JTAR

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About the Journal

Founded in 2013, the Journal of Teacher Action Research (ISSN: 2332-2233) is a peer-reviewed online journal indexed with EBSCO that seeks practical research that can be implemented in Pre-Kindergarten through Post-Secondary classrooms. The primary function of this journal is to provide classroom teachers and researchers a means for sharing classroom practices.

The journal accepts articles for peer-review that describe classroom practice which positively impacts student learning. We define teacher action research as teachers (at all levels) studying their practice and/or their students' learning in a methodical way in order to inform classroom practice. Articles submitted to the journal should demonstrate an action research focus with intent to improve the author's practice.

Editorial Team

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PARALLEL CONFERENCING: CO-VIEWING AND CO-ASSESSING TEACHER CANDIDATES' VIDEOS

Stephanie Kotch-Jester

Elizabeth Soslau

Vicki Goettel

Bridget Duda

Nicholas Bell

Deirdre Lilly

University of Delaware

Abstract The purpose of this action research was to examine an alternative method of observing teacher candidate's instructional practices through the use of video and one-to-one conferencing between the university field instructor and teacher candidate. We developed an innovative strategy to field instruction that worked towards solving a two-part problem (a) managing a large workload and (b) preparing candidates for video-based reflection. The mixed-research approach included elements of self-study and practitioner research to identify the challenges and benefits of co-viewing video, the topics discussed during co-viewing, and the initiators of the reflective discussions. Several challenges and benefits of co-viewing video of practice were uncovered. Even though challenges were identified, parallel conferencing mixed with live observations was favored by teacher candidates. Discussions were focused across five themes with pupil behavior showing the most frequented topic. Initiators of the discussions equalized from the beginning of the semester to the end. Over time, the candidates began to initiate the conversations of practice. We propose that mixing parallel conferencing with live observations could function as cost effective solution to maintaining high quality field instruction.

Keywords: teacher action research, teacher candidates, video conferencing, field instruction

Introduction

In this paper, we, university-based field instructors (student teaching supervisors), examine an alternative method of conducting post-lesson observation conferences with teacher

candidates coupled with traditional field-based live observations. We have labeled our alternative method of conferences as *parallel conferencing*. *Parallel conferencing* occurs when the university-based field instructor and the teacher candidate sit together to co-view and co-evaluate a video recording of the candidate's teaching. The development of our *parallel conferencing* protocol evolved from two problems that we identified during the student teaching semester.

First, a newly implemented national teacher-licensing exam, the Education Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) required our candidates to record their practice and write deep reflections based on their teaching videos. Our candidates consistently struggled to purposely view and annotate their instructional videos. They did not identify evidence of effective practices or ineffective practices, nor did they reflect in meaningful ways towards the goal of improving their practice. Candidates' reflections were superficial and often focused on student behavior versus instructional decision-making or impact on pupil learning and developing understanding of content. Second, due to program restructuring university-field instructors' supervision loads doubled resulting in teacher student ratios of up to 1:24.

We knew that we needed to develop a new observation and conferencing approach to ensure that our candidates received consistent and timely feedback while maintaining the overall quality of our field instruction. Since the value of field instruction lies in the post-debriefing conference, as opposed to our silent and passive observation of lessons (Soslau, 2012), we decided to forgo the time spent observing our students, and reallocate all of our time to the instructional component of our work with candidates. Video recordings would now take the place of some, not all, of our field observations. To discern if the benefits of parallel conferencing outweighed the potential challenges, while alleviating the workload issues associated with doubling field instructors' loads, we asked the following questions:

- What are the benefits and challenges of co-viewing video recordings during one-on-one post-lesson conferences?
- What topics are most frequently discussed?
- Who initiates the topic and does the initiator role change over time?
- As a result of the study, what refinement to the parallel conferencing protocol is necessary?

Literature Review

Video for reflection. Research about preservice teacher preparation, and specifically the student teaching practicum, makes it clear that video can be used to help candidates reflect on their practice (Rich & Hannafin, 2009; Santagata & Guarino, 2011; Star & Strickland, 2008; Santagata et. al, 2007; Schepens et al, 2007; Star & Strickland, 2008; van Es & Sherin,

2008; van Es, 2009, Seidel, et al., 2013; Tripp & Rich, 2012). However, reflecting on video on one's own requires the candidate to employ a set of noticing and analysis skills that they may not have developed yet. Seidel, Blomberg, & Renkl (2013) provide evidence that structured guidance by a field instructor improved teacher candidates' abilities to notice. Teacher candidates' who learn to develop alternative interpretations of events and notice novel features of seemingly routine problems, are better able to examine pupil thinking retrospectively in ways that would be impossible to do in real time (van Es & Sherin, 2008; van Es, 2009; Sherin & van Es, 2009; Sherin, Linsenmeier, & van Es, 2009). Not only can video be used to help teach candidates learn how to notice and assess their practice, but the use of video has also been shown to motivate novice teachers to implement changes to their practice (Tripp & Rich, 2012) and engage in self-assessments firmly rooted in real problems of practice (Rich & Hannafin, 2009).

Personal Practical Knowledge and Professional Knowledge. Since this work was authentically motivated by the researchers who also served as the field instructors for the candidates in this study, we used two complementary conceptual theories; (a) professional knowledge landscape and (b) personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). To develop the parallel conferencing protocol and make sense of our data, we purposefully employed our personal practical knowledge of field instruction and post lesson observation conferencing. With a combined total of over 65 years of experience as field instructors, we know first-hand the shifts in practice that have been necessary to support our candidates and thus the professional knowledge landscape is both familiar and useful to us as we developed and carried out this study.

Context. We serve as field instructors at a mid-sized public university situated on the mid-Atlantic coast of the United States of America. All six-field instructors participated in the development and implementation of this study. Four of the field instructors are full time clinical faculty and the other two are full time professional staff. Faculty field instructors typically carry a smaller load of candidates ranging between twelve and seventeen, while full time professional staff can serve up to twenty-four candidates at a time. Two of the field instructors have terminal degrees and two instructors are currently enrolled in a doctoral program. Three field instructors graduated from the teacher preparation program that they now serve.

Our candidates complete a four-year undergraduate bachelors degree and earn two certifications (1) elementary education (2) special education or a middle school content. There were 98 candidates who a participated in the study. The majority of our candidates are female, cis-gendered, heterosexual, white, and middle to upper class. Candidates are placed in mostly suburban settings with a low percentage of pupils of color. We use the coteaching model for student teaching (Soslau, Gallo-Fox, & Scantlebury, 2018; Soslau, Kotch-Jester, Scantlebury, 2018). Coteaching ensures that the focus of the practicum is to support pupil learning while also attending to the professional learning needs of both teachers (candidates' and classroom mentor teachers').

Normally, field instructors observe and conduct post-debriefing conferences with each candidate every other week. Observations can last between 30 and 90 minutes while

debriefing conferences usually range from 45 to 60 minutes. Pre-lesson conferences are unusual, but do take place. Field instructors always provide candidates with a written record of the observation as well as any notes or feedback suggestions. Often field instructors will also provide extensive feedback on lesson plans and other candidate-generated curricular materials.

Parallel Conferencing Protocol and Procedures. All field instructors conducted live, real-time observations and conferences with their teacher candidates during the first few weeks of the twelve-week student teaching practicum. There were several reasons we made this decision. First, candidates were familiar with the process of live, real-time observations. Second, these in-person on-site meetings allowed field instructors to gain a better sense of the classroom environment and begin to build and maintain rapport with the classroom host teacher. Third, we did not want our decision making to inadvertently signal to our university administrators that we did not value live observations, causing them to cut classroom-visits as a funding priority.

For the second round of observations and conferences, all field instructors asked candidates to record 30 to 60 minutes of a lesson and prepare to co-view the lesson with their respective field instructor during a parallel conferencing session. These sessions took place during weeks four through six (of the twelve week practicum) at a location convenient to the dyad including places such as the school-practicum site, university offices, or other university location. The total time of the conference, inclusive of co-viewing, was one hour to an hour and fifteen minutes. In addition to being responsible for bringing the video clip, candidates also presented written documentation of their lesson plan, lesson materials, and student work.

Field instructors opened the parallel conference by reading from a brief script with pre-viewing prompts, which explained the procedures and created space for the candidate to ask any questions and provide any necessary background contextual information before viewing the lesson. Candidates were encouraged to pause the video when they noticed an aspect of their practice that went well, that they wished to improve, or for any other reason that they deemed necessary to discuss. Candidates were also informed that instructors would pause the video to ask probing questions and to learn more about the invisible web of decision-making that could not be seen by simply observing the candidate's instruction. Instructors used a parallel conference tracking form to take notes and collect field data about the number of times the video was paused and by whom, and which topics of conversation dominated the co-evaluation session.

Parallel Conference Protocol Prompts. When field instructors paused the video, they asked questions aimed at probing the candidates' invisible thinking such as,

- What were you thinking at this point?
- Can you share a bit about your rationale for this decision?
- I notice X … what do you notice?

Or used sentence starters such as,

- Explain why…
- Tell me about…

Later in the protocol, field instructors pushed for candidates to use evidence to evaluate the unfolding lesson. These prompts included questions such as,

- What do you notice about down time, non-instructional time?
- How are the students feeling at this point, how do you know, is that what you had hoped, why or why not?
- Can you find evidence of times when you encouraged pupil thinking?
- Does your body language match your intentions/voice?

Reflective prompts were also used and tied to candidates' evaluation of their lessons. For example,

- Were there steps, directions, materials, or other aspects of the lesson that could have been planned differently or more efficiently?
- How did your prior reflections on your lessons impact your teaching today?

Since prior research on field instruction practices pointed to the necessity of meta-conferencing, or conferencing about the value of the conference activity itself (Soslau, 2015a, 2015b), we also asked,

- What did you learn from this conference?
- What questions do you still have?

Towards the end of each conference, using what is known as temporally connected techniques (Conway, 2001) we pushed our candidates to plan for future reflection by asking,

- What will you reflect on tomorrow?
- What is the most important question you want to ask yourself?
- What is your hope for your next lesson (connected or not connected to this lesson)?

Finally, we encouraged candidates to understand that the reflective process we were engaging them in was one that they could employ on their own, during their in-service tenure. For example, we often closed our conferences with,

- How does our collaborative conferencing practice compare and contrast with your imagined reflective self-assessment process as a full time practitioner?"

Methodology

We employed a mixed research approach that would largely be considered action research (Anderson & Herr, 1999). Though we also used elements of self-study (Tidwell, Heston, & Fitzgerald, 2009), and practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Data were culled from our parallel conferencing notes, field notes, audio recordings of conferences,

candidate interviews, and field instructor research meeting notes. To develop the conferencing protocol, the field instruction research team met monthly to discuss the purpose and goals of parallel conferencing. They jointly developed the parallel conferencing procedure as well as the protocol, which included prompts and probes for the debriefing conference.

Once the protocol was developed, the team met throughout the semester to discuss data collection, emerging findings, and share field notes. An end-of-semester meeting was used to share field instructor perspectives. Data analysis of field notes and parallel conferencing transcripts happened iteratively since the sharing of one researcher's data and analysis influenced the data analysis of the other field instructors. For example, over time, we developed a list of codes to identify the major thematic topics that related to reasons for pausing the video during co-viewing. Data are mostly qualitative, though some frequencies were calculated to determine which topics cut across all of the field instructors' data sets.

Results

Topics Discussed. To determine the major topics discussed during parallel conferencing, field instructors coded their transcribed data. During our monthly meetings, we discussed our codes and determined which codes cut across all data sets tied to each field instructor. Table 1 includes the topics discussed during conferences with candidates.

Table 1: Topics Discussed with Explanations

Topics	Explanation
Pupil Behavior	One or more pupils is acting out and disrupting their own l the learning of those around them
Focus Pupils	A focus pupil is selected due to a predetermined learning need
Notice Some Anomaly	The teacher strays from the lesson, a number of children leave the room, or some other unplanned event transpires
Pushing for a Rationale/Justification	Attempts to uncover candidate thinking which is not readily accessible by observing candidates' behavior/practice
Identifying Points of Confusion	Noticing when children are confused by the directions, content, or some other aspect of the lesson

These topics are oft-addressed topics in the literature on novice teacher learning. Classroom management and the ability to create a learning environment where all pupils exhibit

socially desirable behaviors are incredibly difficult for new teachers. Similarly, we know that field instructors must push for candidates' rationales and justifications before attempting to provide a suggestion or giving some other type of evaluative feedback, since doing so would make all utterances predicated on the field instructors' assumptions and attributions about the candidates' intent (Soslau, 2012; 2015a).

Who hit pause more often? As aforementioned, we were also interested in learning whether candidates would take up the practice of initiating topics of conversation by self-selecting to pause the video and discuss something they noticed pertaining to their practice or internal decision making. To this end, each field instructor kept track of who "hit pause" when watching the video during all of three of their parallel conferences. Table 2 below denotes the frequencies and charts the data over time. This enabled us to track if there were any shifts in the role of initiator throughout the experience. The grayed boxes indicate a loss of data for the particular field instructor. One field instructor did not report any initiator numbers.

Table 2: Field instructor (FI) and N= Teacher Candidates (TC) related to person who "hit pause"

	Conference 1		**Conference 2**		**Conference 3**		**Totals**
	FI	TC	FI	TC	FI	TC	
FI#1 (N=24)	44	59	25	29	11	13	181
FI#2 (N=20)	67	45	58	53	20	20	263
FI#3(N=17)	54	40	11	13			118
FI#4 (N=17	53	43	41	35	9	10	191
FI#5 (N=12)	24	11	7	2			44
Totals	242	198	142	132	40	43	797

Each field instructor, regardless of the numbers of candidates they served, were the dominant participant in the beginning of the field experience. As the semester moved on, candidates began sharing the responsibility for pausing the video more equally with their field instructor during parallel conferencing. While the design of our study does not allow us to account for this shift, we posit some possibilities that can be taken up with further research. First, candidates may feel more comfortable over time, rapport may deepen between the dyad, candidates may feel a greater sense of agency as they become closer to their professional lives as inservice teachers, or field instructors may have become more adept at giving wait time and making space that allowed candidates to take more control over the co-viewing sessions. We think that this is a critically important area of study to develop, because control and a sense of agency has been shown to help candidates take

advantages of opportunities to improve their practice during field experiences (Soslau, 2015a).

Challenges – Field Instructors. During our monthly meetings we shared and compared notes about aspects of parallel conferencing that posed challenges. Often a field instructor would bring a written account of a challenge supported by a partial transcript of her/his conference with a candidate. Together, we determined thematic challenges that we faced during and upon reflection of our engagement in parallel conferencing. We have six areas of challenge that we will now explicate. All six-field instructors experienced these challenges.

Challenge 1: Feedback on the fly. First, we found it incredibly difficult to develop feedback "on the fly" or *in situ*. For years we had honed our practice as field instructors guided by procedures that had us silently observing, with ample time to collect our thoughts, before sitting with a teacher candidate to provide feedback or evaluative suggestions. Parallel conferencing did not allow for this think time and we found it difficult to respond to candidates' requests for suggestions on the spot. Overtime, we became more comfortable explaining to candidates that our goal was to guide them through a self-assessment process to evaluate their own practice using evidence from the video and from pupil work. We explained that we would send feedback and suggestions when we emailed them our notes from the conference. This challenge actually helped shift our instructional focus from giving suggestions or telling candidates how to improve, towards guiding candidates through a process and refining the reflective process alongside them.

Challenge 2: Sharing talk time. Second, we were hesitant to dominate the conversation. As evidenced in Table 2, most field instructors selected the majority of video pause points and initiated topics for discussion. Though, over time these practices were more evenly shared with candidates. During our monthly meetings we would discuss our strategies for encouraging candidates to take charge during the conferences. One field instructor required her candidate to pause the video at least twice in a given ten minute segment of footage. These artificially forced stopping points for discussion proved less than fruitful as candidates struggled to say anything meaningful during these forced stopping points. Other than providing more wait time and encouragement, we did not identify any strategies that disrupted our tendency to dominate the conference.

Challenge 3: Logistical problems analyzing group work. Third, we found it incredibly difficult to analyze a lesson that included group work. Often candidates would select a high functioning group to video record leaving the majority of the classroom out of view of the camera. This limited our ability to observe and give feedback about all learners in the classroom. Similarly, it limited candidates' abilities to reflect on the development of new understandings across all pupils. We addressed this issue by encouraging candidates to continuously move the camera from group to group or to not submit group work lessons for parallel conferencing.

Challenge 4: Coteaching with candidates. Fourth, parallel conferencing made it impossible to teach *in situ.* As previously explained, we use a coteaching model for student teaching. Coteaching makes use of all the human capital in the classroom, which often means that field instructors will assist the teachers during instruction. One field instructor reported modeling a small group for a candidate who was working with rotating groups of students. The modeling functioned as coaching *in situ* and the candidate reported the importance of seeing good practice in action as opposed to verbally discussing what could, or should, have happened. Since parallel conferencing is always a retrospective reflective activity, coaching in real time on-site and modeling practices live with real pupils is not possible.

Challenge 5: Losing contact and rapport with classroom teachers. Fifth, since parallel conferencing occurred outside of classroom time, field instructors lost the ability to maintain regular contact with the classroom teachers. These rapport-building opportunities are critical as we often draw on the same pool of classroom teachers each semester. One function of field instructors is to serve as ambassadors of the university and maintain positive relationships with our K-12 school partners. Classroom teachers may view the lack of face time as a lack of interest or worse, that we are not actually providing the necessary instruction to our candidates since we are not there to conduct live observations. Several field instructors reported clinical educators "calling them out" for not being in the classroom as much as they had been in the past. Though we explained the parallel conferencing approach to the classroom teachers, we are not confident that they perceive the benefits as outweighing the costs. Again, this is an area for future inquiry.

Challenge six: Lack of time. The final challenge noted by the research team was the amount of time allocated to viewing video footage. We found that in a one-hour conference, we only actually viewed about 15 minutes of video. Candidates became used to how long it took to debrief a single event in a given hour of instruction and began bringing video clips to our conferences having already previewed and annotated the sections that they wanted to discuss. This was a welcomed solution and one that the field instruction team was grateful that the candidates developed on their own. The previewing and annotation functioned as both a time saver, since we did not have to sit through footage that captured mundane tasks such as taking roll or passing out materials, but the annotation work also mirrored the reflective work that candidates would be accountable for when they completed their edTPA portfolios.

Challenges – Teacher Candidates. To discern the challenges that our candidates' experienced, we interviewed each candidate at the end of the student teaching practicum using an exit interview semi-structured protocol. Candidates were asked to share their perspectives on parallel conferencing and compare the practice to our traditional conferencing approach. The research team worked together to code the interview data and we identified four challenges that were thematic across the majority of our candidates. Two of these challenges could be easily addressed. First, candidates had technical difficulties with recording equipment and, secondly, they did not review or annotate their video before arriving at our parallel conference. The other two challenges were more complicated and

related back to the challenges articulated by the field instructors. Candidates reported that they were unsure as to when they should hit the pause button and they also lamented not being about to confer or consult with their field instructor during the actual lesson.

Benefits – Field Instructor. While challenges are certainly important to explore, we also wanted to learn more about the potential benefits of parallel conferencing. Field instructors gathered data through self-reflection to determine the benefits. What follows are benefits that cut across all field instructors. First, in contrast to our concern about the lack of ability to gain ample face time with classroom teachers, teachers reported that parallel conferencing was less invasive and distracting to young pupils compared to live observations. We also determined that the quality of our conversations with candidates was vastly improved. In the past, when recalling an aspect of a candidate's practice for discussion, the candidate would become defensive or simply refute that the particular event even occurred. Similarly, since candidates could see their practice, they were better able to offload the cognitive burden of remembering and could focus on the past in the "here and now."

We also determined that the grain size of events for discussion could be smaller and more meaningful. In the past some field instructors would ask candidates how they thought the lesson went and the candidate would appraise the lesson using broad strokes across the entire instructional period making comments like, "The lesson went well, the kids were engaged" or "The pacing was perfect, we finished in time for recess." The video served as an anchoring tool that tied conversations and reflections to specific teacher actions or pupils' reactions. These reflections tied to observable practices also served to improve intersubjectivity between field instructors and candidates. There was very little dispute about what had occurred and candidates and field instructors could enter conversations knowing that they were recalling events as they actually happened. Finally, the logistics of scheduling parallel conferencing were far simpler than scheduling live observations followed by face-to-face debriefing conversations. The ease of scheduling allowed us to schedule up to twelve conferences with candidates in a given week, making a single load of twenty-four candidates a manageable feat.

Benefits – Teacher Candidates. Candidates also reported benefits of parallel conferencing, which they cited as improving their capacity to notice, reflect and posit changes to their teaching practice. Interview data across participants showed a common theme of "richer noticing" which candidates attributed to the use of video. Candidates reported managing a heavy cognitive load during teaching; simultaneously juggling the need to communicate content, implement lesson plans, manage behavior, and work to collaborate with the classroom teacher. They explained that due to paying attention to multiple aspect of teaching during the act of instruction, they often missed pupil cues and did not recognize real time necessary adaptations or opportunities to improve pupil understanding. When viewing video of their practice, they could singularly focus on their teaching and pupils' reactions, which resulted in a deeper, richer ability to notice classroom interactions and provided ample opportunities for reflection on practice.

Candidates also reported that they preferred parallel conferencing because they had time to "decompress" and "process" the lesson before co-viewing and co-evaluating the lesson with their field instructor. Participants explained that it was difficult to sit with their field instructor immediately after a live observation and engage in deep meaningful reflection. Many candidates reported that their "head was spinning" and they just needed some down time and distance from the lesson to be able to analyze their teaching with a clear head.

When asked to compare the learning environment between a traditional live observation and parallel conferencing, the majority of candidates stated that parallel conferencing was less risky and they felt less pressure. For some candidates, they enjoyed being able to self-select a segment of their lesson to show their field instructor, as opposed to the field instructor viewing an entire lesson of her choice. Of course this could lead to "cherry picking" where candidates only show their best teaching episodes, missing out on opportunities to collaborate with their field instructor around a particular problem of practice. We probed candidates on this point and while some candidates admitted to only showing their best teaching, the majority of candidates purposefully selected segments of lessons that they wanted to improve, making good use of the conferencing time with their field instructor.

Finally, candidates shared that parallel conferencing boosted their sense of confidence and self-efficacy. Many candidates were able to notice positive aspects of their teaching practice while viewing the video and field instructors encouraged this by asking candidates to pause the video when they noticed something that went well and could be used in future instructional plans. The field has known for decades that student teaching can be a painful and anxiety-inducing time and opportunities to build efficacy are critical (see for example, Fuller, 1969; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999; Davenport & Smetna, 2004), since a teacher's efficacy is directly related to their ability to positively impact pupil learning and emotional well-being. At the conclusion of each interview, we asked candidates if they preferred live, parallel, or a mixture of both conferencing approaches. A majority of candidates preferred parallel conferencing (55%) with the second choice being a mixed approach (33%) and less than 12% of respondents preferring live observations only (total respondents N=98).

Discussion

Revising the Parallel Conferencing Protocol. In the tradition of action research and the spirit of self-study, we have entered and remain committed to the cycle of inquiry involving the assessment of our practice, planning improvements, enacting change, and evaluating the merit of our innovations (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Mills, 2003). This study represents one full cycle of the action research process. We used the assessment phase to identify a problem, we collaborated to develop the parallel conferencing protocol, and we systematically implemented the protocol and collected data to determine if parallel conferencing was functioning to support the dual purposes of enhancing opportunities for reflection and

helping us to manage our workload. While our findings point to both benefits and challenges of parallel conferencing, we believe that the benefits are worth the pedagogical risks. However, we also acknowledge that we must use what we learned to refine and improve our field instruction practices.

As a result of our collaborative action research we have identified five necessary revisions. First, we plan to develop a second protocol to be used with candidates when exploring pupil work. Often times the content of the parallel conference was focused singularly on the video evidence of practice. While it is helpful for candidates to reflect on their enacted instruction, it is equally critical that candidates judge the merit of their lesson based on student data. Exploring pupil work enables candidates to determine which students understood the concepts and which pupils are struggling. These data are important to explore and candidates need guidance to sort through pupil work, evaluate the work against their planned learning objectives, and develop next steps including plans for enrichment and remediation. We believe that the heart of good teaching is rooted in pupil outcomes, thus we plan to use the pupil work protocol before co-viewing the video. The analysis of pupil work should be used to guide the co-viewing process by setting an intention for noticing. For example, if the pupil work showed that all students struggled to demonstrate understanding of a particular concept, then conference participants would closely analyze the segment of teaching related to that concept and work together to identify missed opportunities to improve pupil learning. Not coincidentally, this process maps exactly to a performance task on the edTPA.

Moving forward, we will now require candidates to preview and annotate their video clips before we meet to conduct the parallel conference. As aforementioned, participants began to do this of their own volition, but all candidates need to engage in this activity since it makes the co-viewing process more efficient and it provides ample practice for candidates to reflect on and annotate their own work. This second refinement necessitates the development of a scaffolding tool. We will develop guidelines to help candidates annotate their video, providing a template and suggestions for how and what to annotate.

Next, we noted a thematic challenge for our candidates related to their willingness to “hit pause” when co-viewing their lesson. Many candidates reported not knowing when to pause the video. For this reason, we will develop a list of rationales for why a candidate may choose to pause their video segment to discuss something they noticed with their field instructor. Sentence starters such as, “I noticed” and “When I … I was thinking …” or, “Here’s a point where I struggled with…” will be provided to candidates to help guide their process and encourage their active engagement in the conference. We are also considering setting a quota for the number of times candidates must pause the video during co-viewing, though we have yet to agree on an optimal number. This is difficult because some teaching events require lengthy debriefing conversations. If a candidate experiences a particularly complex event during teaching, the debriefing session could take the entire hour.

Finally, we will work together to develop a plan that allows for a mixed approach to our field instruction process. Though a majority of our candidates preferred parallel conferencing, we acknowledge that live observations carry benefits and advantages that cannot be achieved during the retrospective activity of parallel conferencing. These advantages include becoming familiar with the classroom climate, touching base with the classroom teacher, and providing *in situ* coaching during lesson delivery.

Implications

We make several important contributions with this study. First, we are one of very few field instruction teams that have systematically carried out an action research study for the purposes of improving our practice for a large population of teacher candidates in the USA. We would like to acknowledge the important work of other practitioner-researcher teams abroad in the United Kingdom and Australia. Second, we were able to develop an innovative approach to field instruction that worked towards solving our two part problem (a) managing a large workload and (b) preparing candidates for video-based reflection. Importantly, we were able to identify areas of improvement for our instructional practices, which in action research sufficiently addresses the significance of our work (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Mills, 2003).

We also realize that many teacher preparation programs are struggling to provide high quality field experiences for candidates. Declining enrollment numbers and budgetary concerns cut across many United States colleges and universities that house initial certification programs. Mixing parallel conferencing with live observations could function as cost effective solution to maintaining high quality field instruction. Similarly, teacher preparation programs are working hard to prepare candidates for state and national assessments that require candidates to deeply reflect on video recordings of their teaching practice (for example see, edTPA and PPAT requirements). Teacher educators who are working to prepare candidates for these high-stakes assessments can use our protocols to better support candidates.

Conclusion

Finally, though the field of self study in teacher education exist, see for example the journal, *Studying Teacher Education: A journal of self-study of teacher education practices*, there are limited empirical studies that actually explore the work of field instructors, particularly from field instructors' perspectives (Soslau, 2015a). Hopefully, our action research study will inspire other teams of field instructors to engage in similar inquiries to share their practices with the teacher education field. Student teaching and clinical based practice is an omnipresent component across teacher preparation programs including traditional and alternative route certification programs. Teacher educators need to better understand how to best serve candidates while they are student teaching. If candidates do not learn how to systematically reflect on, and analyze, their teaching decisions during their preservice experiences, then it is unlikely that they will engage in this reflective practice during their inservice tenure. Parallel conferencing is one viable approach to supporting the

development of reflective teachers who use pupil work and their own instructional decision making as the curriculum for which they develop their professional practice.

About the Authors

Stephanie Kotch-Jester is an assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of Delaware where she serves as a field instructor and teaches undergraduate methods courses. Research interests include coteaching as a method of teacher preparation and field instruction practices that impact teacher candidates' learning. Email: sakjstr@udel.edu

Elizabeth Soslau is an associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Delaware where she serves as a field instructor and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on equity in schooling and action research methodology for practitioners. Her research explores learning opportunities in the student teaching practicum, candidates' development of adaptive teaching expertise, and social justice in teacher education. Email: esoslau@udel.edu

Vicki Goettel is part of the faculty as a senior instructor in the School of Education at the University of Delaware. Teaching includes field instruction during student teaching semesters and course instruction focusing on elementary social studies curriculum. She also serves as the coordinator for the Middle School Social Studies program. Email: vgoettel@udel.Edu

Bridget Duda is a Doctoral Candidate, Clinical Coordinator, and has a Secondary Appointment in the School of Education at the University of Delaware. Her research explores service delivery models within the least restrictive environment (LRE) and field instruction practices that impact teacher candidates'. Bridget also serves as 4+1 Masters in Exceptional Children and Youth program coordinator, field instructor and teaches undergraduate and graduate practicum courses in special education. Email: bduda@udel.edu

Nicholas Bell is a field instructor, instructor, and Ph.D. student in the School of Education at the University of Delaware. As a field instructor and instructor, he works with pre-service teachers to develop their skills, knowledge, and beliefs to educate all students. For the past few years, Nicholas has been studying advanced quantitative modeling to measure issues of equity and social justice in education and ways to disrupt systemic inequities. Email: nicksb@udel.edu

Deirdre Lilly is a senior instructor in the School of Education at the University of Delaware. Her teaching includes field instruction of teacher candidates in the Elementary Teacher Education program and course instruction focusing on classroom management and topics related to the training and professional development of pre-service teachers. Email: dlilly@udel.edu

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