

***“Annotated Observations: Field Notes and  
Reflections”***

by

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this action research presentation is to invite discourse on the intersection of race, gender and instructional decisions in the classrooms of student teachers. The purpose of this study is to also examine the thoughts of a university supervisor during clinical observation with respect to her positionality as a woman of color supervising white student teachers. Strategies include using field notes in conjunction with INTASC Standards for Beginning Teachers. **Methodology:** This action research project took place in rural and suburban school districts with four (4) student teachers in elementary and middle school classrooms. The student teachers worked with a medium sized heterogeneous group of students. The group size was about 19-25 on a given day. This took place within the spring semester of the school year. The documentation of the strategy was anecdotal and based on the principles of action research. **Results:** The exposure to the deconstruction and analysis in the context of engagement, race, class, and gender presented the benefit of the student teachers examining instructional choices. Another benefit was that the student teachers were forced to apply the teacher education goals and standards of the teacher education program to their own teaching practices and choices for those practices. The final benefit of this clinical experience was that the student teachers were motivated to think aloud and lead discussions of the student teaching experience. It allows optimal participation from the university supervisor and student teacher and a constant flow of communication about the central issues at the heart of instruction and student engagement; all tied in some fashion to race, class, and gender. **Conclusions:** The outcome of analyzing the conversation drawn from this text within the clinical experience is that it plays upon the natural discussion of university supervisor and student teacher as a motivator for exploring the instructional choices, socio-behavioral management and the impact of student engagement via the perception of the learning. Another outcome is that the university supervisor found a new medium in which to gain insight on her student teachers' perception of learning; revealing the themes of *metacognition*, *self-efficacy*, and *relationship*. The relationship of this field experience to the purpose of the research is manifested in the rich discussion and authentic transcript conversation of the students. **Recommendations:** It is imperative that university supervisors offer more avenues that activate the conversation of reflection and reflexive practices in the classroom. These and other metacognitive practices with regards to understanding how one exists during a teaching moment make for lifelong learners and independent thinkers.

## INTRODUCTION

The examination of these field experiences and interviews are significant because research has informed us that preservice teachers must be provided with constant directives to be reflective until it become habitual. This breeds an inservice teacher who displays the characteristic or feature of what Good and Brophy calls “with-it-ness”, an ability to flow with the ebb and tide of the classrooms and its constant interactions and not miss a beat. This is the moment in which teacher educators should take the opportunity to engage preservice teachers in conversations about instructional choices, diversity and appreciation of such matters. Also many states have adopted standards based learning models and this will impact the depth and breadth of learning and teaching. Often times, student teachers and teacher educators are limited when attempting to talk about what is happening in the classroom from an engagement standpoint in conjunction with state standards. This task does not have to be daunting or critical in a sense that reflection can breed what a student teacher is doing well or needs improvement in an area such as classroom management. Examination is also important when university supervisors must emotionally under gird student teachers who are experiencing difficulty. This examination will advance our capacity to deliver instruction and support preservice teachers’ ability to be reflective and reflexive in responsive teaching.

As we proceed in this discussion, let us be clear about the definition of field experiences. Field experiences refer to all activities approved and directed by teacher education programs which involve education students in observation or interaction with public school learners and their teachers. These experiences include only those which precede student teaching, and usually begin in an undergraduate's sophomore year. Field experiences are inexplicably tied to the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards.

### **INTASC Standards**

Let’s start off with reviewing the standards by which student teachers and beginning teachers are evaluated. An integral component of the new performance-based process is the use of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards. These standards reflect the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for teachers starting their career. They are outlined below.

#### **1. Content Pedagogy**

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

## **2. Student Development**

The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support a child's intellectual, social, and personal development.

## **3. Diverse Learners**

The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

## **4. Multiple Instructional Strategies**

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

## **5. Motivation and Management**

The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

## **6. Communication and Technology**

The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

## **7. Planning**

The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

## **8. Assessment**

The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.

## **9. Reflective Practice: Professional Growth**

The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

## **10. School and Community Involvement**

The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

The value of field experiences is considered critical enough that the new admissions process to teacher education requires that the candidates provide evidence of completion of a successful field experience in their admissions materials. Feedback from this initial field experience addresses the disposition of the candidate. The expectations of candidate performance at this entry level are clearly articulated in the feedback forms that are completed by the supervisors of the experience and are continuously reviewed as part of our assessment plan.

### **Standards for Field and Clinical Experiences**

Field experiences support candidates to better understand and apply the themes through their work with students. Field experiences provide candidates an opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to become professional educators and other school personnel. Candidates are introduced to field-based experiences early in their programs. The INTASC principles are carefully considered as the experiences are planned and are reflected throughout the program. Field experiences in the teacher education programs supplement and enrich academic coursework by providing candidates with opportunities to observe and participate directly in the day-to-day life of cooperating partnership schools. The purpose and expectations associated with each of the field experiences vary as candidates advance in their program. Early experiences are primarily observational and in the latter stages candidates may play an active role in the classroom. Both candidates and faculty members at the university and partnership schools have much to gain from the collaboration involved in a successful field experience. Candidates benefit from the opportunity to become directly involved in the life of the classroom. Through their classroom visits, candidates have opportunities to observe a variety of effective teaching styles and techniques, develop individual teaching skills, and initiate professional relationships with master teachers and other school staff. The field experience provides cooperating teachers with skilled classroom aides as well as the opportunity to develop professionally through their supervision and observation of future teachers. Finally, the field experience provides the university instructor with an important link to area schools and ongoing practice.

Most programs expect candidates to enter the field experience with an open mind, and with a willingness to learn, grow and change. Here are the basic expectations for most teacher education field experiences. Each of the field experiences will be incorporated into the candidate's portfolio and monitored at the school and incorporated into the classes in the teacher education program. At each new level of field experience, candidates are expected to become more engaged in the practice of teaching. This emphasis on teaching reflects our commitment to providing our candidates with classroom-based opportunities designed to promote professional growth and reflection.

Teacher education programs expect teaching candidates to actively reflect on what they see and do in the cooperating classroom. To support this process, candidates should plan to document their experiences, maintaining a log or journal of their activities and observations for each visit. These journals may be expected to be electronically produced and shared with the faculty. Expectations for the journal entries may vary from class to class. Teacher education programs expect candidates to know and respect the conventions of the cooperating school and classroom. Field experiences mark the beginning of the candidate's professional role in the classroom, and candidates should plan to follow the school's code of professional conduct. Typically this means arriving promptly, signing in at the main office, providing advance notice of cancellations, and following school dress codes for faculty. Schools vary in their specific requirements and conventions and candidates are responsible for seeking in advance the school and classroom policies. Teacher education programs expect candidates to communicate frequently with university supervisors and cooperating teachers both in the partnership school and at the college or university. Candidates are encouraged to seek opportunities to discuss their observations with professional staff and to actively strive to make the field experience a useful part of their professional training.

### **Different types of field and clinical experiences**

Field experiences are a stand out feature of a teacher education program. They make available opportunities within actual teaching settings, facilitate authentic learning, and allow students to practice and put into operation the knowledge and skills developed within university-based methodology courses, and promote a high degree of emotive involvement leading to genuine motivation for success and amplified professional growth. In order to serve the needs of diverse teacher education programs and certifications within; various field experiences are developed to suit those needs. The scope and sequence of various field experiences provide breadth (observation, practica, and student teaching) and depth (P-12, special needs-MID, MOID, interrelated, vision and hearing impaired, content specific, etc). The latest research shares this information.

Prater and Sileo (2002) found that nearly three fourths (72.2%) of the Institutions of Higher Education (IHE's) reported having formal written partnerships with districts, schools, or teachers; however, such formal partnerships only partially influenced the identification and placement of preservice teachers in special education field experiences. Some IHE's used either university supervisors or cooperating/mentor teachers only, but not both, when evaluating the students' performance in field experiences. LaMaster (2001) found that early field experiences had multi-directional impact on teachers, student teachers and field supervisors. She also found that the early field experiences impacted student motivation and classroom participation. Proctor, Rentz, and Jackson (2001) found that in preparing teachers for urban teaching settings, preservice teachers conveyed many positive experiences when placed in diverse instructional settings. The results of their study also indicated the need to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their ongoing perceptions of the diversity they are experiencing.

Foote and Cottone (2004) also found that the type and quality of field experience leads teacher educators, classroom teachers and education students to cooperative strategies and mainstay factors during the experience.

Some of those include lines of communication, standard of expectations, and mutual goals. This is reflected in the INTASC standards adopted by many institutions for initial certification programs.

### **Student perceptions of field and clinical experiences**

Student teaching has traditionally been the culminating activity of teacher preparation programs. Historically, student teaching was often a student's first and only experience of working in an actual classroom setting. Teacher education professionals began to recognize that a single field experience in the form of student teaching was not sufficient to prepare teachers for their own classrooms. Most institutions go to great lengths to garner information on teacher candidates' perceptions of the total field experience. This is normally assessed through institutional data and NCATE Standard 2 data. The most recent research reveals many facets of this.

Bridging the gap between theory and practice has long been an essential aim of teacher education programs. Field-based experience has traditionally been considered a valuable and essential component of teacher education. They are so important and essential to teacher education programs; teacher educators are using electronic mediums to assist teacher education candidates in being as reflective as possible. Myers (2005) documents this in his study of using electronic journals with field and clinical experiences. He found that a teacher education program can incorporate the use of computer technology in a way that offers a focus for early field and clinical experiences. If used as described, electronic weekly journals can create additional instructional opportunities for college supervisors while affording pre-service teachers a learning experience that encourages reflective thinking concerning the factors that can contribute to teaching effectiveness in the elementary classroom.

The student teacher can have positive reflective experiences in their own perception. Richards and Morse (2002) found in their case study of a preservice teacher teaching reading to students receiving special education services that the preservice teacher in this case was reflective, with high expectation for student success and she possessed a high locus of control in reference to her capabilities as a teacher. Poole and Wessner (2003) found student teachers perception of the student teaching experience and performance-based portfolio to be overwhelmingly positive. In this study the communication with the teacher education supervisors and faculty during the teacher preparation experience in conjunction with the portfolio as the medium for communication was compelling in their ability to be reflective in practice. Clearly the field experience, the perception of it, and its assessment component are pinnacle pieces of information for the field supervisor.

## **College supervisors' perception of field experiences**

More research is now focusing on university/college supervisors experiences in the field and what could be done to improve it. Goodfellow and Sumison (2000) looked to address oversights in field experiences and field supervisors' perception of such through focus groups of field based educators. They found three ideas related to professional practice that these field-based teacher educators perceived as particularly beneficial in their work with student teachers—wisdom, authenticity and passion—and cultivate a conceptual depiction that locates their perceptions within a theoretical framework. They found that this representation purports that field-based teacher educators' work with student teachers constitutes a dramatically changed pathway through which student teachers can come to recognize and experience what it means to be a teacher.

Dawson (2006) found that technology and teacher inquiry with field experiences should include a “process that scaffolds prospective teachers to systematically and intentionally study their use of technology, may (1) counter many shortcomings associated with traditional strategies designed to promote reflective activity, (2) focus prospective teachers' attention on student learning outcomes, and (3) facilitate more desirable integration strategies during curriculum-based, technology-enhanced field experiences. The study also found that teacher inquiry is widely recognized in the general teacher education literature, yet novel within the context of curriculum-based, technology-enhanced field experiences”. This facilitation is squarely placed on the shoulders of the field supervisor. The field supervisor serves in a mentor capacity as well. This requires much investment from the supervisor. This yields great benefits for all those involved in the teacher education process and field experiences overall.

Scheetz, et al (2005), found through extended field experiences in collaborative partnerships, PDS (Professional Development Schools) programs provide opportunities for teacher preparation, staff development, research, and enhancement of student learning. The positive impact of PDS (Professional Development Schools) experiences on preservice teachers and their effect on student learning is well documented. Field supervisors serve as mentors as well as supervisors. They are too are an essential part of the professional development schools model many institutions take part in. The role of the mentor is critical to the success of PDS (Professional Development Schools) programs. In her analysis of 20 case studies on the collaborative processes involved in PDS programs, Rice (2002) identified 12 themes as being important to the success of the PDS (Professional Development Schools); nearly half of these focused on the mentor teacher and his or her capacity to develop relationships and communicate effectively. If PDS (Professional Development Schools) programs are to grow and evolve, universities and schools must make the case that mentorship is not only a professional responsibility, but also an experience that can benefit the mentor in numerous ways. This is why the role of the field supervisor is the equinox of this scenario.

Capa and Loadman (2004) investigated in a descriptive study of mentoring for teaching candidates in the field that the “following general aspects of mentoring practices: (a) mentoring strategies; (b) relationship between mentor and student teacher; (c) mentor as a teacher; and (d) mentor's personality characteristics.



Analysis of paired t-tests resulted in significant differences, in which the student teachers' ideal ratings of mentoring practices were higher than their actual ratings". This is essential information for the field-based supervisor because it implication a discrepancy in the actual fulfillment of the duties of a field-based mentor/supervisor.

### **Setting and Background of student teachers**

There were four student teachers involved in this study. Clark- a white male student teacher in fourth grade; Hannon- a white female student teacher in first grade; Lyna- a white female student teacher in first grade; Mandy- a white female student teacher in middle grade/high school science ,and Jo- a white female student teacher in kindergarten. Student teaching took place in rural and suburban school districts in north Georgia. This was a fifteen week placement.

### **Cases and Field notes**

Orland-Barak (2002) states that the "incorporation of selected teaching cases is viewed as an important component of the program that prepares students for the context complexity of classrooms; providing context-bound knowledge of both specific scenes and situations they are likely to encounter and problems they will be required to resolve. This further supports the importance assessing and recording data of preservice teachers' field experiences". This leads into the transcripts and conversations of the field supervisor with the student teachers.

**1-22-04**

#### **Observation**

I am observing a white young female student teacher teach first graders about Dr. Martin Luther King and Mrs. Rosa Parks. There are a few of the children seem to know more that she did and they corrected her definitions of lynching, boycotting and segregation. There is one little who knew more about the movement than both the student teacher and classroom teacher. Before class began, I overheard the teachers from this grade level discuss this little girl and how knowledgeable she and her mother were. They sounded slightly uncomfortable. I observed three black females in this class who were extremely vocal about the injustices of black people by white people. They were keenly aware of the terms "colored" and "for whites only". The student teacher said that the water fountains were the same, just segregated. The "knowledgeable girl" and the other two little black females corrected her by saying the water fountain for the black people was dirty and the water was nasty. I watched as Hannon completed her lesson. We then had a follow up meeting.

## **Follow up interview**

During her conference, Hannon let me know she was nervous but she enjoyed teaching her lesson. She said some of her student teaching colleagues questioned her choice of stories and the vocabulary (words like colored, Negro and lynching), but she said that she did not regret her choice of using nonfiction literature nor the vocabulary associated with it. But I must admit those three little black girl dominated her discussion held after the reading of the book. I wonder what she was really thinking. Did she eventually regret her choice?

**2-4-04**

### **Observation**

I am observing Clark, the only male student teacher in the cohort. I am getting ready to observe a social studies lesson. He opens the lesson with a review from yesterday's lesson. He reads a story about a girl who loved baseball who encountered inequality in the world of sports. I am interested to see how he will handle gender question. Clark presented a variety of literature to accentuate the points of his lesson. His management system for resources and literature and technology was efficient. I noticed that most of the black females in the class grouped themselves together. They were very independent and only needed Clark for clarification on the project they were creating after the story. Clark encouraged their independence. The room was busy and chattering with conversation about the project. Clark also had bookmarked websites for the research project. The students even gave him a nickname- Mr. B. He has a good rapport with the students. He also let me know that two of the females in his class were in the gifted/accelerated program and he wanted to capitalize on that during his cooperative group instruction. Clark also had a student who was visually impaired and he incorporated the use of a magnified LCD screen for this student during the technology portion of this lesson.

**2-4-04**

### **Observation**

I am now observing Lyna in first grade. She is teaching a lesson on dental health. I can see that she is excited but under some duress because her cooperating teacher is also observing. She has said to Lyna that she is not firm enough with the children and that Lyna let's them make too much noise during instruction. Lyna is constantly doling out behavior reminders and check marks. I wonder if this is due to management choice or her cooperating teacher observing. The cooperating teacher is looming over her during this lesson without saying a word. I can tell she is affecting Lyna. I will ask her if there is any way I can offer her support in light of the apparent comments from her cooperating teacher.

**2-12-04**

**Observation**

I am observing Mandy to day at a middle school. She is nervous and excited about her lesson. In reviewing her lesson plan, I see that is very detailed as afar as group directions are concerned. She also mentioned that she had the opportunity to teach on her own. Last week her cooperating teacher was out sick. I spoke with her cooperating teacher and she felt Mandy could handle it. Mandy shared that she found out just how much her students respected her as a “real” teacher. She said that they behaved well and got their assignments completed. She expressed that she felt validated after those two days of teaching on her own. She also mentioned that she is still experimenting with management strategies. I let her know that this was alright. *(This is my opportunity to compile classroom strategies resource manual for the cohort. The teacher preparation program did not offer a classroom management course and the students expressed that they wanted more help with this).* In the lab for this lesson I noticed that Mandy tried to rotate to each group and give them her attention but there were three white female students who monopolized her time. The black males in her class received enough attention but the least amount compared to the other groups in the class. This group of students of students though independent, was very demanding.

**2-13-04**

**Observation**

I am observing a music/black history being taught by Jo. I notice that she has no black students in her kindergarten class, but a substantial number of females. She discussed with me earlier that her black history unit lesson ranged from civil rights leaders to legends in the arts. She told me of an interesting way she taught a lesson on segregation. She did an activity in which the females were assigned a snack but the males got to choose their snack. She discussed how upset the females were and how she channeled their emotions to the injustice suffered by Rosa Parks. I wonder how Jo felt about this lesson in light of the fact that there were no children of color in her class. How does she feel about her lesson’s effectiveness?

**2-13-04**

**Conference/Observation**

I am about to observe Hannon’s creative writing lesson with her first graders. Prior to observing, Hannon and I discussed how effective she feels in her teaching persona. She stated that some days she feels like she has accomplished nothing based on her intended plans. Then some days she feels absolutely incredible when she has accomplished something. She also said that she wonders if the kids know what she feels like. I told her that even as a veteran teacher she will feel that way. I let her know that it was okay to feel that that was and it was a sign of growth as a professional educator. Also, this is a sign of a reflective thinker which is the foundation of the conceptual framework model for the teacher preparation program.

She was also concerned about how her life experience in another profession would benefit and impact her new profession. She questioned how she could insert that experience and knowledge on her resume. I explained to her that life experience should not be discounted and that our next seminar would show her how to incorporate that experience into her resume and interviewing skills.

**2-24-04**

**Observation**

I am observing Lyna teaching a Saxon phonics lesson in whole group. Lyna is at war with her teaching philosophy. For her solo teaching, she was given the freedom to modify the Saxon scripted lesson. I noticed that she called on a little black girl named Rose. She called on her to read or decode quite often. She seems to have an affinity for the little girl. She told me that the little girl does not get called on much by the cooperating teacher.

**Follow Up**

I have encouraged Lyna to not be afraid and deviate from the rote direct instruction script when solo teaching. During her student teaching experience Lyna has been so excited about using developmentally appropriate lessons, but her cooperating teacher is traditional to the extreme. In support of developmentally appropriate practice and Lyna's philosophy about how children learn, I gave her examples of how to modify basal lessons that are not diverse in instructional strategies or appropriate for diverse populations.

**2-25-04**

**Observation**

I am in Mandy's earth science class. I am observing her interactions with the students during the lesson. I am also watching her interaction with a table of black male middle school males. Earlier, one of the males from that table had an altercation with the classroom management problem. She settled the matter in a very laid-back manner and proceeded with her lesson. I wanted to ask her why all of the black males grouped together. There is also only one black girl in the class and she keeps to herself. I wonder if Mandy notices this arrangement with her students. It seems that the group of black males gave her more attention when she was teaching. They were also very engaged in the jeopardy earth science game. The white males in the class were the least attentive. The white females were the second least attentive group. Once again I wondered if Mandy was aware of this. I am also wondering how I will address this. I wonder if she will get to a point where she is aware of these dynamics in this class before her student teaching assignment is up or even her first year of teaching.

One black male was extremely engaged and wanted to answer every question asked. He had a couple outbursts and she reminded him to settle down. She moved toward him and settled herself within his physical proximity. He immediately calmed down. Another class is coming in as she dismissed this one. She I handing out her warm up assignment. I wonder if the grouping will be similar to the last class. I wonder will she notice if the grouping is the same or not?

**1-29-07**

### **Seminar with Student Teachers**

Today I had a seminar with my student teacher cohort. Earlier in the week one of the female student teachers was anxious about a county school system job fair and she had a good lead on a job but she was concerned about having a portfolio to present. After receiving email with similar concerns from the others in the cohort, I set a seminar in motion. I prepared binder portfolios with the basic and appropriate categories for their evidence-based work samples.

I also gave them descriptors for the categories and topics, so that the work samples would be relevant for the categories. They were lots of questions when the seminar began. I included a category for multicultural activities and I reminded them that when I come to observe them in the field, I would be looking for appropriate responses to students' needs based on race, gender and learning style. This sparked a conversation about what they observe their cooperating teachers do when teaching in reference to gender. They asked me about the research literature on gender and I shared with them that the research tells us that during instruction generally, males are more likely to receive attention and positive reinforcement from teachers than girl. This is compounded by the fact that as females' educational careers progress, they are less likely to be encouraged to attend higher level math and science courses. This phenomenon starts early. Two members of the cohort stated that they noticed gender-biased instruction from their cooperating teachers. Lyna stated that her cooperating teacher, during circle or whole group instruction, put all the males near her feet and the females at the back of the circle. When Lyna asked her why, she said that the males needed more guidance and attention. Lyna said that she was appalled at her cooperating teachers' practices and she reused to follow suit. All of the other student teachers agreed. They all looked forward to their next seminar. I wondered how they will adjust their instruction in reference to gender when teaching their cluster lessons.

### **Supervisor Reflections**

The Orland-Barak (2002) study also found that a university teacher-education course based on case-method pedagogy constitutes a safe and challenging context for mentors to voice dilemmas inherent in their field experiences that are often silenced by the system. Field notes set the stage for such reflections. This pushed the university supervisor to examine the type of support needed for each student teacher.

That could require many different services: annotated lesson plans, classroom management plans, or conferencing with cooperating teachers to advocate for student teachers instructional choices and teacher education goals. Let's examine the revealing themes of *metacognition*, *self-efficacy*, and *relationship*.

Interviews and field notes reveal three themes: Metacognition, self efficacy and relationship with cooperation teacher. Metacognition is simply defined in this context as "knowing or being aware of what I know" or being cognizant of what I am experiencing." The students in this cohort are aware of many factors. They are aware of gender dynamics and time on task. They are aware of instructional implications on curriculum. An explicit example of this was the choice of trade book text chosen by Clark in reference to gender. Another explicit example of metacognition and awareness is reflected in Hannon's deliberate choice of trade book text and accompanying vocabulary, though complex.

Self efficacy issues are also issues also revealed in action research project. The students in this cohort are faced with the challenges of managing behavior and still keeping their self-esteem intact. This is manifested in Mandy's student teaching vignettes as she contemplates whether she is a "real teacher" in the eyes of her students.

The final theme revealed in this research project was relationship with the cooperating teacher. This theme was interesting because of the ranges on the spectrum. Many of the cooperating teachers were supportive and yielded to the college's program standards reflected in the conceptual framework along with the INTASC standards; except in Lyna's case. The intervention of the university supervisor was absolutely necessary. Mandy's experience with her cooperating teacher was unique as the cooperating teacher was a former teacher education professor in middle grades science and math.

## **Positionality**

From the standpoint of university supervisor positionality is two-fold. As a person of color, the university supervisor in this context is aware of her emotive intelligence in reference to the position of the young learners. She, in a subtle way, is in solidarity with the young first grade girls of color who are becoming aware of the realities of their heritage. As a person of color, she is also subtle in solidarity with the student of color who was identified as gifted and talented; and required intellectual challenge and autonomy. The university supervisor mediates her ethic of care with the program goals and facilitates support for instruction that will benefit all children, especially children of color. The university supervisor critiques her ability to culturally mediate on behalf of the young learners.

## **Efficacy**

The university supervisor in this context examines reflexive practices through the vehicle of various forms of communication. Those forms come in seminars and follow up conferences. As far as the conferences, the efficacy of the university supervisor is measured in a more direct format. It is a qualified and quantified though performance-based tasks like portfolio compilation and moderated question and answer formats.

Efficacy for the university supervisor is also examined and quantified with the number of observations and how productive they are as far as information gathering or fact finding. The more complex portion of examining efficacy is manifested in the follow up conferences as well as in the university supervisor's field notes and metacognitively examining "what was I thinking when I wrote this observation" to each entry. By annotating field notes and observations beyond a rubric or checklist, the university supervisor can draw upon the tenets of her professional belief system and personal belief system about how student teachers should be supported. In this case, they are supported in a manner that is safe but brings about dissonance so they can begin to examine their own belief systems. The search for efficacy of the supervisor should be located in the reflexive practices of the student teacher. This is a tender and tentative place, but a very authentic examination.

In replicating reflective practices the university supervisor must practice and demonstrate how to deconstruct the belief system behind the actions or instructional support. This stands to be replicated by the teacher candidate by practicing a deconstruction application classroom management plans and lesson plans; the "why I am doing this in my teaching"? Efficacy manifests itself in the observable actions of teacher candidates after direct support from the university supervisor. The guided suggestions of the university supervisor springs from the deconstruction of precious observable tasks documented in the annotated field notes of the student teachers' instructional interactions; thus, in this case efficacy is cyclical and hinged up the acts of deconstruction, mediation and application. This takes place all within the context of "student teaching".

## **Conclusions**

In this action research project, the university supervisor attempted to make the student teacher process safe yet challenging. This took place in the midst of the supervisor deconstructing her own positionality. As complex as this is, it was necessary. Looking at this data in its triangulation with student teacher satisfaction surveys and program completion data provided a rich source of information to aid not only program evaluation, but to provide themes to observe and monitor. The power of constructed forms of communication to enhance the student teaching process further channels purposeful opportunities for learning and perception of instructional efficacy.

## **Implications**

There are essentially three main themes to be further investigated as far as implications are concerned. First, how do we provide more avenues for communication? Second, how do supervisors acknowledge positionality as researchers investigate interactions and reactions of student teachers? Third and finally, what other ways can researchers document conversations and reflexive practices of the university supervisors? Let us envision the student teacher as a color. Each student teacher represents a different color. The power of field notes and data collection adds the ability to examine the hues and shades within and between the colors of the student teaching experience.

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