

Pre-service Teachers' Issues in the Relationship With Cooperating Teachers and Their Resolutions

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This paper reports part of a larger phenomenological study of 23 participants (eight pre-service teachers, eight university supervisors, and seven cooperating teachers) specifically focusing on pre-service teachers' issues in the relationship with cooperating teachers and their resolutions. Two questions were used to guide this paper: (1) What can be pre-service teachers' issue with the cooperating teacher? and (2) How can pre-service teachers resolve/avoid issues with the cooperating teacher? Each participant received two semi-in-depth interviews, with each lasting approximately 90 minutes. Using the applied thematic analysis and the constant comparative approach based on grounded theory resulted in five themes in the area of issues and four themes in the area of resolutions. The results of this study may be helpful to teacher educators, especially those who intend to establish rationale in selecting cooperating teachers and to consider providing training to cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers to enhance the field experience.

Keywords: issues in student teaching, resolutions to issues in student teaching, relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, student teachers, field experience, student teaching

Introduction

To warrant quality learning outcomes of student teaching, it is critical that the pre-service teacher maintains a positive relationship with the cooperating teacher who provides an opportunity to practice teaching in the classroom. Student teaching is most fundamental for future teachers' professional development (Cornell, 2003; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2010a; Veal & Rikard, 1998; Weasmer & Woods, 2003) and the relationship between the pre-service teacher and the cooperating teacher critically influences the learning outcomes (Korth & Baum, 2011; Koskela & Ganser, 1998). This relationship is oftentimes referred to as a mentoring relationship, i.e., a teacher-student relationship (Cornell, 2003; Leatham & Peterson, 2010), a relationship that intrinsically contains a hierarchical nature (Anderson, 2007). In light of this nature, the match or mismatch between the pre-service teacher and the cooperating teacher inevitably has the supremacy to influence the pre-service teacher's attitudes toward the profession (Tok, 2011).

Due to the influential power, it is imperative to examine pre-service teachers' issues with the cooperating teacher and resolutions they can use to address the issues. There is an ample documentation in the literature on issues in the relationship between the pre-service teacher and the cooperating teacher (MerC, 2010; Tok, 2011); however, resolutions to issues of the relationship are rarely found. Even rarer are the two areas studied as a sequential and consequential focus in the literature. The purpose of this paper, hence, was to examine these two

areas through stakeholders' perceptions. Specifically, this paper was interested in exploring what stakeholders perceive as pre-service teachers' issues with the cooperating teacher and as resolutions that pre-service teachers can use to address the issues. The research questions guiding this study thus included: (1) What can be pre-service teachers' issue with the cooperating teacher? and (2) How can pre-service teachers resolve/avoid issues with the cooperating teacher?

Relevant Literature Reviewed

The role of cooperating teachers has been significantly transformed, since teacher education programs increased hours of field experience in the classroom to prepare future teachers to respond to the calls for educational reforms in the school (The Holmes Group, 1986; 1990). In a literature review on the field experience, Lu (2008) theorized that the role of cooperating teachers evolves from being a cooperating teacher, mentor teacher, to supervising teacher. Being a cooperating teacher, a classroom teacher fulfills a set of duties imposed by the teacher education program (Awaya, McEwan, Heyler, & Linsky, 2003). Being a mentor teacher, they serve to mentor and nurture the pre-service teacher (Cornell, 2003; Morgan, 1999). Finally, being a supervising teacher, they supervise the pre-service teacher through observations (Daane & Latham, 1998; Zheng & Webb, 2000). The role change inevitably alters the relationship between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers.

Literature indicates that multiple and complex factors contribute to the construct of the relationship between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers (Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2010b). Some researchers consider gender, age, level in the hierarchy, culture, and learning style as the contributing factors (Armstrong, Allinson, & Hayes, 2002). Others find dissimilar values, attitudes, and beliefs between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers to be the most significant contributing factors (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000). Still others report how different expectations result in disparate levels of support and challenge of cooperating teachers (Rajuan et al., 2010b).

The study of cooperating teachers' role has long been a focal interest of researchers. For example, a study provides a comprehensive examination cooperating teachers' role that results in the development of a cooperating teachers' role inventory (Koc, 2011a; 2011b). In this role inventory, Koc (2011a; 2011b) listed nine important functions of cooperating teachers in the field experience. The functions of cooperating teachers include: (1) providing support on teaching; (2) providing orientation to the school/classroom; (3) providing moral support; (4) providing feedback on lesson planning and teaching performance; (5) providing guidance about resources for teaching; (6) evaluating; (7) self-preparing for the role; (8) providing feedback on the observation forms; and (9) providing written feedback. These functions illustrate cooperating teachers as providers of learning needed for future teachers in the classroom/school, a critical character of a mentor teacher.

Given varied roles assigned to cooperating teachers, the relationship between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers is inherently a mentoring, teacher-student relationship. In this relationship, cooperating teachers help pre-service teachers see what students can do and cannot do and help them adjust their planning and instruction (Nilssen, 2010). Additionally, to ensure pre-service teachers' professional development, the role of cooperating teachers is to provide experience working with young children, model classroom practices, facilitate reflection, and share knowledge (Leatham & Peterson, 2010).

Within a mentoring relationship, power is consequently an unbalanced entity. In a study, examining the

role of cooperating teachers' power in student teaching. Anderson (2007) reported that pre-service teachers are influenced by cooperating teachers through evaluations, rewards, distribution of knowledge, vested authority, and charisma. In his discussion, Anderson (2007) posited that pre-service teachers have acute awareness of cooperating teachers' coercive power through evaluations and some may change behaviors to please their cooperating teachers. Further, cooperating teachers exercise the power of rewards that range from letting pre-service teachers teach to write good reference and evaluation, likewise, pre-service teachers view cooperating teachers' vested authority as legitimate and are willing to comply. Finally, pre-service teachers deem cooperating teachers as experts who have knowledge in the profession and want to learn from them and respect them.

This relationship, nonetheless, could be hurt because of problems which are caused either by pre-service teachers or cooperating teachers. For example, involving 20 pairs of pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers, Rajuan et al. (2010) examined how pre-service teachers' opportunity for learning to teach is influenced due to the match or mismatch of expectations with cooperating teachers on academic, practical, technical, personal, and critical orientations. The results show that mismatched pairs' experience low support and high challenge. In another example, using survey and interviews as data collection instruments, Tok (2011) reported that pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching are negatively affected by virtue of not having cooperating teachers as good role models.

In still another study conducted in Turkey with 99 pre-service teachers, and demanding the participants to self-report problems in the field (MerÇ, 2010), the results indicate some problems that create harm to a student-teacher/cooperating-teacher relationship. The problems existing on pre-service teachers' part primarily include pre-service teachers' incompetency in time management, classroom management, and instruction. Nonetheless, the problems identified to be caused by cooperating teachers include lack of cooperation with pre-service teachers, absences from the classroom, and interfering when pre-service teachers are teaching.

Method

Research Design

This paper, part of a larger phenomenological, interpretive study, focuses merely on the pre-service teachers' issues with the cooperating teacher and their resolutions. For an interpretive study, phenomenology provides a philosophical base (Mertens, 2004). The philosophy of a phenomenological study permits the researcher to focus on the phenomena of individuals' experiences in life and to prompt individuals to recognize, describe, and explain experiences and interpret the meaning of experiences. The recognition and interpretation of experiences are believed to guides, actions, and relations (Merriam, 2009; Mertens, 2004).

Participants and Study Setting

The study involved voices of all stakeholders in student teaching. Using purposeful and snowballing, sampling, the study thus recruited 23 participants, including eight pre-service teachers, eight university supervisors, and seven cooperating teachers. The participants were chosen from different school zones and campus cohorts. The pre-service teachers were in the second semester of the program of study. Four cooperating teachers had more than five years of mentoring experience, while the other four were with two to three years. Four university supervisors were retired or formal teachers, whereas the other four were graduate students.

The study setting was a fifth-year k-6 teacher education program in a research-based university in New England in the United States. In this fifth-year program, around 70 students enrolled in the study year. They were grouped in four cohorts having classes on campus when they were free from the field and were placed individually in public classrooms according to the requirement of diverse zones. They worked in public schools three days a week for the first semester and full day every day the second semester. They received supervision of the university supervisor as well as the cooperating teacher who they addressed as a mentor teacher. After completing the program of study, students graduated with a master's degree and a teaching certificate.

Data Collection

Each participant received two semi-in-depth interviews, with each lasting approximately 90 minutes (Seidman, 2006). A modified version of what Seidman proposed as in-depth interview the first interview focused on any prior experiences relevant to the topic and current experiences of the topic. The second interview started with any missing pieces in the last interview and moved on to meaning making of the shared experiences. Interviews took place in places that were at the convenience of participants and at times when they were available. Two interviews had an interval of one to two weeks to allow time for participants to reflect. This interview approach was effective in data collection, as it permitted the researcher to build relationship with participants in the first interview and then explored in-depth on the interested topic in the second. A semi-structured interview protocol was used throughout all interviews to maintain consistency (Maxwell, 2005). Probing questions were followed to solicit clarification and elaboration, which allowed data to extend deeper and wider. All interviews were recorded and verbatim transcribed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis used applied thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) and grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Applied thematic analysis demands that relevant chunks of the data are identified and pulled out from the large amount of verbatim transcribed data to respond to the inquiry questions. The results of this approach indicated that only the expressions of 15 participants (eight student teachers, five university supervisors, and two cooperating teachers) were relevant to the questions (see Table 1).

The constant comparative approach based on grounded theory imposed a recurrent process of reading, coding, comparing, contrasting, sorting, grouping, and categorizing the segregated data (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Mertens, 2004). These persistent analyzing procedures allowed themes to emerge. The themes were found to illustrate pre-service teachers' issues with the cooperating teachers and resolutions to the issues. Organized chunks of quotes from participants' expressions were used to portray the themes in the results section.

Results

Five themes were relevant to pre-service teachers' issues with the cooperating teacher and four themes to resolutions to the issues. Table 1 provided an overview of the themes and key participants whose expressions supported the themes.

The results in Table 1 indicated that most issue themes with the cooperating teacher were reported by pre-service teachers, except one by a university supervisor. On the other hand, university supervisors had the most say in the area of resolutions to the issues, with one theme having the most expressions from pre-service teachers. Followings were the detailed illustrations of each theme supported by participants' expressions in the

order of numbers of contributing participants.

Table 1

Themes and Participants Whose Expressions Supported the Themes

Question	Theme	Participant whose expressions supported the themes
Pre-service teachers' issues with the cooperating teacher	Inappropriate teaching opportunity	PT: Marjorie, Garcia, Sophie, Dawn
	Ineffective communication	PT: Jamie, Sophie, Dawn
	Poor classroom practices	PT: Garcia, Ruth
	Wrong perception of the pre-service teacher's role	PT: Marjorie, Sophie
	Interrupting teaching	US: Annie
Resolutions to the issues	Being flexible in facing issues	CT: Coral US: Becky PT: Dawn, Roth, Victoria, Serena
	Being communicative	CT: Hannah US: Becky, Grace, Donald
	Being respectful	US: Donald, Grace, Harry
	Being professional	US: Donald PT: Ruth

Notes. CT: Cooperating teacher; US: University supervisor; PT: Pre-service teacher.

Pre-service Teachers' Issues With the Cooperating Teacher

Five themes emerged under this category were: (1) inappropriate teaching opportunity; (2) ineffective communication; (3) poor classroom practices; (4) wrong perceptions of the pre-service teacher's role; and (5) interrupting teaching.

Inappropriate teaching opportunity. The data showed that pre-service teachers did not have appropriate opportunity to teach. This inappropriateness ranged from not being able to try out new ideas to being asked to teach too much. For example, not being able to plan for teaching, Marjorie described, "She would pull out the plan book and say, 'You could do this', or 'These are the things that would be testable this week... These are the stories', 'I never really had that opportunity'". Another pre-service teacher, Garcia, also had to follow the teacher's plans. She stated, "For two-week master teaching, I followed their (referring to grade teachers) lesson plans. We sat together but it was them dictating what we are going to do and then I just went".

Sophie was experiencing a form of melancholy while interviewing took place. It was partly due to constantly feeling stressed because she had no opportunity to try out new ideas. She stated, "It made me feel that the whole lesson is bad. I wish she would just let me teach my lessons... just let me see the lesson; see how it goes... She wanted the perfect lesson. She basically told me what to do".

Nonetheless, Dawn had a complete opposite experience. Dawn stated, "She actually expected me as a teacher, in a way taking the extremist part... I felt... not supported because I was a learner".

Ineffective communication. How communication the cooperating teacher carried out, as the results indicated, could summon a problem too. A pre-service teacher, Jamie, had an example in point: "My mentor teacher this semester has had a couple of interns before... She told me, 'I got to tell you I have had interns before and have not worked out much', I was like, 'Why is that?'".

Sophie, experiencing an ineffective communication with her cooperating teacher, described an issue, "I felt like she was struggling with finding something good to say... it made me feel not good about myself". She continued to describe her communication issue with her cooperating teacher, "It really made me disrespect her

when she asked me the question, 'Are you sure this is what you want to do?'... I thought she was... not mentoring me". She "became not trustful of" her cooperating teacher.

Dawn had an issue with her cooperating teacher in the way how she provided feedback. She illustrated her experience, "From Scotia, I did not feel I got positive feedback... When she had problem, she told me. And when I was doing ok, she never told me. I felt I was always criticized. So that is part of the tension that our relationship was".

Poor classroom practices. The results indicated that some pre-service teachers did not appreciate the cooperating teacher's classroom practices. For example, Garcia had several issues with her cooperating teacher's practices. First, her teacher treated everyone as the same and ignored the needs of a young boy from a poor family. She worried that the little boy "is not going to be able to learn to the best of his ability, looking like that, feeling hungry like that. So you do what you need to do to meet that need".

Another issue was that the teacher gave her first graders sheets with lines that were too small and did not sit down to help them. She described, "So... they show it to me, I am like, 'Why are your letters all over the page? Come here, sit down'. I am helping them (that) these letters should be on the line. I do not see her doing that".

One more issue related to how her cooperating teacher planned for lessons with other grade teachers during a planning time. Garcia stated, "They would go over the new matter for the week... and pull out a file box and pull out papers, papers after papers". While sitting in, Garcia attempted to suggest, "Why do not we have them make caterpillar and cut the stuff out and they can glue?". She then got the teacher's response: "No, we... do not want things that are not sitting at the table and do things that we have to help them with".

Finally, Garcia saw "a lot of favoritism... and a lot of modeling for those students that were quick thinker". She described and commented on what she viewed, "She would call on the same students all the time, while other kids are having hands raised sitting down. So... she was teaching to those students that are already at that level of thinking".

Ruth, another pre-service teacher, had an issue with her teacher's disciplinary style. Below was an excerpt from Ruth: "Her discipline style was not something I want to copy... If you treat children like they are motivated to be powerful, they are not going to be good and they are not going to be nice and they are not going to get along... If I continue to try to be the teacher that she is, my classroom dynamic is going to be the way that it is in her room".

Wrong perception of the pre-service teacher's role. Some students felt frustrated when engaged in doing chores, instead of something relevant to teaching. Marjorie described her experience, "I copied, I pasted, I stapled, I coat laminated... So much of my time was consumed by that". Another pre-service teacher, Sophie, portrayed her experience, "They had a party... My teacher will bring me in and she tells the other teachers, 'Oh, if we need help, just tell Sophie', I just felt it is very disrespectful. I am your intern, not your special helper". Sophie got frustrated with the experience because expectations were not clear. She stated, "What I want is just a teacher who I know what they want. I did not know what my teacher wanted from me. Then things do not work out".

Interrupting teaching. A university supervisor, Annie, described an example of interrupting teaching. Annie stated, "One of the interns... The mentor teacher was always interrupting her... He was worried about the curriculum instruction; not thinking about this should be the intern's turn to lead the lesson". Consequently, this pre-service teacher was not able to teach what she had planned.

Resolutions to the Issues

For question 2, four themes emerged out of the segregated data. The themes indicated that, as a guest teacher in the classroom, the pre-service teacher was expected to be flexible, communicative, respectful, and professional to augment the relationship, when issues arise.

Being flexible. One cooperating teacher, Carol, declared her stand toward her role blatantly, "I am just myself. I am not going to change my personality, not for the intern". This comment explicitly suggested the pre-service teacher be flexible and change herself/himself upon facing conflicts with the cooperating teacher.

Findings indicated that it was applicable to be flexible when facing issues with the cooperating teacher. For example, Dawn, having personality clashes with her cooperating teacher for the first semester, honestly recognized, "I could have improved the relationship by not judging and keeping my mouth shut". She also admitted, "I have been part of the tension and should take responsibility for that".

Being flexible means different things to different people. For example, a university supervisor, Becky, suggested not bringing the issue up. She commented, "Sometimes... it is wise not to bring it on the table. It might just be one of the things where you decide not to. You would learn how to get along with as long as you feel like you can teach".

For a pre-service teacher, Ruth, being flexible means being willing to take criticism. Ruth stated, "You are there; you still have to work with her. I do not think it is so hard to get along with people; you just have to be flexible and willing to take criticism".

For a pre-service teacher, Victoria, being flexible means conforming. Victoria stated, "If (I) have a conflict with a teacher... I usually do not do anything about it. I usually conform to what the teacher wants. I respect the teacher's classroom and they have their ideas about things".

A pre-service teacher, Serena, followed the ways of the cooperating teacher in any given situations. She portrayed her experiences, "My mentor teacher is not only... a control freak, but also the classroom runs in a very specific have-to-do-it way. In my lead teaching thing, she said that I had to do it that way. So, I did it that way... It is unlike last year; she is a second-year teacher she has only taught one year. So, in the case, I am kind of shift about toward the mentor and intern... But I felt more comfortable in that classroom, because if I messed up, we will figure out that together".

Being communicative. Findings indicated that communication was key to a positive relationship. For example, Hannah urged that the pre-service teacher communicate with the cooperating teacher. She elaborated, "If things are working, let me know. If you have questions, let me know. If you have issues with me, let me know please. I do not read minds. I need to know. And if you are feeling unsure about something, please let me know".

Sometimes, it takes courage to communicate especially when recognizing the hierarchical superiority in the relationship. A university supervisor, Becky, commented, "There is a bit of hierarchy there. So, for the intern, to reach and challenge a mentor takes a lot of courage. It takes courage to say how you feel and what you believe and what you know... That is not about teaching. That is about life. What are you going to do if they are not listening to you? That is the maturity".

Agreeing that communication was "a part of life", Grace, a university supervisor, suggested communicating via various ways. She stated, "I would try to have as much communication with this mentor teacher as I possibly could... find ways to communicate, even outside of the classroom".

However, it might not be easy to initiate communication. A university supervisor, Donald, proposed, "Try to... say, 'Can I ask you a question about that?'... or 'I saw you do this; can you explain why you did this?' or 'Can I try this?'" He believed in using questions would help initiate a conversation with the pre-service teacher, when concerns arise.

Being respectful. The results indicated that being respectful to the cooperating teacher was critical in this relationship. For example, a university supervisor, Donald stated he would respect the cooperating teacher's requests, "As (an) intern, you really have to be respectful to the mentor and listen to what they have to say. If they told me to do something I would work to get that done. I would never complain about things".

Respecting the cooperating teacher's responsibility as a teacher is another suggestion. As Grace, a university supervisor, stated, "You have to respect that the teacher's role... is her job and certain things will come up and you are not going to be put in the number one slot. But understand that you do not want to be last either".

Still another suggestion was that the pre-service teacher should respect the power dynamics in addition to the cooperating teacher's priority in the classroom. Harry, a university supervisor, stated:

Really be thinking about this experience of collaboration with your mentor teachers as another very important point of professional learning and growth because you are going to collaborate with colleagues... Your relationship with the mentor teacher... is one that entails power dynamics. It is not your classroom; it is their classroom. They are the ones who are responsible for scope and sequence, for objectives, for meeting the frameworks, for preparing for MCAS¹. And so ultimately that is more important than your practicum.

Being professional. Findings suggested that staying professional help when facing conflicts in the relationship. A university supervisor, Donald, provided an example he had in the field. He stated, "I had one teacher who was extremely sarcastic to the kids... I asked the intern, 'What do you feel about this? She said she did not like it at all... But she felt that she was not at the place to approach the teacher... She was like, 'This is learning experience. That is going to happen. I am going to learn from this but I am not going to do that'".

A pre-service teacher, Ruth, shared how she developed professionally given a personality disagreement with her cooperating teacher. She stated, "Judy and I are not similar... But... we have a very strong and very professional relationship and it is just been great".

Concluding Discussions

In response to the first research question about pre-service teachers' issues with the cooperating teacher, five issues were identified in this study program. They included: (1) inappropriate teaching opportunity; (2) ineffective communication; (3) poor classroom practices; (4) wrong perceptions of the pre-service teacher's role; and (5) interrupting teaching. With only eight pre-service teachers participating in the study, six (75%) reported to have certain degrees of issues experienced in the field. The results, therefore, convey a warning signal and point to a couple of implications to the practices.

First, the results imply that a good selection of the cooperating teacher is imperative to ensure quality of teacher preparation. This implication arises over the concerns that the cooperating teacher was reported to have poor classroom practices, wrong perceptions of the pre-service teacher's role, and ineffective communication. According to the literature, some criteria, such as excellence in teaching and related skills and a commitment to

¹ MCAS stands for Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. It is the high-stakes test in Massachusetts for public school students.

working with pre-service teachers, are used to select cooperating teachers for some teacher education programs (Phillips & Baggett-McMinn, 2000). Selecting cooperating teachers based on effective teaching and skills and a sense of commitment helps warrant a healthy base of the work forces in the field. A good selection process should help handpick good teachers who are willing and dedicated to meeting future teachers' needs. Therefore, issues such as those found in this study could have been avoided at the outset of the field experience.

Further, the results may imply that training of the cooperating teacher is needed to ensure good quality of mentoring practices, an implication that is sustained by the fact that the common theme of the identified issues is mainly relevant to whether pre-service teachers get or fulfill basic learning for the experience with the cooperating teacher they work with. Research evidence indicates that training enables cooperating teachers to fulfill the responsibilities required for the role and to advance the cooperating teachers professionally in supporting student teaching. For example, cooperating teachers who receive training demonstrate learned strategies more and encourage pre-service teachers to implement these strategies (Daane & Latham, 1998). Additionally, cooperating teachers make significant shifts in their conversations with pre-service teachers using the criteria given to them (Timperley, 2001). Further, cooperating teachers who receive training demonstrate more effective planning, more effective classroom teaching, and better reflectivity (Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002).

MerC (2010) reported that 5.5% of pre-service teachers' total problems are related to cooperating teachers. In this study, the most expressions about field issues came from pre-service teachers, which might be because pre-service teachers were ones that directly received the impact of lack of training of cooperating teachers. In the real world, people do what they know and cannot do what they do not know. Due to the lack of knowledge and skills, although cooperating teachers might believe they have done their best to help both their children and pre-service teachers, it may still leave much room to be desired. Although student teaching is most valuable for pre-service teachers to become teachers, it can be a daunting experience. With appropriate training provided to cooperating teachers, it may help student teachers overcome fear and develop with a positive field experience, which ultimately helps the program diminish potential field issues.

The second research question explored the resolutions to issues in the relationship between pre-service teachers and the cooperating teacher. The results suggest that pre-service teachers be flexible, communicative, respectful, and professional when facing conflicts in the relationship, which is a unique contribution to the literature. The results are unique because, although seemingly aiming to resolve the issues stemming from this specific case, they indicate basic behavior rules for guest teachers in the classroom. Eventually, they can serve as fundamental guidelines for pre-service teachers to follow in working with cooperating teachers. Following these guidelines may prevent issues from arising in the field.

Indeed, cooperating teachers hierarchically have the upper hand in this relationship (Anderson, 2007) and may have their share in resolving conflicts in the field, yet the results establish portions of obligation where pre-service teachers can dedicate themselves into better experience as follows. First, pre-service teachers are suggested to be flexible regardless what he/she may prefer for classroom practices. This flexibility may include taking and adapting to the cooperating teacher's suggestions, rules, routines, and ideas in classroom practices, knowing that they are here to learn, to support, and not to evaluate. Additionally, pre-service teachers need to find ways to communicate with the cooperating teacher and be courageous to face issues. Only through effort made in communication does it allow both parties to exchange thoughts, clarify ideas, and explain misunderstanding, which in turn promotes trust in the relationship. Also, pre-service teachers are suggested to

respect the responsibility of the cooperating teacher in the classroom. The priority of the cooperating teacher is children in the classroom and their learning, not pre-service teachers, a fact that pre-service teachers need to understand. Therefore, they should be willing to collaborate with the cooperating teacher and to grow through working with young kids. Finally, pre-service teachers should stay professional when facing issues that come up in the field. They should avoid taking things personally or uttering negative comments and try to learn something beneficial in any given situation, even when things do not proceed the way that they appreciate. Overall, the results conclude that pre-service teachers should be an agent who resolves problem or promotes change, instead of being a trouble maker, in order to develop a positive pre-service teacher/cooperating-teacher relationship.

The study is significant in that it links the potential correlation between issues and their resolutions in the pre-service teacher/cooperating-teacher relationship. The results, therefore, can be helpful for teacher education programs to educate pre-service teachers concerning appropriate behaviors in facing issues with cooperating teachers in the field. Also, the results may provide sensible rationale for teacher education programs to establish standards in selecting cooperating teachers and to provide training for cooperating teachers. Both of the abovementioned schemes working together may proactively prevent issues from arising in the relationship between student teachers and cooperating-teachers and in turn help enhance a better student teaching experience.

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