem that Julia was unpacking different strategies to use in vocabulary instruction, this is not decomposition as it just lists different activities you might engage in to teach students about vocabulary. While the handout included more information, simply passing this out for candidates to read on their own is not supporting their understanding of the strategies or why these strategies might be used. Each strategy may be further decomposed to support candidates in understanding something about teaching but in this instance Julia does not do that with candidates; therefore, this is not a moment of decomposition. Julia was not purposefully decomposing the complex practice of vocabulary instruction.

Another example is when Julia introduced the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Julia shared with candidates:

Gradual Release of Responsibility is one of the ways we teach students to use strategies.

We model the strategy first and then we teach kids to do the strategy on their own.

Gradually giving kids the responsibility for using strategies on their own. Then, the

students do the practice or application. That's the framework that we are working on for these strategies.

While Julia noted a few components included in the GRR, she did not help candidates understand the concepts of the practice or what they might do with K-8 students. I want to note that this is not because Julia does not value the GRR. Julia was aware candidates had discussed this conceptual idea in their education psychology course and confirmed this with candidates on the day she discussed the GRR activating their prior learning on the concept. However, this is still a moment when Julia talks about the parts but does not decompose the practice. In examining Julia's pedagogy this was not a moment when she engaged the teacher educator pedagogy of decomposition to support candidates in understanding a complex practice.

### **Importance of Representations**

In order for decomposition to occur there must be a moment of complex practices to unpack. When we look at the work done in the practical quadrant – this complex practice is the work of teaching. To decompose the practice there needs to be a moment of teaching to discuss, what Grossman et al. (2009) refer to as a representation of practice. Grossman et al. note “representations of practice comprise the different ways that practice is represented in professional education and what these various representations make visible to novices” (p. 2058). Representations may include observations, videos, or modeling by the teacher educator.

Research has shown that when novices observe teaching, they notice different aspects of teaching than experts. Experts notice much more in a video or classroom observation than novices (Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991). Decomposition supports teacher educators in making visible to novices what occurred in a representation. Representations have a reciprocal relationship with decomposition in teacher education; both pedagogies help make the other

stronger. Decomposition allows for a teacher educator to bring attention to particular components, as the representation is unpacked. It allows teacher educators to highlight important parts of the practice candidates might not have noticed on their own.

### **Framework for Decomposition in Teacher Education**

As presented in chapter two, the framework for decomposition in teacher education further unpacks the teacher educator pedagogy of decomposition to better understand the different types of decomposition teacher educators may engage in to support candidate learning. This framework grew out of patterns and trends that emerged in the case study. The framework includes two dimensions and four quadrants. The vertical dimension ends are conceptual and practical and the horizontal dimension ends are general and specific. These ends are described below:

**Conceptual:** “Principles, frameworks, and ideas about teaching, learning and English/language arts acquisition that teachers use as heuristics to guide decisions about teaching and learning” (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999, p.14). Ideas that are conceptual greatly depend on the way the teacher educator talks about them – it is not just introducing a framework but how it is explained in the course.

**Practical:** “Classroom practices, strategies, and resources that do not serve as broad conceptions to guide an array of decisions but, instead, have more local immediate utility” (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999, p.14). These are the tools that are presented to support candidates in understanding specific work done in classrooms with children.

**General:** Relating to the main or major parts of something rather than the details. The most general being decomposing what will be taught in a reading unit, taking into consideration the

developmental sequence of learning to read and breaking it down into specific components to be taught as we move away from the general end.

**Specific:** Clearly defined or identified, this is the smallest level of decomposition in regards to grain size. This end breaks theories and strategies down into small parts. The specific is the smallest size at which we examine theories or moments of teaching. Decomposition of vowel patterns and lessons on decoding individual sounds are near the specific end.

Together, these dimensions create four quadrants of decomposition: Conceptual/General, Conceptual/Specific, Practical/General, and Practical/Specific. These four quadrants are discussed below using examples from the course. Using this framework as an analytical allows us to understand the different types of decomposition Julia engaged in and the relationships between the quadrants.

### **Conceptual/General**

The conceptual/general quadrant includes classroom practices and theories around teaching that are bigger ideas or frameworks that influence reading instruction. It is important to note that it is not just about an idea being conceptual – Julia has to engage in the work of decomposition to create an opportunity for candidates to understand the ideas within the complex practice. Decomposition in the conceptual/general dimension supports candidates in understanding the framing of the literacy content they will be teaching and the literacy research the work is based on, the larger ideas and concepts about the developmental process of reading.

Julia engaged in decomposition in the conceptual/general when she unpacked the different theoretical approaches to literacy instruction. In the second course session, Julia noted there are different approaches to literacy instruction. Julia shared that while there are six different approaches listed in the power point, she would be focusing on the two they will see

most in the area of State University. The two focal approaches are basal/anthology and reading workshop. For each approach Julia reviewed the foundational theory, purpose, components and organization. Julia then noted the strengths and limitations of each. In introducing a basal or anthology approach Julia noted:

These [basal/anthology] programs are based on behaviorism as teachers teach direct instruction and students are passive learners. Every 8-10 years the [state's department of education] looks at the series out on the market and decides on five, six, or seven that the states are adopting for this period of time. From this list, if a district chooses a basal program they would pick one from the state... It's a comprehensive language arts program, one stop shop. Writing, phonics, reading – teach skills and strategies readers need using a structured program with grade level books, frequent testing. That's one way of organizing reading instruction.

Julia provided a similar initial introduction to a reading workshop approach:

The theory behind workshop is sociocultural, cognitive, reader response, and critical literacy – reading our world. It provides students with opportunities for authentic reading and writing. The most programs used come from [the work of] Lucy Calkins at Columbia. All of the kids start gathered on the rug for a mini-lesson. [The length of a mini-lesson is] usually the number of minutes the students are old. [After the mini-lesson] then kids get up and go to different places in the room and each have a box or a bag of books on their reading level or a just right choice. As they are reading the teacher will have one-on-one instruction, called conferring, with kids. At the end, the whole class will come back and people share – asking students to share – it's community based... You have a leveled classroom library, there is a meeting area in the classroom.

After each introduction, Julia further discussed the approaches and components by unpacking the theory and purpose of each approach candidates would see in their placements. This further supports candidates in understanding the conceptual ideas that form the basis for these two different approaches. While ideas in the conceptual quadrant may seem similar to explanation, the difference occurs in the teacher educator's pedagogy of purposefully unpacking the integral parts to help candidates understand the work they will be doing as teachers. If Julia had not further expanded the approaches for candidates to have an understanding of the concepts – then it would not have been decomposition, just a list of approaches. Julia purposefully unpacked specific conceptual ideas as part of her teacher educator pedagogy. Julia intentionally selected these topics with the goals and trajectory of the course in mind as she planned to return to them later in the course. This will further be discussed in a later section that examines the relationships between decomposition of complex practice in each quadrant.

### **Conceptual/Specific**

The conceptual/specific quadrant examines a smaller piece of research and theory. In the literacy methods course, the work done in this quadrant further decomposed the larger conceptual ideas introduced in the conceptual/general quadrant. Having introduced the larger components of reading instruction in an earlier session, Julia further decomposed a component of literacy noted in the general/conceptual dimension, at the level of conceptual/specific. The larger ideas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and other decoding skills and fluency were decomposed at a conceptual/specific level.

In further decomposing phonemic awareness, phonics, and other decoding skills, Julia presented Luke and Freebody's (1999) framework to support candidates in understanding the

small components within the larger ideas of reading instruction. Julia had a slide presenting Luke and Freebody's framework that noted:

Readers draw on and use four families of resources as they expand and deepen their reading practices: Decode words by putting sounds, symbols, and meanings together (Code Breaker); Interpret meanings embedded in texts (Meaning Maker); Recognize and use various textual structures of genres to understand how text works and how to use it (Text User); and Analyze and critique texts around issues of power, perspective, and social justice (Text Analyst).

Decomposition in this dimension supports candidates in understanding specific components of reading instruction, such as strategies for reading. Julia also included a graphic of the framework noting for students:

As we move through the course we are going to use this framework, knowing that everyday you teach from the intersection of all of these. We are going to break down the course by starting here and talking about phonemic awareness and phonics. Then we will move into comprehension work and then critical literacy work with text analysis all the while thinking about building readers' positive identities.

Rather than just presenting the visual framework from Luke and Freebody (1999) or simply explaining the components, Julia leads the class in an activity to deepen their conceptual understanding. This is what makes this decomposition conceptual; Julia does not just present the ideas, she helps candidates understand them. Julia is conceptually unpacking this content for students in a way that is much more specific to help them understand the larger conceptual ideas presented in the general end of the continuum.

Julia also further decomposed the big idea of fluency into a small grain size, breaking it down for candidates and providing an experience for them to further understand the embedded concepts. Julia decomposed fluency into its sub components of accuracy, speed, and prosody. Julia went through each component defining it and providing an example. Julia then modeled fluent and non-fluent reading for candidates.

After unpacking the smaller elements of fluency for candidates Julia presented a slide titled: Why is it important? Julia notes:

It's the link between the two, decoding and comprehension, so your brain can connect the words and phrases. So you can make meaning. We want children to make sure they read smoothly and fluidly. If it's too slow the brain only remembers word by word, not the string of words you can make meaning from.

After discussing fluency, Julia had candidates participate in a speed reading activity. Candidates paired up and were each given a text to place face down on the table. Julia instructed one candidate to read the passage while she timed them for a minute. The other candidate was instructed to do their best to record the errors their partner made while reading. After the first timed reading was complete, candidates switched roles. After each candidate had experienced the timed reading Julia engaged them in a discussion about how fluent each person had been and what they remembered from reading. Ryan noted, "I wasn't reading it for comprehension." In sharing out how her partner read, one candidate noted, "when she got to larger words she would slow down to make sure she gets the words correct." This activity supported candidates in understanding fluency and factors that influence it.

Decomposition that occurs in the conceptual/specific includes literacy ideas that are at a grain size that allows for smaller sub components to be examined. Its not just about listing or

defining these pieces to candidates but engaging candidates in learning opportunities for them to understand the concepts. These strategic pedagogical moves were made by Julia to support candidates in understanding specific literacy concepts.

### **Practical/General**

In this quadrant, larger segments of teaching are focused on to support candidates in understanding instruction. An example from the case study is when Julia provided the candidates with an example of a literacy block, noting the different content to be taught within each component. Julia was decomposing at the general/practical level. During this block, Julia presented a type of phonics lesson, word work.

Julia presented a video representation of word work to candidates. Prior to watching the video Julia oriented candidates to focus on both what the teacher and students were doing. After the video ended Julia instructed candidates:

Talk to your neighbor, what did you notice? Either what you noticed about what the students were thinking or how the teacher moved the sort along. The instructional decisions the teacher might have made to move the students along. What did you notice the students doing? What did you notice the teacher doing to facilitate it?

During the discussion candidates discussed how this lesson went beyond memorizing spelling patterns but understanding them. Candidate attention was brought to both the work of the teacher and the work of students in this type of lesson. The video represented a practical application of phonics instruction. However, the decomposition did not break down specific components within the lesson or specific teacher moves that were made. The post video discussion was orchestrated to support candidate understanding of an example of the complex practice of phonics instruction and the work that teachers and students generally engage in.

Julia used this video as an example of rigorous phonics instruction within a literacy block. While she hopes the candidates will try this out in their placement classrooms, and notes this sentiment to the class, she did not decompose it to as specific level to support candidates in understanding the moment to moment moves they might make when enacting word work. The video representation was used to support candidates in understanding what one piece of a literacy block, whole group phonics instruction, may look like in a classroom.

### **Practical/Specific**

A specific moment of teaching, such as word work, that is further decomposed by unpacking the activity into smaller chunks to support candidates in understanding moment-to-moment components of instruction is the type of decomposition that occurs in the practical/specific quadrant. In the literacy course one smaller chunk of teaching, which was further decomposed, was a literacy activity called making words. Making words focuses students' attention on spelling patterns supporting their understanding of phonics.

In introducing making words to candidates, Julia began by showing students a video representation. However, unlike the word work video, this representation was further decomposed into smaller components, showing candidates the different steps of the activity to support their planning and enactment.

- Step 1: Introduce Activity
- Step 2: Identify Letter Cards
- Step 3: Two Letter Words
- Step 4: Longer Words
- Step 5: Record Words

These steps were initially shown to candidates prior to watching the video. Then, Julia brought candidate attention back to these components when discussing the representation. In regard to Step 1, introducing the activity, Julia engaged candidates in discussing how both the lesson content was introduced and the process of the activity for students. One candidate noted the preparation the teacher in the video had done prior to the lesson. This brought further attention to the in-the-moment moves candidates might make in steps three and four.

This decomposition highlighted the importance of candidates understanding the particular phonics content prior to teaching it to K-8 students. Julia noted the importance of creating word lists prior to the activity to think about all the patterns K-8 students might notice and questions they might ask K-8 students to support their understanding of the content. In addition to unpacking these steps of the lesson, Julia broke down specific teacher moves; think-pair-share and the types of questions. These moves fall under State's core practice of eliciting and responding to students, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **Role of Core Practices**

As noted in chapter one, in explaining core practices to candidates Julia presented the definition outlined by Grossman, Hammerness, and McDonald (2009) noting core practices are practices that occur with high frequency, can be used across curricula, allow candidates to learn about students and teaching, preserve the integrity and complexity of teaching, and are research-based to potentially improve student achievement. The elementary teacher education program at State focuses on three core practices: opening moves, eliciting and responding to students, and orienting students to one another. Julia further explains State's elementary core practices below:

An opening move can be thought of as anything - from what do you do the first week of school to build your classroom community – [to] how do you open your classroom - to

what am I going to do in this literacy lesson, this read aloud, to get kids excited and involved right from the beginning, to how do I talk with one-on-one a student when they bring me a piece of writing work. What's my first question that I'm going to ask them so that we can start to have a conversation about the writing that's happening. So, the opening moves is...kind of like a pick up line, right? It's a way of getting kids engaged in whatever we are having them do at whatever particular time in the year. So, that's our first one.

Our second one is eliciting and responding to students. So, thinking about in what ways can we pull out student thinking? In what ways do we help make their thinking visible? In what ways do we help them grapple with issues and ideas and then respond in a way that builds the community? Respond in a way that deepens students' thinking. In a way that isn't just the initiate, evaluate, respond, kind of, a mold but is a way of really helping them move forward in whatever particular learning goal they have at the time, right? So, that's the second one, eliciting and responding.

Then, the third one is orienting students to one another. So, really helping build that learning community. One student says one thing, how do we revoice and help another student connect to that, how do we do more of a spider web rather than the teacher, student teacher?

So, last year, we focused across methods in opening moves. We were doing opening moves everywhere. Like, everybody was doing an opening move, right? Some of our field support people were asking their students during student teaching about opening

moves, it was a hard charge [focusing on] opening moves. This year, we are focusing on eliciting and really thinking about what does it mean to elicit student thinking.

The inclusion of core practices supported Julia in unpacking complex teaching. Core practices provided a language for Julia to use to support students in understanding the work of teaching. The inclusion of core practices is an intentional approach to supporting candidates in understanding the conceptual and practical ideas and tools behind their work in the literacy course.

Theoretically, Vygotsky (1987) discusses the use of language as a tool. The core practices approach includes specific language used with candidates to support their understanding and are therefore tools in enactment. Core practices are both teacher educator and candidate tools. Core practices support teacher educators in decomposing practice for candidates; they provide a language that allows teacher educators and candidates to talk about the work of teaching. The core practices support candidates in understanding the complex knowledge necessary for teaching. When discussing the relationship between content and core practices, Julia noted:

You couldn't have one without the other. I couldn't teach comprehension with a piece of children's literature without talking about the instructional activity of a read-aloud and the core practice[s]...all three of them. Designing a good opening move to get kids involved, to really think about when I stop, where am I stopping? Why am I stopping? What am I asking that's going to elicit their thinking and then how do I respond in a way that helps them but also helps our community when I orient students to one another. I can't do one

without the other, especially in things like an interactive read-aloud and things like a writing conference and different instructional activities within our course.

The core practices supported Julia in further decomposing complex teaching for candidates in the practical/specific domain. Core practices provided Julia with language that supported the articulation of moment-to-moment decisions made in in the classroom to support K-8 student in learning to read. The inclusion of these core practices was an intentional move by Julia to help candidates further understand the work of teaching.

The core practices do not only support the work done in the practical specific quadrant, they help highlight the importance of relationships between the domains. Janssen, Grossman, and Westbrook (2015) note, “focusing on core practices allows teacher educators to attend to both the conceptual and practical aspects associated with any given practice” (p. 138). Core practices support our understanding of the relationship between knowledge and enactment in teaching. In this case, the core practice of eliciting and responding to students helps candidates understand specific questions they might ask about a spelling pattern with students in the moment. In doing this candidates need to not only have tools for questions to answer, but understand the conceptual ideas around phonics to know what type of question would be productive to further student learning. We now turn to a discussion of the relationships between the dimensions to further unpack this idea.

### **Quadrant Relationships**

While we look at each quadrant and define it independently, the quadrants do not have a dichotomous relationship. Each quadrant is important in preparing teachers and influences the work done in other quadrants. While the practical work supports candidates in understanding moment-to-moment moves for enactment, without an understanding of the conceptual ideas

behind them, a candidate would struggle to understand where and why to make those in-the-moment decisions. The work of decomposition in these four quadrants is bridging the divide between theory and practice – supporting candidates in seeing how we draw on the work in the conceptual quadrants to understand decisions and moves to make in the practical.

In an interactive read aloud candidates need to understand where to stop and ask a question, why one would stop there, and the type of question one would ask about the text – all of which requires a conceptual understanding of reading in order to engage the practical components. In preparing thoughtfully adaptive teachers it is important to decompose practice in all quadrants.

In this course, the main lesson that candidates focused on was an interactive read aloud. Julia worked to decompose practice for candidates across the quadrants in preparing them to enact interactive read alouds. The decomposition work done around an interactive read aloud will be discussed in this section, illustrating how decomposition occurred within and across the four quadrants to support candidate learning. These relationships are paramount in preparing thoughtfully adaptive teachers to engage in ambitious practice.

### **Conceptual/General**

In the second class session Julia had a slide titled: Components of Effective Reading Instruction that listed reading fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, and other decoding skills, reading and writing strategies, vocabulary, comprehension, literature, content-area study, oral language, process writing, spelling, critical literacy, and independent reading. Julia noted, “this is all the stuff you will be able to know and do by the end of the quarter.” In introducing these larger components Julia included the five components of effective reading instruction found by the National Reading Panel (2000). These are the larger concepts that underpin classroom

reading instruction. Julia briefly described each component noting, “having a big picture is helpful” and she compared the different components in relation to classroom instruction.

This decomposition focused solely on the conceptual ideas and did not move into the practical side, this provided candidates with a general sense of the components of literacy instruction and how they relate to one another. When discussing comprehension Julia noted it was about “interpreting meaning embedded in text.” In regard to the interactive read aloud, the work in this section introduced the conceptual ideas that are the foundation for the work – specifically the understanding that reading comprehension is one component of reading instruction. Julia then went on to further decompose the comprehension process in the conceptual/specific quadrant.

### **Conceptual/Specific**

Julia further decomposes the comprehension process in the conceptual/specific dimension when she elaborates on meaning making with text. Julia presented a passage to be read from Bransford and Johnson’s (1972) investigation of comprehension. The text is a bit confusing, and selected by the researchers just for that purpose, to require individuals to have to engage in different reading strategies to understand the text. The passage is about the process of doing laundry, though, this main idea is not clear.

Julia projected the passage on the screen for candidates to read and gave directions, “...after you have read it a time or two, write down a word, a phrase, a sentence or two, what do you think this is about.” Candidates read the passage and took some notes, often looking up at the screen to re-read. Once candidates had time to read, think about the passage, and write some notes, Julia brings the group back together. The discussion centered on what the candidates thought the passage was about, Julia pushing them to further clarify evidence in the text that

made them think that. Julia asked questions such as, “What do you think it is...and tell me why. What clues? Anyone else have something about reading? Other ideas?” An important component of this discussion is having candidates share how they were making meaning while reading. Julia used this experience as an opportunity to unpack the work done in comprehending text; decomposing this literacy concept by engaging candidates in an experience that requires them to use their own reading comprehension skills. Julia ends by noting:

When I read a magazine, I read it differently than something for this class. I read Facebook differently than I will read your books boxes you jut turned in. We use strategies to change our rate when we are reading. These all connect to being fluent and understanding the text we need. I teach these things about different texts to kids.

Rather than just presenting a list of reading strategies and discussing how they might be used with text, Julia led the class in an activity to deepen their conceptual understanding of comprehension and meaning making. Julia engaged the candidates in an activity that required them to think about what they do to understand a text, to help them understand the work K-8 students engage in. Julia intentionally unpacked conceptual content for candidates in a way that is much more specific than general.

### **Practical/General**

Once candidates were beginning to have a conceptual understanding of comprehension, Julia began to connect these theories to work in classrooms with K-8 students. In the practical/general quadrant, Julia noted where in a literacy block she would engage in comprehension instruction and how this fit into the larger literacy instruction that occurs in classrooms. Julia introduced the interactive read aloud and the reading concepts included.

Julia showed candidates a video representation of an interactive read aloud with the teacher Mr. Sean. Prior to watching Julia had candidates create a T-chart for the viewing, one side noting what candidates saw in regards to strategies and content and the other side noting what they learned about management. The class then had a discussion around these noticing's after watching the video. This viewing lens supported candidates in understanding two types of work teachers are engaged in during an interactive read aloud – managing the classroom community and supporting students in making meaning with text. This decomposition provided an opportunity for candidates to think about different components of teaching they must manage during an interactive read aloud.

### **Practical/Specific**

Julia's work around decomposition was subtle. Julia did not explicitly state to candidates that she was decomposing the interactive read aloud but does share with candidates how they will be working on different parts of the interactive read aloud. Interviews with Julia revealed this work was very purposeful, while she did not use the language of decomposition; she was intentional in unpacking the interactive read aloud. Julia broke down an interactive read aloud into pieces she discussed as opening moves, stopping points, and closing: what is typically referred to in literacy as before, during, and after reading.

Julia spent a significant amount of time in unpacking the opening moves and stopping points of an interactive read aloud for candidates. In introducing the interactive read aloud Julia noted “over the next few weeks each part of the class will be dedicated to part of the interactive read aloud.” Julia was able to engage in decomposition at this grain size because of the previous decomposition work she had engaged in to support candidates in understanding ideas in the conceptual/general, practical/general, and conceptual/specific quadrants.

As noted above, the inclusion of core practices in the course provided a tool to support the decomposition that occurs in the practical/specific dimension. In this dimension Julia broke down the components of an interactive read aloud – what you would do before reading, the opening move. Julia then noted the stopping places – this component connects to State’s core practices of eliciting and responding to students and orienting students to one another. While Julia provided a handout on closings, she did not further decompose this part for candidates. Within each of these sections both literacy content and specific teacher moves to engage students in the content were discussed.

**Opening moves.** In the first session Julia specifically connects opening moves to the work on interactive read alouds she notes:

Remember opening moves is one of our core practices that will be in all of our methods classes. In literacy it’s what do you do at the beginning with a book, how do you get kids ready. We are going to do an activity in here and then I am going to give you a short story and you are going to do and write your own opening moves.

Julia then models an opening move for the book, Because of Winn Dixie

Julia: It really helps when you make a friend when you move. How many of you have made a new friend when you moved?

Julia: In this book, Opal, who is the main character in our book, has moved to Florida with her Dad. Her dad’s a preacher. What’s a preacher?

Ryan: Inaudible response

Julia: Opal is really lonely but she finds a big friendly dog at the Winn Dixie supermarket and that’s what she names him.

Julia: Thinking about the title, what do you think is going to happen in the book? What do you predict? Make some predictions, thinking about the title, what we think, what might happen?

Ryan: Her life is going to change and it might be thanks to Winn Dixie, an emotional journey.

Elena: Because of Winn Dixie, Opal is going to make a lot of friends.

Julia: So, in the book, Opal meets some very unusual people, [an] old lady and a snobby girl. As I read, I want you to notice what the characters are really like and as we read on in the next few weeks I want you to notice how they change.

Julia: So there is my opening move for Because of Winn Dixie. So, with a partner, I want you to name the strategies I used in my opening move, Because of Winn Dixie.

Julia: So, for example, when Sean [Teacher in the video representation of an interactive read aloud] asked what the students know about the topic and have the think-pair-share. I would name that as hooking into my students previous experiences with the content, prior knowledge, [and] activating background knowledge. Notice and name the strategies I used with Winn Dixie, notice and name and list them with a partner.

As pairs begin to discuss her opening move, it becomes evident to Julia that candidates are struggling to notice and name what she was doing on their own. Julia puts her hands up:

Julia: Okay, let's go through this from start to finish. I know you are going to have different names for the same move or the same idea but let's just think about what I might be doing.

Julia: *Lots of people have experience moving* (Julia re-states something she did as an opening move with *Winn Dixie*.) What am I doing?

Kendall: Making connections

Julia: Can also be called what?

Ryan: Accessing prior knowledge

Julia: *It really helps to make a friend.* What's my move there? A statement that connects something from the book to their experience, something from the book that connects to the personal experience, we need to help students make that bridge. Hook them back into the book, thinking about the book.

The explicit naming of what Julia is doing and why, explicitly unpacking an opening move for candidates, is the work of decomposition in the practical/specific dimension. Julia continues going over the opening move she modeled and then notes, "An opening move is a series of interconnected steps that helps the reader get ready. There are lots of opening moves you can make, this is just a series of opening moves I put together for this." Decomposing the practical work of opening moves at a small grain size, supports candidates in understanding what they specifically do with K-8 students to engage them in a text.

**During Reading.** Julia also pulled out the during reading section over a few class sessions, focusing candidates in on thinking about where they might stop while reading, why they would stop there, and then the question they would ask to students. Julia decomposed the during reading section of *Because of Winn Dixie*, providing an example that she wrote for a text,

using a graphic organizer as a tool to unpack this part of the read loud. The tool included the stopping place, reason for stopping, and the question. Julia then had candidates work in groups to read the text, share their stopping point and the reasoning behind it.

An illustration of the connection between the dimensions, specifically the conceptual/specific and practical/specific by the instructional activity is when Julia discusses stopping points in a text. Julia not only asks students where they would stop, but why, thus incorporating the conceptual ideas behind reading comprehension when candidates are thinking about practical moves they would make while reading the text. In this activity, without a conceptual understanding of meaning making with texts it would be difficult to articulate the why. The decomposition done in the practical/specific dimension relies on work previously done in others. There is a direct relationship between understanding the conceptual and being able to use practical tools and make decisions in a classroom. This was a bit tricky at times when candidates struggled with the conceptual and were seeking more of a checklist. One candidate asked about the number of stopping points to have in a text. Julia responded:

How many times you stop, is not exact; it's not, you will stop five times. You need to stop enough for talking and learning to happen but you don't want to stop so much you can't get anywhere and the students don't retain what's happening in the story. How much do I stop so they can understand and we can talk about things but not too many stops to interfere with understanding the story and the enjoyment? If you have to stop too much to explain or check for understanding it's too hard for kids. You need to think of another way to give kids access to the text. There is not a hard and fast rule about if the text is too difficult; it's a gut thing.

While Julia noted it is a gut thing, it's one of those in the moment decisions that requires candidates to recall the conceptual ideas around reading instruction and use them in their practical work to plan a lesson for K-8 students. It is about using the bigger conceptual ideas you have learned to drive your decision of what to do with a text – in order to understand how to best scaffold the lesson for our students you need to know them and know about comprehension, the conceptual, so you can decide when and where to stop, the frequency and the questions you will ask at each point. The decomposition of the stopping points was by far the most specific and practical decomposition that occurred in the course. This is the point on the framework that is heading towards the bottom, right corner in the practical/specific dimension

Thinking about how the four quadrants support one another also works to ameliorate the tension between what students need for tomorrow (practical) and what students need to understand about teaching for their career, to be able to flexibly adapt their teaching based off what they see their students doing (conceptual). The day that Julia introduced the components of reading (Conceptual/General), at the end of the session a candidate, Ryan, asked: Is there a list of strategies at each grade level that teachers get? Candidates are focused on the practical tools that may be used immediately in their practicums and placements. However, without a conceptual understanding candidates will not understand ideas such as metacognition and when and why to stop and discuss the text to support candidate understanding.

### **Candidate Interviews**

With an understanding of the work Julia did to decompose practice for candidates in the course, I was curious about how, if at all, this work might show up in candidate interviews. In examining candidate interviews, candidates related to these different types of decomposition. All

eight focal candidates noted the work of decomposition Julia did in the course as something that supported their lab school enactments or would support future enactments.

In discussing an interactive read aloud, Ryan notes how helpful it was to have Julia decompose the practices in multiple dimensions:

Yes, yes, it wasn't the fact that we just watched that [the video representation] and I know what an interactive read aloud was. It was all the discussions and the debriefing and the breaking it down of what he was doing and why and what was important...but using that as a resource to help us understand and discuss and make sense of it, it helps me.

Ryan drew on the work done in three quadrants, the work done in the practical/specific around the part of an interactive read aloud, the video representation in the practical/general, and when discussing the why he is connecting to work done in the conceptual quadrants.

In discussing what from the class supported her enactment, Reese noted:

We practiced looking for stopping points with the *My Name is Julian* chapter, and that was really helpful. Learning about why we do the stopping in some places. There's actually a reason to the stopping point, and not just, "Oh, look, the students are going to randomly spot a good place to stop." It was really helpful. I didn't know about that before.

This not only supported Reese in preparing for her enactment but understanding the intentionality of planning. The interactive read aloud has a purpose and is carefully planned to support student learning around the objectives. Mayra also noted the benefit of decomposition in her final interview:

I think that having the practice that Julia had for us by doing openings moves and stopping points and kind of going through the elements of interactive read-aloud that go into it was very helpful, because it helped me kind of structure some kind of outline for

how it would go, instead of just ... I don't know, having some ... Almost like a fill-in-the-blank, like, "Okay, this is my opening move and stopping place. This is how I'm going to end it." And that was helpful.

While work done in all quadrants supported candidate enactment, the work done in the practical/specific quadrant seemed especially important. The use of core practices in the course provided a tool that allowed Julia to further decompose the work of teachers and help candidates prepare for their enactments with her work in the practical/specific quadrant.

In order for candidates to have practical tools, such as language to explain reading strategies to children, they themselves have to understand the strategy at a conceptual level to be able to articulate what is readers do when they are engaging in the strategy. It is imperative that candidates learn about both the conceptual and practical. This framework helps teacher educators and researchers understand the type of knowledge candidates appropriate in enactment.

### **Conclusion**

In stepping back to the framework and thinking about the four quadrants, what my analysis showed is that decomposition is actually more nuanced than anticipated. This skilled teacher educator engaged in decomposition that fell in all four quadrants. As a field we need to shift from valuing what is being taught to valuing both what is taught and how it is taught. This framework helps us think about teacher educator pedagogy in a way that considers both practical and conceptual ideas. Supporting candidates to understand the theory behind the instruction for reading and how that plays out in their classrooms – gives them the knowledge to engage in ambitious teaching in which they are able to have the knowledge to make in the moment decisions to provide the highest quality of reading instruction for the students. This requires understanding practice in each quadrant of the framework.

It is important that candidates have a sense of a day of instruction and what takes place (conceptual/general), understand the reading strategies we use when engaging in metacognition (conceptual/specific), know what happens within the reading mini-lesson by watching a video of an interactive read aloud (practical/specific) in order to fully be able to understand the decomposition in the practical/specific of an interactive read aloud to understand the moves to make in the classroom with children and why they are making these particular moves.

For candidates to become thoughtfully adaptive teachers decomposition must take place in each dimension. Dewey (1904) “adequate professional instruction of teachers is not exclusively theoretical, but involves a certain amount of practical work as well (p. 142). We need to not only support candidates in developing theoretical and practical knowledge, we need to support them in understanding how they work together. Teacher educator pedagogy is approach to this, thoroughly decomposing practice in each quadrant. The implications of this finding are that we should reconsider how we think about decomposition in teacher education and how this framework can be used as a pedagogy to bridge theory and practice.

## Chapter 5: Enactment as a Continuum

*“This is like practice basics, like the preseason or whatever. You know what I’m saying? You know just build on each one and pick out [what] was good and what you can improve upon. With the opportunity to practice your craft and learn from it, even if it goes terrible, can only be a good learning experience ” – Mason, pre-service candidate at State University*

### Introduction

Historically, when new teachers enter the classroom, they either “sink or swim.” Teachers that sink often leave the profession finding the struggle to swim too great. The field often assumes those teachers who swim learned enough in their teacher education programs or have innate personal characteristics that allow them to swim. In 1904, Dewey wrote that most teacher preparation approached “learning to swim without going too near the water;” this continues today (p. 146). Why do we continue to wait until teachers are in classrooms to get them in the water, to see if they will sink or swim?

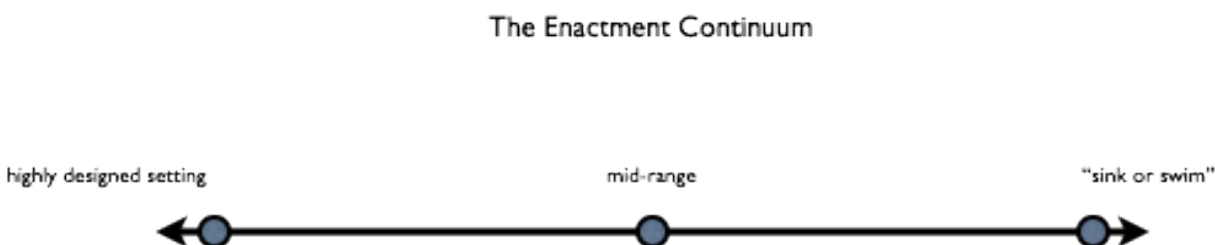
In examining data it became evident that different types of enactment were occurring in the case study course; alternatives to sink or swim emerged. For the purposes of this study, enactment refers to any time candidates are teaching K-12 students, regardless of context. Typically novice teachers are just trying to survive teaching, as there is little support provided to them and novices are often inadequately prepared (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon, 1998). However, this data showed that purposeful steps were taken in the course to ensure candidates did not feel as if they were thrown into the water without support. The teacher educator, Julia, made intentional pedagogical decisions to provide candidates with a supported opportunity to enact practices they were learning in the course. Trends in data show that rather than enactments being an isolated experience in which candidates are left to sink or swim, candidates engage in

enactments in deliberate contexts with support. It is important to thoughtfully consider these alternatives.

The evidence shows that we must expand our view of enactment from one moment in the classroom when teachers are on their own to a continuum of enactment that accounts for the different contexts in which it occurs. In this chapter, I present a new idea, developed out of the study data: the enactment continuum. I will explain how it aligns with a sociocultural view of learning, provide illustrative examples from the data, discuss candidates' responses to enactments that occurred at different points on the continuum, and end with a discussion of the implications this expanded view of enactment has on the field.

### **The Enactment Continuum**

In expanding our idea of enactment, we need to view it as a fluid continuum. Figure 4 represents enactment as a continuum. The right end of the continuum represents how we have historically viewed enactment, sinking or swimming, where purposeful supports are not provided to candidates. The left end of the continuum represents a highly designed setting for enactment. McDonald, Kazemi, and Kavanagh (2013) note, "designed settings intentionally include elements of controlled and authentic settings to facilitate novice learning" (pg. 7). Designed settings occur along the continuum until we reach sink or swim. However, the features vary with highly designed settings being on the left when the maximum conceptual and practical tools are provided to candidates for support. The enactment continuum is not one in which candidates incrementally move to the right without turning back, rather, enactment is fluid on different points of the continuum based upon strategic pedagogical decisions by the teacher educator.

**Figure 4: The Enactment Continuum**

Viewing enactment, solely, as sinking or swimming does not align with a sociocultural approach to learning. A sociocultural lens helps us understand that in order to move individuals further in their learning we need to provide instruction in their zones of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1987). When thinking about enactment as a continuum, teacher educators may consider the developmental stage candidates are in and create enactment opportunities where the most potential development will occur. In looking at a highly designed setting, there is more adult guidance and the potential support of more capable peers, both elements that support development in the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1987). Given these concepts of sociocultural learning theory, the enactment continuum considers the designed settings in which optimal candidate growth will occur.

Enactment that occurs in designed settings allows for thoughtful consideration of the supports that will be provided to candidates. These settings provide opportunities for candidates to experience interactions with children that occur during teaching that are otherwise difficult to prepare for in teaching. Typically, candidates will struggle to plan for and therefore enact a read aloud if they are still learning about reading strategies. In a designed setting, supports such as a lesson plan may be provided to candidates so they can work on enactment while they continue to

learn about K-8 students and the content, thus engaging in Cazden's (1997) *performance before competence*. Enactment in turn deepens, candidates' knowledge as they continue to learn about students and their responses to instruction.

It might seem that the designed settings are similar to approximations of practice given the scaffolding and support. However, the key difference is that approximations occur when students are not present, such as in microteaching or rehearsals, which take place with fellow colleagues and teacher educators prior to working with K-8 students. For example, in Dr. Elham Kazemi's elementary mathematics methods course at the University of Washington, candidates rehearse a mathematics activity with a small group of candidates and a teacher educator before enacting the lesson with a small group of K-8 students (personal observation FQ 2012). Once this coached rehearsal, an approximation, is complete, candidates then move into an elementary classroom to teach the lesson to children, the enactment. Approximations may be a component of the designed setting that occurs before candidates are working with children, enacting their lessons, but they alone are not enactment.

When viewing the continuum an important aspect is that on the left side, highly designed settings, the supports given to candidates are intentional. The intentionality of teacher educators in designing these settings for enactment are paramount. In designed settings we must consider the context and the supports; these include the number of students, length of the lesson, selection of content, lesson planning support, etc. As we move towards sinking or swimming, decisions are just as intentional but fewer supports are provided. In order to clearly articulate an enactment continuum I provide three archetypes to illustrate a designed setting with a high level of support, a mid-range example of enactment, and sinking or swimming.

### **Highly Designed Setting (Left End)**

The first archetype is a highly designed setting on the left end of the continuum where the maximum amount of support is provided to candidates for their enactment. These supports include contextual considerations such as the number of students being taught and the presence of the classroom teacher during the lesson. Candidates also receive supports in the form of tools, which may include lesson plan templates, lesson plans, and specific moves to engage during the lesson such as having K-8 students turn-and-talk.

Theoretically, this setting is in candidates' ZPD where supports are provided for optimal development. Candidates are in a stage where they don't yet have the capacity to teach or plan their own lesson but with supports can engage in enactments. These enactments provide opportunities for candidates to learn about in-the-moment decisions, what students might say, and how to respond to children in the moment. In these highly designed settings candidates are engaging in *performance before competence* (Cazden, 1997). These are initial opportunities for candidates to begin appropriating tools from the course.

An example of a highly designed setting is an elementary literacy methods course intentionally taught on site at an elementary school. The university course is partnered with a first grade class for the duration of the course allowing candidates to learn about the classroom teacher's practice and to build relationships with the first grade students. In the course, one component would be teaching candidates about phonological awareness and how to teach phonics mini lessons. Candidates receive tools such as a lesson plan template and a list of prompts to use when a student needs additional support. Candidates collaborate in groups of four to teach a lesson to a small group of first graders. Candidates are given the lesson plan by their methods instructor and have opportunities to internalize and practice the plan.

On the day of their enactment, candidates would engage in an approximation of practice prior to entering the classroom for their enactment. While the small group of candidates co-teaches their small group of first graders both the classroom teacher and university teacher educators are also present to provide in the moment assistance. The classroom teacher's presence also supports classroom management. All of these contextual considerations and supports are intentionally selected by the university teacher educators to provide a highly designed setting where candidates can enact practice as part of their teacher preparation.

### **Mid-Range Enactment (Middle)**

This enactment would fall in the middle of the continuum; the enactment still takes place in a designed setting but fewer features are provided, as it is closer to authentic teaching. Theoretically, candidates are in a place where their ZPD is one in which less assistance is needed to be independent in teaching a lesson. At this point guided assistance still includes both contextual and tool support such as mentorship, lesson plan templates, and having another teacher present in the classroom. While there are fewer features in this designed setting, intentional supports still exist to support candidate development.

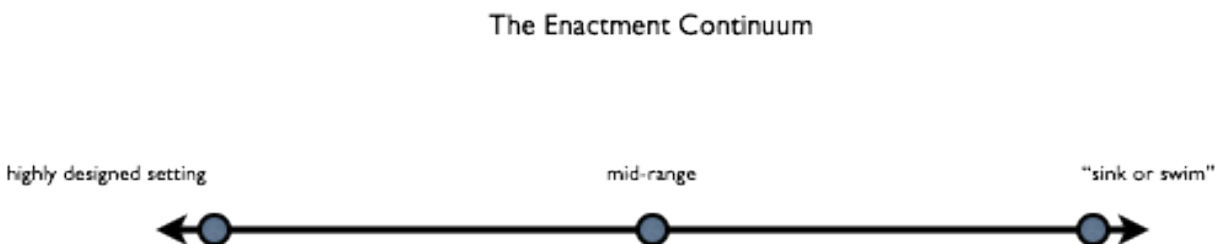
An example of this is a typical lesson candidates teach in their placement classrooms. Contextual considerations include the mentor teacher being present and that the candidate has a relationship with the students in the classroom. The mentor teacher would select the part of day the candidate would teach providing the curriculum, lesson, and all necessary materials. The candidate is responsible for teaching the lesson alone but able to reach out to the mentor teacher for support at any moment. Having the mentor teacher present in placement classrooms is an intentional support that allows the candidate to focus more on teaching the lesson as the mentor teacher's presence influences student behavior, taking much of the management load off of the

candidate. While there are intentional supports at mid-range enactment, there are not as many as in highly designed settings.

### Sink or Swim (Right End)

The third archetype is when candidates are in a position to sink or swim, they are responsible for their own classroom and teaching all subjects for the entire length of a day, No intentional supports are provided. The lesson is planned and enacted by the teacher on his or her own. There may be planning supports provided through the school curricula but depending on context these resources might not be available. This end illustrates what we have historically viewed as enactment. Figure 5 and Table 4 represents the enactment continuum and common supports provided for the three archetypes.

**Figure 5: The Enactment Continuum**



**Table 4: Enactment Archetypes**

Place on Enactment Continuum:	Highly Designed Setting	Mid-Range Enactment	Sink or Swim
Context:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom of a University Partner Teacher</li> <li>• Candidate is teaching in small groups of 3-4 candidates</li> <li>• Candidates teach a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement classroom</li> <li>• Relationship has been built with students</li> <li>• Mentor selected the lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' own classroom</li> <li>• Whole group instruction</li> <li>• Teacher is on his or her own in the room</li> </ul>

	<p>small group of students, no more than five</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher and teacher educators are present during the small group lesson</li> <li>• Candidates have built relationships with these students during their methods course</li> <li>• Short lesson, 20 minutes or less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson is 30 minutes or longer</li> <li>• Mentor teacher is in the classroom for support during the lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for the entire day of instruction</li> </ul>
Supports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates are given the lesson plan</li> <li>• Candidates have had instruction on the content of the lesson</li> <li>• Candidates have supported time to practice the lesson with their colleagues</li> <li>• Approximations of practice prior to enactment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text (Materials) selected by mentor teacher</li> <li>• Lesson selected and provided with curriculum or partially planned by mentor teacher</li> </ul>	

It is important to remember that this continuum is fluid. The supports provided at different points on the continuum are not specific to that point. The type of support, such as providing a lesson plan or only working with a small group of students, may be provided to someone near the highly designed setting end and towards the middle. It is the suite of supports provided that determines where on the continuum the enactment falls. As illustrated in the three archetypes above, supports overlap at different points on the continuum, with the exception of sink or swim, when candidates are completely on their own in the most authentic teaching environment, their own classroom. We now turn to a discussion of the enactment data from the study.

### Case Study Enactment

Enactment in this study occurred in two contexts: at State's lab school and in candidate field placements. The Lab School is part of the university and was created as a place to engage in, observe, and research best practices in teaching. There is a lottery system for enrollment and the school does not provide any sort of transportation for students. These factors influence the student population, which differs from the student population most candidates work with in their placements. The school has both general and Spanish dual immersion classrooms. The enactment at the lab school took place during a course session.

In addition to their lab school enactments, candidates had opportunities to enact lessons in their field placements. Candidates were placed in the surrounding area of State University, teaching in different cities, districts, and schools. I'll first discuss the lab school enactment followed by enactment that occurred in field placements.

In the case study course, the first designed settings occurred within the context of the methods course when candidates taught lessons at the university lab school. Julia felt it was important for candidates to have an opportunity to try on what they were learning in class:

In the context of their student teaching placements, right now, where they are in their classrooms it's just observation participation and that looks very different across students. Some students are still just sitting and watching and, maybe, working with an individual student, maybe, working with a small group. Some students are planning and teaching some things so I can't guarantee consistency, that everyone is going to have a space to read, everyone is going to have a supportive guiding teacher to help them pick a book, to help them find space to be able to do something so lab school it is.

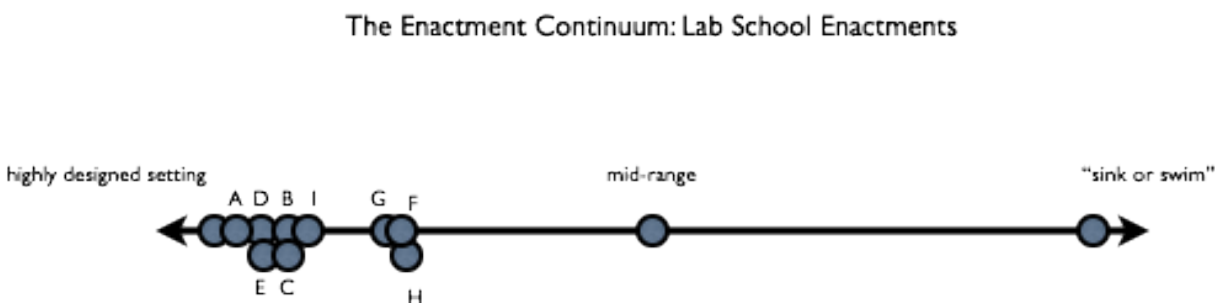
Recognizing that not all the candidates have the space to try activities out in their fall quarter observation placements, Julia wanted to connect with the lab school to create an intentional space so everyone would have the opportunity to enact an interactive read aloud. Shulman (1998) notes, “Learning from experience, therefore, requires both the systematic, prototype-centered, theoretical knowledge characteristics of the academy and the more fluid, reactive, prudential reasoning characteristic of practice” (p. 519). While Julia recognized that this enactment would be different than in their placements since candidates don’t have relationships with the lab school students, it still provided the opportunity for them to try out the practices they have been learning, furthering developing them as teachers. In the past, Julia had candidates plan a sequence of lessons at the end of the quarter but found that most did not have the opportunity to ever enact them. She said, “It’s not fulfilling to plan something that you’re never going to teach; it doesn’t teach you anything but to plan something.” With a focus on practice Julia moved to design an intentional space where candidates could enact practice in the context of the methods course.

### **Lab School Enactment**

The lab school was a context where all candidates had the opportunity to enact practice in a designed setting. Julia’s initial goal for the lab school was that all candidates would have the same supports provided to them. Julia hoped that each classroom teacher would select the text candidates would use in their lesson and that candidates would co-plan and co-teach with one another. The reality of working in schools is that ideal situations do not always work out. While the candidates were all teaching at the same school, the specifics of the context differed, affecting the level of support or success that candidates felt.

The figure below illustrates the different points on the enactment continuum that occurred at the lab school moving from the left of the continuum to the right. While these data points fall on different places on the continuum, the supports are not exclusive to these points. As noted above supports overlap and different combinations of support may be used to create a more designed setting for candidate support or an enactment situation where the candidate is assuming more responsibility. Figure 6 demonstrates the different points on the continuum where lab school enactments occurred.

**Figure 6: Lab School Enactments on the Continuum**



- A: What Julia hoped for: In first thinking about the lab school experience for candidates Julia was hoping that she could design the setting- creating a space where the text was selected for candidates by classroom teachers, the candidates planned the lesson together but then each took half of the class to teach on their own, classroom teachers would be present for supervision. Julia purposefully selected these supports in order to ensure that candidates felt successful in their first enactments.
- B: Reese and Partner: Reese and her partner were given an author to use, Shel Silverstein, but had the freedom to select the specific poem they would use. Reese and her partner co-planned and co-taught the lesson. Five other teachers, including

- classroom teachers and assistants, were present supporting student behavior during the lesson.
- C: Ryan and Partner: Ryan and his partner were given the text, Tea with Milk by Allen Say, to use in their classroom. They planned the lesson together and went back and forth in the reading and teaching. There were two classroom teachers present in the class.
  - D & E: Eva and Elena: Eva and Elena had the specific text selected for them, Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst. They planned the lesson together and taught it whole group, splitting up specific parts of the text amongst themselves. There was only one mentor teacher present. Eva and Elena taught their lesson in Spanish.
  - F: Lucita: Lucita selected the text she would use with students and planned the lesson with Sienna. Lucita taught the whole class on her own.
  - G: Sienna: Sienna selected the text she would use with Lucita and planned the lesson with Lucita. Sienna taught the lesson on her own and had one classroom teacher present.
  - H: Mayra: Mayra selected her text on her own and did some initial planning with Mason, however the initial planning occurred with a different text. Mayra made a last minute text selection and lesson plan change. Mayra taught the whole group on her own with one classroom teacher present.
  - I: Mason: Mason selected the text he would use. Mason did some co-planning initially with Mayra but their lessons and text differed. Mason taught the whole class

with one teacher present. Mason use to be on staff at the lab school so he vaguely knew the students.

The evidence demonstrates that there are different types of support that can be provided for enactments that occur in highly designed settings. Intentional support in this study came in the forms of: course instruction prior to the enactment, context, planning support, and the percentage of the lesson the candidates were responsible for teaching. Next, I will examine these supports in individual case studies from the course. I will begin with supports in the context of the course that all candidates received and then examine two specific candidate pairs. One pair, Eva and Elena, had an experience closer to the left side of the continuum, a more highly designed setting and a second pair Mayra and Mason, had fewer supports in their lab school enactments. The section will end with a discussion of these differing supports and their impact on candidates, further discussing the importance of expanding our view of enactment and the impacts it has on teacher preparation.

**Intentional pre-lab school course decisions.** Julia made intentional design and pedagogical decisions prior to the start of and during the course to ensure candidates' lab school enactment occurred in a highly designed setting. These purposeful decisions involved the inclusion of core practices in the course, providing representations of practice, and decomposing conceptual and practical tools for candidates. These instructional choices allowed Julia to take the complex work of teaching and focus candidates in on particular aspects, optimizing their potential for development as teachers.

**Core practices.** Julia included core practices in the design of her course. As noted in chapter one, the core practices movement seeks to create a common language in the field, align teacher education with what is expected of candidates in schools, and highlight both content

knowledge and practice (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). In describing a core practice, Julia noted, “It's a skill or a strategy that our students are able to do within a particular instructional activity that can help really transform the teaching and learning of their classroom.” As discussed in chapter four, the elementary teacher education program at State focuses on three core practices: opening moves, eliciting and responding to students, and orienting students to one another. The inclusion of core practices supported Julia in unpacking complex teaching. Core practices provided a language for Julia to use to support students in understanding the specific moves they might make to facilitate text discussion in the interactive read aloud. The inclusion of core practices is an intentional approach to supporting candidates in understanding the conceptual and practical ideas and tools behind the work in the literacy course.

Theoretically, Vygotsky (1987) discusses the use of language as a tool. The core practices approach includes specific language used with candidates to support their understanding and are therefore tools in enactment. Core practices are both teacher educator and candidate tools. As discussed in chapter four, core practices support teacher educators in decomposing practice for candidates. The core practices provide a language that is a tool that can be used as a support for candidates at different points on the continuum. Julia intentionally used core practices to help students both understand what an interactive read aloud is and how to enact it with K-8 students. Julia unpacked the interactive read aloud for candidates discussing both the literacy content included and the core practices. These intentional decisions supported candidate enactment at the lab school serving as a support in the highly designed setting.

As noted in chapter one, a critical feature of the core practices movement is its focus on both what will be taught and how it will be taught. An explicit focus on teacher educator

pedagogy is what sets this practice-focused approach apart from historical attempts to put practice at the center of teacher education. As previously discussed, representation and decompositions of practice are teacher educator pedagogies used in the core practices movement (Grossman et al., 2009). These pedagogies were utilized in the course to support candidates in learning about interactive read alouds and preparing them for enactment. Each of these will be discussed below with specific examples of the course.

*Representations of practice.* Julia provided representations of interactive read alouds, the type of lesson candidate would enact at the lab school, through teacher educator modeling and the use of video. In their interviews, Elena, Sienna, and Lucita all noted Julia's modeling as something that helped prepare them for their lab school interactive read aloud enactments. Reese noted, "I really enjoyed being able to see what Julia did, and then trying to do it on my own, and then being able to discuss with other people about it." As Reese noted, it was not just the opportunity to see Julia model but the opportunity to try it on her own. In addition to modeling Julia used video representation.

Julia showed the class a video of Mr. Sean engaging in an interactive read aloud. After their lab school enactment, candidates were asked: What did you do in the literacy course that prepared you for today's lesson? Five of the eight candidates noted Mr. Sean's video as something that supported their enactment. Both Reese and Eva specifically noted that they included think-pair-shares into their interactive read aloud enactments due to the Mr. Sean video.

What is important to note is that it was not just the representation of practice that supported candidates, it was what Julia did along with the representations, unpacking the work. Ryan noted, "It was all the discussions and the debriefing and the breaking it down of what he was [doing] and why." Mayra noted that what was key was, "showing us videos of it being

implemented and breaking it down” it helped her “structure some kind of outline for how it would go.” These are intentional moves by Julia to support candidates in understanding the components of the lessons they will be teaching at the lab school and hopefully, as teachers in their own classrooms. In addition to the representations, Julia intentionally decomposed practice for candidates to prepare them to enact interactive read alouds.

*Decomposition of practice.* Leading up to the lab school day, Julia worked to decompose an interactive read aloud, the instructional activity they would be teaching, for candidates. As noted in the previous chapter, Julia engaged in decomposition in each quadrant of the framework of decomposition for teacher educators. Engaging in decomposing conceptual and practical ideas in both general and specific ways was an intentional decision to prepare candidates for their enactment at the lab school, a support in a highly designed setting.

In the course Julia first focused on opening moves, which she describes as “a way of getting kids engaged;” it is the hook at the beginning of a lesson. Next, the course moves to understanding stopping places and the purpose of questioning, and how to close a lesson. Candidates found this pre-work and learning very useful in understanding how to teach an interactive read aloud. Reese noted:

Learning about why we do the stopping in some places. There’s actually a reason to the stopping point, and not just, oh, look the students are going to randomly spot a good place to stop. It was really helpful. I didn’t know about that before.

This allowed candidates to understand the importance of planning; it is not enough to know where to stop but why you would stop there, understanding your purpose in a read aloud and how that influences planning. Knowing the candidates would engage in an interactive read aloud enactment at the lab school, Julia intentionally designed her course to cover pertinent content

prior to candidate enactment. These course features, noted above by Reese, were integral pieces to the learning experiences of candidates in the course and intentional supports in the highly designed setting of the lab school.

**Case Study One: Eva and Elena.** Eva and Elena both entered the teacher education program at State viewing education as an issue of equity; they were drawn to the program's focus on social justice. Eva entered an AmeriCorps program after college and began working in education, Eva noted the experience "opened me up to a whole new world of social justice" and she knew she wanted to be in education. Elena was initially inspired by the character Miss Honey in *Matilda* to be a teacher and further considered it after seeing how she, along with her friends, was treated in school. Elena noted, "it started with the little kid dream and then it became a goal because I wanted to change what was going on." Elena, spent three years prior to entering the teacher education program working in an arts program that partnered with State's elementary teacher education program. In their first interview they both noted that the biggest challenge they saw as teachers was understanding where students are in their learning and differentiating instruction to meet all student needs. In the program, Eva and Elena were part of two different student teaching cohorts, Elena being with Julia and Eva being with the other field instructor.

At the lab school, Eva and Elena would be teaching in a classroom taught in Spanish. Eva was from California and spoke Spanish as her first language. Elena spoke Spanish but was not as fluent or confident in her abilities as Eva. In an interview, Elena noted that she thinks she is the only bilingual credential candidate who is not in a Spanish placement so she does not have opportunities to observe or try out teaching lessons in Spanish.

Eva and Elena had their specific read aloud text, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst, selected for them by the grade level teachers at the lab

school. Eva and Elena planned the lesson together. This co-planning was an important support for Eva; she was initially intimidated by the planning, as she had not written a lesson plan before. However, her partner Elena had more experience lesson planning as it had been discussed in her cohort. Eva noted:

The lesson planning part, that was probably the most intimidating for me at first because that was the actual first lesson plan that we created because we hadn't had any lesson plan work with our other cohort, I think Julia's group had that, and it was nice to be paired up with Elena who does have that. She has experience in creating other lesson plans.

Eva and Elena had planning support by having the text selected for them and a partner to plan with. In addition to co-planning, Eva and Elena co-taught their lesson to an entire class of students, alternating reading pages and asking questions.

While they taught separate sections of the book it was evident they had both prepared for the entire lesson. As Elena was reading her pages I could see Eva mouthing the words as she went along, it was clear they had prepared together. Prior to entering the classroom to teach they were practicing the reading and questions. Elena even asked Eva to support her in her pronunciation of some of the more difficult Spanish words before they went into the classroom.

The classroom teacher was present during the lesson, providing additional support to candidates in regard to norms and management. In reflecting on the lesson, Eva wrote:

I am certain that the fact that things went so smoothly was due in no small part to the teacher whose class we were in having put in a lot of effort in the beginning of the school year to get students to be active listeners and respectful to their peers.

Novices often struggle to enact any content instruction as they work to manage behavior. This intentionally designed setting with the mentor teacher present creates an environment in which

candidates can focus on teaching the instructional activity with minimal attention to classroom management issues.

Eva and Elena's design setting included a context where the classroom teacher was present and they were jointly responsible for one 20-minute lesson. They received planning supports through the in class course work preparation, materials selection, and having a partner. When asked how the lesson went both Eva and Elena felt it went well. Eva noted:

Elena and I were at the same page throughout the entire interactive read out loud. We stuck to our lesson plan that we made and the questions that we asked were the questions that we had intended to ask and the students answered the questions the way we wanted them to answer the questions.

Elena also felt that the lesson went well, in part because:

All of the work that I put in before hand, being as prepared as I was really helped me focus and calm down and rely on the preparation, everything that we put into it and just let it go from there.

In looking at their intentional supports, Eva and Elena had seven: the methods course focused on the type of lesson they taught, the text was selected for them, the text was a familiar genre, they were provided with a lesson plan template, they co-planned and co-taught, and the classroom teacher was present during the lesson. These intentional supports, having their first enactment in a highly designed setting, created a successful space for them to begin engaging in the practice of teaching.

**Case Study Two: Mayra and Mason.** Mayra and Mason were also attracted to the program at State due to the focus on social justice but had different pathways. Mayra knew from a young age she wanted to be a teacher, influenced by her aunt who taught. Mayra has many

memories of teachers who influenced her, most inspired by those who made a point to have personal connections with students. Mason, entered teaching as a career change; prior to entering the field, Mason worked in the film industry but felt his work lacked purpose. When Mason move into education he worked as a teaching assistant at State's Lab School the year before entering the program. Mason and Mayra were in two different field placement cohorts; Mayra was in Julia's group and Mason was with the other field instructor.

Mayra and Mason were initially paired for their lab school enactments. However, a few days prior to the lab school day they were split up to accommodate all of the classrooms. Initially Mason and Mayra selected a poem together, guided by the grade level teachers request it be from Shel Silverstein, and jointly worked on the lesson. It is important to note that both Mayra and Mason would be using a poem for their interactive read aloud, a genre that had not been the focus of the course which emphasized the use of fiction and informational texts. Julia had some concerns with the first grade teachers' choice of letting the candidates select their poems but adjusted for the sake of the partnership as it was important for her to align with what the lab school teachers were currently working on in their classrooms. While Mayra and Mason initially co-planned, Mason took on the majority of the decision making including selection of the poem. When Mayra and Mason were informed they would be teaching on their own, this changed the supports they would receive, and therefore their experiences.

Mason continued on with the poem he had selected and plan he had worked on with Mayra. In selecting the author, Shel Silverstein, the grade level teachers narrowed candidate text selection but still left many options. The lesson Mason taught was co-planned with Mayra around the poem "Ations." Mason was working with a group of students he was vaguely familiar with given his past teaching experience at the lab school. Mason taught a whole-group lesson

with the classroom teacher present. Mason felt that “what helped tremendously was the idea of the opening move” and how Julia scaffolded their learning of it in the course. Mason felt “confident” with the opening move in his lab school enactment lesson.

Once Mayra knew she would be on her own she thought, “No, I am going to go with what I like [instead of what my partner wanted].” While Mason had the support of a co-planned lesson, Mayra developed hers on her own, which included selecting a new poem. Mayra taught the lesson to an entire class of students with their classroom teacher present in the room. Unlike Mason, Mayra did not have any prior experience at the lab school so when she entered the room for her lesson it was the first time she met the children she would be teaching. Mayra was visibly nervous during her lesson and often asked the students the same questions multiple times.

Mayra and Mason had very different experiences at the lab school, partly due to the different supports they received for their enactments. Mason felt the lesson was a relative success. In looking at the intentional supports Mason had for his enactment there were six: the methods course focused on the type of lesson he taught, the text author was selected for him, he was provided with a lesson plan template, he co-planned the lesson, he had some familiarity with the school and students, and the classroom teacher was present during the lesson. Mayra did not feel her lesson was successful. This reflection is not surprising given Mayra had fewer intentional supports. In looking at Mary’s supports she had four: the methods course focused on the type of lesson she taught, the author was selected for her, she had a lesson plan template, and the classroom teacher was present during the lesson.

The features present in Mason’s enactment place him farther left on the continuum.

Mason noted:

I think mine went really well. I don't know if me being at the lab school before helped. I knew some of the kids, only vaguely because they were younger and I had been in the upper grades. I knew some of them. I knew the classroom. I think maybe that helped a little bit.

In addition to being more familiar with the context, Mason had planning support. Mayra's lesson didn't go as well as hoped. In reflecting on the lesson Mayra noted:

I had changed poems last minute; I did not have time to run my ideas by anyone. This filtering process would have been beneficial since I would reflect on the repetitiveness of my lesson. However, with only my own eyes reviewing my work, I failed to see the flaws in my plan...and it crashed and burned.

Mayra learned an important lesson that many candidates face, you actually need to plan for enactment much more than you realize. Mayra continued "I have a tendency to kind of shoot from the hip, and realizing it doesn't work that way." Thinking of enactment as a continuum and providing experiences for candidates that are in designed settings gives them the space to learn these important lessons before they are responsible for a group of students on their own. In her written reflection, Mayra noted, "I learned that before every lesson, I have to ask myself, "What if it doesn't go as planned?"

A highly designed setting allowed Mayra to learn about teaching in a space created for reflection and growth rather than in isolation and without opportunities to analyze what happened in a way that will support her in changing her practice. Mayra noted, "I felt a little short changed in that, because I didn't have a partner and everyone else was able to bounce, pick things off of each other." The opportunity to co-teach is an important contextual support that can be included in a design setting. Although Mason enacted the lesson on his own, he was enacting

a lesson that he had support in planning and was teaching in a context in which he had prior experience.

**Discussion of Lab School Enactments.** The lab school enactments illustrate the importance of thoughtful pedagogical considerations by the teacher educator to create highly designed settings. Mayra and Mason's experiences illustrate the exclusion of what may be seen as a small support; co-planning can have a large impact on a candidate's enactment. The features included or not included in a designed may be more critical for one candidate than another. It is important to consider the difference of candidates as they enter the program, their prior experiences and personal histories. With a sociocultural lens we consider what candidates bring with them into the program. These personal histories affect candidates ZPDs and therefore the supports that may or may not be needed at different points on the enactment continuum. Consideration of personal differences was evident in comparing the experience of Mason and Mayra. From the start, Mason's setting included more design features because he was familiar with the school context and some of the students.

While candidates brought different knowledge into the course based on their individual histories, they each had access to the conceptual and practical tools Julia intentionally included in the course. While their individual histories influence how they interpret these tools they were all introduced to them in the same way. Features of all candidates designed settings included the presences of a mentor teacher, core practices, opportunities to see representation and decompose an interactive read aloud, and the lesson plan template. Differences occurred in the contexts, Mayra and Mason taught on their own while Eva and Elena were able to co-teach. In addition, unlike the other three, Mayra planned her lesson on her own. While Elena and Eva had the specific text selected for them by the teacher, Mayra and Mason were given an author but got to

select the specific text. Even with these slight differences, the features that each candidate experienced at the lab school placed all of their enactments in a highly designed setting.

The intentionality in creating design settings for enactment is critical. Similar to Mayra, Sienna found out she would be split from her partner at the last minute due to an additional classroom being included. Sienna responded, “Oh my gosh, we’re doing it by ourselves.” Sienna was losing the support of her colleague, moving her enactment down the continuum to the right, a less supported space. The cases of Mayra and Sienna illustrate that even when teacher educators attempt to be very intentional in providing a high level of support in a design settings, there are school-based factors that influence choices that are made when working with children. In order to be able to engage with the lab school, it is was necessary to ensure there was a candidate for each of their classrooms, which meant that sacrifices had to be made for the benefit of the whole. While in this study, Sienna had little notice that she would be teaching on her own, with more advanced notice teacher educators would be able to purposefully select candidates, who potentially needed fewer supports, for individual enactments in classrooms.

Overall, the candidates felt that the lab school experience contributed to their learning. In their final interview, each candidate was asked if he or she would keep the lab school day a part of the literacy course or if he or she would rather have just had a regular class session. Of the eight candidates, six noted they prefer the lab school experience to another typical class session. Of the two that would prefer a regular class session, one, Eva, has four years of experience working with struggling readers and she feels that more content would be helpful. However, in her written reflection Evan noted that she “felt doing a read aloud at the State Lab School was an excellent closing activity for the class.” Elena, the other candidate noted that she would choose

the teaching experience over class if it was with the type of population she was in the program to serve. Elena noted:

I want to be in a place that needs me. I respect the lab school, I love what they're doing but my heart is somewhere else. So I think it would have been a more interesting experience and a more valuable [if] it was in a placement similar to where I will end up.

If the context of the enactment was different, Elena would select an opportunity for enactment.

Thus, in analyzing all data sources, all eight candidates felt the lab school enactment was a valuable learning experience. Ryan noted that he feels “we should have as many opportunities as [we] can to get up in front of kids.” Lucita noted, “I need to be doing it to learn from it.”

Overall, enactment at the lab school was seen as a beneficial part of their literacy methods course. Prior to the lab school day Julia noted,

I saw everybody as they were preparing to go in with this nervous, excited energy that I though was nice and, maybe, this was a good use of our time because I was so nervous about letting go of those three hours that I could have done a multitude of other things.

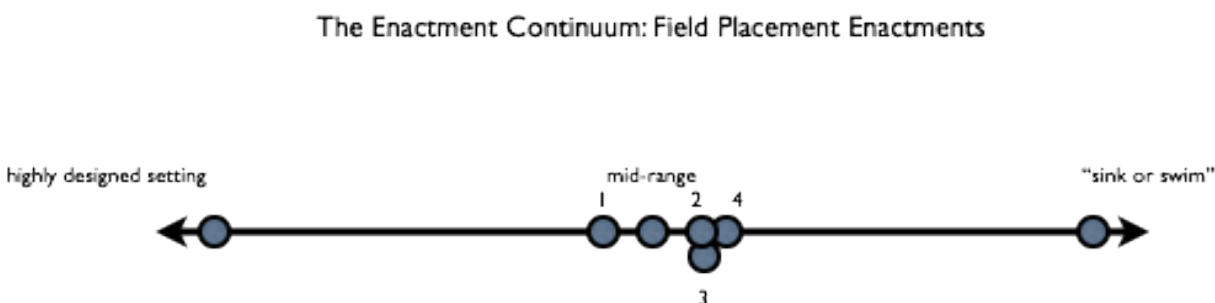
It seems, from candidate responses, that creating an intentionally designed setting for candidates to enact what they were learning in the course was worth it. This experience allowed candidates to put their knowledge in action and learn more about children and teaching.

### **Enactment in Field Placements**

As noted previously, the context of each candidate field placement differed. These differences directly impacted the design settings for their placement enactment. The list below demonstrates the different points on the enactment continuum that occurred in observing candidates teaching in their placement classrooms moving from the left of the continuum to the

right. While the lab school enactments occurred to the left end of the continuum, in a highly designed setting, the placement enactments hover around the middle. As previously noted, these supports provided at these different points are not exclusive to each one but overlap; for example, in all of the enactments the mentor teacher was present during each lesson. Figure 7 notes where field placement enactments fall on the continuum:

**Figure 7: Field Placement Enactments on the Continuum**



- 1: Reese: Placed at Bryant, a school located in the district surrounding State. Reese is in a kindergarten classroom. Bryant has adopted a fairly scripted literacy program, California Treasures. Reese taught a lesson from the California Treasures curriculum following the classroom routines used by her mentor teacher. The mentor teacher was present during the lesson, along with a classroom assignment, but Reese was responsible for the classroom for about an hour of instruction.
- 2: Elena: Placed at Garden Place, a charter school geographically located in the district surrounding State. Elena is in a fourth grade classroom. Given that Garden Place is a charter school they do not have a curriculum for literacy. Elena taught a lesson planned in collaboration with her mentor teacher. Elena's mentor teacher also went through the teacher education program at State. Elena's mentor teacher was present in the classroom during her writing lesson, which was about 30-minutes long;

- however, they were in a different classroom due to a burst pipe. At times during the lesson Elena would ask for the assistance of her mentor teacher who jumped in for additional support.
- 3: Mason: Placed at Miner, a school located in a city outside of State's location. Mason is in a fifth grade classroom. Mason taught an academic language lesson, a portion of the day in which his mentor teacher has freedom to plan for as there is not a school curriculum. For this lesson, Mason planned it on his own, modeling it after the interactive read aloud he learned about in the literacy course. Mason's mentor teacher was present in the classroom during the lesson and supported Mason with classroom management at different points in the lesson.
  - 4: Eva: Placed at Marshall, which is a school created in partnership with State University, the local district, and community. Eva is in a Fourth/ Fifth grade dual immersion classroom. Eva taught an interactive read aloud lesson to her class. It was the second interactive read aloud she had taught in her placement classroom, using her learning's from the literacy course in planning for both. Eva taught the lesson on her own while her mentor teacher was in the room.

**Case Study One: Reese.** Reese was placed at Bryant Elementary; a large school in the urban district State was located in. Reese was in a kindergarten classroom where the mentor teacher has a daily routine all the students are familiar with. When given opportunities to teach, Reese follows this routine, adopting her mentor teacher's style as much as possible. It was evident in observing Reese that she was working to follow someone else's schedule and plans. When asked about having opportunities to try out activities she had learned in the literacy methods class Reese noted, "...it's just that my guiding teacher, she has a lot of things already in

place.” Reese felt she needed to engage in the same type of teacher her mentor teacher did.

While Reese had opportunities for enactment in her placement, it was closer to the mid point on the enactment continuum. Reese did not have opportunities to enact lessons she had learned in Julia’s course in her placement. While she had gained many tools in the reading course, her placement context limited her ability to use these tools and further learn from them.

The morning that I observed, Reese was following the teacher’s schedule for the day and using the literacy curriculum and instructional knowledge she had gained from watching her mentor teacher. Reese worked to provide instruction as similar as possible to her mentor teachers. At the end of the observation period Reese brought out a big book that the students would be reading the following day. Below is a brief transcript from Reese’s observation.

Reese:           Soon we'll be reading this book. I want you to think about what you might see in this book. What do you predict that we will see in this book? Think about it. What might you see in a firehouse? What might you see?

Student 1:       A fire truck.

Reese:           A fire truck, we might see a fire truck. Student 2?

Student 2:       A firefighter.

Reese:           A firefighter, we might see a firefighter here. Student 3?

Student 3:       A fire station.

Reese:           A fire station. Student 4?

Student 4:       A fire hose.

Reese:           Fire hose, yeah.

While Reese was introducing a text that was part of the curriculum, she did use an opening move, having students make predictions based off what they see on the cover and know about

fire stations. This was the only point in the hour-long observation in which I saw Reese employing or attempting to employ strategies from the literacy methods course. Unlike in Reese's lab school enactment, students were not provided with opportunities for turn and talks in the placement classroom.

The scenario illustrated above where Reese called on multiple different individual students, occurred each time a question was posed. The contextual influences of her placement impacted her enactment. When asked about this enactment Reese noted, "mainly what I did was what my guidance teacher had set in place." Given that Reese did not observe her mentor teacher using turn-and-talks in similar lessons, Reese did not use them in this placement lesson, even though they were an integral part of her lab school enactment. Reese had the support of the school's literacy program and plans of the mentor teacher to guide her enactment; while having her mentor teacher present for classroom management and in the moment lesson support if needed. Reese did not have as many intentional supports in her placement as at the lab school. This also limited Reese's opportunities to appropriate tools from the course.

**Case Study Two: Mason.** Mason was placed at Miner Elementary, a school located in a district about thirty minutes away from State. Mason was in a fifth grade classroom. Mason's mentor teacher had a specific schedule and routine but was flexible with the lessons Mason taught. Mason noted, "She is, I think, more traditional like instruction based but she does give me space to kind of do these newer things." This freedom provided Mason with the opportunity to select his materials and plan the lesson for the portion of the day he would be teaching. On the day of my observation Mason was teaching the academic language block.

In describing the academic language block Mason noted, "There isn't really, from what she has said, a set curriculum on it or set standard. Its kind of, I guess, whatever she feels."

Without a curriculum, the only planning support Mason received from his mentor teacher was the lesson focus of figurative language. Given the limited support from his placement, Mason relied on the tools he gained in his literacy methods course to plan for his enactment. Mason planned an interactive read aloud using the planning template provided in Julia's course. Mason planned the lesson independently and did not receive any feedback prior to his enactment. Mason's mentor teacher was present in the room as he taught, providing management support. On a few occasions she stepped in redirecting students she found to be off task.

Mason: So we've been going over figurative language, right, the past few days for ALD. Can anybody give us a reminder on what figurative language is, or an example of figurative language that we've been doing? Student 1

Student 1: Like, the way that you use language?

Mason: So the way that you use language. Can you add on to that at all?

Student 1: Language enriched by words in a different [inaudible 00:00:59].

Male Teacher: Did everyone hear that one?

Multiple Students: Yes.

Mason: So it's your [added 00:01:04] definition, but that's absolutely right. It's language, say again, that's enriched ...

Student 1: Enriched by [crosstalk 00:01:10]

In this transcript you can see that Mason started his lesson using an opening move, activating knowledge on prior learning. Mason also attempts to get the students talking and confirms that students can hear one another. These moves are similar to the moves that Mason used during his

interactive read aloud at the lab school. In his interview, Mason noted he learned about turn-and-talks from the Mr. Sean video representation and then used these in both his lab school and placement enactments. Mason's use of the practical tools of an opening move and turn-and-talks are both features of the design setting for enactment at his placement school. Mason had opportunities to appropriate tools from the literacy course in his field placement classroom. The use of these tools along with contextual features such as knowing the students and having the mentor teacher present placed his enactment in a mid-range design setting.

**Discussion of enactment in field placements.** The program at State intentionally places candidates in classrooms during the entire first year of the program in order to observe instruction at different grade levels, try on practice, and build relationships with students. Most students spend fall quarter observing in their placement classrooms and in winter quarter they begin to teach some lessons. This intentional programmatic design created a space in which Reese and Mason had the support of knowing their students and mentor teacher. Even with this programmatic design, Reese and Mason had differing experiences enacting lessons in their placement classrooms due to their specific contexts. Reese had little freedom in what she taught and how she taught it in her placement classroom, while Mason was given the flexibility to plan his lessons on his own. While Mason's placement provided him with opportunities to further enact his learning's from the literacy course, Reese did not have these opportunities. While the placement enactment was not as highly designed as the lab school enactment, this mid-range spot on the continuum provided many more supports than the traditional sink or swim model as it still had features of a designed setting.

Research shows that candidates often struggle to take what they have learned in their methods course into their student teaching placements, their first teaching positions, or both

(Grossman, Smagornisky, Valencia, 1999). In their study on English language arts methods course Grossman and colleagues (1999) found that depending on the mentor teachers candidates were placed with, they may not be in a context in which they can try out the tools they are learning in their methods courses. This was the case for Reese, in reflecting on the lab school experience she noted:

[I am] glad that we did that. It didn't go as I had hoped. It was still a really good learning opportunity, and it was nice to actually do something in a real classroom. I don't know. I haven't been able to do with an interactive read-aloud yet in my observation classroom, so it's good to, like, put everything together and see it happen in real life.

Given that Reese was unable to enact the practices and appropriate tools she learned about in her literacy methods course in her placement, the lab school enactment was even more critical in her learning. The lab school was the only place where Reese could try on practices related to her identity as a teacher, this opportunity was not present in her placement where she felt she needed to mimic the teaching style of her mentor teacher. Unlike Reese, Mason's placement classroom provided him with the opportunity to continue to try on practices and use tools he learned in the literacy methods course. Mason had the freedom to plan his own lesson and did not feel pressured to follow the model set by the classroom teacher. By expanding our view of enactment, to that of a continuum, which goes from designed settings to sinking or swimming we are able to work to ameliorate some of the issues that arise from a difference in context.

Designed settings create a space for appropriation of tools, by purposefully arranging enactment opportunities directly connected to what is being learned in candidates' method's course. This is important given we know, "teacher educators must provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience these tools in practice" (Grossman et. al., 1999, p. 658). Sienna

felt the designed setting enactment was helpful for her learning, “I think that the thing I find important is learning the tools, then being able to use them pretty immediately.” When we consider the use of tools in sociocultural theory this is an important component to consider in creating designed settings for enactment. Providing candidates with opportunities to use tools while they are learning about them supports the appropriate. Sienna continued:

I feel like if I didn't get a chance until next quarter or even next school year, with my class, it wouldn't be as fresh. The idea to remember, use that tool that you have to use and having Julia there to scaffold it and help us working in pairs and stuff I think it was really helpful. That, to me, I don't think you can really get from just being in a class or sitting in a classroom.

Had Sienna not had the opportunity to try the tools out with children, her understanding of them would not have continued to grow, it is even possible she would have set them aside and not used them again, forgetting about them without the opportunity to make them part of her practice. Julia had similar concerns to candidates about opportunities for the candidates to enact the practices they were learning in their reading methods course. Julia responded:

In the context of their student teaching placements, right now, where they are in their classrooms it's just observation participation and that looks very different across students. Some students are still just sitting and watching and, maybe, working with an individual student, maybe, working with a small group. Some students are planning and teaching some things so I can't guarantee consistency, that everyone is going to have a space to read, everyone is going to have a supportive guiding teacher to help them pick a book, to help them find space to be able to do something so lab school it is.

Providing candidates with enactment opportunities towards the designed setting end of the enactment continuum creates a space for them to experience and grow in their own practice. Sociocultural theory suggests the importance of context in learning. Expanding our view of enactment allows us to design contexts to optimize candidate learning.

### **Conclusion**

In looking at teacher education, it is consistently illustrated, that the difference in contexts between their methods course and places of enactment often hinder candidates' ability to understand how to use the tools they learned in their methods course in their placements. Grossman et al. (1999) note, "Teachers who grasp the conceptual underpinnings of a tool are likely able to make use of it in new contexts and for solving new problems" (p. 17). When candidates have opportunities to enact the conceptual and practical tools they have learned in their methods course, it furthers candidate understanding. If candidate placements do not provide opportunities for them to appropriate tools from their course, then it is even more important to create designed settings for enactment in the context of methods courses.

Shulman (1998) "practical skills are best learned in a true apprenticeship, when someone is indeed on the job, authentically responsible for the classroom and not simply observing or role playing" (p. 514). Providing candidates with enactment opportunities in designed settings moves beyond role-playing and observation to prepare them to not only know what to teach students but how. Enactment in designed settings creates opportunities for candidates to learn about practice from enactment in a supported environment. Lucita noted, "I think hands-on is a must. I need to be doing it in order to learn from it. I mean, I can't work with the hypothetical in my life, you know what I mean?" Candidates need opportunities to enact practice with children prior to being a teacher of record when they are left to sink or swim. Lucita's comment, "I need to be doing it

in order to learn from it,” illustrates the importance of how the knowing supports the doing and the doing supports the knowing as candidates learn to teach.

In our traditional view of enactment as a one shot moment we could imagine that Mayra might continue to struggle through the day, week, school year and potentially leave the profession. Elena would have made it; she had something that allowed her to swim. However, this is not what happened because these enactments occurred with a broader view, on the designed setting side of the continuum. It was one 20-minute lesson that crashed and burned for Mayra and she was okay. In reflecting on the lesson in her final interview she noted how it taught her the importance of planning and really being prepared. When I talked with Mayra two months after her initial enactment, she was optimistic about the teaching occurring in her placement classroom, she was learning to swim. The importance of thoughtful planning is an essential learning for any teacher, which might not have occurred without the opportunity for enactment in a designed setting. This occurred for Mayra while she still had the supports of her program to learn.

This continuum provides teacher educators with an alternative model of enactment. Teacher educators can thoughtfully create designed settings to support candidates in learning about the practice of teaching instead of leaving them to sink or swim. Dewey noted that we need the water to swim, designed settings are a type of swimming lessons for teachers so they are prepared when they get in the classroom for the moment to moment challenges of enactments.

Anne, a faculty member that teaches mathematics methods in the program describes the benefit of supported enactment in the context of her mathematics methods course:

One of the places that I see learning occurring is when they go to the lab school to choral count with the kids. What happens is that they start recognizing that they have to do that

interactive, in-the-moment work that requires them to listen to kids, to write on the board, to be attentive to management, and time, and different kids all at the same time.

I remember really clearly the first time we counted at the lab school, one of my students came out after finishing and he goes, "Oh my gosh, I was standing up there and I asked a student what they thought. They talked, and I didn't hear a word they said because I was so busy thinking about what I was going to do next that I didn't hear anything that they said." I said, "Okay, so what'd you do?" He said, "I asked them if they would tell me again," and I said "This is it!" What a great idea. As an approach this is going to happen to you again, so as an approach we need to have some [moments] that you can do productively to get that back on the table again.

For me, it was both the fact that he needed - for him to highlight the strategies he could use, but really what it was, was recognizing that in-the-moment work is really complicated, and that I am balancing all of these things at the same time. When I come back to methods now and I talk about these other [points], I have a frame in which to try and make sense of that.

Viewing enactment as a continuum instead of as a sink or swim model allows candidates to think about those in the moment decisions while they still have the support of their program and are continuing to learn and grow as teachers before they are on their own. This moment illustrates how enactment in design settings can facilitate the opportunity for candidates to see “the interaction of mind, to see how teacher and pupils react upon each other – how mind answers to mind” a component of teacher education that Dewey (1904) felt was of utmost importance (p. 155). Candidates learn that there are moments when children might say something they are not

prepared for but they have thought about this before and experienced so they can swim through, rather than sink.

## Chapter 6. Teacher Educator Pedagogy as the Bridge: Concluding Thoughts and Lessons

### Introduction

We have a strong body of literature around how to teach children to read (Duffy, 2002, NRP, 2000). We also know teachers have an impact on student achievement (Chubb, 2012, Darling-Hammond, 1999). Where we have less information, is in how to prepare those teachers to teach children to read. In the field in general we have what Mary Kennedy (1999) terms the *problem of enactment*, candidates are entering the field unable to put what they have learned in their preparation programs into action in the field. We need to explore connections between all that we know and helping novices understand that knowledge and enact teaching in classrooms.

Another problem the field has faced is the lack of a common language (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Lortie, 1975). The teaching profession struggles to have a technical vocabulary to describe nuanced actions; as a result, communication in the field is affected. Common tools and conceptual ideas are needed to facilitate work across the field, both in framing ideas and sharing them.

Cognizant of these problems, this dissertation specifically investigated a literacy methods course to understand how teachers were being taught to teach children to read. The reading methods course at State University provides us with an example of the complex work being done to prepare teachers to teach reading. This example illustrates how core practices may be used as an approach to prepare candidates not only to understand the knowledge of teaching but to also be able to enact practice. The incorporation of core practices is not just about adding to *what* is being taught but thoughtfully considering *how* a course is being taught. This dissertation

addresses these in teacher education. The findings make direct contributions to practice and research in the field.

In this final chapter, I address implications of this study in two areas: practice and research. First, I discuss implications for the practice of teacher education. In this discussion, I consider the pedagogy used in teacher education and the role of the core practices. Next, I review research implications, highlighting areas for further investigation. I end with a discussion of limitations.

### **Implications for Practice**

The field struggles to aggregate knowledge on teacher educator practice, partly due to the lack of a common language. The sharing of knowledge is also limited by a scarcity of tools for teacher educators to use across contexts. This study adds two tools to the field that both contribute to a common language and support the sharing of knowledge in the field. Discussed in previous chapters, the study findings, specifically a framework for decomposition in teacher education and a continuum of enactment, directly impact the practice of teaching education. This section will discuss how these findings may contribute to bridging the gap between knowing and doing, support candidate enactment, contribute to a common language and therefore the ability to aggregate knowledge across the field.

The framework for decomposition in teacher education provides a tool that may support teacher educators in making connections between conceptual and practical ideas for candidates. In examining the teacher educator's decomposition in the study, it became apparent that decomposition was much more complex than anticipated; patterns emerged within this complexity. The framework for decomposition in teacher education helps us understand the work

Julia, the teacher educator, was doing in the course to unpack varying grain sizes of both conceptual and practical ideas for candidates.

This framework provides a tool for teacher educators to use when considering the work that will be done in their course – both what they will decompose and how it connects to other practices of engaging teacher candidates. This framework serves as a tool that supports teacher educators in making intentional pedagogical decisions around decomposition that help bridge knowing and doing for candidates. The problem of enactment in education connects to understanding the relationship of knowing and doing. Novice teachers are struggling to put what they have learned in their teacher preparation programs into action the field. They know some ideas about teaching but struggle to actually do the work with children. The framework of decomposition supports teacher educators in understanding the type of work – both conceptual and practical - that must be done to support candidates in further developing their knowledge and enactment.

This framework may support teacher educators in thinking about the nuanced decisions they make in their course. The framework also provides a language for teacher educators to talk about this nuanced work. Julia, the teacher educator, was thoughtful to decompose connected content, such as reading comprehension, in all four quadrants. As noted in chapter four, the purposeful connections between decomposition in the course supported candidate learning. This dissertation illustrated the ways teacher educator pedagogy can serve as a bridge between theory and practice. Rather than teaching components of these in isolation or solely focusing on one at the expense of the other, the teacher educator, Julia, used pedagogical approaches that supported candidates in understanding both theory and practice and how these approaches work in relation to one another.

While this tool supports a common language and shared knowledge of teacher educator pedagogy, I want to caution against using it simply as a planning tool for content. It would be inappropriate to simply lay content out in the four quadrants without considering the teacher educator pedagogy that would accompany it because this is a framework for particular teacher educator pedagogy, specifically decomposition. The practice that a teacher educator decomposes ranges from the conceptual to practical idea and from the general to the specific. This is a framework to support our understanding of teacher educator pedagogy, not simply a graphic organizer for considering what is taught in a methods course. Just as in teaching we must understand and consider the relationship between the knowing and doing, the same is for the framework. It is not just about what is being taught to candidates but how it is being decomposed – this framework helps us understand that work. This framework of decomposition provides a theoretical structure that enables one to consider the different types of decomposition a teacher educator engages in when preparing candidates to teach reading.

To work toward ameliorating the problem of enactment, we must provide candidates with opportunities to enact as they are learning the practice of teaching. Candidates learn from having opportunities to try on the work of teaching; teacher educators and teacher educators must create opportunities for candidates to learn from enactment (Hiebert & Morris, 2012; Shulman, 1998). The second study finding, viewing enactment as a continuum, provides a tool for teacher educators and teacher educator programs to think about how they might create opportunities for enactment and what types of enactment might best support candidates at different stages in their development as teachers.

The continuum illustrates the benefit of creating enactment opportunities for candidates in highly designed settings with intentional supports to scaffold their learning, creating

alternatives to the historical experience of sinking or swimming. It is not just about more time with children; it's about being intentional about the time with children – creating designed settings to support candidates in their initial enactments. Teacher educator programs and teacher educators should thoughtfully consider how to provide candidates with opportunities for enactment in their programs and courses so their candidates have the tools to swim when they enter the classroom as teachers of record.

This continuum also provides a language for us to discuss the different types of enactment opportunities for candidates across the field. These two findings support the field in talking about the work of teacher educators that directly impacts candidate opportunities to understand both knowledge and enactment. The data highlight the connections between decomposition and enactment in the course. Teacher educators should thoughtfully consider the decomposition in the course, in all quadrants. In addition, teacher educators need to think about how enactment opportunities align with the work in decomposing practice, thoughtfully connecting what is decomposed and what candidates have opportunities to enact at different points on the continuum.

The framework for decomposition in teacher education and enactment continuum provide language and tools for teacher educators to use when talking about their work. These tools will allow teacher educators to consider the intentional decisions they may make in their courses. Specifically, the continuum for enactment provides teacher educators and teacher educator programs with alternatives to the current view of enactment. Considering the different points on the continuum teacher educators can not only talk about different types of enactment but discuss why they might make the decisions, thus contributing to shared knowledge in the field

Dewey first discussed the knowing and doing relationship in 1904. The field has been struggling with this problem for over 100 years. The findings in this study contribute tools that teacher educators may use to explicitly make connections between the knowing and doing, between knowledge for teaching and enactment. Julia intentionally decomposed components of the interactive read aloud in each quadrant prior to candidates' enactments at the lab school. This was an intentional pedagogical decision to support candidates in their growth.

The relationship between what was decomposed and what was enacted was critical. Candidates noted that the decomposition in the course supported their enactments. In turn, the opportunity for immediate application of what had been decomposed in the course through enactment strengthened the relationship between knowledge and enactment. Candidates felt successful teaching their interactive read alouds because Julia had supported them in understanding the components of the activity through decomposition in all four quadrants. In addition, Julia provided a highly designed setting for candidates to enact their interactive read alouds in. These learning opportunities directly supported one another and aided candidates in understanding the connections between knowledge and enactment, the bridge that was built through Julia's intentional pedagogical decisions.

These tools have a symbiotic relationship with one another in supporting candidate growth and bridging the knowing and doing divide. While in isolation these tools contribute to a common language and shared knowledge, together these tools can impact the problem of enactment. Using a suite of pedagogies that considers both the knowledge and the enactment supports candidates in understanding the relationship between the knowing and the doing.

Julia is a knowledgeable and skilled teacher educator. Julia's content and pedagogical knowledge enabled her to support candidates in making connections between the knowing and

doing. It is important for teacher educators to understand the development of novice teachers to be able to design supported settings for enactment and create opportunities for candidates at different points on the enactment continuum. Julia was well equipped to engage in this work. It is not only about how we engage in the practice of preparing teachers but how we prepare teacher educators.

The tools developed in this study not only support the learning of candidates but can be used to prepare teacher educators to engage in the work. The framework for decomposition in teacher education supports teacher educators in thinking about what they might include in their course and how the content connects to one another. The framework also supports teacher educators in balancing what candidates need to prepare thoughtfully adaptive teachers. The enactment continuum supports teacher educators in understanding candidate development and the types of supports that may be provided to candidates.

These implications for practice highlight the benefits of the core practice approach in teacher education, that we must consider both the *what* and the *how* when preparing candidates to engage in ambitious teaching. The findings in this dissertation provide two frames to think about the teacher educator pedagogy that may be used in teacher education. The frameworks for decomposition and enactment continuum prompt further studies to see how these tools contribute to the field and if they might work toward ameliorating the problems we currently face. If we are to work to ameliorate the problems in the field, we need to consider decomposition and enactment opportunities in our methods courses.

### **Implications for Research**

As noted in chapter one, additional research is needed to build the literature base on the use of core practices in elementary literacy. This study contributes to that body of knowledge.

Even with a growing body of knowledge, the field of teacher education still faces the challenge to aggregate knowledge in practice and research. Just as it is important for practitioners to understand work across contexts, the same is true for researchers. Analytic frames are about the ability to aggregate knowledge in practice and research. The findings from this study directly impact the sharing of knowledge in the field by producing two analytic frames: the framework for decomposition in teacher education and the enactment continuum.

This study suggests that future research take into account the analytical frames that were findings in this study. The framework for decomposition of practice in teacher education and the enactment continuum present frameworks that can be used by researchers to investigate teacher education pedagogy and the enactment that occurs in teacher education. These frameworks may be used both as an observation tool during data collection and an analytical tool during analysis.

As suggested by sociocultural theory and confirmed by this study, candidate learning is influenced by the relationships among knowledge, enactment, and contexts. This connection between knowledge and enactment, the relationship between knowing and doing, can be facilitated by strategic pedagogical decisions on the part of the teacher educator. These pedagogical decisions include designing the contexts in which learning occurs. Given this finding, it is important to conduct more research on teacher educator pedagogy to further examine how it connects the knowing and doing.

### **Limitations**

As with any study, there were limitations with this dissertation. The main limitations this study confronted were lack of data to answer one of the research questions and that the study is a single case study, only examining one course for a quarter, which does not provide information across contexts. This section will illustrate and discuss these limitations.

A critical critique of the core practices movement is that practices are focused on at the expense of content. This study sought to investigate if content knowledge is lost when core practices are included in a literacy methods course. This particular study included a quantitative component to measure content knowledge gained in the course. However, there was a lack of participation with the pre- and post- knowledge assessment. I was unable to make the assessment a requirement of the course, so candidate participation was voluntary. As noted in chapter three, while a few candidates did take the assessment, the numbers were very low and there was not a match between individuals who took the pre-and post-assessments. Given limited participation on the assessment, there was not enough data to analyze to answer this question. It will be important for future research address the question: Do candidates learn less content knowledge when core practices are included in a literacy methods course?

Another limitation to the study was that it only examined a single case. A single case study does not provide knowledge across contexts. We need a deep understanding of how teacher educator pedagogy and practices look across contexts. This study goes in depth with one course to understand the intentional pedagogical decisions made by a literacy teacher educator. However, it is paramount we investigate this across programs to have a more complete picture of what is occurring.

Further research is needed to determine if these findings hold for multiple cases. Engaging in a multiple case study allows for cross case analysis to determine if these findings are trends across programs with a focus on core practices. Larger cases also allow exploring the use of a suite of pedagogies. This research would provide an opportunity to expand our view on enactment as a continuum, understanding strategic pedagogical decisions made in other course to support candidate enactment in designed settings. Questions to be asked in a cross case study

might be: What do opportunities for enactment look like across different courses in a program? What decomposition looks like in different types of practice-focused programs? What pedagogical practices do teacher educators use within and across programs when preparing teacher candidates to teach reading?

Another shortcoming is the length of time data was collected on candidates. Given the study's focus on the literacy methods course, I did not follow candidates into their first years of teaching; thus I could not assess the impact of the methods course on their literacy instruction once candidates are classroom teachers of record. Questions for future inquiry might include: Do candidates continue to appropriate tools from their methods course once they are the teacher of record? Are candidates engaging in lessons, such as an interactive read aloud, that were taught in their methods course? Are candidates engaging in the core practices in their own classrooms? The questions in this section suggest extensions of this particular study and offer suggestions for future research on the use of core practices in elementary literacy teacher education.

The importance in having a knowledgeable teacher educator raises questions about how we can best prepare teacher educators to engage in this work. Julia had a strong content foundation, experience as a K-8 classroom teacher, and experience as a teacher educator. Knowledge around all of these experiences she has had supported her in making intentional and skillful pedagogical decisions in the course. Research needs to be conducted to better understand how teacher educators are prepared, specifically to engage in the work of core practices where teacher educator pedagogy is a critical component.

### **Conclusion**

Julia's teacher educator pedagogy served as the bridge between knowledge and enactment for candidates. This dissertation began with Mason wondering how he would teach

children. Mason had the knowledge but wondered how best to organize or express it in the classroom. This study contributes to our understanding of how we can help candidates see the connection between what they need to teach and how to do it. This dissertation illustrates how teacher educator pedagogy might serve as the bridge between knowing and doing, addressing the problem of enactment and contributing to the growth of a common language in the field.

The findings in this study provide insight into how we may prepare teachers to teach children to read. The data uncovered specific pedagogical decisions by the teacher educator that may be a way to work towards helping candidates understand how to put the knowledge they have learned into action in the classroom. This study begins to help us understand how we can best support candidates in bridging the gap between knowledge and enactment as they learn to teach children to read.

Pursuit of the questions related practice and research identified in this discussion offer hope for improving the teaching of reading in our schools. Importantly, the use of core practices in the literacy methods course and accompanying pedagogical approaches helped create a bridge between the knowing and doing in teacher education. These findings provide insight on high quality teacher education in literacy. However, these findings prompt further study.

There are inequities in reading abilities in our country, particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse students and children living in poverty (Au, 2004; Snow et. al., 1998). A strong literature base on effective reading instruction exists (Duffy, 2002a; NRP, 2000). We know there is a relationship between teaching practices and student achievement (Chubb, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 1999). This dissertation explored the connection between what we know and how to help novices understand it, a current problem in the field. As a result of the study tools emerged that can support building a connection between the knowing and the doing. This

dissertation directly contributes teacher educator and researcher tools to the field to support novice learning – with the ultimate goal of improving the reading ability of all students.

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## Appendix A

### Course Instructor Initial Protocol

#### *Introductions:*

1. Express appreciation for project participation
2. Project overview and purpose of interview
3. Share contact information

#### *Personal Background:*

4. How long have you been working in teacher education?
  - a. Have you worked in any other programs?
  - b. How did you become a teacher educator?
5. What do you see as the major influences on your work as a teacher educator?
6. What specific things do you want your candidate to learn about teaching reading?
7. What are your more general goals as a teacher educator in the program?

#### *Course Information:*

8. Tell me about your course
  - a. How long have you been teaching the course?
  - b. Where does it fit in the program sequence?
  - c. What are your goals for the course?
  - d. How is the course organized to achieve those goals?
  - e. What strategies do you use to achieve those goals?
  - f. How do the assignments align with the course goals?

#### *Core Practices:*

9. What do you mean when you say core practices?

- a. How would you define core practices?
  - b. What core practices are you focusing on?
  - c. How did you make that decision?
10. How did you decide to include core practices in your course?
- a. Was this a programmatic decision?
  - b. What influenced this decision?
  - c. Are there any individuals who supported you in this?
  - d. How did/do you feel about this?
11. What do you see as the relationships between the content and the core practices in your course?
- a. How do you articulate this for candidates?
12. What are some challenges in teaching this course?
13. Is there anything else you want to share?

Thank you!

## Appendix B

### Candidate Initial Interview Protocol

#### *Introductions:*

14. Express appreciation for project participation
15. Project overview and purpose of interview
16. Share contact information

#### *Personal Background:*

17. Tell me about your decisions to become a teacher.
  - a. What brought you to teaching?
  - b. What factors did you consider when deciding to become a teacher?
18. When you think of your experience as a student, what stands out for you?
19. When you think about learning to read – are there any moments that are memorable?
  - a. What made this moment memorable?
20. What strengths do you bring to teaching?
21. What do you think you will find challenging about teaching?

#### *Program Information:*

22. How did you decide on the program at XXXXX?
23. Could you describe the program and design to me to help me understand more about it?
24. What do you hope to learn in this teacher education program?

#### *Course Information:*

25. Walk me through a typical literacy class session.
  - a. What do you think are the strongest aspects?
  - b. What are you still unclear about?

26. I am learning that the course includes core practices. What are core practices? Can you help me understand what that means in regards to your literacy course?
- a. How do you understand the core practice of opening moves?
  - b. How do you understand the core practice of eliciting and responding?
  - c. How do you understand the core practice of orienting students to each other?
27. What have you learned about reading and teaching reading?
- a. What has helped you learn this?
  - b. Have you had opportunities to practice what you are learning in the literacy course in your placement?
  - c. Are there things you have learned that you are still unsure how to teach to children?
1. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you!