CO-TEACHING MODEL OF STUDENT TEACHING:

PERCEPTIONS OF BEGINNING TEACHERS FOR CAREER READINESS

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by

RYAN D. HUFF

Dr. Sandy Hutchinson, Dissertation Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

CO-TEACHING MODEL OF STUDENT TEACHING:

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presented by Ryan D. Huff,

a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education and hereby certify that, in their

opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dr. Sandy Hutchinson, Dissertation Supervisor

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Dr. Barbara Martin

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Dr. Doug Thomas

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Dr. Steve Ritter

DEDICATION

I would like to begin by thanking my loving wife, Teresa Huff, for standing by me through this journey. You have been my source of strength and encouragement. Your strength, dedication and courage have no match. To my children, Lauren and Layton, you both mean so much to me and I appreciate your understanding in the many days and nights that daddy was not home due to attending classes and the countless late night hours spent at work. My love for you both is beyond measure.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of instruction as implemented by the University of Central Missouri (UCM) teacher education program in relation to teacher readiness, retention, satisfaction, and preparedness to complete the required tasks in the teacher certification process. In addition, the study examined the new teacher evaluation form as outlined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE) and how equipped new teachers are in meeting the new teacher evaluation expectations. Bruffee's (1999) work in adult learning theory served as the conceptual framework for this study.

Four themes emerged from the findings of this study. These four themes are: 1) modeling, 2) relevant experiences or practice, 3) district resources/culture, and 4) scenarios. The findings and following discussion led to recommendations for university educational leaders to provide further opportunities for modeling of expected teacher behaviors, providing useful and relevant experience/practice for specific areas of suggested improvement, encouraging greater diversified experiences in the teacher preparation program to expose student teachers to the many different cultural and socio-economic situations that are found in public schools, and providing real-world examples through role playing and scenarios.

The Co-Teaching Model of student teaching has many positive aspects. These include providing positive modeling for appropriate teaching behaviors/processes, learning the skill of collaboration with peers, discovering and experiencing new and useful technological tools, and the opportunity to face difficult real-life situations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1920s, the process of preparing student teachers for the classroom has changed little (Bachrach et al., 2008, 2010; Hartnett, Wee, McCoy, Theiss, & Nickens, 2013; Tschida, Smith, & Fogarty, 2015). The traditional methods of student teaching involved a method of the student teacher observing the cooperating teacher for a short period of time and then handing over the reins of the classroom with very little help from the cooperating teacher. The student teachers were left to their own devices under a "sink or swim" mentality (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010).

In an age of increasing accountability standards and high stakes testing, the ability of teacher preparation programs to place student teachers under the traditional method of student teaching has become increasingly more difficult. As veteran teachers and their supervisors grow more concerned about placing a novice student teacher in a classroom to be responsible for the educational outcomes, teachers and supervisors have increasingly denied teacher preparation programs the ability to place student teachers in their classrooms (Ellis & Bogle, 2008; Merk, Betz, & O'Mara, 2015; Morton & Birky, 2015).

To combat the lack of interest in placing student teachers in classrooms, teacher education programs are reevaluating the process by which student teachers are trained. As the practicum experience is identified as the single most important aspect to the success of a new teacher, allowing student teachers access to veteran co-teachers is imperative (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielson, 2013). A new model of student teaching that addresses the concerns of veteran cooperating teachers and school district leaders, and yet

provides the opportunity for student teachers to have access to the all-important classroom experience, is called the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

This study examined one particular teacher education program at a Midwestern regional university that is currently implementing the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. The study focused on the teachers who have completed the program and their preparedness to take on the responsibilities of the classroom, as well as the teachers' success in completing required training and evaluation processes as outlined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE).

The goal of this study was to look for themes of commonality of the teachers who have participated in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching as part of their teacher preparation program in order to understand the level of success that the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching has had in meeting the requirements and objectives of mandated outcomes. This study gives practitioners the ability to make educated decisions on the validity of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching program and give those in decision-making positions data to make necessary changes to strengthen the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

<center>Statement of the Problem</center>

As a result of increasing accountability standards, teacher training programs in colleges and universities across the nation are rethinking the way teacher candidates are trained to enter the teaching profession. The number of veteran teachers who are willing to take on a teacher candidate for a semester is dwindling as high stakes testing and higher accountability standards make it difficult for veteran teachers to hand over the reins of the classroom to a novice (Bacharach, N. & Team, C.T., 2010; Tschida, Smith &

Fogarty, 2015). Standards set forth by the Missouri Legislature and the Missouri

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE) require teacher training

programs to reform to meet very specific criteria. Teacher candidates are now required to

complete and document four major tasks prior to becoming a certified teacher in Missouri

(MoDESE, 2013). The University of Central Missouri has embraced the Co-Teaching

Model of instruction to meet the requirements set forth in the new standards (Hartnett, et

al, 2013). There is a specific gap in the current knowledge as it relates to utilizing the Co-

Teaching Model of instruction to train teacher candidates to meet the required tasks and

to promote teacher readiness, retention, satisfaction of new teachers, as well as

successfully completing the new teacher evaluation form as outlined by MoDESE.

Purpose Statement

This study investigated the perceptions of beginning teachers of the Co-Teaching

Model of instruction. A qualitative case study was utilized to analyze new teacher

perceptions of the implementation of the Co-Teaching Model at the University of Central

Missouri's teacher education program. The study population was limited to those

individuals who have graduated from the teacher education program at the University of

Central Missouri and included only those who have been under contracted service in the

teaching profession three or fewer years.

Significance of the Study

As accountability standards are raised to ever higher levels, teacher education

programs in the United States must adapt their programs to prepare the next generation of

teachers to be able to meet the required standards. Traditionally, teacher education

programs placed a teacher candidate in a classroom with a veteran teacher and, after a

few weeks of observation, the teacher candidate took over all responsibilities of the classroom in what amounts to a "sink or swim" model (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). This has been the practice across the United States for nearly 100 years (Bachrach et al., 2008, 2010; Hartnett, Wee, McCoy, Theiss, & Nickens, 2013; Tschida, Smith, Fogarty, 2015).

This study has the potential to impact teacher education programs, especially those located in the state of Missouri, as the outcomes of this study can be utilized to help college of education officials make decisions based on the outcomes of the implementation of the Co-Teaching Model of instruction. This study will help fill in the knowledge gap that exists in the literature regarding teacher education programs that utilize the Co-Teaching Model of instruction for teacher training purposes.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed this study:

1. How did the Co-Teaching Model experience prepare beginning teachers to meet the expectations of the teacher evaluation process?

2. How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence the ability of beginning teachers to assume responsibility of a classroom teacher?

3. How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence beginning teachers' views of the teaching profession?

4. How did beginning teachers perceive their preparation for the completion of MoPTA tasks while participating in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching?

Conceptual Framework

Bruffee (1999) delineated collaborative learning as a means to educate adult learners in a college or university setting. Bruffee (1999) explained how college students often appear to professors as being inept, incompetent, and basically unprepared to enter the collegiate atmosphere. Students would come to class, appearing to have little basic understanding or concept of the subject matter being presented. Bruffee (1999) theorized that the students had a basic knowledge and understanding, but were unable to communicate it because they did not know the "language" that the professor was using. Likewise, the professor did not recognize the appearance of a lack of knowledge or understanding to what it truly was: a disconnect between two different cultures (Bruffee, 1999). The students were very adept at navigating the environments from which they came, but were unable to translate that ability into the culture in which the professor was working.

To bridge this disconnect, the professor needed to find some commonality between the culture of the students and that of the university setting. When a commonality is found, students can then begin to relate to the culture in which the professor wants them to navigate. Over time, the professors are able to reacculturate the students into the culture of the university setting or discipline that the students have chosen to pursue (Bruffee, 1999). Bruffee (1999) noted, "[Students] talked, wrote, and behaved in a manner that was perfectly correct and acceptable within the community they were currently members of. The way they talked, wrote, and behaved was 'incorrect' and unacceptable, we found ourselves saying, only in a community that they were not – or were not yet – members of" (p. 5). As teachers, it became their job "…to find out how, in

some way and in some measure, to reacculturate the students who had placed themselves in our charge" (Bruffee, 1999, p. 5).

Research conducted by Abercrombie (1960) involving medical students at University Hospital, University of London in the 1950s concluded that students who worked collaboratively to diagnose patients learned diagnostic techniques and practices much faster than those who worked independently (Bruffe, 1999). "The result, that students who learned diagnosis collaboratively acquired better medical judgement faster than individual students who worked alone, showed that learning diagnostic judgement is not an individual process but a social, interdependent one" (Bruffee, 1999, p. 13).

The Co-Teaching Model of instruction for student teachers mirrors the research conducted by Bruffee (1999) and Abercrombie (1959). Student teachers have yet to be reacculuturated into the teaching community. As in Abercrombie's study of medical students, theoretically, by working with a veteran co-teacher, student teachers learn much more quickly the language, processes, curriculum, disciplinary techniques, and organizational structure of the school setting. As in Bruffee's work, it becomes the job of the co-teacher to reacculturate the student teacher from the community of a college student to that of a colleague working in the K-12 community. Working collaboratively with a veteran co-teacher gives an opportunity for both the student teacher and veteran co-teacher to learn from each other, as is often the case in collaborative partnerships.

Research Design and Methods

This study incorporated a qualitative case study research design. Specifically, this study was classified as a single case study. The research conducted was based on the study of teachers who have completed the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching

through the teacher training program at a Midwest regional university. Creswell (2007) defines a case study as "research [that] involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (p. 73). Merriam (1998) stated, "Case studies are differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, program, event group, intervention, or community" (p. 19).

The first phase of this study was to identify those teachers who have completed the Co-Teaching Model teacher preparation program at the University of Central Missouri. The Assistant Dean of the Teacher Education Program was contacted to acquire contact information on the teachers who have completed their student teaching experience utilizing the Co-Teaching Model. The study was limited to those individuals who have completed three or fewer school years of contracted teaching. To limit the study to a manageable number of participants, the researcher limited the sample to eight elementary teachers, eight middle school teachers, and eight high school teachers. Secondly, the administrators of the school buildings where some participants worked were contacted to receive permission to visit with particular teachers on school campus. Other participants were interviewed on the campus of University of Central Missouri or at the UCM Summit Center in Lee's Summit, Missouri. The teachers were contacted to receive forms requesting consent to participate in the study, which they signed prior to the interview. The study incorporated interviews that were audio recorded and later transcribed, as well as handwritten field notes taken by the researcher.

All questions and prompts were directed toward collecting qualitative data. The data was analyzed to determine emerging themes as they relate to the implementation of

the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. The researcher deemed the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching successful as the themes that emerged showed that teachers who completed student teaching under the Co-Teaching Model of instruction were successful in completing the MoPTA without undue difficulty, received favorable evaluation ratings on their summative teacher evaluations, and the teachers indicated that they had a true understanding of the major components of the teaching profession upon entering the classroom as a teacher.

<div align="center">Definitions</div>

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Cooperating Teacher: A teacher currently employed in a public school district who acts as a mentor to the student teacher and shares his/her classroom teaching responsibilities with the student teacher while teaching the craft of teaching and preparing the student teacher to take on a classroom of his/her own.

Co-Teaching Model of student teaching: Method in which student teachers and veteran cooperating teachers work together for the training purposes of the student teacher. This model is focused on collaboration, communication, modeling, and positive peer rapport. The student teacher and veteran cooperating teacher share the workload as peers rather than trainer/trainee.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE): MoDESE is a state level institution that gives oversight to the public education school districts in the state of Missouri. The organization is overseen by a State Board of Education and the appointed Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner of Education takes direct orders from the State Board of Education and implements their

mandates as well as those that come directly from law as passed by the Missouri and signed by the Missouri governor.

Missouri Pre-Teacher Assessment (MoPTA): The MoPTA is a series of tasks and requirements that must be completed satisfactorily by each teacher candidate prior to being licensed as a certified teacher in the state of Missouri.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): NCLB is a law passed in 2001 that was put in place by the Federal Government to provide oversight of public school systems across the United States.

Student Teacher: An individual who seeks to enter the teaching profession and is in their final semester of college completing their capstone project which involves hands-on, in-depth immersion in a classroom setting for one 16-week semester.

University Supervising Teacher: An individual who provides support, guidance, and feedback to the student teacher. This individual also acts as a liaison between the cooperating teacher and the College of Education.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. First of all, this study only included one regional university located in a small Midwestern town. The study did not include every teacher who completed the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching at the University of Central Missouri. As only one university was involved in this study, the conclusions of this study cannot be generalized to all university or college teacher preparation programs that implement the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Additionally, there may have been value in including the veteran cooperating teachers who co-taught with the participants of this study. Their insight may have given further

value in the findings; however, they were not included in this study. Supervising teachers from the university were not included in this study. The teachers' immediate building supervisor's viewpoint was not included in this study, either. Both the university supervising teacher and building level supervisor could have additional meaningful viewpoints as to the success of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

Rationale for the Study

Increasing accountability standards and high stakes testing has resulted in fewer cooperating teachers willing to turn their classroom over to a novice student teacher. Therefore, it has become more difficult for university teacher preparation programs to place student teachers in their capstone practicum experience. A solution to this problem is the implementation of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. The review of the literature has found very few teacher preparation programs utilizing the Co-Teaching Model. As such, there are even fewer studies examining the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of instruction for student teaching purposes.

As implementing the Co-Teaching Model of instruction is a relatively new phenomenon at the post-secondary level, research will be valuable in further understanding the implications, impact, and effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of instruction in the teacher preparation programs. This study will add to the knowledge of the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model as it is implemented at a Midwestern regional university.

Outcomes of this study can be utilized by the university program under study to strengthen or change components of the Co-Teaching Model as it is currently being implemented, allowing for a more effective program. This study can also be utilized by

other regional universities to study the impact of moving from a traditional model of student teaching to that of the Co-Teaching Model of instruction for their teacher preparation programs.

Public K-12 school leaders will be able to decide, based upon outcomes of this study, if it is in their best interests to hire a new teacher that has completed the capstone experience utilizing the Co-Teaching Model of instruction. In rural school districts there are often few teachers who have a significant amount of experience, as newer teachers often move to larger urban areas to seek better pay as they gain more experience. Therefore, the number of veteran teachers available to act as a cooperating teacher is often very limited. Often, there is only one teacher that teaches all sections of a particular subject area. This phenomenon opens the school district to negative consequences of academic performance if a novice student teacher takes over the entire classroom and program. This study has the potential to give more credence to the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching by which rural K-12 school leaders can feel confident in allowing their veteran teachers to participate in teacher preparation programs as cooperating teachers.

Summary

Increasing accountability standards created by NCLB and the Missouri State Legislature have resulted in a need to reevaluate the process by which student teachers are trained. As teachers are the most important aspect of student achievement in a school, it is imperative to ensure that tomorrow's teachers are receiving the necessary training to be successful in the 21st Century. This study examined the Co-Teaching Model of instruction in preparing new teachers to take over their own classroom and preparing the teachers to meet the performance expectations for new teachers as outlined by DESE.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is often said that a great teacher is born, not made. This statement conjures the longstanding debate of nature versus nurture. Are great teachers really genetically superior to the less successful teacher? Or is it that the great teachers have had excellent examples throughout their formative years that have now culminated to a point that they are considered great teachers? For generations, colleges of education across the United States have been treating student teachers as if great teachers are born and not made. Colleges and universities have relied on a mentor/mentee model in preparing new teachers for the challenges of the classroom. This system was often perpetuated by the "sink or swim" mentality (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). The mentor would hand over the reins of the classroom to the student teacher and often the mentor would walk out of the classroom and head to the teacher's lounge, hoping the student teacher would survive and that the students would learn something (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielson, 2013). On occasion, the mentor would sit down and visit with the mentee regarding challenges and frustrations, but rarely sharing the art of teaching. Lucky few were those student teachers who had a mentor that was interested in their professional growth. The mentor who would sit down and work closely and build a positive relationship that allowed for sharing of the craft of teaching was rare indeed (Clarke et al., 2013).

In an era of high stakes testing and increased accountability for school districts, a new model of student teaching has begun to make waves in the colleges and universities across the United States. The new teaching model is called Co-Teaching. The idea is based on the premise that great teachers learn from other great teachers. Therefore,

student teachers work side by side with experienced teachers to learn the craft of teaching and not just the mechanics of teaching. A new idea has surfaced and is gaining strength: great teachers are made, not born.

<div align="center">History of Student Teaching</div>

The ability to pass down knowledge from one generation to the next is imperative to the advancement of the human race. Likewise, the ability to transfer best practices of teaching from one generation of teachers to the next is also imperative to the advancement of the teaching profession and the learning opportunities of the students. Professional teacher training has evolved over several centuries. "Some historians claim that the Jesuits originated professional teacher training including the student teaching concept" (Johnson, 1968, p. 5). Johnson (1968) found that the Jesuits' main purpose of providing education at the secondary level in the mid-1500's was to accomplish the mission of "counteracting the Protestant Reformation by promoting Catholicism" (p. 5).

Jean Baptiste de la Salle is considered to be the "Father of Student Teaching" (Johnson, 1968, p. 9). De la Salle established the first normal school in 1685 (Johnson, 1968, p.10). His first school opened in Rheims, France, and later a second school was opened by de la Salle in Paris. The Paris normal school was opened as an "elementary laboratory school for the sole purpose of providing practice teaching" (Johnson, 1968, p. 10). "The first state supported training school on record was the Gymnasial Seminary established in Berlin, Germany, in 1788. Prior to this time, teacher training institutions had been operated by individuals or the church" (Johnson, 1968, p. 17).

The Rev. Samuel Hall founded the first private normal school on the American continent in 1823 (Stiles, Barr, Douglass, & Mills, 1960, p. 231). Hall's normal school

"organized and maintained classes of elementary-school pupils to enable their students to observe the work of experienced teachers and do a limited amount of practice teaching in these classes" (Stiles, Barr, Douglass, & Mills, 1960, p. 231). The Massachusetts State Normal School was the first state sponsored normal school founded on the American continent. The building opened to students on July 3, 1839 at Lexington Village (Norton, 1969, p. xiii). The establishment of normal schools in Massachusetts was built upon during the years of 1837-1848. The Secretary to the Board of Education, Horace Mann, was instrumental in establishing these institutions (Norton, 1969, p. xiv). The normal school was a three-year experiment "to meet the desperate need of competent teachers for the district schools of the state" (Norton, 1969, p. xiv).

Harvard College, the first higher education institution founded in colonial United States, was founded in 1636 for the sole "purpose of preparing ministers" (Johnson, 1968, p. 33). There were many other early American colleges, including William and Mary (1693); Yale (1701); Princeton (1746); King's College (1754); Brown (1764); Dartmouth (1769); and Queen's College (1770) (Johnson, 1968, p. 33).

Institutions of higher learning realized the need for experiences to properly train student teachers. These experiences needed to allow the student teacher to interact with his environment either directly or vicariously (Stiles, Barr, Douglass, & Mills, 1960).

Stiles, et al. (1960) stated the importance of these experiences in the overall preparation of the student teacher: "In their endeavors to expand and improve laboratory experiences, leaders in the movement have emphasized the importance of matters such as learner purpose, motivation, past experiences, self-activity, generalization and application or use" (p. 231).

In 1859 the First Annual Convention of the American Normal School Association was held. The delegation adopted the following resolution to emphasize a combination of theory and practice:

> Resolved: that this education of teachers should not only be theoretical, but also practical: and that, to this end, there should either be a school of observation and practice in immediate connection with the Normal School, and under the same Board of Control, or that there should be in other ways equivalent opportunities for observation and practice (American Normal School Association, 1860, p. 107).

Early student teachers were dictated a prescribed lesson plan. Students were to observe master teachers and incorporate their methods and procedures into their own classrooms (Stiles, et al. p. 232). In the mid-20th century, a movement away from prescribed teaching methodologies began and moved towards a method that promoted placing "primary responsibility upon him [students] for making decisions concerning the selection, organization, and presentation of instructional materials in terms of the principles of teaching which are relevant in a given classroom situation" (Stiles, p. 233). To create an environment where colleges could give student teachers the necessary practice in decision making, organization, and presentation of materials, colleges began to create college controlled campus schools for elementary and secondary students on site (Stiles, p. 233). Stiles, et al. (1960) outlined five specific purposes for the college controlled campus school as a professional laboratory:

1. Serve as a professional laboratory facility for observation and participation by prospective teachers.

2.   Conduct research and experimentation in child growth and development and in the use of instructional materials and teacher procedures.

3.   Test and demonstrate forward-looking school practices.

4.   Enrich the program of graduate studies in education.

5.   Exercise leadership in in-service education programs for teachers (p. 244).

As the population of the United States grew following World War II, the need for the number of qualified teachers greatly increased. To help meet this demand, the colleges began to move away from the professional laboratory schools on campus and towards cooperative agreements with local public school systems. According to Stiles et al. (1960), these cooperative agreements had three objectives for student teachers:

1. Total immersion of students in teaching activities to gain a deeper understanding of the role of the school and how the principles of educational psychology, philosophy, and sociology serve as a basis for educational practice.

2. The development of specific teaching skills.

3. The development of desirable personal and professional traits (p. 260-261).

Even with teacher education programs moving away from laboratory schools, the way that teacher candidates were trained has remained mostly unchanged since the 1920s (Bachrach et al., 2008, 2010; Hartnett, Wee, McCoy, Theiss, & Nickens, 2013; Tschida, Smith, Fogarty, 2015). Traditionally, teacher candidates entered into their student teaching experience by first becoming casual observers of the classroom. After a few weeks of observing the cooperating teacher, the teacher candidate would begin to take over specific classes or lessons. Gradually over time, the teacher candidate would take

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over the entire classroom, being responsible for lesson preparation, classroom discipline, student learning and outcomes. The cooperating teacher would mostly leave the teacher candidate to his or her own devices in the classroom (Bacharach et al., 2010; Hartnett et al., 2013).

University of Central Missouri – A Brief History

Following the Civil War of the United States in 1865, there was a need to build new public schools and provide teacher training across the state of Missouri. During the legislative session of the 25th General Assembly, Wells H. Blodgett of Warrensburg introduced a bill to provide normal schools in the state. The bill was passed by the Senate and amendments were attached during the adjourned session. On March 18, 1870, the Normal School Act was passed (Pearce, 1995). Two normal districts were created. The first was to encompass all of the counties north of the Missouri River, while the second was to encompass all of the counties south of the Missouri River, excluding St. Louis County.

In 1871, the Board of Regents awarded Johnson County the District Two Normal School to be located in Warrensburg; the first normal school had been awarded to Kirksville in Adair County (Pearce, 1995). On May 10, 1871, "Normal No. 2" opened in the Foster Building of the Warrensburg Public Schools. The normal school utilized Warrensburg Public Schools as the model department for teacher training purposes (Pearce, 1995). In 1907, a new training school building was erected at a cost of $50,000 which was appropriated by the Missouri General Assembly. The training school "was said to have been the most completely equipped teacher training school in the West, if not in the United States" (Pearce, 1995, p. 8).

In 1919, State Normal School No. 2 became Central Missouri State College (https://www.ucmo.edu/about/cmsu/guidelines.cfm). Central Missouri State College became Central Missouri State University in 1972. During the 2005 legislative session, Missouri Senate Bill 98 was passed to allow the CMSU Board of Governors to change the name of Central Missouri State University to the University of Central Missouri (https://www.ucmo.edu/about/cmsu/guidelines.cfm).

Co-Teaching Model of Instruction

Federal legislation and other policy mandates have made it more difficult for teacher preparation programs to place student teachers. Cooperating teachers are reluctant to hand over the reins of their classrooms in an era of high stakes testing and higher accountability standards (Ellis & Bogle, 2008; Merk, Betz, O'Mara, 2015; Morton & Birky, 2015). This has resulted in teacher preparation programs to seek out new methods in which to provide instruction for their teacher candidates. One such model that has gained interest and acceptance is co-teaching (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlin, Shamberger, 2010).

Co-Teaching for Special Education

Co-teaching historically has been a model in which public PK-12 schools implemented special education instruction. In fact, co-teaching has its roots based in meeting the needs of the special education population of students (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). "For decades, teams have made decisions about the most appropriate educational options for students with disabilities, and close working relationships with parents have been nurtured and strengthened. In the classroom, paraprofessionals have assisted special educators in supporting students with disabilities, and other professionals,

including speech-language therapists, school psychologists, counselors, and occupational and physical therapists…" (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlin, Shamberger, 2010, p.10).

Since 1975, Public Law 94-142 mandated that students with special needs be educated in the least restrictive environment (Kamens, Susko, & Elliott, 2013). As such, schools have been required to place students with disabilities in general education classrooms with their peers when possible. Subsequent legislation accelerated the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms. Approximately 75% of students with disabilities are placed in a general education classroom (Kamens, Susko, & Elliott, 2013). "By the 1980s, co-teaching was discussed most often as a means for special education teachers to meet students' needs in general education settings" (Cook & Friend, 1995, p. 1).

Role of Legislation

Two major pieces of federal legislation have intensified the interest in the Co-Teaching Model of instruction. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) have been key factors in educators embracing the Co-Teaching Model (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2010; Bouck, 2007; Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlin, & Shamberger, 2010; Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012).

Co-teaching strategies offer educators the opportunity to meet the accountability standards set forth without compromising quality individualized instruction. Students in special education have systematically been placed in the general education classroom. As a result, this process of inclusion has proven to have positive effects on student outcomes (Gurgur & Uzuner, 2011). "Inclusion, as it is currently defined, refers to the instruction of

all students, with and without disabilities, in the general education classroom, unless substantial evidence is provided to show that such a placement would not be in the student's best interests" (Austin, 2001, p. 245).

<div align="center">Paving the Way for Co-Teaching</div>

The cooperative teaching method was the precursor to co-teaching. Bauwens et al. (1989), Bauwens & Hourcade (1991), and Nickelson, D. (2010) listed three fundamental elements of cooperative teaching: 1) complementary instruction, 2) team teaching, and 3) supportive learning activities.

- Implementing **complementary instruction** requires the general education teacher to teach the content material; the special education teacher complements the instruction by providing the necessary modifications and support for the learner with special needs to be able to master the content material.

- When the general and special education teacher jointly plan, present, and teach the material to students in both general education and special education, this is referred to as **team teaching**.

- Special education teachers who implement activities that support the content being taught by the general education teacher are implementing the **supportive learning activities** approach to cooperative teaching.

<div align="center">Co-Teaching: A Model for Teacher Education Programs</div>

Cook and Friend (1995) define co-teaching as "two or more professionals delivering substantive instructions to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space" (p. 1). From the very beginning of the practicum experience for teacher candidates, cooperating teachers and teacher candidates work together to plan and

implement lesson objectives (Bacharach, Heck, Dahlberg, 2008). This gives the added

benefit of teacher candidates being viewed as real teachers by the students (Bacharach &

Team, 2010).

Merk, Betz, and O'Mara (2015) explained the differences between the Co-

Teaching Model and the traditional model of student teaching. The authors state that the

"…teacher candidate is integrated into the classroom from the beginning as a teacher

versus a student observer. Thus, the cooperating teacher and teacher candidate

collaboratively plan and deliver instruction from the beginning" (p. 1-2). The authors

further explained, "Teacher candidates are able to see more clearly the dynamics of how

a classroom works and the process by which teachers plan lessons and implement

curriculum" (Merk, Betz, & O'Mara., 2015, p. 2).

Teacher candidates view their student teaching experience as vital to their success

in the teaching profession. According to Clarke, Triggs, and Nielson (2013), teacher

candidates consider cooperating teachers and the practicum experience as the most

important aspects of the Bachelor of Education degree. With the importance of quality

placed on cooperating teachers by those who benefit directly from their guidance, it is

contrarily noted that "…the current practices for ensuring that cooperating teachers are

professionally prepared for their work are inadequate and fail to address some of the most

basic issues associated with their supervisory work" (Clarke, Triggs & Nielson, 2013, p.

2). Often, "…cooperating teachers are left to rely on their intuitive sense of what it means

to supervise student teachers – often by drawing on their own practicum experiences

when they were student teachers" (Clarke, Triggs & Nielson, 2013, p. 2). This

methodology, incorporated by cooperating teachers, resulted in mixed and unpredictable outcomes.

Reports have recognized that reform efforts are needed to insure quality teacher education programs (Tschida, Smith & Fogarty, 2015). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) released the Blue Ribbon Panel Report (2010) outlining necessary changes and recommendations to teacher education programs in the nation. "To prepare effective teachers for 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm which emphasizes academic preparation and coursework loosely linked to school-based experiences. Rather, it must move to programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses" (NCATE, 2010, p. ii). "Current research in teacher education points to the Co-Teaching Model in elementary classrooms developed by St. Cloud State University (MN) as one example of systemic change" (Morton & Birky, 2015, p. 119).

Realizing the inadequacies associated with the traditional student teaching model, researchers at St. Cloud State University (MN) implemented a model of student teaching based upon the special education model of co-teaching (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2010; Hartnett, Wee, McCoy, Theiss & Nickens, 2013). Kansas State University (KS) pioneered the use of the Co-Teaching Model in the student teaching experience. Kansas State developed the program based upon complaints received from parents and teachers that students were receiving too much instruction from inexperienced student teachers (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlerg, 2006).

Co-teaching has proven to be an effective means for teacher candidates to be fully immersed in the culture of the public school. This gives the teacher candidate an

experience that allows for the opportunity to learn "at the knee" of the more experienced practitioner (Carambo & Stickney, 2009). Learning collaboration techniques by osmosis is no longer a successful model for teacher candidates. Proximity to cooperating teachers is important; however, more in-depth opportunities for interaction must be present in a successful teacher practicum experience (Bacharach & Team, 2010).

To implement co-teaching effectively, teacher candidates and cooperating teachers have identified five critical elements that all stakeholders need to embrace. Three of the five are identified important by cooperating teachers; the remaining two are considered important by the teacher candidates (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008). These five elements are as follows: 1) Support and training provided by the university, 2) Handling interruptions without stopping the class, 3) Planning specifically rather than in generalities, 4) Students in the class view the teacher candidate as a real teacher, and 5) Working well as partners – being in sync (Bacharach et al., 2008, pp. 45-46).

A survey of cooperating teachers conducted by Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg (2008) identified five overriding themes for successful co-teaching experiences. These five themes were planning, communication, relationship, classroom applications, and co-teaching knowledge (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008). Cook and Friend (1995) as well as Weiss and Lloyd (2003) identified five co-teaching approaches. "No one approach is best or worst; each has a place in a co-taught class. In fact, each of the approaches – or some variation – is likely to be used alone or with another in any session of a co-taught class" (Friend & Cook, 1995, p. 7). These five co-teaching approaches are as follows: One teaching, one assisting; Station Teaching; Parallel Teaching; Team Teaching; and Alternative Teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995; Weiss & Lloyd 2003).

Bacharach et al. (2010) identified two additional approaches beyond the five approaches delineated by Cook and Friend (1995): Supplemental Teaching and Team Teaching.

Figure 1. Strategies of Co-Teaching in Student Teaching

One Teach, One Observe	• One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the (instructing) teacher. The key to this strategy is to focus the observation on specific behaviors. Both the teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher are able to take on either role.
One Teach, One Assist	• One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments, often lending a voice to students or groups who hesitate to participate or add comments.
Station Teaching	• Station teaching occurs when the co-teaching pair divides the insturctional content into parts. Each teacher instructs one of the groups. The groups then rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station. Indpendent stations are often used along with the teacher-led stations.
Parallel Teaching	• Parallel teaching occurs when the class is divided, with each teacher instructing half the students. However, both teachers are addressing the same instructional material. Both teachers are using the same instructional strategies and materials. The greatest benefit to this method is the reduction of the student-to-teacher ratio.
Supplemental Teaching	• Supplemental teaching allows one teacher to work with students at their expected grade level while the other teacher works with those students who need the information or materials extended or remediated.
Alternative (Differentiated) Teaching	• This teaching strategy provides two approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students; however, the avenue for getting there is different.
Team Teaching	• Team teaching incorporates an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team-teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson. From the students' perspective there is no clearly defined leader - both teachers share the instruction, are free to interject information, and are avialable to assist students and answer questions.

As found in Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2010, p. 7.
Used with permission.

Teacher Candidate Competencies

With increasing scrutiny on the teaching profession and the implementation of high stakes testing, state legislatures across the country have implemented more stringent and uniformed competency standards for those in the teaching profession. The state of Missouri is no exception. During the legislative session of 2009, the Missouri Legislature passed Senate Bill 291 and Governor Jay Nixon signed the legislation into law on July 13, 2009. The new law outlined six general concepts that each public school in Missouri was required to implement. However, the law gave the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE) the authority, based on the six concepts, to provide model standards to the districts upon request by the school districts. These six concepts are as follows:

1) Students actively participate and are successful in the learning process;

2) Various forms of assessment are used to monitor and manage student learning;

3) The teacher is prepared and knowledgeable of the content and effectively maintains student on-task behavior;

4) The teacher uses professional communication and interaction with the school community;

5) The teacher keeps current on instructional knowledge and seeks and explores changes in teaching behaviors that will improve student performance; and

6) The teacher acts as a responsible professional in the overall mission of the school (SB 291, 2009, "Teaching Standards for Public Schools").

As a result of this law, MoDESE provided school districts model standards that included nine teacher standards and 36 quality indicators. Each referenced to the six concept statements outlined in SB 291. MoDESE identified the following nine standards as core competencies for those currently in or seeking to be a part of the teaching profession:

Standard #1: Content Knowledge, Including Varied Perspectives, Aligned with Appropriate Instruction

Standard #2: Student Learning, Growth, and Development

Standard #3: Curriculum Implementation

Standard #4: Critical Thinking

Standard #5: Positive Classroom Environment

Standard #6: Effective Communication

Standard #7: Student Assessment and Data Analysis

Standard #8: Professionalism

Standard #9: Professional Collaboration (MoDESE, 2013, pp. 5-10).

MoDESE created several documents to outline these nine standards and their accompanied 36 quality indicators. To facilitate the implementation of the new standards across Missouri public schools, guidelines were created for teacher education programs across the state to implement. To assess the competencies of teacher candidates prior to becoming a certified teacher, candidates are required to complete the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment (MoPTA). The MoPTA delineates four required tasks that teacher candidates must perform to show competency as a teacher. "The MoPTA is a

performance-based, pre-licensure assessment of a teacher candidate's readiness and ability to teach effectively" (MoPTA, Oct. 2015, p. 4). These four tasks are as follows:

Task 1: Knowledge of Students and the Learning Environment: [The teacher candidate] will demonstrate the knowledge and skills that pertain to [their] understanding of the context of [their] classroom in regard to [their] students, the school, and the community; and [they] will identify implications of these factors on instruction and student learning.

Task 2: Assessment and Data Collection to Measure and Inform Student Learning: [The teacher candidate] will demonstrate [their] understanding, analysis and application of assessment and data collection to measure and inform student learning.

Task 3: Designing Instruction for Student Learning: [The teacher candidate] will demonstrate [their] ability to develop instruction, including the use of technology, to facilitate student learning.

Task 4: Implementing and Analyzing Instruction to Promote Student Learning: [The teacher candidate] will demonstrate [their] ability to plan and implement a lesson using standards-based instruction. [They] will also show how [they] are able to adjust instruction for the whole class as well as for individual students within the class. Finally, [they] will demonstrate an understanding of reflective practice (MoPTA, Oct. 2015, pp. 11-18).

These four tasks were selected for two purposes. First, "to introduce [the teacher candidate] to the benefits and practice of regular professional reflection" and secondly,

"to help [the teacher] candidate complete a Professional Competency Profile that engages [the teacher candidate] in the kind of reflective goal setting and action planning that certified Missouri Teachers practice annually to improve their knowledge and skills in concert with the state's teacher evaluation system" (MoPTA, July 2015, p. 5).

<div align="center">Teacher Perceived Benefits of Co-Teaching</div>

As co-teaching becomes more mainstream, more teachers are available to give their insights into the benefits of co-teaching. For veteran teachers, this represents the level of job satisfaction that teachers have when they incorporate the Co-Teaching Model as compared to those that stay in their traditional ways. Cozart, Gudahy, Ndunda, and VanSickle (2003) noted that teachers who observe and participate in quality teaching practices as co-teachers have a better work environment. An increase in critical thinking skills of participating teachers was an added benefit (Cozart et al., 2003). In a traditional classroom, teachers tend to be isolated, void of collegial interactions and knowledge sharing. Rytivaara and Kershner (2012) noted that when teachers share information and/or ideas, the co-teachers had an increase in motivation and enjoyment due to the building of a social relationship.

A study conducted by Austin (2003) between general education and special education teachers who incorporated the Co-Teaching Model in their classrooms found that "…generally, they worked well together, solicited each other's feedback, and benefited from working together. Further, both groups generally agreed that co-teaching was a worthwhile experience that contributed to the improvement of their teaching" (p. 248). In the same study, Austin (2003) shared that teachers "…considered co-teaching to have contributed positively to their professional development: Special education co-

teachers cited an increase in content knowledge, and general education co-teachers noted the benefits to their skill in classroom management and curriculum adaptation" (p. 250).

Teacher Perceived Challenges of Co-Teaching

Although research has shown many positive aspects of co-teaching, research has also shown that there are several challenges that need to be addressed for co-teaching to be successful. Walther-Thomas (1997) completed a three-year study involving teachers who utilized the Co-Teaching Model in their classrooms. Several major themes of persistent problems were recognized by the teachers involved in the study. The problematic themes reported by the teachers included scheduled planning time, student scheduling, caseload concerns, administrative support, and staff development opportunities (Walther-Thomas, 1997; Bouck, 2007).

Finding scheduled planning time for co-teachers is a serious problem for those implementing the Co-Teaching Model of instruction (Hang & Rabren, 2013; Mastropieri, 2005). It is often difficult for administrators to schedule co-teachers' planning times that are concurrent with one another as administrators are often confined to the organizational structure of the school (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Scheduling students is also of concern, especially when taking into consideration the special education population. Aligning the schedules of students with disabilities became problematic if left to the confines of computer-based scheduling. A more hands-on approach was needed to insure a heterogeneous mix of students congruent with the population of the school (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Closely related to scheduling conflicts is that of caseload management. When placing students with special needs into classrooms it was imperative that the ratio of

general education students to that of students with disabilities was adequately distributed. Having too many students with special needs in one classroom resulted in too few personnel and other resources to maintain a co-teaching atmosphere (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Administrative support both at the building level and district level were critical in helping co-teachers be successful. Whether it be co-teaching or other implementation efforts, administrative support is imperative (Mastropieri et al., 2005; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Co-teachers who were forced together as opposed to volunteering were often unsatisfied with the Co-Teaching Model of instruction. A study conducted by Mastropieri et al. (2005) found that "voluntary participants tended to report more positive perceptions than did teachers who were assigned to co-teaching" (p. 261). Sileo (2011) likened co-teaching to a "professional marriage" (p. 32). Just as in any successful marriage, there needs to be a courtship period in which the co-teachers have an opportunity to get to know one another professionally prior to being placed in the same classroom. Without due diligence spent in building the relationship prior to co-teaching, opportunities arise for miscommunication and other misunderstandings to occur, which ultimately can result in the ending of the relationship (Sileo, 2011).

Added to this discourse is the tenseness that the students sense between the teachers. Savvy students often will take advantage of such a situation and pit one teacher against the other when requesting to do things, not unlike children of parents who are estranged or divorced (Sileo, 2011). "Co-teachers believe personal compatibility is the most important factor for co-teaching success" (Sileo, 2011, p. 34). In addition to the

above listed issues, co-teachers also faced the feelings of constrained teachers' autonomy, feelings of devaluation, and constrained existing roles (Bouck, 2007).

Benefitting Students through Co-Teaching

The goal of any instructional strategy should be that it benefits the student learner in some regard. Besides benefiting teacher satisfaction, co-teaching has also shown to impact students in a positive manner. In a 2001 study conducted by Dieker, it was found that students reported receiving more academic assistance, help, attention, and had fewer behavior problems (Hang & Rabren, 2013). Students also reported that they learned new things well through the hands-on activities that were provided in the co-taught classroom (Hang & Rabren, 2013).

Limited research has been conducted on student achievement in co-taught classrooms. However, recent studies have shown a correlation between increased student achievement and co-teaching classrooms (Nickelson, 2010). In the study conducted by Austin (2001) it was noted,

> Co-teachers interviewed in the study stated that they believed co-teaching contributed positively to the academic development of all their students. Supporting factors that the teachers noted included: reduced student-teacher ratio, the benefit of another teacher's expertise and viewpoint, the value of remedial strategies and review for all students and the opportunity for the students without disabilities to gain some understanding of the learning difficulties experience by many students with disabilities (Austin, 2001, p. 253).

Additional Co-Teaching Concerns

Though recent research has shown a correlation between student achievement and the implementation of the Co-Teaching Model of instruction, there is also research showing that co-teaching has had little, if any, effect, whether negative or positive, on student outcomes (Nickelson, 2010). The number of early studies on co-teaching vs. student achievement were limited. A review of the literature conducted by Welch, Brownell, and Sheridan (1999) concluded that there was empirical support for co-teaching as it relates to teacher acceptance of the Co-Teaching Model as well as the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Contrarily, other researchers (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1996; Reinhiller, 1996) concluded that the research conducted at that time did not offer support to the theory that co-teaching offered outcomes for students that were positive academically (Nichelson, 2010).

Administrative support for co-teaching is critical for co-teaching initiatives to survive, although many administrators that have co-teaching initiatives in their buildings fail to comprehend the full scope of co-teaching. This is not for the lack of desire to want to be supportive, but a lack of training in the methods and needs of Co-Teaching Models of instruction (Wilson, Susko, & Elliott, 2013). Administrators have a good understanding of what co-teaching is, but they need to have a better understanding on how to best support and encourage those teachers who have embraced co-teaching. Administrators need more training, whether formally or through professional development opportunities, in regards to the nuances and intricacies of co-teaching (Wilson et al., 2013).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The process of teaching students to be teachers has changed little since the 1920s

(Bachrach et al., 2008, 2010; Hartnett, Wee, McCoy, Theiss, & Nickens, 2013; Tschida,

Smith, & Fogarty, 2015). For nearly a century, the norm for teacher education programs

was for the student to observe the practicing teacher for a given amount of time and then

handed the reins of the classroom with little additional help or intervention. The "sink or

swim" mentality was prominent among cooperating teachers and their collegiate

counterparts in the teacher education programs (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010).

In an age of increasing accountability standards and high stakes testing, the ability

of teacher preparation programs to place student teachers under the traditional method of

student teaching has become increasingly more difficult. As veteran teachers and their

supervisors grow concerned about placing a novice student teacher in a classroom to be

responsible for the educational outcomes, teachers and supervisors have increasingly

denied teacher preparation programs the ability to place student teachers in their

classrooms (Ellis & Bogle, 2008; Merk, Betz, & O'Mara, 2015; Morton & Birky, 2015).

To combat the lack of interest in placing student teachers in classrooms, teacher

education programs are reevaluating the process by which student teachers are trained.

As the practicum experience is identified as the single most important aspect to the

success of a new teacher, allowing student teachers access to veteran co-teachers is

imperative (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielson, 2013). A new model of student teaching that

addresses the concerns of veteran cooperating teachers and school district leaders, and yet

provides the opportunity for student teachers to have access to the all-important classroom experience, is called the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

This study examined one particular teacher education program at a Midwestern regional university that is currently implementing the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. The study focused on the teachers who have completed the program and their preparedness to take on the responsibilities of the classroom, as well as the teachers' success in completing required training and evaluation processes as outlined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE).

It was the goal of this study to look for themes of commonality of the teachers who have participated in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching as part of their teacher preparation program to understand the level of success that the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching has had in meeting the requirements and objectives of mandated outcomes. This study gives practitioners the ability to make educated decisions on the validity of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching program and give those in decision-making positions data to make necessary changes to strengthen the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of instruction as implemented by the University of Central Missouri (UCM) teacher education program in relation to teacher readiness, retention, satisfaction, and preparedness to complete the required tasks. In addition, the study examined the new teacher evaluation form as outlined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE) and how equipped new teachers are in meeting the new teacher evaluation expectations.

A qualitative case study was utilized to analyze new teacher perceptions of the implementation of the Co-Teaching Model at the University of Central Missouri's teacher education program. Merriam (1998) outlines the following three distinct features to identify a study as qualitative: "…researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed…" (p. 6), "…the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 7), and the research "…usually involves fieldwork" (p. 7). The study population was limited to those individuals who have graduated from the teacher education program at the University of Central Missouri and include only those who have been under contracted service in the teaching profession three or fewer years.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed this study:

1.   How did the Co-Teaching Model experience prepare beginning teachers to meet the new teacher evaluation program recently implemented by MoDESE?

2.   How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence the ability of beginning teachers to assume responsibility of a classroom teacher?

3.   How did the Co-Teaching Model of students teaching influence beginning teachers' realistic views of the teaching profession?

4.   How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching experience prepare beginning teachers to meet the tasks outlined in the MoPTA?

Population Sample

The University of Central Missouri is a Midwestern regional university located in Warrensburg, Missouri. The university's School of Education has implemented a new

program in which student teachers are placed into cooperating teacher classrooms utilizing the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Between the fall semester of 2012 and the spring semester of 2015, there have been 407 documented student teachers that have participated in the University of Central Missouri Co-Teaching Model of student teaching program. The population studied only included individuals who have been employed three years or fewer as a classroom teacher, graduated from the University of Central Missouri, and completed the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Furthermore, the researcher selected a random sample of teachers from the high school level, middle school level, and the elementary level.

The sampling population was selected from teachers who have taught in the Missouri counties of Johnson, Pettis, Henry, Cass, Jackson (excluding the Kansas City Public Schools), Green, and Lafeyette. This resulted in a more diverse group of teachers from which to draw the sample population. Exclusions to the sample population were teachers who taught in a private school setting.

<div align="center">Sampling Procedure</div>

According to Merriam (1998), "nonprobability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research" (p. 61). For the purposes of this study, the researcher utilized purposeful sampling to select participants of this study (Merriam, 1998). Meriam (1998) states that "…purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). In particular, the researcher utilized "Criterion Sampling" as the type of purposeful sampling to be conducted. Creswell (2007) explains the appropriateness of Criterion Sampling utilization, "…when all individuals studied

represent people who have experienced the phenomenon" (p. 128). In this study, the phenomenon at hand is the participation in the university's College of Education Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

The process of sampling began with the researcher contacting the university's Associate Dean of the College of Education to seek out contact information for classroom teachers who have graduated from the University of Central Missouri and completed the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching (See Appendix A). To obtain permission to be on school district property where the identified teachers teach, the researcher emailed either the superintendent or the building level administrator depending upon the size, location, and organizational structure of the school district. Smaller districts may have had only one building; these districts required permission from the superintendent, whereas in larger districts with multiple buildings and locations, permission was required from the building level administrator. Attached to the email sent was an explanation of the study (See Appendix B) and a copy of the questions that were asked of participating teachers (See Appendix C).

The identified teachers were contacted by the researcher through a letter sent by email that explained the purpose of the study and requesting the teacher's participation (See Appendix D). A letter of consent (See Appendix E) accompanied this letter for the teacher to accept or decline the invitation to participate in the study. The identified teachers were asked to sign the letter of consent prior to the interviews.

The researcher attempted to include eight teachers from each level of high school, middle school, and elementary school. However, the researcher was unable to get an even number of individuals from each grade level. Ultimately, twenty individuals

responded positively to the request to participate in the study. These individuals also

represented a cross section of teachers from urban, suburban, and rural school districts.

Research Design

This study was a qualitative case study. Creswell (2007) states that qualitative

research "begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens,

and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups

ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37). This study also incorporated an ontological

philosophical assumption. According to Creswell (2007), a "researcher uses quotes and

themes in words of participants and provides evidence of different perspectives" in an

ontological philosophical assumption (p. 17). A researcher of an ontological study asks

the question, "What is the nature of reality?" (Creswell, 2007, p. 17). In this study, the

researcher sought out the reality of the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of student

teaching in preparing student teachers for the classroom, evaluation processes, and

practicum requirements for certification. This study embraced Creswell's (2007)

postpositivist research paradigm; postpositivists "…believe in multiple perspectives from

participants rather than a single reality…" (p. 20). This researcher interviewed multiple

participants of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching to understand the reality of the

Co-Teaching Model of student teaching program at the University of Central Missouri.

Creswell (2007) defines a case study as "…research [that] involves the study of an issue

explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (p. 73). Furthermore,

Creswell (2007) states, "Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the

investigator explores a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases)…" (p.

73). In this study, the bounded system was the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching

program at the University of Central Missouri. Therefore, this study was considered a single case study.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Merriam (1998) defined data analysis as "…the process of making sense out of the data" (p. 178). Data analysis was completed by reviewing the transcripts of participant interviews. Field notes were also analyzed. Together, the transcripts and field notes were examined to discover any emerging themes and patterns that existed. Creswell (2007) recommends "…aggregating information into large clusters of ideas and providing details that support the themes" (p. 244). A holistic approach to the analysis was taken. Creswell (2007) states that in a holistic analysis, "…the researcher examines the entire case and presents description, themes, and interpretations, or assertions related to the whole case" (p. 245).

Creswell (2009) organized data analysis into a multi-step approach. The researcher followed Creswell's (2009) model of data analysis for this study. First of all, the researcher organized the data by transcribing interviews, typing field notes, sorting and arranging data into plausible categories (Creswell, 2009). Next, the researcher gained a general sense of the information by reading through all of the data and making notes and then formed general ideas about the data. The researcher then completed the process of coding. Creswell (2009) defines coding as "…the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information" (p. 186). Utilizing the coding process, a complete description was created to define the setting, people, and categories (themes) for analysis. A description, as defined by Creswell (2009), "…involves a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in

a setting" (p. 189). The researcher created a qualitative narrative utilizing the transcripts of the study participants "to convey the findings of the analysis" (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). Finally, the researcher made interpretations of the data, gleaned from the data important information that was used to add to the general knowledge of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

<center>Strategies for Ensuring Quality</center>

Creswell (2009) explained the difference between qualitative validity and qualitative reliability. Creswell (2009) states, "Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects" (p. 190). To ensure validity, the researcher triangulated the data by including multiple data sources (Meriam, 1998). The data sources included field notes, documents, and interview transcripts. Creswell (2007) identified triangulation as "[making] use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence" (p. 208).

A second method that provided validity to the study was the explanation of the researcher's biases. Creswell (2007) recommended that the researcher "[clarify] researcher bias from the outset of the study…so that the reader understands the researcher's position and any biases or assumption that impact the inquiry" (p. 208).

A third method to ensure validity of the study is to incorporate member checks. Merriam (1998) identified member checks as "taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking [the participants] if the results are plausible" (p. 204).

Merriam (1998) defined reliability as "…the extent to which research findings can be replicated" (p. 205). The researcher will ensure reliability by checking transcripts for any obvious errors that were created during transcription (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) also recommended that the researcher is aware of the possibility of a drifting in the definition of codes. "This can be accomplished by constantly comparing data with the codes and by writing memos about the codes and their definitions" (Creswell, 2009, p. 190).

<div align="center">Researcher Bias</div>

Merriam (1998) recommended identifying the researcher's biases at the beginning of the study to strengthen the study's validity. For this study, the researcher's biases include: 1) The researcher was a former building level administrator as well as district level administrator, and 2) the researcher participated in a traditional style of student teaching during his undergraduate teacher preparation work.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This case study investigated the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching at a Midwestern regional university. More specifically, the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching as implemented by the University of Central Missouri was studied. The researcher utilized interviews, transcripts, and documents to determine if the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching is being effective in preparing teacher candidates to complete the MoPTA, have a successful transition into their own classroom as a first year teacher, and meet expectations as set forth by the MoDESE New Teacher evaluation form. Data collected was coded and analyzed for emerging themes and patterns.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This study examined the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching as implemented by the University of Central Missouri (UCM) in preparing teacher candidates to take over their own classrooms. This study also examined the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching in preparing beginning teachers to meet the evaluation standards set forth by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Reported in this chapter are the interviews of 20 beginning teachers who have taught under contract for three years or fewer. Bruffee's (1999) and Abercrombie's (1960) work in adult learning theory was utilized as the conceptual framework from which the research questions were derived. Data collected from participants were organized per research question.

Findings from the data emerged in two ways. First, findings emerged from individual research questions. Secondly, findings emerged across the spectrum of the research questions. Chapter Five of this study includes discussion and recommendations based upon the data gathered from the twenty interviews.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model of Instruction as implemented by the University of Central Missouri (UCM) teacher education program in relation to teacher readiness, retention, satisfaction, and preparedness to complete the required tasks. In addition, the study examined the new teacher evaluation form as outlined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE) and how equipped new teachers are in meeting the new

teacher evaluation expectations. Bruffee's (1999) and Abercrombie's (1960) research in adult learning theory will be utilized as the conceptual framework for this study. The research questions are based on Bruffee's (1999) and Abercrombie's (1960) adult learning theory and how it applies to transferring the necessary knowledge and skill set from practicing teachers to teachers in training.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed this study:

1. How did the Co-Teaching Model experience prepare beginning teachers to meet the expectations of the teacher evaluation process?

2. How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence the ability of beginning teachers to assume responsibility of a classroom teacher?

3. How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence beginning teachers' views of the teaching profession?

4. How did beginning teachers perceive their preparation for the completion of MoPTA tasks while participating in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching?

Participants

Participants of this study were beginning teachers who have completed three or fewer school years of teaching. Having some contracted teaching experience was a requirement to be a participant in this study. Participants were a heterogeneous group of individuals that included both males and females, individuals who taught at the elementary and secondary levels, and a mixture of individuals who taught in urban, suburban, and rural settings. All participants were graduates of the University of Central Missouri.

The confidentiality of the participants is accomplished by giving each participant a fictitious first name only. To further strengthen the confidentiality of the participants, names of school districts, school buildings, cooperating teachers, and supervising teachers were omitted from teacher responses.

Data Analysis

Merriam (1998) defined data analysis as "…the process of making sense out of the data" (p. 178). Data analysis was completed by reviewing the transcripts of participant interviews. Field notes were also analyzed. Together, the transcripts and field notes were examined to discover any emerging themes and patterns that may exist. Creswell (2007) recommends "…aggregating information into large clusters of ideas and providing details that support the themes" (p. 244). A holistic approach to the analysis was taken. Creswell (2007) states that in a holistic analysis, "…the researcher examines the entire case and presents description, themes, and interpretations, or assertions related to the whole case" (p. 245).

Creswell (2009) organized data analysis into a multi-step approach. The researcher followed Creswell's (2009) model of data analysis for this study. First of all, the researcher organized the data by transcribing interviews, typing field notes, sorting and arranging data into plausible categories (Creswell, 2009). Next, the researcher gained a general sense of the information by reading through all of the data and making notes and forming general ideas about the data. The researcher utilized the process of coding. Creswell (2009) defines coding as "…the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information" (p. 186). Utilizing the coding process, a complete description was created to define the setting, people, and

categories (themes) for analysis. A description, as defined by Creswell (2009), "…involves a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in a setting" (p. 189). The researcher created a qualitative narrative utilizing the transcripts of the study participants "to convey the findings of the analysis" (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). Finally, the researcher made interpretations of the data, gleaning from the data important information that will be used to add to the general knowledge of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

The participants of the study were recruited to participate through a multi-step approach. First of all, a list of potential participants was received from the University of Central Missouri College of Education. The list included names of graduates from the College of Education who graduated at the end of the spring 2013 semester and through the end of the spring 2015 semester. All potential participants were required to be employed by a public school district from a specific list of counties in immediate proximity to UCM and the Kansas City Metro area. Second, the list of potential participants was sorted by urban, suburban, and rural school districts. The list was also sorted by certification level such as elementary, middle, and secondary. The list was then sorted by the number of years taught. It was the goal of the researcher to include a broad spectrum of participants to include individuals that have taught one, two, and three years. The researcher also wanted to include an equal number of individuals who taught at the elementary level, middle school level, and high school level. The researcher sought to include a good representation of teachers who taught in rural areas as well as those in the larger suburban/urban areas. The only information that the researcher received in order to make contact with the potential participants was the school district in which they taught.

The researcher found email addresses for the potential participants on the school district websites. Formal invitations were sent via email to the potential participants. A very small number of potential participants responded to the invitation to participate, even after multiple attempts to make contact. Ultimately the researcher was able to procure twenty individuals who were willing to participate in the study. Nineteen of the 20 participants had completed at least one year of contracted teaching service. The remaining one participant had completed less than one year of contracted teaching service. However, this individual had served as a paraprofessional one year prior in the same district in which he now serves as a contracted teacher. Following is a list of the participants with their pseudonyms and information about their teaching experience.

Figure 2. **PSEUDONYMS OF PARTICIPANTS**

PARTICIPANT NAME	# YEARS TEACHING COMPLETED	CONTENT/GRADE LEVEL STUDENT TEACHING	CONTENT/GRADE LEVEL CURRENTLY TEACHING	SUBURBAN URBAN RURAL STUDENT TEACHING	SUBURBAN URBAN RURAL CURRENTLY TEACHING	TEACHING SAME DISTRICT AS STUDENT TEACHING
John	3	8-12 Agriculture	9-12 Agriculture	Rural	Suburban	No
Kay	3	3rd Grade	3rd Grade	Suburban	Suburban	Yes
Anita	1	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Urban	Urban	No
Kelly	1.5	3rd Grade	1st Grade	Suburban	Rural	No
Addie	2	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Rural	Rural	Yes
Monica	3	9-12 FACS	9-12 FACS	Suburban	Rural	No
Amy	3	Kindergarten & 1st Grade	Kindergarten	Rural	Rural	Yes
Elaine	1	6-12 FACS	9-12 FACS	Suburban	Suburban	No
Karen	2	5th Grade Math	6-8 Math	Suburban	Urban	No
Ashley	1	1st Grade	Pre-K SpEd	Rural	Urban	No
Sharon	2	2nd grade	3rd Grade	Rural	Rural	No
Kathy	1	1st, 2nd, 3rd Grades	Kindergarten	Suburban	Suburban	No
Luke	2	9-12 Theater	9-12 Theater	Rural	Suburban	No
Jenny	1	1st Grade	5th Grade	Suburban	Suburban	No
Kristin	3	HS Algebra I	HS Algebra 1, Geometry	Urban	Suburban	No
Rayleene	1	5th Grade	3rd Grade	Suburban	Rural	No
Ann	1	9-12 FACS	9-12 FACS	Suburban	Suburban	No
Trisha	1	Geometry & Pre-Calculus	7th Grade Math & Algebra 2	Rural	Rural	Yes
Sarah	3	9th English & 11th Honors	7th English Language Arts	Suburban	Suburban	Yes
Brent	<1	HS Social Studies	HS Special Education	Suburban	Suburban	Yes

Meeting Expectations of the Teacher Evaluation Process

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education identified the following nine standards as core competencies for those currently in or seeking to be a part of the teaching profession:

Standard #1: Content Knowledge, Including Varied Perspectives, Aligned with

appropriate Instruction

Standard #2: Student Learning, Growth, and Development

Standard #3: Curriculum Implementation

Standard #4: Critical Thinking

Standard #5: Positive Classroom Environment

Standard #6: Effective Communication

Standard #7: Student Assessment and Data Analysis

Standard #8: Professionalism

Standard #9: Professional Collaboration (MoDESE, 2013, pp. 5-10).

Of the nine standards, participants of the study were asked to identify the two they believed they were the most prepared to meet as a result of their participation in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. More than half of the participants identified Standard 5: Positive Classroom Environment as the standard they thought they were most prepared to meet. Many teachers credited the modeling provided by their cooperating teacher during student teaching as instrumental in preparing them to create a positive classroom environment upon receiving their own classrooms. Kelly stated,

> The teacher that I was with was very good at creating a good learning
> environment in her classroom and the other teachers that I was around in
> that school were very good at that. That's one of the standards that is
> really important to me personally, to create a positive learning

environment in my classroom. So I learned a lot of classroom management techniques that I still use. Just understanding like the school community culture. Especially because going from [District] which was a very different school environment that this school that I am currently in. It was good for me to see the school environment and how you can manage that in the community in both those situations. So I think that kind of helped me too.

An important aspect of creating a positive classroom environment was observing the cooperating teachers build positive relationships with their students. Kay reflected on her student teaching experience by stating, "I felt like with the co-teaching, we focus so much on building relationships with the kids, and so it really helped me when I started my own classroom to recognize how those relationships made a difference with the students." Luke also mentioned,

With the subject that I teach and student taught, we got to know students on a much deeper level. Only because, not only are we spending time with them in classrooms, but, with theater it's co-curricular, so you have them in shows, at rehearsals at night times, and then at tournaments on weekends. So you're learning how to definitely influence them. Because how they act outside of the classroom is going to impact how you teach them inside the classroom. Because you spend a lot of time so you know they need this to become more advanced. It made us able to pinpoint those specific things and then really hit on making sure that they got those in the team environment.

A second important aspect of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching is that it allowed the teachers the opportunity to observe correct behaviors, procedures, and processes that lent themselves to creating a positive classroom environment. Modeling these classroom management techniques by the cooperating teacher was extremely important. Jenny said, "I really felt I got to dig in on my mentor's method on why she set up her classroom the way she did. What is there, and how she did things."

Standard 2: Student Learning Growth and Development was also mentioned as an area that a quarter of the participants felt adequately prepared to meet. Similar to positive classroom environment, Student Learning Growth and Development was significantly influenced by the modeling of the cooperating teacher. Kathy noted, "…it was really nice to actually see and pick up on what she, like what we need to do, what we need to assess and what we need to teach and how [students] are performing as well."

Participants were also asked to identify the two standards believed they were the least prepared for upon taking over their own classroom. Half of all participants identified Standard 3: Curriculum Implementation as the teaching standard they were the least prepared to meet. Trisha, a secondary level teacher, stated, "I still struggle trying to figure out curriculum, and so that was one thing. I mean, during the co-teaching you had all the PD meetings and stuff, too, and not having seen it a whole lot taking college classes, it was kind of like mind blowing. 'What the heck am I getting myself into?' kind of deal." Just like Trisha, several teachers mentioned the lack of exposure to curriculum writing and implementation during their pre-professional semester as well as during their student teaching experience. Teachers also noted the impact of the new Common Core standards. Sarah lamented,

> I didn't spend time looking at curriculum with [cooperating teacher]. I didn't learn a lot about, the Common Core was new; when I was coming into [District] it was just being implemented that fall my first year of teaching. So I did not feel prepared as far as curriculum goes. I didn't know anything about the common core. I was just handed the standards. It was all new to my mentor. I had been given to her, like in Spring PD and stuff. And so it was all new to her. And again like I said, I wasn't a part of planning the curriculum instruction for that year I was student teaching either. So I felt a little bit unprepared for the, just the curriculum implementation when I started.

Adding to the concern of not being prepared for curriculum implementation is the fact that some districts are so organized, there is little opportunity for the student teacher to participate in curriculum writing. Every activity, lesson, and procedure is already laid out for them. Karen noted, "I didn't have anything to do with [curriculum implementation]. They already had it all laid out for the entire year. So I didn't really have any bearing on what was – what I wanted to do. I had no say in that like how the kids were taught. It was already laid out." Kelly, as well, stated, "…the curriculum in my student teaching was very structured. And then when I went into my actual teaching, the curriculum in my school that I currently teach at is very unstructured. And so I felt like I was prepared for what I was expected to do if I taught in [the district I student taught] but I don't feel like I was prepared for what I was expected to do when I teach in [current district]." Ashley, an elementary teacher, also commented, "I would say the main thing about [curriculum implementation] is that I, when I was in college in student teaching, we really worked to do that. To help do lesson plans and things like that. But it didn't translate into teaching…at least not at my school. So I didn't have the opportunity to help do any of the things that I was taught."

It was found that teachers who taught in non-core subject areas found it difficult to write curriculum and implement educational standards into their daily lessons. As there are not any Common Core State Standards for the non-core areas, teachers had to become creative in implementing standards into their lesson planning that came from other subject areas. Luke stated,

> …at the time I was student teaching, Common Core was making its
> entrance into education and there wasn't any Common Core theater and
> for speech and debate. So we had to get really creative in pulling from
> certain English and Social Studies standards to make sure that we were

hitting things that were standards from the government. To just make sure that we are really, um, making sure that they are learning things across the board. Instead of just saying, "Hey, I want to teach you guys on how to act." Well, what's the purpose of that. Because we have to be able to show that purpose overall. And then, had to collaborate all the time not only with my co-teacher and advisor.

In the co-teaching classroom, student teachers often relied heavily, either out of choice or circumstance, on the lesson plans and curriculum of the cooperating teacher. Kay stated,

I would just say it was kind of difficult with [curriculum implementation] in my co-teaching experience because when my cooperating teacher and I were working together it was basically like, "Here's what we're going to do next and how do we want to go about getting there." And so I guess I wasn't having to go out and do the long range planning and things like that on my own. It was kind of given to me and then I could develop activities and lessons off of that. So, that was something that was a little bit harder for me my first year because I knew what the end in mind was, but it was harder to think about the smaller steps to get there.

Participants also felt very unprepared to meet the expectations of Standard 7: Student Assessment and Data Analysis. Many participants felt lost in the process of giving assessments, collecting data, determining the meaning of the data, and then what to actually do with the data to help drive and improve instruction. Jenny shared,

…the district that I am in now, [district], is really digging in on data. And a lot of our instruction is all completely data driven. And so I'm finding I mean it's brand new to me. Giving all of these assessments, getting all these numbers, and figuring out what to do with them and why am I doing these things with them. I never had like an assignment or anything where I had to get data and do something with it. And so that's definitely now a learning process.

John, a secondary teacher who teaches a co-curricular subject area, stated,

I think the student assessment I was pretty good on, but the data analysis part of it, doing the pre and post and using data and that driving curriculum, that really we hinted at it in undergrad stuff and we hinted on

it when we student taught, but it wasn't to the degree that was, I think is expected now. I mean now I am good to go. Every year our data team crunches numbers. Going into it I had no idea.

As in the area of curriculum implementation, the non-core subject area teachers had a difficult time analyzing data. Monica, a secondary Family and Consumer Science (FACS) teacher, made note of the difficulty in being lumped together with other subject areas for data analysis collaboration time. "…because FACS is such a hands-on project-based learning, it's hard for me to figure out what data to use. So, this past year I had to pick, we were all in this PLC (professional learning community) and it didn't make sense. I was in the science group. And so we were trying to figure out how to compare my data to the PE teacher and to the science teacher…"

Study participants were asked to identify ways in which the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching could have better prepared them to meet the standards they felt the least prepared to meet. Some teachers believed they should have had an opportunity to take over the classroom on their own during their co-teaching experience. Teachers often felt unprepared to take on their own classroom because they always had someone during their co-teaching experience to rely on and lean on to help with classroom management and curriculum implementation. Trisha shared,

> I think at some time have the classroom to yourself. It doesn't have to be for very long. At least a week or two out of your entire student teaching. That way the classroom is completely yours. That you get the real good feel of, you know, this is what you are getting yourself into when you have to run a classroom. I think that might help…on curriculum, because that's when you start making your own lessons type instead of like building with another teacher on what they have planned. I think it might help a little bit.

One teacher, Sarah, began her student teaching experience with the intention of following the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Following the co-teaching training

with her cooperating teacher, her cooperating teacher did not want to follow the co-teaching method and so decided to have Sarah student teach utilizing the traditional student teaching model. Sarah was particularly glad that she followed the traditional student teaching model because she was forced to create lessons unilaterally. Sarah shared,

> I think the pro to traditional student teaching which she mentioned when we went to that first training, which I felt, and what my mom said being in education, was that you kind of have to fail. And student teaching gives you the opportunity to drown a little bit. And I really did. I feel like with the co-teaching you kind of hold hands and you do team work and you do it together. But I didn't have a co-teacher when I showed up at [first job]. I was by myself and so I think that it prepared me in that. Like, no, you're on your own. You're in charge, you're solo. A solo act. And so I think student teaching prepares you to do that, the traditional model. Because I drowned a little bit. She didn't hold my hand through it. She said you need to figure out what you're teaching the next three days and you need to do that like now.

Kristin, who liked her co-teaching experience, gave an assessment of her co-teaching that also, unknowingly, gave a nod to the rigor of the traditional student teaching model. Kristin elaborated,

> I think that the Co-Teaching Model gives you that, many more opportunities to collaborate with your co-teacher about, in this case the curriculum. Um, when you're student teaching, you're doing a lot of it. My friends that student taught [using traditional model] while I was co-teaching, they were doing all the planning kind of on their own. Whereas I had someone next to me the entire time. Looking through the curriculum, making sure we were meeting all the standards and things like that. I think that would be difficult to do, more difficult to do if I were student teaching [using traditional model].

Multiple study participants mentioned the issue of having all their pre-professional labs and co-teaching experience occur in the same district. As the culture of every district is different, the participants felt unprepared if their first job was in a

different district than where they did their pre-professional labs and co-teaching student

teaching experience. Ashley spoke of the lack of diversified experiences:

> I think UCM should look into broadening the districts. I think they have
> since I did it but, I mean in the sense of just curriculum. At [district] we
> were there for like three semesters. And so I got used to everything they
> did. They did Reader Writers Workshop, they did Everyday Math, it
> would have been nice to see a district that did something completely
> different. So if that is where you got a job, so you had kind of a sense of
> what they do here, what they do there, I have experienced both. Because
> school did basal readers for reading. That was like I just came from a
> Reader Writers Workshop district. So I think it would be beneficial to
> broaden the district range……But I feel like for just the culture of the
> classroom too. Seeing different kinds of students. So, [district] is a pretty
> affluent district.

Kelly also expanded on the notion that a more diversified pool of districts to

experience would be an added benefit. She commented,

> Maybe if we had been able to see not only the school that I was in and the
> teacher that I was with. But other districts or other teachers. I don't know
> if you can do that during student teaching, because you are kind of in a
> school for a reason. But, I don't know, 'cause I really felt very prepared,
> like, if I had walked into a classroom in [district that I did my student
> teaching] I felt like I could have taught perfectly. But I didn't. And so I
> kind of feel like there are some things that I missed out on because I
> wasn't really exposed to what I was really going to get into.

As noted previously, Assessment and Data Analysis was an area of weakness that

many teachers felt unprepared to initiate in their own classrooms. Brent, a first year

secondary teacher noted,

> As far as the co-teaching goes, I don't recall anything that was directed at
> [data analysis]. I don't recall a certain model or anything that was, you
> know, you and your co-teaching partner take some sort of data or
> something like that and use that in a lesson. But that was a couple of years
> ago. I don't recall exactly that. I know me personally, I struggled more
> making sure, going straight into that student teaching, I know I struggle
> more with making sure data was going to be used in a beneficial way back
> towards the students.

As such, participants gave input as to what they view as ways to improve this area of particular weakness. Having deeper or more meaningful assignments utilizing data collection and data analysis was a theme of many participants. Furthermore, it was found that teachers needed to take results of the analyzed data and shown how to properly utilize the information to drive instruction. Monica suggested,

> So for the data one I would just say that they could show us kind of what they do for their data, or how they look at that, which I don't know if that's necessarily a new and upcoming thing because I did attend their collaboration days and they just did a book study. So, I don't know necessarily, know if the university could teach us that like during like before co-teaching. Or something like that. 'Cause during co-teaching, I mean that data part is hard unless that school is actually doing data for their collaboration or things like that. I'm not exactly sure how they could tie that in unless they made it an assignment.

Jenny stated, "Giving me a reason for standard seven to get data and then do something with it. So, um kind of like having a requirement to maybe do some type in action research type thing. Like just having a reason to get data. And then not just only having it, but doing something with it."

Participants were asked to share the results of their summative evaluation from their first year of teaching as one indication of the participant's readiness to meet the requirements of the teacher evaluation process. The summative evaluation is based on a Likert Scale of one through four: 1) Ineffective, 2) Minimally Effective, 3) Effective, & 4) Highly Effective. It was noted that several teachers had districts that based their summative evaluation on a 1-5 or even a 1-7 scale. Every teacher, except one, self-identified as at least meeting expectations on their end-of-year summative evaluation. The one teacher who did not meet expectations explained in detail the reasoning behind

the low assessment on the summative evaluation. The reasoning goes back to the issue of

teachers not being prepared for assessments and analyzing data. Ashley shared,

> I learned very quickly how political a school district could be in my first year teaching. So, we were both aware that I was resigning so at that point [the principal] had notes about data collection that were completely unnecessary. That's why I mentioned the standard about data analysis because I got reamed for that for no reason really. Honestly no reason…all my students showed growth and moved on. So um, I don't know exactly what she ranked me. She said her main concern was data collection. So that's something that maybe should be reiterated in the program. I don't feel like I was completely unprepared. Because we went over types of assessments. We went over actually performing assessments. I didn't know. I think it is one of those things once you get into a school district you just have to adapt. Maybe just continuing to um, make the assessment portion available to the students, really hone in on it and focus on the fact that it's a big thing right now and that a lot of schools are really focused on data. And so you have to find a way to balance the data and just actually teaching your kids. Instead of teaching to a test. Which I felt like I had to do a lot of the time. Which is really hard. So, yeah, maybe the program could just focus on the different types of assessments and how these could be used. And how they may be used in specific districts.

Ability of Beginning Teachers to Assume Teaching Responsibilities

The new teachers were asked to identify areas of their job they believe were their

bigger responsibilities as a classroom teacher. There were three general areas which the

participants identified as their largest responsibilities. The first area was the things related

to instruction, implementation of curriculum, assessments, and data analysis. Teachers

felt the tremendous amount of pressure that coincides with high stakes testing. Kristin

commented,

> In the math world teaching an EOC class, there's a lot more responsibility to know exactly where my kids are at all times. Um, especially with Algebra 1 and all the pressure that's on that course for kids to do well and all the money that's tied to that test. Just being able to determine who's ready to take that assessment and who is not. And that could just be in my

district and last year where we were. There's a lot of pressure to make the kids ready, but also decide if they're not ready to take the assessment.

Furthermore, Brent stated, "Meeting curriculum goals is one I feel a lot of pressure to do. There's many responsibilities. That's like when I found when I was student teaching I didn't realize how many responsibilities a teacher had. But, using different instructional strategies with technology formative assessment tools."

The second area that was identified as a major area of responsibility came from those teachers who taught a co-curricular class at the secondary level. The pressure and lack of confidence that came from taking on the duties of their particular subject area was duly noted. Elaine, a Family and Consumer Science teacher, shared,

> This is FACS-specific. The grocery shopping and the supply inventory and the lab safety. Those are things that are massive in our classroom. It may not seem like it to somebody else. But if you botch that, your whole room is off, supply management. I teach housing as well and making sure that at the beginning of the year I didn't know I had stencils for laying out floor plans. After I knew I had stencils it was a whole new ball game for teaching. I was like, "This was great!" But making sure like the tools and everything are there. I'm like, "Oh wait, this is fantastic!" This is something that was already laid out for me in co-teaching; it wasn't like, "Here, you have a brand new classroom and pretend and start from scratch. What would you need? What kind of tools? What would you request? You have a $1000 budget to spend, how are you going to spend it?" That wasn't something the teachers walked you through. What their thought process was. The first year teacher, I was like, "I don't know. I have $1000 to spend and I don't know what to spend it on because I'm doing just fine with what I've got." But not thinking to ask those questions when you are in a place when somebody could've assisted. That would be a really great idea. I know the equipment is going to need to be replaced in the future, that rotation. Because everyone's got their system and we're just starting to develop ours because the department is pretty much brand new.

Luke, a theater teacher, stated,

> Now I'm actually in charge of a program to whereas I wasn't when I was co-teaching and now I'm in charge of the theater department here. I run all the financials, I run all the shows, I run all, making sure everything works

together. So, when I was student teaching, [co-teacher] was in charge of all that and she's like, this is what I have to do so get ready 'cause it's going to happen to you as well.

The third general area that participants identified as a major responsibility was in the area of classroom management and having the entire classroom to themselves. Trisha commented, "Definitely classroom management is a huge difference from student teaching to running your own classroom…A couple of classes could have been more helpful at UCM to prepare for some situations." Ann also commented,

Just overall being able to manage your own classroom. So when you walk into a classroom your first year you're going to have to start right off the bat with assessing your students, monitoring their grades. And I feel like, obviously you have a lot more responsibility as a whole. And just following their data trends. Um, so having to see where your students are at and seeing if you need to move on from there or stay back. That's something, in student teaching I knew you had to do it. But then I also had the teacher there with me that would be like, "Well, you could do this or you could do that." So just being able to think on your feet and doing it on your own versus having someone there to guide you.

Jenny shared,

Definitely identifying all students and their learning needs instead of whenever I was in the Co-Teaching Model, only having a handful of students and so now I have a whole classroom. I felt like I only had to work with the below level students while my co-teacher had the higher level. So, like she wanted me to find their needs and only focus on them and only focusing on getting them up to grade level expectations. To whereas now I have an entire classroom. I can't just split it up and give rest of the class to someone else type thing. That's definitely the biggest one. I mean just you had a whole classroom to yourself.

Participants were asked to tell how the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching prepared them to take on those responsibilities they believed were their larger ones. Again, classroom management was one area of responsibility that participants frequently identified as a major concern. As such, the participants shared how the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching prepared them for classroom management issues. Some

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teachers believe that the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching helped prepare them for

the classroom management of their own classroom. Trisha commented,

> I think it helped a little bit having somebody back you up when you are trying to not necessarily discipline a student but try to get them back on task or something like that. That your co-teacher is also there to enforce the classroom rules even when you as a student teacher are gone. That way they can get into a routine and also you've got that kind of back up to help you, I think.

Elaine stated,

> The teachers that I were under were super organized. They were fantastic with what they did. They knew their students, they knew their classrooms, their structures. I think classroom management styles I picked up a lot from them. I was much better prepared for my first year of teaching because of that. I think they were fantastic at making sure that they had eyes on the kids at all times. That they had their systems in place. That was one thing that they did extremely well. And I took a whole lot from them.

However, not all teachers felt that the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching prepared

them for the classroom management issues they faced upon taking over their own

classroom. Karen shared,

> I believe that co-teaching may have lacked a little bit in classroom management, like I said, because you have two teachers and then you walk into a room where it's just you. So, I'm used to having a second person kind of able to be the bad cop to my good cop. And I had to be both. If that's how you would think of co-teaching. It's how she introduced it [to] me. So I feel like they did a good job of preparing for what could have happened. But then whenever I walked into my own room, in my own area and field it was a little scary to see the kids walking towards you and you know it's just you sitting in the room.

> The co-curricular course teachers had mixed reviews for the Co-Teaching Model

in preparing them for their large responsibility of taking over their programs. Luke said,

> She really, she laid everything out. She didn't hide anything from me. If I had any sort of question she knew. And I think, she had been teaching 14

years before I even stepped in the classroom. So, and that's the reason I wanted to co-teach with her. Was because I knew she would be able to help me. And not hide anything from me. Tell me the good the bad, the ugly of what I was going to get myself into. Um, I modeled my classes, what I taught my classes, loosely what she did in hers. So, she gave me her calendars, her curriculum calendars at the very beginning of my student teaching. She's like, "This is what I teach. You can teach it or you cannot teach it. If you want to do something else, go for it…see if it works." She's like, "If you want to steal this from me, perfect. If you just want to take a few parts…do it." So she was able to just show me, "This is what's worked for me, adjust it, or do it exactly how I do it. But it's up to you what you want to teach." So I was able to steal a lot of her ideas that really worked whenever I taught them in co-teaching. Because one, I enjoyed teaching them, and two, the kids enjoyed learning that material. So it wasn't her saying or me saying I'm teaching this because I just want to do it. She really listened to the kids, and we really listened to the kids on what they wanted to learn and we adjusted.

John was less enthusiastic about the preparation that he received in preparing him to take over his Ag/FFA program. John said, "The greenhouse, that was kind of hit the ground running. I had to figure that out. I didn't get a whole lot of experience with that. I got the lab experience but they didn't do a plant sale like we do. So, doing those activities helped me implement those things not necessarily my first year, but my second year, my third year and going into my fourth. We have had quite a bit."

Participants were asked to elaborate on what about the co-teaching experience could have better prepared them take on the responsibilities of their own classroom. Having the opportunity to be in charge of the classroom by themselves was a reoccurring theme. Addie stated, "I would say letting the [student teacher] take over the classroom. I got to after she was on maternity leave. But that was not during co-teaching. We did a lot together. I never lesson planned on my own. There were times where I taught, and she watched and observed, where she would step in. Just kind of give me the whole class." Ann commented, "Maybe letting me have a little more influence on when I was in the

classroom. Actually doing it. Um, since there was someone to guide you, maybe if they

just kind of just gave you full hands and said, 'Hey, this is what you need to do.' That

could have been a better way." Trisha commented, "…'cause with that co-teaching, you

know, you're playing off each other instead of having the classroom to yourself. It

helped, but I don't think there was enough time for like a one on, just you know, you just

the classroom instead of two teachers. I like the Co-Teaching Model but kind of like the

traditional, too, at the same time." Elaine said,

> I think that the teachers should have already been through it, had they
> tossed you in the middle and said, "Okay, I'm not going to help you at all.
> How are you going to do this?" So, you could ask those questions and get
> that information. Or left me on my own to do a grocery shopping list
> instead of holding my hand and spoon feeding the whole way. Try and
> dump me in the water. I think that would have been highly beneficial. It
> could have been controlled drowning instead of mass chaos.

Each participant was asked to identify something that they were not prepared to

take on when taking over their own classroom. Many teachers were not prepared to take

on the classroom management of their own classroom, whether that be in managing

student behaviors, setting up classroom procedures, or handling the daily administrative

duties of a classroom teacher. Amy shared,

> I would say that the beginning of the school year, since I student taught in
> the spring, like setting my classroom up and getting all of that kind of
> started. I didn't really get a chance to see that work with my teacher. To
> do that, so that was a little bit on my own. So in the planning process, in
> the beginning of the school year, I had to ask a lot of questions.

Luke commented,

> I think the one thing I wasn't prepared for was all of the behavioral
> classroom management. And I think a lot of teachers would probably say
> that coming out of student teaching or co-teaching. Because you have
> another co-teacher in there who does know all the kids, who will step in
> when they see you struggling a little bit. But I allowed her to step in, when

I was looking back, I should have handled it myself. And been like, "Hey, this is going to be uncomfortable but I'm going to do it anyway."

Addie stated,

> I would say in my first year I struggled with setting classroom procedures and just the overall classroom management for the first couple of months because [during student teaching] I had gone into a room that it was already established. So getting to do that on my own was difficult. I would say because that was just something at the beginning I was just watching. I wasn't able to help set that for the kids. So it was more difficult on my own to do that.

Kathy shared an interesting perspective on the daily administrative duties of the classroom teacher:

> I wasn't prepared for the money responsibility. The kind of behind the scenes more of. Not the teaching. I felt super prepared to come into the teaching and everything. But when the students brought money in, I never had, or like the technical stuff like for tee-shirts, and for lunch order, and that kind of stuff. I never did any of that.

An area which new teachers were not prepared to take on was the area of serving on committees. As such, it is interesting to note that often school administrators take advantage of the new teachers and place them on too many committees or actually put them in charge of committees as committee chairs. Kay shared,

> For some odd reason my first year teaching I was named the Safety Chair for my whole building. And I think it was kind of like you are the newest one and no one wants to do it. Um, and when I was first asked I thought I was going, just going to one meeting because the person that did it couldn't go. So I was really unprepared for that. Because when I went to the first meeting then I found out that I was the Chair for the building and I would be for the rest of the year, and I still am. And I feel a lot more comfortable with it now.

Monica commented,

> Maybe like the not extracurricular, but extra responsibilities that the school district give you. So like committees and things like that and not necessarily so, obviously, so schools have lots of committees. But just being aware of those because I feel like student teaching maybe just

prepares you for the actual teaching but doesn't prepare you necessarily for those extra duties like being on the data committee or PD committee, or what even those things are because a lot that I didn't know until I actually went through some of those words or what those words are or not even necessarily having experience during co-teaching but knowing what you will have to do that's beyond. So having 10 hours of PD extra. Well, what things can you do before that, so that you can get that head start and what should you be looking for [in] those things.

There were two areas that were mentioned by participants that were brought up only once, but this researcher felt it important to share these in light of previous answers to other questions and the changing environment of education in general. These two areas are data and technology. Ashley, speaking on the area of data, shared,

> But I do feel like we were not as aware, I've talked to my friends who were with me in the program too. We were not as aware of how data driven the education system has become or is becoming. And so we had time to plan all of these awesome lessons and these really interactive lessons, yes that's possible, but not always. And so the things that we got to do I don't feel were as realistic as when you're in the classroom by yourself. You have five assessments to get done in one week, and does that make sense? I feel like it was a little bit unrealistic because we were not responsible for any testing that was supposed to be done, or putting in any of the scores and going back and doing, it's so time consuming. And you don't see that when you are student teaching because you get to do the fun stuff. You get to plan the week long lesson and your teacher is the one that has to figure out how that's going to work. So I feel like that's one thing that I wasn't prepared for.

In today's world of expanding technology in the classroom and many school districts moving to one-to-one technology programs, Sarah's statement is timely. Sarah stated,

> I felt most unprepared technology-wise. And I think that the reason that I was unprepared was because it was not taught in undergrad. We didn't experiment with a lot of new technology tools. I don't think every teacher has the privilege of being one-to-one. So it may not have been a priority to them to teach that in undergrad. But I felt unprepared because the district

that I landed in really does use it. And my particular teacher that I student taught under did not use it. So when I got here I felt behind in technology.

Participants were asked to share what particular strength their cooperating teacher instilled in them as a beginning teacher. Student relationships was something that several teachers reflected on. Sarah stated, "Which she instilled with me also was just relationship with the students. And that's been just continued to be my strength. Is that I have a professional yet personal relationship with each student." Luke commented,

> The strength she instilled in me and is still continuing to instill in me is every student is going to come in with different ideas, with different opinions, with different levels of love at home, with different levels of support at home. But it's our job to make sure that they get everything that they need because we are going to be sending them out in the real world. And we need to make sure we are setting them up for success. Even though they may never do theater again in their life, that they can actually appreciate art, and appreciate others' opinions about it. That's one thing that she's really instilled in me. And I think that's why she had such successful relationships with her students is because they trusted her so much with all that information. They trusted that she had their best interests at heart so that's one thing that I've tried to instill in my students as well as, no matter how mad I may get at you and no matter [how mad] you get at me. I'm still here and I have your back no matter what.

Likewise, participants were asked about what area they felt they needed more guidance on from their cooperating teacher. By far the largest deficit in the beginning teachers' repertoire was classroom management. Ann shared,

> Just classroom management. 'Cause once you step into the spotlight of working and, like the Co-Teaching Model you don't take over right away. So your cooperating teacher kind of builds that atmosphere at the beginning. Now I did help with that. But then coming in on day one having that classroom management and knowing how to set up was somewhat of a challenge.

Kathy stated,

> Classroom management. Having, now this group, now different groups you see a whole bunch of different things every single year. So, classroom management was hard because I had a really good group student teaching.

So I was like, "Oh I have this classroom management down, man, they're good." It's not always like that. So maybe, it was just hard, that was hard.

Beginning Teachers' Views of the Teaching Profession

Participants were genuinely surprised by the amount of time it took to accomplish the daily tasks of being a teacher. Not only the classroom time, but also the amount of personal time demanded of the profession. Ashley stated, "I did not realize how much of a teacher's personal time they use to make sure they are doing their job. I didn't realize how much time they spent in meetings." Kelly also stated that she was surprised about "how many meetings you have to go to." Addie commented, "I would say just how much time is spent on lesson planning. When we lesson planned for classes it was not the same." Ann shared, "There's a lot of outside time that goes into teaching." Sarah was surprised in a different way about time, in the fact that she always had to be watching the clock to pace her day and lessons. Sarah said,

> I was surprised at the time. I couldn't believe how much the clock dominated my lesson. And how much it dominated my every day. Like I was always cognizant of the time. It took seven minutes to do that, it took eight minutes to do this and that kind of shocked me. And how in my beginning it seemed like I flew through a lesson in about three and a half minutes. And then I had 15 minutes and they were all staring at me. So the time thing really got to me.

Teachers were also surprised about the seemingly endless tasks that teachers have to do on a regular basis. Rayleene was surprised about "how much extra stuff there is that they don't tell you about in college." Sarah was also surprised about the extra responsibilities associated with the teaching profession. Sarah commented,

> …and then there are the one million responsibilities a teacher takes on that you don't know until you're thrown into it. Like attendance, IEPs, 504s, absent kids, differentiated lessons, kids that are way behind, kids that are way too smart. And so then all of, like attendance, even though it's small it's something you have to do every single hour. And it's something that

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people don't realize you have to do. Or like, yeah, just all the little responsibilities teachers, that teachers have. Like answering every email, booking library, booking computers, making sure to make this announcement, just all the different hats you wear.

Ashley shared, "...I didn't know a lot of the process with [special education] either. I learned very quickly with that. I went through testing with a couple of my students."

Participants were asked to identify a situation or attribute of the teaching profession that they were not prepared for and how they handled it. Two main areas of concern surfaced for the teachers. The first was the issue of dealing with parents. Elaine stated,

> My first parent blaming me for the kid failing. I was like, "Wait, this doesn't make sense." Parents at the end of the semester threw a fit that I wouldn't accommodate the final so that her child could pass because her child couldn't understand it. Well I could tell you that the kid didn't understand it all semester. So she wasn't going to understand it now. She didn't put forth effort. Walking through emails with the parent and carbon copying the principal, "This is what I am doing, this is how I am handling it if it gets to you." But that was a lot of, "Ok, mom, how do I handle this? How do I handle this? What do I do?" Which is really nice to have that at home. "Oh my gosh, this just came through. Am I going to be in trouble or how is this going to work?" And having somebody to bounce that off of first year. Not everybody gets their mother. Sometimes that comes from tough love. But having that one person in the building who knows it. Who's been there a while and who understand, the system and understands parents and you can bounce that off.

John commented,

> It was interesting to see when you hold a kid accountable how parents will act. Especially when it comes to grades. One year I had an FFA officer I held them accountable to their conduct, and their parent didn't like [it]. And that parent ended coming into my classroom on my plan period unannounced. So that was…just learning how to handle parents and how to handle officer teams and things like that.

Ann shared,

> I think that one thing that they don't really prepare you for in college is maybe like even just that parent interaction. Even when it comes to parent/teacher conferences, um it's something that you just kind of, I know you have to learn as you go. But, some sort of simulation or scenarios would definitely help because you never know how you are going to face those until you get to them. But, that's just kind of hard to know.

The second situation that teachers faced that they were not prepared for was dealing with extreme student behaviors. Trisha commented,

> Last year was my first year. I had a student cuss at me. It was like, "Alright, let's go to the office." And so as we walked out the door he slammed it and decided to cuss again. I was like, "Alright, let's go now!" And I'm not very far from the office so it was quick and everybody else in here was dead silent. Like they didn't know what to think. I think the hard thing is having a student do that and then trying to get everybody else on task afterwards.

Jenny relayed a situation that occurred at her school,

> I had a student who, um, ran away, like didn't get on the bus. And ran away and we could not find her for an hour or so. So having to contact parents, and parents don't answer their phones. And so we're stuck. I mean I just felt like it was my responsibility because she didn't get on the school bus. And just having that feeling of not knowing where your student was. Anything with parent contact I always had help last year with parent contact when there was an issue with a student in my room. And I felt like I should have been better prepared for that. Handling it, the office contacted me saying she never got on the bus. And so I worked together with our building principal and secretary, and mean we went out and drove around and all of this. And finally contacted parents. Parents came in, student came in, and then we together decided the consequences for her.

Jenny explained how the student was found, "We were driving around. She just went to a friend's house."

Karen gave an account of a very serious situation in her classroom that she experienced:

Something I thought I would never have to deal with is mental health education. Like being a counselor as well as a teacher. In my program we don't have counselors. So if student needs to talk to you they are allowed to. I have all the training for mental health. But I wasn't ever trained that in college. I had that in professional development. I had a student come up and try to kill herself on my watch. And that was…she tried to cut herself. She had a steak knife in her lunch bag. Um and because of our program being what it is, we were in trailers. And she just walked in the door with it and said she was going to do it. And I tried to restrain her because I'm Mandt-ed trained. And um yeah, it was scary. And I never thought I would have to do that and I did.

There were two general areas that teachers stated could have been done differently during their co-teaching experience to better prepare them for areas that they were surprised about. The first area would be to observe more, whether that be actually more observation time in the classroom or observing particular processes and behaviors of the teachers in particular situations. Trisha, whose surprise situation involved an extreme student behavior stated,

I know it's hard to say, "Yes, I wanted that kind of situation when I was student teaching." You really don't want kids to do that period. I think maybe just different behavior issues like more common ones than like other teachers might deal with that a certain teacher might never see. I think that might help a little bit. Because certain teachers don't have a whole lot of discipline issues but you know, one that's right next door may have a lot of problems with kids. And so I think maybe seeing different teachers, like co-teaching with different teachers might give you a better behavior background.

Elaine, who had to deal with a parent issue and spent a lot of time communicating to the parent through email, said,

I probably could have paid attention more to what the teachers were dealing with through their email. But at the same time we were trying to soak all of that in. So having known to pay attention to traumatic situations instead of letting somebody else deal with them. So when the teachers were freaking out or when they were dealing with something stressful, they would kind of blow off their fuse for just a second. Paying attention to what they were doing in those moments would have been beneficial. But instead, it was like I have five minutes to catch up on this.

Kelly, who had a particularly difficult student that she was trying to have a breakthrough with commented,

> I don't know…just give me some more techniques to use for kids that are difficult. I really didn't see. I mean I saw some kids that were struggling but not to the extent that I have now. I think it probably would have also helped me if I had been in different grades too. Not just one grade. And I know in the past people have been in multiple classrooms. And since they switched to the Co-Teaching Model they've tried to keep you in one classroom. Which I like that because I got to see the class through the whole time. But, it was also hard for me because I didn't see the younger kids when I was actually student teaching and then I started teaching first grade which is very different than third grade. So the techniques that you use are completely different.

The second area that teachers felt would be beneficial to help them in their surprise situation was that of dealing with parents. John, who had a confrontational meeting with a parent, said,

> I think if I would have been [student teaching] in the fall like when my school district that I was under had their parent teacher conferences, they do a spring and fall now. They implemented that after the year I left. Being a part of those conferences and seeing how they handle parents could help my parent/teacher conference. You get the good parents but you might have one that comes in that, that's not so calm and collected. Just seeing that.

Jenny felt as if her cooperating teacher handled all of the parent contact issues while co-teaching, which left her particularly unprepared to communicate with parents. Jenny commented,

> Definitely I feel like my [cooperating] teacher always had parent contact. So if I had an issue or concern with a student, my [cooperating] teacher took care of it. I never directly contacted parents. So I feel like if I had the responsibility to do that, if she made me, say, "If you see him not reading at grade level, you need to be the one to contact parents." And so I think having that role would have definitely made me feel more comfortable having parent contact and communication.

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Building positive professional relationships is essential in today's education environment. As such, participants were asked whether or not they felt like the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching prepared them for the relationship aspect of the teaching profession. Teachers were asked to elaborate on their experiences regarding building peer-to-peer relationships, teacher-to-student relationships, and teacher-to-principal relationships. All participants who participated in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching reported they believed they were very well prepared for peer-to-peer relationships as well as teacher-to-student relationships. Kristin commented,

> So peer-to-peer, like I said, we spent a lot of time having professional conversations talking through what needed to be done, how it needed to be done, when it needed to be done. Um, I mean daily, but also hourly. I'm completely comfortable with walking up to any teacher in any building that I've been in and say, "Hey, do you know about this?" Just asking for help I guess. That's a lot, a big thing that I think there are teachers that are afraid to do. Because they don't want people to see them as weak or unintelligent or whatever.

Anita stated,

> For me, since I am still teaching under that model, we use the Co-Teaching Model at our current school. I feel it really helps a lot in the sense that since I did co-teach with two other professionals I was able to kind of figure out how to collaborate with two others who had different ideas and who came from different backgrounds and different things like that. It prepared me in a sense of collaboration with other people.

Kay elaborated,

> I'm, well I think, I'm a go-getter, so um, during my co-teaching experience I kind of took every opportunity I could to get to know other teachers, and I, you know, asked if I could come observe them while teaching different things I knew to be some of their strengths or things like that. So, when I co-taught I tried to kind of get my foot in the door with all the different people because even if it was something I didn't want to implement I still wanted to get the experience and the perspective of how they taught things. So with my relationships with other people I really strongly feel like I was seen like an equal in my grade level because I didn't hesitate if my cooperating teacher wasn't there or wasn't saying

something. I still gave my two cents. I still asked questions. I still went if she was gone that day, I still went to try to figure out you know why a student was upset or what was going on at home with a social worker. It's like I still tried to bridge the gaps as much as I could. And so I didn't feel like, so I felt like by the end of the semester, I was a staff member in that building too. I felt like I had the respect to everybody else too. I never approached someone that said something negative about, "Well you really don't work here." I never fell into any of those situations. So, it was really easy for me because when, then when I started I already had a lot of those relationships. And I didn't feel closed off to any of the teachers. I felt like I could go and ask them anything or other staff members in the building and things like that.

And in regard to teacher-to-student relationships, Brent shared,

Teacher-student wise I think in some cases it does lend itself better to one-on-one. For instance, when he was teaching part of the group and I was teaching the other part of the group. Maybe these guys over here are excelling in this area and the kids that I have are still struggling to understand the main concept. Then that works out really, really well 'cause it's able to catch those guys up while still keeping these guys going and cognitively [challenging].

In discussing the benefits of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching in preparing teachers for teacher to student relationships, Jenny commented,

Definitely important. I think without a positive teacher/student relationship, you don't have a classroom full of learners. They won't respect you. I feel like I spend a lot of time getting to know my students. So then they can realize that I really am here for them. And so that they actually want to learn. They don't feel like they have to be learning.

Trisha also spoke highly of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching in preparing her to have positive professional relationships with students. Trisha said,

I think it was awesome. Getting to know your students. 'Cause I know, like as a younger professional, like you kind of try and build those barriers especially if you are teaching high school just to like keep your distance. Not to have a really close relationship with students. But they kind of teach you like, "Hey, it's okay, it's okay." To like notice like if a student is kind of out of whack that day. You can really pick up on those character traits.

As far as teacher-to-principal relationships, teachers had mixed reviews on their preparedness to have a positive relationship with their building principals. Those teachers who did not feel like they were prepared identified that it was more due to the building principal showing little interest in getting to know the student teacher.

Ashley stated,

> We really didn't talk to the principal too much when [we] were student teaching. The principal that I had, he was nice. But he did not even know my name by the end of it. So it was really weird. He actually hired one of the girls that we, that was teaching with us. So he focused more on her than the others of us. So that's kind of odd.

Karen commented,

> I didn't have the greatest experience with that at [said school]. So I would say it really didn't help at all. But I do that very well now. Just because I'm able to articulate what I am thinking and say what I need to say. The principal didn't want it. She kind of ignored my existence in the school. They have assistant principals and they just all were so wrapped up in getting ready for testing and you know all their responsibilities. They didn't come in and talk to me at all. Even when like the lady would come in to observe my teaching or [cooperating teacher's] teaching. It was my co-teacher, it wasn't ever, "Here, let me talk to you about what I think of you." She always would pull [cooperating teacher] aside and talk to her. But just kind of ignored my existence.

Those teachers that had a more positive experience with their building principal during their co-teaching experience felt prepared to interact with their building principal upon taking on their first teaching assignment.

Sharon stated,

> The principal where I student taught, I don't know if the college asks them to do those things, but she came to me and said, "I'm going to come in and I'm going to observe you. You need to be prepared for this in case I want to hire you if we have an opening at the end of your student teaching. I want to see what you can do." She warned me, she didn't just show up. I knew when she was coming. But I interacted with her so when I started teaching here I felt really comfortable talking to the principal. It wasn't like, "Oh my gosh, it's the boss, I've never talked to them." So um, again

it could be different depending on what school. And obviously if you're in a really big school district they're very busy, and there's 10 student teachers in their building. They're not going to have a lot of time. So I don't really think the college could have done more other than just maybe ask them, which they may have.

Kelly shared,

…just the value of having that person that knows what's expected of you and building a good relationship with your administration. And it's different in my school because I already knew my principal. And we have a very close relationship because it's a very small school. But I did learn that at [school district where student taught] like how important it is to build a strong relationship with your administration and how much they can help you when you need something and how they can guide you.

Teachers' Perception of Completing MoPTA Tasks

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education implemented a new process by which to evaluate and certify beginning teachers. Many of the participants in this study went through the previous process of completing a Work Sample and taking the PRAXIS test to meet certification requirements. As a result, very few of the participants actually completed the new process of student teacher evaluation and certification testing utilizing the MoPTA. Of those that did, participants were asked to share how the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching helped in preparing them to complete the four major tasks the MoPTA process requires. Those four tasks are as follows:

Task 1: Knowledge of Students and the Learning Environment: [The teacher candidate] will demonstrate the knowledge and skills that pertain to [their] understanding of the context of [their] classroom in regard to [their] students, the school, and the community; and [they] will identify implications of these factors on instruction and student learning.

Task 2: Assessment and Data Collection to Measure and Inform

Student Learning: [The teacher candidates] will demonstrate [their]

understanding, analysis and application of assessment and data collection

to measure and inform student learning.

Task 3: Designing Instruction for Student Learning: [The teacher

candidates] will demonstrate [their] ability to develop instruction,

including the use of technology, to facilitate student learning.

Task 4: Implementing and Analyzing Instruction to Promote

Student Learning: [The teacher candidates] will demonstrate [their] ability

to plan and implement a lesson using standards-based instruction. [They]

will also show how [they] are able to adjust instruction for the whole class

as well as for individual students within the class. Finally, [they] will

demonstrate an understanding of reflective practice (MoPTA, Oct. 2015,

pp. 11-18).

In discussing her experience with the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching as it

related to being prepared to complete the MoPTA tasks, Trisha stated,

> I don't know if it really helped that much at all. There was a class I took in
> college we did kind of like a practice run through it so we knew what we
> were looking for. But, that co-teaching, I was more focused on the
> teaching part. And, I'm not saying I wasn't focused on the MoPTA
> part…but while I was at school I didn't really pay attention to a whole lot
> of what the MoPTA wanted. I was more focused on the teaching than
> trying to fill out that paperwork. So then when I would go home at night
> that's when I would think about, "Okay I did this today," or "I asked these
> types of questions." I was, I don't know if it was just me, I was more
> focused on the teaching than the paperwork behind it.

Ann commented,

So I took the PRAXIS once right before it was done with. And that was like my Junior year of college. And so I didn't finish, like I hadn't taken all the courses. And I didn't barely pass it. But then I had to take the MoPTA and then I passed it. So I feel like it was beneficial since I took the PRAXIS and the MoPTA there wasn't a lot of information out there at that point. So we kind of just had to, what we had already known about the PRAXIS. So we did complete the tasks in sections throughout, so that was beneficial versus saving it at the end. So as we went through the semester we had certain timelines when they were due. Then we took the test at the end.

The participants who completed the MoPTA process were asked to identify the biggest challenge in completing the four major tasks. Ashley commented,

Maybe giving the assessments because we had to find time to do that. My grade level was MAP testing too. So trying to find the time before they started testing to get all of our tests in that we needed to do before the big thing. We had to do a pre-test on what they knew, like their prior knowledge and then teach the lesson, teach the whole unit, and then do the post test on it. Then we had to do a whole data chart on it and stuff like that and analyze all the data.

Anita shared,

Time. Though I wasn't working, student teaching is like a full time job, just like the teacher. When you leave the school, yes I am a student it feels like work all day long for eight hours so when I go home I don't necessarily want to work on this right now. It helped me when the teachers had meetings or my co-teacher because she did a lot of activities with a girl's group they had at the school. Whenever she stayed for that I would commit to staying. I never helped her because I didn't know the programs. I would just sit in the classroom and work on my tasks. Sometimes I had to really force myself and stay and do those things. That I would, I would…because it feels like a full time job. Kind of like now I am working and getting my Master's. Time is something…especially coming from the undergrad program where you are having two or three hours of class a day and then you know you are on Christmas break and then the next semester is like every day, eight hours a day, is a complete change for me. Time is definitely something I had to get together.

More than half of the participants who completed the MoPTA process felt like there was not really anything that could have been done differently utilizing the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching to help in the completion of the MoPTA tasks. Ann

stated, "I don't know if there's anything necessary to help me complete it." Trisha

concurred, "I don't know that it could have."

Those same few participants were asked to elaborate on the question as to what

extent their cooperating teacher provided help to the participants in completing the four

required tasks. Anita said,

> She was really there a lot for advice as well as guidance whenever I had a
> question or, you know, I was, because I'm a planner. For me doing the
> tasks, I would always write out an outline or idea on how I wanted to
> construct a task so I would always go to her and have her look over before
> I did anything with it, before I actually implemented anything with the
> students. I always had her go over it and like I said earlier she was always
> very truthful. I wouldn't say blunt. It was she was really open. She was
> very honest about that. At first it was a little shocking. I wasn't used to
> that and coming through the program you just get a lot of advice on work
> and things like that. A lot of it is a lot too. Now with the online classes and
> the hybrid classes some of the interaction you get from your, as far, work
> is always is written on your paper or on a discussion board and things like
> that. Sitting face to face with her and hearing that honesty…it was a little
> surprising at first, but as time went on I began to complete parts of those
> tasks. I really did appreciate it.

Ann shared,

> She didn't have a huge role. Because a lot of it was stuff I had to fill out
> and self-reflection. I could ask her questions here and there. But she was
> so far out of college that she didn't really, it wasn't current to her. So she
> would help me every once in a while, but I feel like I completed most of it.

Participants were given the opportunity to share anything that they wanted to for

the benefit of providing feedback to the University of Central Missouri in regards to the

Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Sharon provided some very important feedback

that needs to be highlighted,

> I think it's important that you're not just paired with a teacher that's
> willing to have a student. I hope that this is how it is. I hope they have to
> have, they obviously are evaluated by their administrators. I hope it has to
> be a teacher that meets a certain level. Because I feel like if I didn't have
> such an outstanding facilitating teacher where I student taught, I don't

think that I would have survived my first year. I think I would have wanted to crawl into a ball and cry and quit. Because I feel like she did an outstanding job. [Supervising Teacher] told me right before I graduated, "If you need a job reference…" she gave me her personal cell phone number and said tell them to call me. Because it's not often that I feel like a teacher is ready to walk straight into a classroom. And she told me that she said without reservations she felt I was ready. In a lot of ways that really helped me. Because everyone questions whether they're good enough or whether they're going to do a good job. So really making sure that teachers have a quality teacher that they're going to work with. Not to talk poorly of my grade level partner but she actually has a student teacher this year. One of the things she said she needed help was, was dealing with chaotic situations in the classroom and they actually nicknamed my grade level partner the Catastrophizer. She doesn't know that but because everything that is slightly a problem becomes a catastrophe. And I feel like that paring probably isn't appropriate. I would not have wanted to been paired with her as a college student. She was my mentor my first two years teaching here. And I feel like a lot of the questions I needed answered I had to go elsewhere to get. So had I been paired with her I don't feel like I would have been prepared to walk into a classroom. So I think they really need to do, she's [student teacher] from UCM, so a better job screening their teachers. Just because they taught 20 years doesn't mean they're a good teacher.

Kelly felt like her student teaching experience was mostly positive, although it was a little difficult transitioning into a small school environment. Kelly shared,

I think it overall was a really good experience. Like I think because I was one of the newer people to the Co-Teaching Model like we were one of the first years. It wasn't like solidified exactly. And so there was a lot of bumps along the road that probably could have been avoided. But we were the group that got to try it out. So, I think overall it was a good experience. I think it's a good change from the way they used to do it. Because I think it's important that we get into the classroom and work with the kids from the very beginning instead of just sitting and watching. Um, I think it really overall prepared me well for what I am doing. The only that that really wasn't good was that I was in third grade in a big school and the same year I transitioned into a first grade in a small school and it's a very different environment. But I think overall I felt very confident and prepared for what I was getting myself into. And I felt like I understood the expectations of me as a teacher. I felt like I had a good relationship with the people that I worked with during student teaching. And that helped me be prepared to work with the people that I'm working with now. So I think overall it was a really good experience.

Ashley stated,

> I really liked the Co-Teaching Model. Though I do feel like it is a bit
> unrealistic. It does foster good peer relationships. And I think that's
> awesome. It helps you bounce ideas off of somebody. As a student it's
> really helpful to have somebody there to swoop in there if you are getting
> lost in a lesson or something like that. But when you're teaching on your
> own, you're on your own. So I think that's where it's kind of harder to
> transition. I didn't feel that way necessarily. Because I felt pretty confident
> in the classroom. But there are some teachers that graduate or students
> who graduate and get a job and they don't. So that's my only downside to
> the Co-Teaching Model. I had a lot of fun with it. I was paired with a great
> teacher. Some people weren't though. So that was also a hard thing if you
> had two personalities that don't mesh and you have to teach with them.
> That's hard. But I would say my experience at UCM was much better than
> my experience my first year. But I think the most important thing that we
> really got, that time with the students and we really got to learn to be a
> teacher. I feel like I had more experience in my program specifically than
> the other elementary students that did not do what we did.

Rayleene commented on needing a more district-level viewpoint as well as more
accountability during co-teaching. Rayleene said,

> I really liked, I loved my co-teaching experience. Now that I am a teacher,
> I do think they left some of the things out, like, combining it with not just
> the classroom but more of the school and the school district. And just
> having more pieces of information about that. Just so you know what it's
> like to work for a district. Because you're not working for the school or
> even the grade level. You're working for the district. So I didn't really
> realize that. And so now I know. And one more thing. I felt like my UCM
> supervisor was super nice and helpful. But he wasn't like there, he was
> just there, he didn't give me any critical feedback. I don't think. He went
> through the indicators with me or whatever standards he was looking at.
> And he just told me, "You're good, you're good, you're good. You're like
> on the good side of middle. Which is what we want. You're good." And
> just giving me confidence, which was good. He should have been more
> critical with me. Much more critical. He should have been like, "I know
> you're a student teacher, but come on." But that's what I would have
> wanted.

Summary

Chapter Four includes the reporting of the findings from the participant
interviews. Participant responses were organized and grouped according to each

research question respectively. Each individual research question was provided

support by the findings. More specific answers to each research question will be

provided in Chapter Five as well as themes that emerged.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conceptual Theory

Bruffee (1999) identified collaborative learning as a method by which to educate adult learners in a college or university setting. The student teaching experience at the University of Central Missouri (UCM) is an extension of the university setting that moves away from the campus and into a real world setting of K-12 public schools. The process of adults becoming teachers occurs generally over a four-year time frame. Bruffee (1999) explained the necessity of reacculturating adult learners from their previous knowledge base and culture to that of the discipline that the students have chosen to pursue.

At the University of Central Missouri, the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching is being utilized as the precipice of that reacculturating process. By having veteran practitioners in the field of K-12 education work collaboratively with the prospective teachers, they help to develop skills in professional language, processes, curriculum, disciplinary techniques, and the organizational structure of the K-12 setting. As veteran teachers it becomes their job "…to find out how, in some way and in some measure, to reacculturate the students who had placed themselves in our charge" (Bruffee, 1999, p. 5).

Bruffee (1999), in discussing the beginning knowledge base of adult learners coming into the university setting, brought forth the idea that students are "oppressed" from the greater community of America because they were

…acculturated to those perfectly valid and coherent but entirely local

communities alone [which] had severely limited their freedom. It had

prepared them for social, political, and economic relations of only the

narrowest sort. It had closed them out of relations with other communities,

including the broader, highly diverse integrated American (or for that

matter international) community at large… (p. 6-7).

Participants in this study mirrored these thoughts by Bruffee (1999). Participants

who did both their student teaching and pre-professional work in the same school district

were acculturated to that specific school district or building and found it difficult to

transition to another school district or building following their co-teaching experience.

Kelly stated, "Maybe if we had been able to see not only the school that I was in and the

teacher that I was with, but other districts or other teachers." She continued, "…'cause I

really felt very prepared, like, if I had walked into a classroom in [district that I did my

student teaching] I felt like I could have taught perfectly. But I didn't. And so I kind of

feel like there are some things that I missed out on because I wasn't really exposed to

what I was really going to get into." Beginning teachers needed more diverse

opportunities to broaden their experiences of different educational communities.

Bruffee (1999) cautioned against the school of thought that individuals can be

reacculturated easily, or individually, for that matter. However, Bruffee stated,

What does seem possible to accomplish is for people to reacculturate

themselves by working together. That is, there is a way to sever, weaken,

or renegotiate our ties to one or more of the communities we belong to and

at the same time gain membership in another community. We can do that

if, and it seems in most cases only if, we work collaboratively. What we

have to do, it appears, is to organize or join a temporary support or

transition group on the way to our goal, as we undergo the trials of

changing allegiance from one community to another (p. 7-8).

This is the whole premise of working with a cooperating teacher during the Co-

Teaching Model of student teaching experience. The role of the cooperating teacher is to

work collaboratively with the student teacher to systematically expose them to all the

nuances of the teaching profession. The cooperating teachers do this through a number of

tools at their disposal. One such tool is the use of modeling expected behaviors.

Participants of this study reported the importance of watching their cooperating teacher in

many different situations. Addie stated, "I had both of my supervising teachers just

modeled [positive classroom environment] for me. So that was something I took to my

own classroom the following year." Kathy shared, "…it was really nice to actually see

and pick up on what she, like what we need to do, what we need to assess and what we

need to teach and how [students] are performing as well."

The opposite is true as well. When student teachers did not have the opportunity

to see or experience a particular action or process, the student teachers felt lost and

unprepared to tackle an issue when they first encountered the situation on their own. One

such area mentioned by participants of the study was in the area of curriculum. Karen

noted, "I didn't have anything to do with [curriculum implementation]. They already had

it all laid out for the entire year. So I didn't really have any bearing on what was, what I

wanted to do. I had no say in that like how the kids were taught. It was already laid out."

A second tool that cooperating teachers had at their disposal was that of collaboration. Participants reported that during the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching, when the cooperating teacher took the time to include them in relevant decisions, it really helped prepare them to take on their own classroom. Kristin stated,

> I think that the Co-Teaching Model gives you that, many more opportunities to collaborate with your co-teacher about, in this case curriculum. Um, when you're student teaching, you're doing a lot of it. My friends that student taught [using traditional model] while I was co-teaching, they were doing all the planning kind of on their own. Whereas I had someone next to me the entire time. Looking through the curriculum, making sure we were meeting all the standards and things like that. I think that would be difficult to do, more difficult to do if I were student teaching [using traditional model].

In Kristin's experience, she delineated the issue surrounding the traditional student teaching model where student teachers were left to their own devices to accomplish the goals, which goes back to what Bruffee (1999) said about the difficulty of reacculturating through individuality.

Bruffee (1999) discussed the process of students becoming reacculturated into their new community of peers and discipline. Students become part of a transition group; in this particular situation, the group is that of the co-teaching classroom led by the cooperating teacher and the school building or district made up of many others who have already been reacculturated to the profession of teaching. Bruffee (1999) stated,

> The agenda of this transition group is to provide an arena for conversation
> and to sustain us while we learn the language, mores, and values of the
> community we are trying to join. Transition groups provide us with
> understanding peers whom we can rely on as we go through the risky

process of becoming new members of the knowledge communities we are

trying to join (p. 8).

Bruffee (1999) continued to say that students have little confidence as they join

the transition group. They rely heavily on their peers to help them navigate the new

environment or group. Over time, the students become more confident and they begin to

trust themselves as they have "internalized the language, values, and mores of the still

larger community, the disciplinary community of knowledgeable peers that they have

been striving to join" (Bruffee, 1999, p. 8). A key piece of this is the ability of the student

teacher to come to the point at which they trust themselves. This speaks to the issue about

which many beginning teachers said they needed the opportunity to have the classroom to

themselves for a time during the co-teaching experience. Beginning teachers had not

come to the point where they felt comfortable enough in the classroom to handle difficult

situations or experiences on their own. Trishia stated,

> I think at some time have the classroom to yourself. It doesn't have to be
> for very long. At least a week or two out of your entire student teaching.
> That way the classroom is completely yours. That you get the real good
> feel of, you know, this is what you are getting yourself into when you have
> to run a classroom.

Allowing teachers the opportunity to have the classroom on their own for a short

period of time would reinforce the confidence and knowledge they had gained from being

a part of the transition group.

Discussion

Cook and Friend (1995) defined co-teaching as "two or more professionals

delivering substantive instructions to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single

physical space" (p. 1). Teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers work together to

plan and implement lesson objectives from the very beginning of the practicum experience (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008). The University of Central Missouri implemented the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching to better align their respective teacher training program to the six standards set by the Missouri Department of Elementary Education (MoDESE, 2013, pp. 5-10).

Co-teaching in general has its roots based in the practices of PK-12 schools implementing special education instruction to meet the individual needs of their students (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). "For decades, teams have made decisions about the most appropriate educational options for students with disabilities, and close working relationships with parents have been nurtured and strengthened. In the classroom, paraprofessionals have assisted special educators in supporting students with disabilities, and other professionals, including speech-language therapists, school psychologists, counselors, and occupational and physical therapists…" (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlin, & Shamberger, 2010, p. 10). The value of co-teaching for teacher training programs lies in the fact that "teacher candidates are able to see more clearly the dynamics of how a classroom works and the process by which teachers plan lessons and implement curriculum" (Merk, Betz, & O'Mara., 2015, p. 2). One participant of this study, Kathy, stated "…it was really nice to actually see and pick up on what she, like what we need to do, what we need to assess and what we need to teach and how [students] are performing well."

Cooperating teachers identified three critical elements that all stakeholders should embrace in the co-teaching experience (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008). These three elements are: 1) Support and training provided by the university, 2) Handling

interruptions without stopping the class, and 3) Planning specifically rather than in generalities (Bacharach et al., 2008, pp. 45-46).

As the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching is a relatively new program at the University of Central Missouri (UCM), the support and training provided by the university for cooperating teachers and the student teachers is in a state of evolvement. Addie commented, "Since it was the first year, it was kind of difficult to understand the differences between co-teaching and [traditional] student teaching. I think both of my co-teachers were kind of confused on that too. So it made it difficult…"

The university provides a one-day seminar for cooperating teachers to go over the nuances of the Co-Teaching Model and to begin building a relationship with their assigned student teacher. The university provides additional support in the way of supervising teachers who visit the student teacher and provide evaluative feedback as well as listening to concerns or suggestions. This visit occurs on the school campus where the student teachers are doing their student teaching. In discussing her UCM supervising teacher, Rayleene commented,

> I felt like my UCM supervisor was super nice and helpful. But he wasn't like there, he was just there, he didn't give me any critical feedback. I don't think. He went through the indicators with me or whatever standards he was looking at. And he just told me, "You're good, you're good, you're good. You're like on the good side of middle. Which is what we want. You're good." And just giving me confidence, which was good. He should have been more critical with me. Much more critical. He should have been like, "I know you're a student teacher, but come on." But that's what I would have wanted.

There was not much feedback from the participants in the study as it related to handling interruptions while continuing with the class. Trisha talked about the difficulty of doing that her first year of teaching following an incident in which a student cussed at

her which resulted in her taking the student to the office. Trisha stated, "I think the hardest thing is having a student do that and then trying to get everybody else on task afterwards."

Participants of the study often mentioned the importance of the opportunity to lesson plan in detail as opposed to learning how to lesson plan in general. Ashley stated, "I would say the main thing about [curriculum implementation] is that I, when I was in college in student teaching, we really worked on that. To help do lesson plans and things like that. But it didn't translate into teaching…at least not at my school. So I didn't have the opportunity to help do any of the things that I was taught." Kay commented,

> I would just say it was kind of difficult with [curriculum implementation] in my co-teaching experience because when my cooperating teacher and I were working together it was basically like here's what we're going to do next and how do we want to go about getting there. And so I guess I wasn't having to go out and do the long range planning and things like that on my own. It was kind of given to me and then I could develop activities and lessons off of that. So, that was something that was a little bit harder for me my first year because I knew what the end in mind was, but it was harder to think about the smaller steps to get there.

<center>Research Questions Answered</center>

The intention of this study was to answer research questions related to the perceptions of beginning teachers about their preparedness to take on their own classrooms following participation in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Furthermore, this study intended to answer research questions as they related to the perceptions of beginning teachers toward their preparedness of meeting expectations of the certification and evaluation process of beginning teachers set forth by the Missouri Legislature and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Each

of the four research questions were answered by coding the responses of participants and grouping them by commonalities.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed this study:

1.   How did the Co-Teaching Model experience prepare beginning teachers to meet the expectations of the teacher evaluation process?

2.   How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence the ability of beginning teachers to assume responsibility of a classroom teacher?

3.   How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence beginning teachers' views of the teaching profession?

4.   How did beginning teachers perceive their preparation for the completion of MoPTA tasks while participating in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching?

Research Question One

The purpose of Research Question One was to determine if beginning teachers were prepared to meet the expectations of the teacher evaluation process as a result of participating in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Overwhelmingly, the participants felt prepared to meet the evaluation expectations set forth by their respective districts. There were areas of particular strength and areas of particular weakness that emerged from the participants' responses.

The areas of strength identified by the participants were being prepared to create a positive classroom environment and facilitating student learning and growth. Kay stated, "So, I felt like with the co-teaching, we focus so much on building student relationships with the kids, and so it really helped me when I started my own classroom to recognize

how those relationships made a difference with the students." Kathy commented, "…it was really nice to actually see and pick up on what she, like what we need to do, what we need to assess and what we need to teach and how [students] are performing as well."

The areas which participants identified as weaknesses included curriculum implementation, student assessments, and data analysis. Trisha shared, "I still struggle trying to figure out curriculum, and so that was one thing. I mean, during the co-teaching you had all the PD meetings and stuff, too, and not having seen it a whole lot taking college classes, it was kind of like mind blowing. 'What the heck am I getting myself into?' kind of deal." John said,

> I think the student assessment I was pretty good on, but the data analysis part of it, doing the pre and post and using data and that driving curriculum, that really we hinted at it in undergrad stuff and we hit on it when we student taught, but it wasn't to the degree that was, I think is expected now. I mean now I am good to go. Every year our data team crunches numbers. Going into it I had no idea.

Teachers identified areas of strength and weaknesses in their teacher evaluations. However, when taken holistically, teachers considered their personal experience in the teacher preparation program as positive and adequate in helping prepare them for the teacher evaluation process.

<center>Research Question Two</center>

Research Question Two focused on the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching's ability to prepare student teachers to assume classroom responsibilities. This question garnered mixed results. Those teachers who were hired in the same district where they did their student teaching felt more prepared than those who were hired in a different district than the one in which they student taught. Kelly stated,

<center>90</center>

Maybe if we had been able to see not only the school that I was in and the teacher that I was with, but other districts or other teachers. I don't know if you can do that during student teaching, because you are kind of in a school for a reason. But, I don't know, 'cause I really felt very prepared, like, if I had walked into a classroom in [district that I did my student teaching] I felt like I could have taught perfectly. But I didn't. And so I kind of feel like there are some things that I missed out on because I wasn't really exposed to what I was really going to get into.

Classroom management, curriculum implementation, data analysis, and parent communication/contact were four major areas where teachers felt underprepared to meet their professional responsibilities. Amy said,

I would say that beginning of the school year, since I student taught in the spring, like setting my classroom up and getting all of that kind of started. I didn't really get a chance to see that work with my teacher. To do that, so that was a little bit on my own. So in the planning process, in the beginning of the school year, I had to ask a lot of questions.

Kelly stated,

Probably one of my biggest challenges is dealing with parent situations. And I think the reason I wasn't prepared for it was because I really didn't have those problems at [the district I did my student teaching]. Like I never really was faced with, I mean I saw some parent confrontation but it was not to the extent that it is when I'm actually teaching. And I had someone else, there was someone else there to deal with the problem. It wasn't directed at me. And so now that I'm dealing with it on my own it's just a bigger challenge. But I don't know that there is anything you can really do about that. But I think, it was good that I saw parents, but I wasn't prepared for, yeah what I got into.

The teachers reported the main reason for not being prepared in these particular areas was mainly due to the lack of meaningful practice or minimal opportunities to be exposed to challenging situations. Teachers felt extremely prepared in building positive collegial interactions and having positive professional relationships with students. This was a result of the close proximity in which the student teachers worked alongside their cooperating teacher and the students. Anita shared,

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For me, since I am still teaching under that model, we use the Co-Teaching Model at our current school. I feel it really helps a lot in the sense that since I did co-teach with two other professionals I was able to kind of figure out how to collaborate with two others who had different ideas and who came from different backgrounds and different things like that. It prepared me in a sense of collaboration with other people.

Jenny stated,

Definitely important [teacher-to-student relationships]. I think without a positive teacher/student relationship you don't have a classroom full of [learners]. They won't respect you. I feel like I spend a lot of time getting to know my students. So then they can realize that I really am here for them. And so that they actually want to learn. They don't feel like they *have* to be learning.

The Co-Teaching Model of student teaching lends itself to more collegial interactions, thus providing for more opportunities to practice peer-to-peer relationship building. In general, teachers felt the need to have the classroom to themselves for a time to become more comfortable and confident in the day-to-day running of the classroom on their own. Addie commented, "I would say letting the [student teacher] take over the classroom. I got to after she was on maternity leave. But that was not during co-teaching. We did a lot together. I never lesson planned on my own. There were times where I taught, and she watched and observed, where she would step in. Just kind of give me the whole class."

<div align="center">Research Question Three</div>

Research Question Three focused on the general perceptions regarding the student teacher's views on the teaching profession as a result of participating in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. The participants were surprised by the amount of time that is involved in the teaching profession. Their perceptions of time involvement were

somewhat distorted by the fact that there was a co-teacher in the classroom helping them manage and prepare the day-to-day activities of the classroom.

Beginning teachers often felt overwhelmed in response to the amount of outside time they were having to spend in preparing for their lessons the next day. Addie stated, "I would say just how much time is spent on lesson planning. When we lesson planned for classes it was not the same." Beginning teachers were also surprised by the amount of time involved in extra duties that were thrust upon them as new teachers. The amount of time spent in committees and professional development activities outside of the regular school day was duly noted. Ashley shared, "I did not realize how much of a teacher's personal time they use to make sure they are doing their job. I didn't realize how much time they spent in meetings." They also were genuinely surprised by the number of things they had to do as part of their daily routines that were not a part of their student teaching experience. Sarah shared,

> …and then there are the one million responsibilities a teacher takes on that you don't know until you're thrown into it. Like attendance, IEPs, 504s, absent kids, differentiated lessons, kids that are way behind, kids that are way too smart. And so then all of, like attendance, even though it's small it's something you have to do every single hour. And it's something that people don't realize you have to do. Or like, yeah, just all the little responsibilities teachers, that teachers have. Like answering every email, booking library, booking computers, making sure to make this announcement, just all the different hats you wear.

Research Question Four

Research Question Four sought to understand the implications the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching had on student teachers' preparation in completing the MoPTA and the four associated major tasks. With so few study participants who completed the MoPTA as opposed to the PRAXIS, there was not enough data to support an answer to

Research Question Four. However, from those who did complete the MoPTA

certification process, it was found that the student teachers did not rely too much on the

cooperating teacher to complete the required tasks. The cooperating teacher was there for

advice and support if needed, but beginning teachers reported that this rarely occurred.

One aspect to note was some of the required activities to show mastery of the tasks. In

particular, teachers noted the activity in which student teachers are to give students a pre-

test, teach the unit lesson, and a post-test, following that up with data collection and

analysis. Ashley commented,

> Maybe giving the assessments because we had to find time to do that. My
> grade level was MAP testing too. So trying to find the time before they
> started testing to get all of our tests in that we needed to do before the big
> thing. We had to do a pre-test on what they knew, like their prior
> knowledge, and then teach the lesson, teach the whole unit, and then do
> the post-test on it. Then we had to do a whole data chart on it and stuff like
> that and analyze all the data.

The teachers found it difficult to complete this assignment due to time constraints

in the classroom. It was specifically mentioned that preparing for MAP testing took

precedence and interrupting that process with this specific assignment proved to be

problematic. The beginning teachers also noted that the tasks were divided up into

manageable sections throughout the semester which helped in completing the tasks. Ann

commented, "So we did complete the tasks in sections throughout, so that was beneficial

versus saving it at the end. So as we went through the semester we had certain timelines

when they were due. Then we took the test at the end." This is opposed to the previous

method where teachers often reported that the work sample that they were required to

complete was left to the last minute as there were not any benchmark deadlines to meet.

Themes

Through the interview process and analyzing the responses, four themes emerged in the responses given by the participants. These four themes are 1) modeling, 2) relevant experiences or practice, 3) district resources/culture, and 4) scenarios.

Theme One: Modeling

The first theme that emerged was that of modeling. Student teachers relied heavily on observing their cooperating teacher, watching their cooperating teacher model the craft of teaching. Beginning teachers expressed on multiple occasions that their cooperating teachers' methods, procedures, lesson planning, activities, classroom management, etc. were incorporated into their own classrooms. Elaine stated,

> The teachers that I was under were super organized. They were fantastic with what they did. They knew their students, they knew their classrooms, their structures. I think classroom management styles I picked up a lot from them. I was much better prepared for my first year of teaching because of that. I think they were fantastic at making sure that they had eyes on the kids at all times. That they had their systems in place. That was one thing that they did extremely well. And I took a whole lot from them.

If a particular process was not modeled correctly or not at all, the beginning teachers had a difficult time in implementing a particular practice. This was especially true for those practices or procedures that were completed by the cooperating teacher at the beginning of the school year when the student teacher was not in the classroom as part of their student teaching experience. This can also be extended to the classroom management issues that a number of beginning teachers were challenged with. Since the cooperating teacher had already set the expectations of the classroom, the cooperating teacher had developed a particular rapport or respect with the students. Addie said,

I would say in my first year I struggled with setting classroom procedures and just the overall classroom management for the first couple of months because [during student teaching] I had gone into a room that it was already established. So getting to do that on my own was difficult. I would say because that was just something at the beginning I was just watching. I wasn't able to help set that for the kids. So it was more difficult on my own to do that.

The beginning teachers did not get a true understanding of the importance of setting those expectations early and how to cultivate the level of respect that a teacher needs to properly run a classroom because those behaviors and procedures were not modeled to them by the cooperating teacher. Ann stated,

Just classroom management. 'Cause once you step into the spotlight of working and, like the Co-Teaching Model you don't take over right away. So your cooperating teacher kind of builds that atmosphere at the beginning. Now I did help with that but then coming in on day one have that classroom management and knowing how to set up was somewhat of a challenge.

Jenny commented,

…when I was in school, you have these nice teachers, your favorite teachers, and [also] the ones who made an impact, like a negative impact. And I really wanted to be the one to make a good impact. But starting off the school year you can't really be that nice person. And so I kind of came in trying to be nice and you get trampled on. So I had to, I mean this year kind of revise that and you came in really hard. And then kind of ease your way in. So I because I went in, I mean, after my [cooperating teacher] had already established her routines and everything like that. And so I got to come in being nice and then they still respected me. So that was probably a difference like not realizing you really had to set your structure, you had to set your routines down before you could be the nice guy.

Co-teachers are watching and modeling their cooperating teachers. Knowing this, having highly competent teachers assigned as their cooperating teacher is critical. The Co-Teaching Model of student teaching program at the University of Central Missouri provided most student teachers with highly competent cooperating teachers who were interested in the growth and development of their student teacher. Ashley commented,

I think when you have another teacher with you, you get to see different methods of teaching. Not just what you would do, not just what they would do. But then kind of coming together and forming kind of like a dual teaching model. We had different classroom management strategies that I would try. My co-teachers were great!

Trisha stated,

I think the co-teaching helped [in that] you have somebody else that has taught that before. I like it best when you can play like off of each other. And add bits and pieces. They would add to you, you would add to them. And so I think that helped better than like the old school model of you slowly implement and then the class is just on your own. And that other teacher isn't there anymore. It was nice to be able to play off like each other's strengths and asking questions maybe a different way for a student to be able to understand.

Theme Two: Relevant Experiences and Practice

The second theme to emerge was the need for relevant experiences and practice. Beginning teachers spoke of a lack of understanding of how to go about writing curriculum and analyzing data to drive instructional improvement. Several beginning teachers mentioned minimal amounts of curriculum writing, data collection, and analysis practice during their undergraduate work. It was noted that what practice was given was not relevant and did not give a true picture of what was expected of them when the teachers became employed by a school district. Ashley stated,

But I do feel like we were not as aware, I've talked to my friends who were with me in the program too. We were not as aware of how data driven the education system has become or is becoming. And so we had time to plan all of these awesome lessons and these really interactive lessons; yes, that's possible, but not always. And so the things that we got to do I don't feel were as realistic as when you're in the classroom by yourself. You have five assessments to get done in one week, and does that make sense? I feel like it was a little bit unrealistic because we were not responsible for any testing that was supposed to be done, or putting in any of the scores and going back and doing; it's so time consuming. And you don't see that when you are student teaching because you get to do the fun stuff. You get to plan the week long lesson and your teacher is the one

that has to figure out how that's going to work. So I feel like that's one thing that I wasn't prepared for.

Continuing with the theme of relevant experiences and practice, it was noted that student teachers needed the opportunity to have the entire classroom to themselves for a period of time during their co-teaching experience. As the teacher modeled correct behaviors with lesson planning and classroom management skills, the student teachers often used their cooperating teacher as a "crutch" in these areas. Whenever a student got out of line or needed to be reprimanded, often the student teacher acquiesced to the cooperating teacher to handle the disruption. Luke commented,

> I think the one thing I wasn't prepared for was all of the behavioral classroom management. And I think a lot of teachers would probably say that coming out of student teaching or co-teaching. Because you have another co-teacher in there who does know all the kids, who will step in when they see you struggling a little bit. But I allowed her to step in, when I was looking back, I should have handled it myself. And been like, "Hey, this is going to be uncomfortable but I'm going to do it anyway."

Likewise, when the student teacher wrote lesson plans, they often utilized the lessons already written by the teacher as a starting point and built off of them. Therefore, they did not get a realistic view of writing lesson plans from scratch and the amount of time and effort that goes into writing quality lesson plans. Kay shared,

> I would just say it was kind of difficult with [curriculum implementation] in my co-teaching experience because when my cooperating teacher and I were working together it was basically like, "Here's what we're going to do next and how do we want to go about getting there." And so I guess I wasn't having to go out and do the long range planning and things like that on my own. It was kind of given to me and then I could develop activities and lessons off of that. So, that was something that was a little bit harder for me my first year because I knew what the end in mind was, but it was harder to think about the smaller steps to get there.

At the secondary level it emerged that more needed to be done in preparing teachers in the co-curricular and vocational programs to shoulder the duties of the

organizations and activities that go along with those particular programs. The beginning

teachers needed more practice and relevant experiences to bring with them when they

were hired for their first teaching assignment. Elaine commented,

> This is FACS-specific. The grocery shopping and the supply inventory
> and the lab safety. Those are things that are massive in our classroom. It
> may not seem like it to somebody else. But if you botch that your whole
> room is off, supply management. I teach housing as well and making sure
> that at the beginning of the year I didn't know I had stencils for laying out
> floor plans. After I knew I had stencils it was a whole new ball game for
> teaching. I was like, "This was great!" But making sure like the tools and
> everything are there. I'm like, "Oh wait, this is fantastic!" This is
> something that we already laid out for me in co-teaching, it wasn't like,
> "Here you have a brand new classroom and pretend and start from scratch.
> What would you need? What kind of tools? What would you request? You
> have a $1000 budget to spend, how are you going to spend it?" That
> wasn't something the teachers walked you through. What their thought
> process was. The first year teacher, I was like, "I don't know. I have
> $1000 to spend and I don't know what to spend it on because I'm doing
> just fine with what I've got." But not thinking to ask those questions when
> you are in a place when somebody could've assisted. That would be a
> really great idea. I know the equipment is going to need to be replaced in
> the future, that rotation. Because everyone's got their system and we're
> just starting to develop ours because the department is pretty much brand
> new.

These programs have unique requirements. In particular, difficulties arise with

how to manage and organize the daunting tasks of sponsoring important organizations

and activities such as FFA, FCCLA, FBLA, Speech & Debate, Theater, etc. John stated,

"The greenhouse, that was kind of hit the ground running. I had to figure that out. I didn't

get a whole lot of experience with that. I got the lab experience but they didn't do a plant

sale like we do. So, doing those activities helped me implement those things, not

necessarily my first year, but my second year, my third year, and going into my fourth.

We have had quite a bit." Elaine commented,

> Extracurricular activities like FCCLA is part of the FACS program. How
> to balance that, how to keep that running at the same time that you are

running a classroom your first year and trying not to let everybody fall apart all at the same time. It was something that was already in place, it was already running. They already had their system when I was student teaching or co-teaching. But when you get there on your own, the kids are a little resistant because you are brand new and making sure that you've got all your ducks in a row or like FCCLA is common for a FACS programs so I had no idea what it entailed and how many conferences and how much paperwork that included. And field trip permission slips, that was already done. They had that already in place and just reused…Why do you include this piece, and not that piece in the information that you give parents? I think that would have been beneficial but it was kind of one of those things you had nine weeks so you can't cover it all so I totally understand why it wasn't a priority because the curriculum was more important.

Another important area related to the theme of relevant experience and practice was the lack of experience the beginning teachers received during their co-teaching experience in how to deal with parental issues and concerns. Few student teachers had the opportunity to be a part of a formal parent/teacher conference. This was a result of the fact that many of the teachers did their student teaching during the spring semester and most schools have their parent/teacher conferences during the fall semester.

Student teachers also expressed the need to have more opportunities to deal with the occasional student issue that required parent contact. The cooperating teachers would often take it upon themselves to make the parent contact instead of giving the student teacher the experience in doing that. As a result, beginning teachers felt unprepared to handle difficult dialogue with parents. Jenny said,

Definitely I feel like my [cooperating] teacher always had parent contact. So if I had an issue or concern with a student, my [cooperating] teacher took care of it. I never directly contacted parents. So I feel like if I had the responsibility to do that, if she made me, say, "If you see him not reading at grade level, you need to be the one to contact parents." And so I think having that role would have definitely made me feel more comfortable having parent contact and communication.

A strength of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching was the ability of student teachers to learn the skill of collaboration by way of relevant experiences and practice. Student teachers had the opportunity to work side-by-side their cooperating teacher and work together to provide learning opportunities for students. Kay stated,

> My cooperating teacher that I was placed with, we had just a really good relationship and partnership when I co-taught and so I thought since I got started with building that collaboration with another teacher that it was really easy to then transfer that into working with other teachers and staff in the building. Since our relationship got started really well I definitely felt like I could easily, when I started teaching, I could easily just go ask questions, um, bounce ideas off of other people with that professional relationship, um, and we in the district that I'm in we have different collaborative sessions all the time and so when I co-taught I got a little bit of taste of that before I started my first job.

Theme Three: District Resources/Culture

The third theme involves the available resources and cultural differences in different school districts. Beginning teachers who found themselves in a small rural school district for their first teaching assignment after student teaching in a large wealthy suburban school district found themselves in situations for which they were not prepared. The cultural differences associated with a lack of financial resources, technology, curriculum development and implementation, as well as human resources in the form of colleagues in the same subject level or grade level can be oppressive. The cultural differences from one school district to the next, or even from one building to another, can often be stark. The socioeconomics of one school building from another can often create a situation where a teacher does not feel prepared to meet the needs of the students in his or her charge. Ashley shared,

> I think UCM should look into broadening the districts. I think they have since I did it but, I mean in the sense of just curriculum. At [district] we were there for like three semesters. And so I got used to everything they

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did. They did Reader/Writers Workshop, they did Everyday Math; it would have been nice to see a district that did something completely different. So if that is where you got a job so you had kind of a sense of what they do here, what they do there, I have experienced both. Because my school did basal readers for reading. That was like I just came from a Reader/Writers Workshop district. So I think it would be beneficial to broaden the district range…But I feel like for just the culture of the classroom too. Seeing different kinds of students. So, [district] is a pretty affluent district.

Wealthy school districts usually have a low percentage of students on free and reduced lunch, higher parental involvement, higher parental expectations for their students, and have students whose parents are college educated. All these factors affect the preparedness of students to be successful in the classroom. Working with these students is often easier in the aspect of classroom management and meeting achievement goals. Brent stated, "Here, fortunately at [district] we don't have a lot of classroom management issues. Lots of the kids in this community, they've grown up in families that make it a priority to be in school, they have a good home life. So, fortunately being a teacher here is easier on us, classroom management-wise." Conversely, poor rural school districts often have a much higher percentage of students participating in free and reduced lunch services which often culminates into less parental involvement, more classroom management issues, more extreme behaviors, lower student achievement, greater percentage of students with identified learning disabilities, fewer college educated parents, and greater parent apathy. Beginning teachers often struggle in these types of environments if they have not been exposed to them in their pre-professional or student teaching experience. Many of the participants reported spending both their Junior and Senior Blocks in the same school district and building which resulted in a lack of opportunities and experiences in working with different types of student populations.

Small rural school districts often have only one teacher for each grade level or subject area. Sometimes there is only one teacher for every two grade levels. This results in isolation for the beginning teacher with few colleagues to collaborate with or share difficulties and other experiences. Culturally, this can be very shocking to the beginning teacher who did their student teaching in the wealthy suburban school district with multiple teachers teaming together to improve the education of all students collaboratively. Curriculum in the small rural school district often centers around what the particular teacher can prepare to follow the state standards. Nearly everything has to be started from scratch, as often is the case, when the previous teacher took all of their resources, lesson plans, and files with them. The wealthy suburban school districts have their curriculum organized, digitized, online, scoped, sequenced, mapped, and overall dictated to the point that the beginning teacher has to do very little lesson planning from scratch. As writing curriculum and quality lesson planning takes a huge time commitment, the small rural school teachers often find themselves working late into the evening getting ready for the next school day, leaving less mental and physical energy to draw upon for the benefit of the students.

Technological advances in the wealthy suburban school district are often extremely more advanced than compared to the small rural school district. Beginning teachers in small rural schools who did their student teaching in the wealthy suburban school district often find themselves disappointed and wanting for the technological resources to which they had become accustomed. Figuring out how to do certain activities that they once did, but without those resources in place, becomes a seemingly impossible challenge. The opposite is also true. Beginning teachers who did not have

certain technologies in place during their student teaching found themselves in unknown territory when they walked into buildings or districts that have one-to-one technology programs. These teachers had not been exposed to the necessary electronic devices and applications that they were now expected to master and teach to their students.

As technology continues to evolve quickly, the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching allows the student teacher the opportunity to see how veteran teachers are adapting to the technological changes by finding free available resources on the internet. As financial resources are limited in many school districts, these free applications that are available are allowing teachers to implement processes that otherwise would be nearly impossible. Brent discussed a particular application that he and his cooperating teacher utilized to track mastery of student learning. Brent shared,

> My co-teacher ended up finding a great online tool, Flubaroo, on Google Docs which allows you to see percentages of questions missed. And you know if there was a bad question. If 13% of kids got this question wrong, you know it's a bad question. And so together we both jumped into that together. Together we figured out that this question is about the standard. And 13% got this question right. So, obviously, this standard was missed. We were able to go back and reteach that standard to make sure they got it right and move on from there.

Theme Four: Scenarios

The fourth theme to emerge from the beginning teachers' responses to the research questions was the need for scenarios. This theme could have been included with the theme of relevant experience and practice; however, the importance of this particular theme warranted its own category. Student teachers needed opportunities to visually see, hear, experience, and practice how to handle certain scenarios that are not as common but nonetheless do occur when working with students and the public in general. Sharon stated,

…having actual classroom teachers come in and talk about things that have happened and how they handled those situations. Or at least discussing situations that have occurred. And how teachers handled them. Or how, even negative examples, this is what happened, this is what was said. And you know the parent reacted badly, how could have done it better. Those sorts of things.

This need is especially true for those situations where there are extreme student behaviors and extremely negative parental interactions. The beginning teachers felt unprepared and unsure how to properly handle violent student situations, including the legal implications of intervening. Sharon continued, "Just discussion. I don't think it's, um, I mean they talk about what you should do and what you shouldn't do. But I feel like maybe even getting up and role playing, I mean not actually hurting someone, but, 'This is what a student is doing. What are you going to do?' And to really make you think on your feet." Likewise, they felt vulnerable to the verbal attacks that some parents launched against them.

Having the ability of student teachers to see scenarios and experience these types of negative situations outside of the classroom is deemed important and will be useful for beginning teachers to experience. However, real-life situations are much more effective in leaving lasting impressions on student teachers. The Co-Teaching Model of student teaching does allow for that occasion when a student teacher is faced with an extreme student behavior to have the safety net of the cooperating teacher nearby to help facilitate and successfully navigate the situation. Sharon shared a situation in which she found herself on recess duty and faced with an extreme student behavior. In this particular situation a student was punching, kicking, and biting a fellow teacher. Sharon stated,

It was kind of like, "Oh my gosh, what do I do?" I mean, she was experienced, she was a teacher on staff. I wasn't out there by myself. But, she handled it. And got more…it showed me too. She had forgotten her

radio. I was never in charge of taking it. But, so she didn't have a radio to get someone. I didn't have keys to get in and out of the building. So the doors were locked on the playground. So I had to get the keys from her. She was being attacked, to go instead, she had me get the administrator. She just kind of took it until they got there. I wasn't ready for that. I never saw kids like that when I was in school. I didn't know, I was very naïve. I did not know that there were kids that acted like that.

Though Sharon did not state this, this situation most likely made a lasting impression on her as a teacher and she now has a greater understanding of the importance of having a radio in hand and building keys on her at all times during recess duty. A greater impression was made than if she had experienced this situation through a mock scenario.

Implications for Practice

The Co-Teaching Model of student teaching has many positive aspects. These include providing positive modeling for appropriate teaching behaviors/processes, learning the skill of collaboration with peers, discovering and experiencing new and useful technological tools, and the opportunity to face difficult real-life situations, all of which should continue. Like any program, there are areas that could be strengthened to provide an even better experience for student teachers. Implications for practice are divided into three different categories. These are: 1) Implications for Higher Education, 2) Implications for K-12 Administration, and 3) Implications for Cooperating Teachers. The following suggestions might lead to an even stronger student teaching experience.

Implications for Higher Education

Given the importance of the student teaching experience in the process of becoming a successful teacher, it is imperative that the cooperating teacher that is paired with the student teacher be a highly competent and respected teacher in their own right.

As modeling behaviors and procedures is such a large part of the successful co-teaching experience, it would be counterproductive to place a prospective teacher in a classroom with an average or below average teacher. Processes and habits are ingrained early. It would be much easier for the student teacher to learn the correct way to do things up front than have to be retrained or corrected through the teacher evaluation process. It is my recommendation that the College of Education at the University of Central Missouri cross-reference recommendations from the prospective cooperating teacher's immediate supervisor as well as available student achievement data at the district level. This needs to occur prior to selecting cooperating teachers to partner with student teachers. An individual may be a nice person or veteran teacher, but not successful in producing positive student achievement results in the classroom.

As beginning teachers are having difficulty with handling extreme classroom behaviors upon taking over their own classroom, more attention needs to be given to preparing the teachers for unique and sometimes frightening situations. I would recommend that during the last semester of their Junior Block, students partake in a panel discussion of teachers that have completed one year of teaching. This strategy is often used at the graduate level in educational leadership courses. Student teachers need the opportunity to hear from those who have been in the classroom recently and who have also just been through the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. During these panel discussions, practicing teachers can share their most challenging student behavior situations, what happened, how they handled it at the time, and what they would have done differently if it happened again. Through this exercise, student teachers can gain the realization that unpleasant things are going to happen in the classroom, what the process

of dealing with the situation looked like, and how to better manage similar situations in the future.

Many teachers discussed the issue of not being prepared for curriculum implementation and data analysis. The data would suggest that the teacher education program at the University of Central Missouri implement into the program opportunities for prospective teachers to take data from a real-world assessment that was given at some point during their Junior Block and analyze the data. The data needs to be collected and entered into a database similar to those utilized in school districts. The prospective teachers need to dig into the data deeply and understand what the information is telling them. Following the analyzation process, the prospective teachers need to be able to make realistic recommendations on how to change instructional practices to improve upon the areas that the data is telling them are weak and then differentiate instruction for different learners.

Additionally, UCM should consider implementing a focused curriculum writing seminar. Writing curriculum should address both horizontally following a scope and sequence as well as vertically with other prospective teachers. This could be accomplished by giving all prospective teachers a copy of the state standards, assigning each individual a particular subject area and grade level. While making sure that each grade level and subject area is covered, the prospective teachers can plan curriculum for an entire unit horizontally for their particular grade level and subject area. Following the completion of this, the individuals can then collaborate with other individuals from a different grade level but same subject area to align their created curricular unit vertically and make adjustments to their own unit as necessary. This will give the participants not

only experience with creating curriculum, but also collaborating with others to write a curriculum that spans several grade levels. Prospective teachers will also learn how to be fluid with their lessons, to be a team player, and not assume that they work in a box without any consequences to other teachers. The Regional Professional Development Centers in Warrensburg and Kansas City would be an excellent resource to bring in on those types of opportunities.

Technology is an area that is ever changing and yet is vital to the success of the students and teachers in the 21st Century. I would recommend that UCM survey school districts annually for the types of technology applications/programs they are using and keep abreast of the changes that districts are implementing. As the survey results are tallied, particular notice should be given to those programs or applications that are being utilized across several different districts. These particular programs or applications could then be installed on the electronic devices the students are using so the prospective teachers can have the experience of working with the types of programs and applications they will most likely find in the school districts where they student teach or take their first job.

It was noted that some beginning teachers are having difficulty adjusting to different school districts than the one in which they student taught. This is especially true for those individuals who were in the same school district for both their Junior and Senior Blocks. It might be helpful for prospective teachers to be exposed to a variety of districts. Different districts have different socio-economic statuses and the availability of resources can vary from district to district. Smaller districts might not have teachers in the building who are teaching the same grade level or course content, making it more challenging to

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collaborate with others when it comes to curriculum planning, classroom management, and general day-to-day issues. Exposing pre-service teachers to different environments could prove to be advantageous to them.

The next recommendation would be to include a second day of training for the cooperating teachers mid-semester. The teachers can have opportunities to collaborate with other cooperating teachers to discuss what is currently working with their student teacher and what areas they are having difficulties with and get ideas on how to implement improvements into the student teaching experience. If there are cooperating teachers who have prior Co-Teaching Model of student teaching experience, then they can be utilized as small group leaders during discussions or they can have a completely different program altogether to give them new ideas and information.

New teachers are sometimes placed onto committees about which they know nothing. An informational sheet of the acronyms and titles of different committees, programs, and organizations that prospective teachers may come across in their first year of teaching might be a good project during student teaching. Or perhaps this could be included as a workshop topic for on-campus student teacher meetings. The name, acronym, and a short description of each organization would be extremely helpful for new teachers.

New teachers struggle with navigating the processes involved with referring a student to special education or 504 services. Prospective teachers need an opportunity to look at an actual, albeit anonymous, IEP and/or 504 plan. They need to be exposed to the terminology and processes involved in referring students to either of these programs and understand the difference between the two.

Prospective teachers in secondary co-curricular classes and vocational programs need more guidance in their respective programs on how to manage the day-to-day activities associated with specific groups and organizations. For example, the agriculture teachers need opportunities to navigate the pitfalls associated with local FFA chapters, alumni, officers, fundraising, and trips. They may also need more guidance on how to properly run a greenhouse as well as hold an annual plant sale. Likewise, Family and Consumer Science teachers need opportunities to plan large shopping lists, plan for long term equipment rotation, budgeting for the entire school year, organize FCCLA meetings, fundraising, trips, and plan large meals, as FACS teachers are often called upon to cook for different school events. One would think that some of these issues would be covered during the student teaching experience. However, if an individual is placed in a school district that does not have a greenhouse, for example, and later accepts a job that does have one, the teacher has a huge learning curve ahead on how to plan for the inevitable plant sale.

Also, some things happen at the beginning of the school year that a student teacher does not see such as setting up rules, procedures, and consequences for organizations. New teachers are often at a loss on how to properly manage these types of programs which often results in unhappy students, parents, administrators, and school board members. Furthermore, teachers who teach speech and debate, as well as theater, often have overwhelming responsibilities as they relate to planning large events such as speech and debate tournaments or theatrical performances that run for several evenings. The organization, planning, advertising, and monetary responsibilities involved with such events are daunting. A recommendation for dealing with these specific types of co-

curricular and/or vocational programs is to encourage student teachers to talk with their professors and cooperating teachers about the potential issues, problems, and pitfalls of sponsoring these types of programs. The prospective teachers need to be given real world examples and solutions to be able to implement these programs effectively. As these organizations and vocational programs are a large part of what the teacher does during the school day, the student teachers need to be taught how to incorporate their programs into the curriculum. Another suggestion in this area would be for the university content area faculty to contact the state level organization leadership and work cooperatively with these organizations to provide meaningful and valuable opportunities/workshops for pre-service or beginning teachers. These organizations can bring in their top sponsors to teach the beginning teachers best practices in their particular organization. This could be done on a regional or state-wide basis.

Finally, it seems the student teachers would greatly benefit from an opportunity to have the classroom all to themselves for one or two weeks. This may seem counterintuitive to the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching, but the rationale behind it is the fact that the vast majority of the student teachers will not have a co-teacher in the classroom when they have their first contracted teaching assignment. They will be on their own to lesson plan, manage classroom behaviors, communicate with parents, and work with administration. This will also aid in providing the teachers a realistic understanding of the amount of time involved in preparing for their own classroom. The student teachers need the confidence that they can handle the challenges of a classroom on their own prior to walking into the classroom where they are required to do it alone.

Implications for K-12 Administration

As it is important for the UCM College of Education to vet prospective cooperating teachers, K-12 administrators need to take an active role in identifying appropriate individuals to serve as cooperating teachers in their school districts. A joint effort between the university and the school district to train K-12 administrators in the characteristics of what makes a quality cooperating teacher would ensure that the right teachers are providing the appropriate modeling for the student teachers. Identifying these master teachers and encouraging them to volunteer as cooperating teachers will further strengthen the student teaching experience for all prospective teachers.

I would suggest that K-12 administrators also take a more active role in getting know and visiting with the student teachers in their buildings. The student teachers need the experience and confidence in communicating with the building administrator. Setting up a short meeting to introduce themselves to the beginning teacher, welcoming them to the building, and encouraging them to seek out input and advice from the administrator will begin the process of helping the student teacher learn how to build a positive relationship with their building principal.

Implications for Cooperating Teachers

Taking on the role of a cooperating teacher carries with it a great responsibility to the professional development of the student teacher and to the education of future K-12 students. Understanding and appreciating this responsibility will help guide the cooperating teacher in providing an experience that is truly valuable and meaningful to the student teacher.

During the co-teaching process, student teachers have little exposure in dealing with and communicating with parents. Student teachers should participate in parent/teacher conferences, whether formally or informally. If a student teacher has a student issue that needs to be addressed with a parent, serious consideration should be given to the idea that the student teacher should be the one to contact the parents. Guidance is an important aspect of this as well. The cooperating teacher needs to listen in on the conversation to be able to give feedback to the student teacher. Another suggestion would be for student teachers to observe mock conversations between a teacher and parent. These mock situations need to be realistic in nature and sometimes confrontational in their demeanor. Though not condoning such behavior, a few expletives may need to be thrown in to prepare naïve prospective teachers for the reality of the profession. These mock situations need to be followed up with discussion on what went right with the conversation, what went wrong with the conversation, and how it might look if different actions were taken by the teacher to deescalate a confrontational situation. A day toward the beginning of the student teaching experience could be taken to require student teachers to be on campus and participate in the mock situations, giving each prospective teacher an opportunity to be on the receiving end of a confrontational parent.

<div align="center">Limitations and Assumptions</div>

The scope of this study involved the student teaching program at one university. The limitations of this study were relative to the university, the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching program as implemented by the university, the responses of the

participants of the study, as well as the researcher's design of the study. These limitations are indicated as follows:

1. The sample of participants interviewed for this study was limited to 20 individuals.

2. The sample included few participants who actually completed the MoPTA as opposed to the PRAXIS test.

3. The participants of the study were limited by proximity to the researcher and the proximity to the University of Central Missouri Campus and the University of Central Missouri's Summit Center in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

4. The accuracy of the information is limited by the openness and truthfulness of the participants.

5. It was assumed that the responses to questions by the participants were based upon their own thoughts and experiences and not those of others.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Further Study</div>

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of beginning teachers toward their participation in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching as implemented by the University of Central Missouri (UCM). The study focused on the perceptions of the beginning teacher's preparedness in taking over their own classroom, completing necessary tasks to become certified teachers, and successfully completing the teacher evaluation process. The discussion of implications of practice reported in this study gives the University of Central Missouri recommendations on how to improve the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching experience for future student teachers. This study did not

encompass all aspects of the Co-Teaching Model. Therefore, further studies could be conducted. Recommendations for future research include:

1. A two-year longitudinal study of student teachers beginning their Senior Block and following these individuals until the end of their first year of contracted teaching to get a more precise indication of what student teachers need to be more successful at specific times in their professional preparation.

2. The current study could be replicated to include a larger sample of individuals and include only those individuals who have completed the MoPTA.

3. The timing of inviting participants is critical to the success rate of having individuals participate in the study. It is recommended that invitations to prospective participants be sent during the first week of September with interviews completed by mid-November. The summer months are not ideal as teachers often do not check their school email frequently and teachers often limit outside distractions during their summer break. Waiting later than September could result in teachers being hesitant to participate due to the holiday season of November and December. Spring months are filled with teachers preparing for state assessment tests and squeezing in end-of-year activities and field trips.

4. A study could be conducted based upon the perceptions of the cooperating teachers and the effectiveness that they observe in the Co-Teaching Model preparing student teachers to take over their own classrooms.

5. A comparative study could be conducted of building administrators who have hired teachers who have completed the Co-Teaching Model of student

teaching and who have hired teachers who completed their student teaching

utilizing the traditional model of student teaching. The study might explore

the perceptions of the building administrators as they relate to the

preparedness of the teachers taking over their own classroom and being

prepared to effectively integrate state standards into the curriculum.

6. A longitudinal study could be conducted to explore the effects the Co-

Teaching Model of student teaching has on K-12 student performance.

Summary Statements

This study sought to determine the perceptions beginning teachers had on their

readiness to assume the role of a classroom teacher, including the process of being

professionally evaluated as a result of participating in the Co-Teaching Model of student

teaching as implemented at the University of Central Missouri. This study also sought to

determine the level of preparedness beginning teachers felt when required to accomplish

the tasks of the teacher certification process including the MoPTA evaluation.

The Co-Teaching Model of student teaching was implemented by the University

of Central Missouri to replace the traditional student teaching method and to meet the

standards set forth by the Missouri Legislature for teacher preparation programs across

the state. The traditional model of student teaching relied on student teachers observing a

cooperating teacher a couple of weeks and then taking over the entire classroom. The Co-

Teaching Model of student teaching sought to build a collaborative relationship between

the cooperating teacher and the student teacher by which to gain a greater understanding

and knowledge base for the prospective teacher.

Twenty beginning teachers participated in the study. Their responses to the research questions were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Four themes emerged from the findings. These four themes are 1) modeling, 2) relevant experiences or practice, 3) district resources/culture, and 4) scenarios. The importance of modeling by the cooperating teacher for the student teacher was extremely important in the co-teaching process. Beginning teachers liked the opportunity to work side by side as a colleague instead of a teacher-pupil relationship. This opportunity gave the beginning teachers useful tools and communication skills to build a positive classroom environment for their students in their own classrooms. Beginning teachers needed more experiences and practice when it came to working with curriculum, new technologies, and collecting/analyzing data for instructional change. Secondary level teachers, especially those in the co-curricular classes, could utilize a more personalized approach to teaching them how to navigate the co-curricular and extracurricular programs and activities that are often associated with their particular area or discipline. The beginning teachers would have benefitted from more diverse experiences during their pre-professional and student teaching experiences. During their co-teaching experience, beginning teachers created positive peer-to-peer and teacher-to-student relationships. Beginning teachers would have also benefitted from the opportunity to physically see, hear, and participate in scenarios that would have prepared them for the more difficult aspects of the teaching profession which include working with parents, deescalating extreme student behaviors, and emergency type situations. Beginning teachers appreciated the support and knowledge gained from their cooperating teachers and viewed their cooperating teachers as instrumental in their success as a classroom teacher.

It should be noted that the university student teaching experience cannot provide everything that a student teacher needs to be successful in their own classroom. There are many experiences and situations for which prospective teachers cannot be prepared. Many skills of a teacher come from doing the job on a daily basis and through trial and error.

In conclusion, the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching as implemented at the University of Central Missouri is effectively training beginning teachers to meet the day-to-day challenges of the teaching profession. While there are areas that could be strengthened, graduates of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching appear to meet expectations of the teacher evaluation process, have the ability to assume the responsibilities of a classroom teacher, and they have a positive view of the teaching profession.

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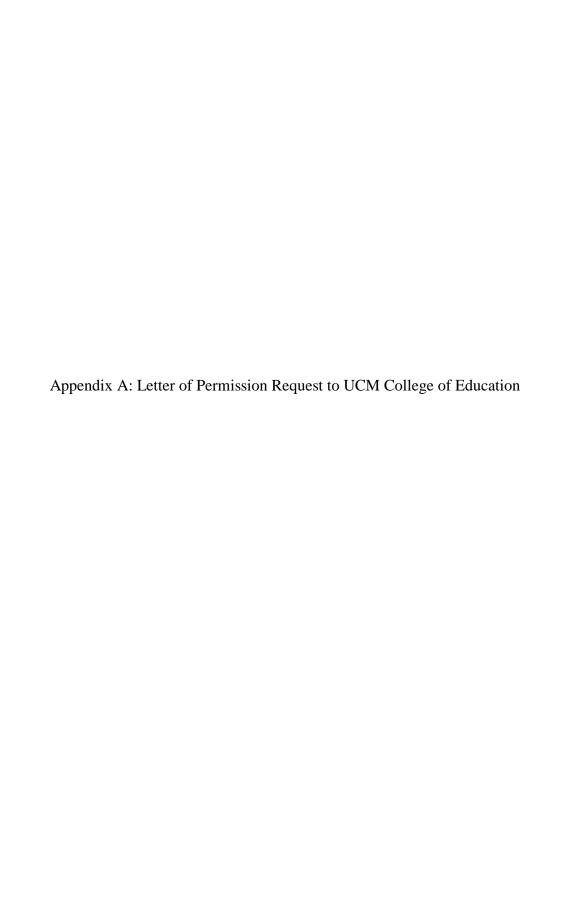
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Appendix A: Letter of Permission Request to UCM College of Education

April 28, 2016

Mr. Ryan D. Huff
Doctoral Student
994 Glen Oaks Dr.
Nixa, MO 65714

Dr. Joyce Downing
jdowning@ucmo.edu
Associate Dean
College of Education
University of Central Missouri

Dear Dr. Downing,

My name is Ryan Huff. I am a Doctoral Student at the University of Missouri, Columbia. My Academic Advisor is Dr. Sandy Hutchinson, a professor at the University of Central Missouri.

My dissertation proposal centers around the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching currently implemented at the University of Central Missouri's College of Education. I am doing a case study on how well the teachers that have graduated from the university's student teaching program have been prepared to meet the expectations outlined by the MoPTA and the MoDESE new teacher evaluation program. Also, I will be studying the preparedness of the new teachers to take over their own classrooms following graduation.

I am needing permission from you to receive the names and contact information for the graduates that have completed the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching prior to June 2015 and who are now gainfully employed by a public school system.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (417) 838-0332 or rdhvwf@mail.missouri.edu. You may also contact my Academic Advisor, Dr. Sandy Hutchinson at (816) 405-9306 or hutchinson@ucmo.edu.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mr. Ryan D. Huff, Ed. S.

Appendix B: Letter of Permission Request to District Administrators

June 15, 2016

Ryan Huff
994 Glen Oaks Dr
Nixa, MO 65714

Dear (School Administrator),

My name is Ryan Huff. I am a Doctoral Student at the University of Missouri, Columbia through the cooperative doctoral program at the University of Central Missouri. I am conducting a dissertation study titled, "A case study of beginning teacher perceptions resulting from the participation of the student teaching program."

I have identified a teacher(s) in your district that I would like to invite to participate in my study. I would appreciate your permission to conduct an interview with the participant(s) on your school district property. The interviews will be conducted at a time that is convenient to the teacher and not interfere with his/her daily activities.

I have attached a copy of the research questions of the study and also a copy of the interview questions to be asked of the teachers. This study is focused on the teacher perceptions only, and therefore will not require any of your time or that of other administrators.

If you are willing to allow me the opportunity to conduct the interviews on your school campus, I would appreciate it if you would reply via email back to me utilizing your school email account giving me your permission. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me either by email at rdhvwf@mail.missouri.edu or by phone at (417) 838-0332. Furthermore, you can contact my academic advisor, Dr. Sandy Hutchinson by email at hutchinson@ucmo.edu or by phone at (816) 405-9306.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ryan Huff, Ed. S.

Appendix C: Teacher Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction: Tell me a little about yourself.

1. **How did the Co-Teaching Model experience prepare beginning teachers to meet the new teacher evaluation program recently implemented by MoDESE?**
   a. The new teacher summative evaluation tool has 9 standards that a new teacher is to be evaluated on. (Hand the form to the participants). Of the 9 standards, which two did you feel you were the most prepared to meet or accomplish? Why?
   b. Again looking at the 9 standards, which two did you feel that you were the least prepared to meet or accomplish? Why?
   c. In what ways could the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching better prepare you to meet those standards that you identified as being the least prepared?
   d. The summative evaluation form has an overall teacher rating system. It categorizes teachers into four areas of meeting expectations: 1) Ineffective 2) Minimally Effective 3) Effective & 4) Highly Effective. At what level did your supervisor rank you at the end of your first year of teaching? If your supervisor ranked you as ineffective or minimally effective, how could the Co-Teaching Model of instruction be changed to better prepare you to meet all 9 standards?

2. **How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence the ability of beginning teachers to assume responsibility of a classroom teacher?**
   a. What are some bigger responsibilities you have as a teacher?
   b. How did the Co-Teaching Model prepare you to take on those responsibilities?
   c. What about the co-teaching experience could have better prepared you to take on those responsibilities?
   d. Name one responsibility that you have that you felt that you were not prepared to take on and your opinion as to why you were not prepared for it.
   e. Every teacher has a particular strength what strength did your cooperating teacher instill in you as a teacher? What area did you feel that you needed more guidance once you had your own classroom as a teacher?

3. **How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching influence beginning teachers' realistic views of the teaching profession?**
   a. What were some aspects of the teaching profession in general that you were surprised about?
   b. Give an example of when you were faced with a situation or attribute of the teaching profession that you were not prepared for. How did you handle it or adjust to it?
   c. What could have been done differently during the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching experience to better prepare you for those surprise situations?

d. Think about your interpersonal relationships within the school community. How did the Co-Teaching Model of instruction prepare you for peer-to-peer relationships, teacher-to-principal relationships, and teacher-to-student relationships? Elaborate.

4. **How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching experience prepare beginning teachers to meet the tasks outlined in the MoPTA?**
   a. There are four major tasks that had to be completed to meet the requirements of the MoPTA. How did the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching prepare you to complete the tasks?
   b. What areas were the biggest challenge in completing the MoPTA?
   c. What about the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching could have better prepared you to accomplish the completion of the tasks?
   d. What role did your cooperating teacher play in helping you complete the four major tasks?

5. **Follow Up Questions:**

   a. What else would you like to share with me about your teaching experience or your co-teaching experience?

   b. Is there anything else you would like to share?

   c. What questions do you have for me?

Appendix D: Letter of Explanation to Prospective Participants

June 15, 2016

Ryan Huff
994 Glen Oaks Dr
Nixa, MO 65714

Dear UCM College of Education Graduate,

This letter is being sent to you because you are a recent graduate of the University of Central Missouri's College of Education. My name is Ryan Huff. I am a Doctoral Student at the University of Missouri, Columbia through the cooperative Ed.D Program at the University of Central Missouri. I am doing a research study titled, "A case study of beginning teacher perceptions resulting from the participation of the student teaching program at the University of Central Missouri." The study is focusing on beginning teachers and their perceptions of the UCM Co-Teaching Model of student teaching. Participants in this study will have graduated between and including the Fall Semester of 2012 and the Spring Semester of 2015. Participants will also have participated in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching at UCM.

I am requesting that you participate in this research study. Your time involved should be no more than 1 hour. Your participation would allow me to personally interview you and audio record our conversation. I have included with this letter an Informed Consent Form. After reviewing the accompanied document and you are willing to participate in this research study, please email me at rdhvwf@mail.missouri.edu Please use the word "Permission" with your name in the subject line of the email (ex. Permission: Jane Doe). I can also be reached on my personal phone at (417) 838-0332 if you have any questions.

If you have further questions or concerns regarding this research study, these can be directed to my advisor, Dr. Sandy Hutchinson, at the University of Central Missouri. Her email address is hutchinson@ucmo.edu and her phone number is (816) 405-9306. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ryan Huff, Ed. S.

Appendix E: Consent to Participate in Research Study

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Research Study: "A case study of beginning teacher perceptions resulting from the participation of the student teaching program at the University of Central Missouri"

Identification of Researchers: This research is being done by Ryan Huff, a doctoral student with the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Purpose of the Study: This study will investigate the perceptions of beginning teachers of the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching at the University of Central Missouri.

Request for Participation: I am inviting you to participate in a study on outcomes related to the participation in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching prior to graduation and also following graduation from the University of Central Missouri. It is up to you whether you would like to participate. If you decide not to participate, you will not be penalized in any way. You can also decide to stop at any time without penalty. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions, you may simply skip them.

Exclusions: You must have been employed as a teacher for 1 to 3 school years, be a graduate of University of Central Missouri, and participated in the Co-Teaching Model of student teaching.

Description of Research Method: This study involves participating in an interview with the researcher. The study will take approximately 1 hour to complete. You will also have a chance to ask questions. Interviews will be audio recorded.

Privacy: All of the information I collect will be kept confidential. Any identifying information will be coded and the key to the code will be kept in a separate and secure location.

Explanation of Risks: The risks associated with participating in this study are similar to the risks of everyday life.

Explanation of Benefits: You will benefit from participating in this study by getting firsthand experience in the process of graduate level research.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, please contact Ryan Huff by phone at (417) 838-0332 or by email at rdhvwf@mail.missouri.edu. If you have further questions or concerns you may contact my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Sandy Hutchinson. She can be reached at hutchinson@ucmo.edu or at (816) 405-9306. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585.

If you would like to participate, please sign a copy of this letter and return it to me. The other copy is for you to keep.

I have read this letter and agree to participate.

Signature: _____ Name (printed): _____

Date: ___/___/2016

VITA

Ryan D. Huff was born April 19, 1973 in Girard, Kansas. Ryan is the son of James and Colleen Huff and brother to C.J and Raymond. Ryan was raised on the family farm near McCune, Kansas. Ryan attended elementary school in McCune and graduated from Southeast Rural High School in 1991.

Ryan then began college at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas. During his undergraduate coursework, he also attended Labette Community College in Parsons, Kansas. He graduated from Pittsburg State University (1996) with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology Education. At Pittsburg State University Ryan also completed a Master of Science Degree in Educational Leadership (2000) and an Education Specialist Degree in District Level Administration (2004). Ryan entered the Doctoral program of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri – Columbia in 2009 and completed the coursework in 2011. Ryan was a member of Cohort 7 through the Cooperative Doctoral program at the University of Central Missouri - Warrensburg.

Ryan began his educational career at the Nevada R-5 School District where he taught sixth grade science for five years. He moved on to the Hume R-8 School District in Hume, Missouri, to serve as the high school principal for three years and was promoted to superintendent for an additional two years. He then accepted the position of superintendent of schools at the Lakeland R-3 School District in Deepwater, Missouri, where he served the Deepwater and Lowry City communities for six years. Following this tenure, Ryan accepted the position of superintendent of schools in the Marshall Public Schools in Marshall, Missouri, where he served for two years. Ryan and his wife Teresa have two children, Lauren and Layton. They currently reside in Nixa, Missouri.