

Running Head: STUDENT TEACHERS AND MASTER TEACHERS

DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT TEACHERS AND MASTER
TEACHERS WITHIN THE CO-TEACHING MODEL

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ABSTRACT

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Student teaching is a critical step in the process of becoming a teacher. Since its development over the past few decades, student teaching has become a requirement to attain a teaching credential in all fifty of the United States. Unfortunately, the relationship between student teachers and master teachers is frequently wrought with tension. This tension makes student teaching a frustrating experience for both parties, rather than an exciting time of shaping a novice teacher as he or she embarks upon a successful new teaching career. Recently, in an effort to improve upon traditional student teaching, the co-teaching model of teacher training has been developed. In this model, the student teacher and master teacher come alongside one another to plan, prepare, and teach classes together. The hope is that this new approach would help student teachers attain a higher level of success by providing them with more support as well as with opportunities to develop collaborative skills. However, the structure of co-teaching introduces a new interpersonal dynamic to the classroom. This dynamic contributes both strengths, such as heightened support for student teachers and their pupils, and weaknesses, such as increased planning requirements and decreased independence, to the student teacher-master teacher relationship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
List of Tables	7
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	8
The Problem	11
Purpose of Study and Research Questions.....	13
Overview of Methodology	14
Overview of Findings	15
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	17
Student Teachers Relating to Master Teachers	17
Master Teachers Relating to Student Teachers	20
Common Causes of Strain in the Relationship	22
Solutions Suggested by Prior Research	25
Conclusion.....	29
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	30
Population, Sampling, and Participants	30
District	30

Schools	31
Sampling	32
Data Collection and Instruments	33
Interviews	35
Observations	36
Surveys.....	36
Data Analysis	37
Validity and Reliability Issues	38
Validity	38
Reliability	39
Limitations	39
Ethical Considerations.....	42
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	43
Student Teachers	43
Beginning of Relationship.....	43
Middle of Relationship.....	51
End of Relationship.....	56

Master Teachers61

 Beginning of Relationship.....61

 Middle of Relationship.....67

 End of Relationship.....72

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....79

Findings80

 Patterns of Interaction.....80

 Feelings about the Relationship.....82

 Reaching Objectives.....85

Implications for Practice90

 Student Teachers.....90

 Master Teachers90

 Administrators.....91

Recommendations for Further Study93

Final Thoughts93

REFERENCES95

Appendix A: Monthly Survey98

Appendix B: Individual Interview Questions100

Appendix C: Group Interview Questions.....101

Appendix D: Research Information102

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form105

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Table 1.a: Intake Student Teacher Patterns of Interaction	44
2. Table 1.b: Intake Student Teacher Feelings about Relationship	46
3. Table 1.c: Intake Student Teacher Meeting Objectives	49
4. Table 2.a: Exit Student Teacher Patterns of Interaction	56
5. Table 2.b: Exit Student Teacher Feelings about Relationship	58
6. Table 2.c: Exit Student Teacher Meeting Objectives	59
7. Table 3.a: Intake Master Teacher Patterns of Interaction	62
8. Table 3.b: Intake Master Teacher Feelings about Relationship	63
9. Table 3.c: Intake Master Teacher Meeting Objectives	65
10. Table 4.a: Exit Master Teacher Patterns of Interaction	72
11. Table 4.b: Exit Master Teacher Feelings about Relationship	74
12. Table 4.c: Exit Master Teacher Meeting Objectives	76

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The first phase in the development of teacher preparation programs in the United States began in the early twentieth century. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published the study titled *The Professional Preparation of Teachers for American Public Schools* (Barrett, 2010), which initiated the professionalization of teaching in the U.S. However, it was not until after World War II that teacher training programs began to be developed across the nation, with the formation of graduate programs at Harvard University, Vanderbilt University, University of Chicago, and Columbia University (Barrett, 2010). Over the past century, within these expanding teacher preparation programs, student teaching emerged as a requirement to attain a teaching credential in each one of the United States. Through student teaching, a teacher candidate gains a semester of hands-on experience in a classroom while being mentored by an experienced master teacher. Although exceptions to the student teaching requirement are sometimes made for approved district and university internship programs, student teaching is the normative capstone in the acquisition of a teaching credential.

In the United States, student teaching programs fall under the auspices of university graduate divisions. To offer student teaching, a university must have a teacher preparation program that has been approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for the state in which the school is located (CTC, 2012). The specific requirements of student teaching are determined by each university, but are ultimately under the oversight of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Traditional student teaching involves one student teacher (ST) training under two master teachers (MTs), teaching students at two different grade levels, over the course of one semester. At the primary level, STs usually teach with one MT for the first quarter, and a different MT for the second. At the secondary level, STs most often work with one or two

classes belonging to each MT, and will continue working with these classes for the duration of the semester. Because student teaching is part of university teacher preparation programs, all STs are overseen and evaluated by university supervisors.

Occasionally, variations on traditional student teaching have been tried in districts and at universities. The co-teaching model, recently introduced by a university here referred to by the pseudonym Belmont State University (BSU), in conjunction with a district here referred to by the pseudonym El Dorado Unified School District (EDUSD), is one such variation. This model aims to embed principles of the “Linked Learning” approach, a recent EDUSD high school reform initiative, within the BSU teacher preparation program (Swisher, 2012). While still relatively new, Linked Learning has found early success by restructuring the large urban high schools into small learning communities, each with a unique vocational focus. This structure requires teachers to work closely together to develop integration of the vocational focus throughout the classes and activities associated with each learning community. Within the co-teaching model, STs are expected to develop skills required to teach within the Linked Learning structure by attending small learning community meetings with their MTs, participating in implementation of the Linked Learning curriculum, and developing collaborative skills by planning and teaching alongside their MTs in co-teaching relationships. This approach stands in contrast to the individualistic traditional model of passing off responsibility from the MT to the ST during the student teaching semester.

The structure of co-teaching in this teacher induction model borrows heavily from co-teaching programs developed across the United States over the past two decades. The initial co-teaching programs aim to integrate special education students into mainstream classrooms. In the 1990s, Lynne Cook and Marilyn Friend developed six approaches to co-teaching, with the

goal of better meeting the needs of diverse students, including those in special education, in the classroom. They began to train other teachers in the use of co-teaching, and published their book, *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals* in 2000. In the wake of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004, schools were required to include special education students in the same classrooms as all other students whenever possible. With this legislation, Cook and Friend's co-teaching approach gained momentum – many schools responded to the requirements of NCLB and IDEA by arranging for special education teachers to co-teach along with mainstream teachers so as to provide proper support to all students in the integrated classrooms (Conderman et al, 2009). The use of the co-teaching approach yielded much success for both special education students and general education students.

Within the past decade, co-teaching has been introduced as a model for STs and MTs working together in the classroom at a handful of universities and school districts across the United States. Kansas State, the Virginia Consortium, and St. Cloud State University of Minnesota paved the way with successful co-teaching programs replacing their traditional student teaching programs. Last January, BSU and EDUSD were awarded a grant from the James Irvine Foundation to fund an initiative to replace traditional student teaching with the co-teaching approach in order to further develop Linked Learning (Swisher, 2012). The new co-teaching structure will certainly impact current and future interactions between the STs and MTs in the district, making this a perfect time to study the dynamics of the student teacher-master teacher relationship within the co-teacher partnership at a district high school.

In addition to attending to current developments in the field of education, this study also aligns with other recent studies that address concerns within the relationship between STs and

their MTs. The anxiety surrounding this relationship is bilateral, with STs concerned about relating to their MTs as well as the reverse (e.g. Jones, 2000; Friedman & Wallace, 2006; Schwille, 2008; Lace et al., 2003). The sources of concern are multifaceted, as the student teacher-master teacher relationship is multi-dimensional and varies among schools as well as among individuals.

The Problem

“I’ve decided you’re right. The students aren’t learning,” Peter said. I looked at my ST, sitting at a student desk, with his usual tub overflowing with crumpled notes and student work. He had been struggling to teach my first period class for the past two months. Where was he going with this? “I’ve decided to quit. I can’t keep up with the work necessary to complete my student teaching this semester.”

I felt a mixture of relief and disappointment as Peter unloaded his haphazard stack of papers onto my desk. Working with him had been an extremely demanding undertaking; he was consistently disorganized and unprepared, and teaching did not come naturally to him. However, I had hoped that it wouldn’t come to this – I had hoped that he would pull himself together, improve, and achieve the significant accomplishment of completing his student teaching semester.

I began to ponder our student teacher-master teacher relationship. As Peter’s MT, what role did I play in this situation? Could I have done anything to help him succeed? Could I have offered him more support? Or perhaps a more empowering relational dynamic?

The student teacher-master teacher relationship is widely known to be a relationship wrought with tension. Student teaching is often a hellish experience, in which pre-service

teachers are faced with an incredibly steep learning curve and constant feelings of failure and frustration. On the other hand, master teaching is a demanding endeavor, which many excellent and experienced teachers are quite reluctant to undertake. However, student teaching is a necessary evil in the world of education – all teachers must start somewhere, and experiences in observing, tutoring, or substitute teaching only have a limited capacity to prepare a person to be a full-fledged classroom teacher. It is during student teaching that pre-service teachers are finally given the opportunity to apply the theories and strategies they have learned in their education courses to their work with a room full of real, live students.

The relationship between the MT and the ST is an essential central component of the student teaching experience. As Kasperbauer and Roberts (2007) state, “The relationship between student teacher and cooperating teacher has a direct effect on the legitimate peripheral participation and ultimately has an effect on the decision to enter the [teaching profession]” (p. 32). The relationship between these two parties exerts unparalleled influence on the success or failure of those entering the field of education. In fact, in a study done by Kitchel and Torres (2007), “Student teachers rated the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship the most important student teaching element” (p. 13). It is evident that this relationship is a critical factor in a beginning teacher’s preparation for the field.

Thus, the student teacher-master teacher relationship plays a significant role in shaping future educators and, in turn, the future of our schools. Student teachers must be set on a trajectory that propels them towards effective teaching. However, as Schwille (2008) writes, “Knowing how to be a good mentor is not necessarily inherent in being a good teacher” (p. 139). Wonderful teachers often take on STs only to encounter frustration and failure as they attempt to explain their craft to the amateur educators. Hall et al. (2008) adds, “To improve understanding

of how mentoring is viewed and how complex it can be is particularly critical in teacher education, because many mentor teachers have a central role in shaping beginning teachers' beliefs and practices and can significantly impact their learning" (p. 330). As new teachers enter education, the concepts ingrained in them by their MTs considerably shape their paths. Consequently, MTs impact the future students of these future teachers as well.

Ultimately, beginning teacher training is one of the most vital aspects of the field of education, and the student teacher-master teacher relationship is a central component. This aspect of education immeasurably shapes the future of the field. Unfortunately, many recurring problems strain this relationship, yet surprisingly little research has been done to explore how to improve the dynamics of the relationship between STs and MTs.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the dynamics of the relationship between STs and MTs, especially within the co-teaching model. This exploration will help fill the gap in literature regarding this relationship and will aid future STs and MTs as they seek positive interactions with one another. It will also help further improve and develop co-teaching as a new approach to teacher training.

The study focused on two primary research questions: (a) What is the experience of student teachers in their relationships with master teachers? and (b) What is the experience of master teachers in their relationships with student teachers? Together, these two questions work to explore the dynamics of both sides of the student teacher-master teacher relationship within the co-teaching model.

Overview of Methodology

This study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods. It was a phenomenological study with an inductive approach, as it began with collecting data through interviews, observations, and surveys, and concluded with a rich description of the experiences of the participants, along with recommendations for future study and application.

The qualitative methods of interviews and observations were the focus of this study, because it was a study of a specific phenomenon: the shared experiences of STs and MTs within the co-teaching partnership. Qualitative data was collected five times during the nine-week-long co-teaching relationship, and included a variety of types of data aimed at increasing comprehension of the relational dynamics involved. Private, one-on-one interviews were scheduled twice during the study – once at the beginning, and once at the end. Group interviews, including one each with the STs and with the MTs, separate from one another, were conducted approximately half-way through the study. Each co-teacher pair was observed twice during the study, including once while the pair was working one-on-one, and once while the ST was teaching the MT's class. To best understand the dynamics of the student teacher-master teacher relationship, this study focused on a diverse group of six co-teacher pairs. This in-depth focus on a small number of participants allowed for a rich understanding of the intricate nuances involved in this multi-faceted relationship. More detailed information regarding the sample and population will be discussed in chapter three.

The quantitative method of giving a monthly survey was chosen for this study to enable the participants to give quick, easy feedback to track their experiences at different points throughout the study. This survey consisted of seven closed-form questions and three open-form

questions, as well as space to explain the response given to any of the closed-form questions. It was sent out digitally, using Survey Monkey, because each ST and MT had access to email on a daily basis. These surveys, combined with the qualitative data described above, resulted in data collection during eight of the nine weeks the co-teachers worked together, thus closely tracking the dynamics of their relationships.

All of the interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed for relational themes. Furthermore, all of the surveys were organized and analyzed for themes as well. More detailed information regarding the methodology of the study will be given in chapter three.

Overview of Findings

This study found that the co-teaching model has potential to be a viable improvement to traditional student teaching. Educational practices must shift with each generation in order to keep current, and this shift could help better prepare the next generation of teachers. However, the co-teaching model poses a significant increase in relational demands when compared to traditional student teaching. In light of these demands, it was also found that STs, MTs, and administrators are advised to take several action steps to make co-teaching a true improvement for the relationships between future student and master teachers.

For STs, it was found that they should take care to maximize the support provided to them through the co-teaching process. They must prioritize regular meetings with their MTs, communicate the demands they have on their time outside of the classroom, and be mindful of diligently working towards the ultimate goal of becoming an independently employable teaching candidate.

For MTs, it was found that they must practice continual awareness of the needs of their STs throughout the co-teaching process, along with prioritizing regular meetings with them. Master teachers should offer a substantial amount of scaffolding for the STs to accomplish teaching tasks and ought to take care to include both negative and positive feedback to their mentees. Further, they must communicate their expectations and the rationale behind their expectations as they push their STs towards independence.

Finally, for administrators, it was found that they need to improve organization and communication with all participants in the co-teaching process. Master teachers and student teachers benefit greatly from participating in training regarding the specifics of co-teaching, and this training is most beneficial when it takes place at least several months before they commence their quarter of co-teaching. Additionally, co-teachers ought to be assessed and paired intentionally, also substantially in advance. Finally, administrators should consider how to restructure elements of co-teaching to foster STs' progression towards teaching independently.

Further details regarding data collection will be discussed in chapter four, and further details regarding findings will be discussed in chapter five. Next, chapter two will present literature published by past researchers who have explored elements of the student teacher-master teacher relationship and the co-teaching model.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Teachers Relating to Master Teachers

Student teachers often highly respect their relationship with their MTs. They feel dependent upon their MTs' direction for success in the classroom, and they cherish their MTs' recognition and approval. However, STs experience variations in MT quality and support, which frequently results in frustrations for STs as the semester progresses.

Student Teachers Respect Master Teachers

Research has shown that STs highly respect their relationships with their MTs. In fact, in a study of 28 STs, Kitchel and Torres (2007) found that "Student teachers rated the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship the most important student teaching element" (p. 13).

Several studies have revealed that STs identified their relationships with their MTs as directly impacting the STs' decisions to enter the teaching profession after completing their student teaching assignments (e.g. Jones and Straker, 2006; Hall et al., 2008; Brown and Albury, 2009; Edgar et al., 2009). Loizou (2011) identified the student teacher-master teacher relationship as "a fundamental element, which can enhance or detract from the [teaching] experience for both" (p. 373). Overall, STs are heavily influenced by their MTs and highly esteem the student teacher-master teacher relationship.

Student Teachers Depend upon Master Teachers

Student teachers are highly dependent upon their MTs throughout the student teaching semester. They look to their MTs to guide them in developing classroom management, teaching objectives, and lessons (Sempowicz and Hudson, 2011). They listen to their MTs for feedback

and suggestions for improvement (Sepmowicz and Hudson, 2011). They observe their MTs to learn school culture and socialization (Chou, 2011). The participants in a study done by Cuenca (2011) said, “One of the most important elements of the student teaching experience was their cooperating teacher’s willingness to give them what they termed the ‘things’ of teaching” (p.121). Master teachers are STs’ biggest resource as they conclude their education and embark upon their teaching careers.

Furthermore, STs’ actions are directly influenced by their MTs. Sempowicz and Hudson (2011) noted that STs demonstrated more effective classroom management after management skills had been either discussed with or modeled by their MTs. Likewise, Brown and Albury (2009) refer to much of STs’ actions as “mirroring” what they observe in their more experienced MTs. Throughout the student teaching semester, teacher candidates depend upon their MTs to guide them and provide a model for them as they enter their new career.

Student Teachers Seek Recognition and Approval from Master Teachers

Beyond gaining physical resources and techniques from their MTs, STs also seek recognition and approval from their mentors. In a study of 20 STs, Loizou (2011) found, “Student teachers value the mentor’s feedback and support very strongly” (p. 379). The MTs are the controlling party in the relationship, so STs feel vulnerable to the MTs’ feedback; this feedback can be either a source of empowerment or a source of devastation (Atjonen, 2011). If MTs misuse their power, they may cause STs to try to please them rather than to explore their own personal strengths in the classroom (Atjonen, 2011). Furthermore, a MT who distances himself from the ST may engender feelings of inadequacy in the ST, even so far as to cause the

ST to feel like an outsider in the classroom community (Cuenca, 2011). It is evident that MTs are extremely influential in how STs feel about their experiences during student teaching.

Variations in Master Teacher Quality

One of the most common ST complaints revealed in the research is that the quality of MTs varies widely. For example, Jones (2000) writes, “The quality of school-based training depends to a large extent on the mentor’s expertise and commitment which, according to the trainees, varied and was a cause for concern” (p. 71). It is understandable that STs worry about the quality of their MTs; STs have no control over whom they are assigned to, and their universities often have limited knowledge of the MTs prior to their placements in the schools.

Although administrators at most school sites maintain a level of control over which of their teachers take on STs, often any teacher who expresses interest may be approved to become a MT. Schools rarely turn down any teachers interested in master teaching; more often, they are scrambling to find teachers who are willing to fulfill this role for incoming STs. Thus, the screening process is very loose, and often simply requires that the MT has been teaching for a minimum of three years. Some studies have revealed this common struggle to find suitable candidates for master teaching. After conducting a five-year-long study of urban STs, Lane et al (2003) concluded, “Our dilemma is the shortage of ‘model’ guiding teachers in urban schools. [...] Only five-to-eight percent of the current teachers in urban schools are considered outstanding teachers” (p. 56). It is tragic that researchers should come to such a dismal conclusion about the quality of urban teachers, and even more concerning that STs should enter such an environment. It is understandable that STs would struggle if working under MTs who are not fit to be mentors.

Master Teachers Relating to Student Teachers

Interestingly, the topic of how MTs relate to STs has been studied far less than the opposite dynamic. However, numerous studies with a focus on STs have concluded that MTs must make improvements in their approach to guiding STs. It seems a bit unbalanced to ask MTs to make changes based upon the experiences of their apprentices without evaluating the experiences on their side of the relationship. Therefore, this study will attempt to capture the experiences of both members of the student teacher-master teacher relationship.

Master Teachers Look for Specific Qualities

When STs enter the classroom, MTs instantly appraise them according to the characteristics they believe are essential for entering the teaching profession. In a study of MTs, Smith (2001) found that MTs “had a strong sense of the sort of person who should or should not be allowed to become a teacher” (p. 314). Master teachers quickly identify certain STs as “a natural” or “a born teacher.” This analysis intangibly shapes the ST’s self-perception and identity. Although it may or may not be intentional, MTs often use student teaching as a license to assume the role of “gatekeeper” for the teaching profession, thus preventing unwelcome newcomers who may approach the profession differently from themselves (Brown & Albury, 2009).

However, the most important characteristic in the eyes of MTs is STs’ openness to personal and professional growth. This openness to growth is the key to a positive student teacher-master teacher relationship – at least as far as MTs are concerned (Loizou, 2011). Teachers love teachability.

Master Teachers as Coaches

Master teachers often view themselves as coaches or mentors to their STs. They are attracted to the idea that they are giving back to the teaching profession and building into the future of education (Cavanaugh & Prescott, 2011). As the experts, MTs perceive themselves as leading in the relationship; they are often opposed to receiving feedback or criticism from their subordinate STs (Wilcox & Samaras, 2009). Most MTs see STs as the receptive participants who are learning and growing through the student teacher-master teacher partnership, while the MTs guide the journey.

Master Teachers Gain a New Perspective

One benefit of the student teacher-master teacher relationship is that a number of MTs gain a new perspective from working with their STs. Sometimes this new perspective is of the pupils; as the pupils work with a different teacher, MTs have an opportunity to observe different sides of the pupils' personalities. Furthermore, some STs bring new teaching ideas with them from their recent university training, and MTs have an opportunity to assess how the pupils respond to these new techniques. Similarly, the pupils are given a new perspective of MT as they see him or her interacting with the ST and taking on a different role in the classroom (Cavanaugh & Prescott, 2011).

Other times, the new perspective introduced by STs is the view MTs have of themselves. Student teachers often affirm the MTs by admiring their teaching practices (Cavanaugh & Prescott, 2011). In addition, the novices' mistakes reveal the level of expertise that has been achieved by the MTs over the course of their years of teaching.

Master Teachers Differ from University Faculty

Several studies have found that MTs are frequently uncertain of their STs' quality of preparation for the classroom. Friedman and Wallace (2006) found that "High school English faculty view [education and university faculty] with skepticism as novice teachers enter mainstream classrooms grounded in irrelevant coursework, often unaware of the most effective and relevant pedagogy" (p. 15). This lack of preparation becomes a problem, because MTs have many responsibilities, and teaching basic pedagogy to STs is extremely time consuming. Additionally, MTs often feel that STs come to the job unaware of what public school teaching truly entails. They blame university faculty members for being unaware of life in primary and secondary schools, thus underpreparing the STs for the realities of entering the school setting (Friedman & Wallace, 2006).

Since student teaching is the final class in credentialing programs, one would assume that all STs would come into the field with a collection of techniques and ideas to employ. However, STs enter the classroom with widely varied levels of competence. This is quite frustrating for MTs, and many become soured on the master teaching endeavor after one or two negative experiences.

Common Causes of Strain in the Relationship

A number of possible causes of the strain commonly found in the student teacher-master teacher relationship have been proposed. The two causes most commonly discussed by researchers are the lack of formal preparation offered to MTs and the disparate expectations held by STs and MTs.

Lack of Formal Master Teacher Preparation

Historically, MTs receive very little training before entering the new role of acting as a MT. This is a problem because knowing how to be a good MT is not necessarily inherent in being a good teacher (Hitz & Walton, 2003). Furthermore, mentoring a novice is complex, yet it is crucial in the realm of teacher education, where the beginning teachers are highly influential in the lives of many children (Hall et al., 2008). As Norman (2011) points out, “Being a strong teacher of children does not automatically translate into the necessary skills needed to carry out the role of a school-based teacher educator” (p. 50). Although teaching adult STs is quite different from teaching children or youth, MTs are often given a large burden for beginning teacher growth with very little training in how to do so.

To compound the issue, the social structure of most schools leaves teachers isolated, resulting in a the absence of informal training for MTs as well. Norman (2011) explains, “The social organization and professional norms of politeness and non-interference often leave teachers isolated in the privacy of their own classrooms” (p. 52). University administrators and supervisors maintain this level of isolation when dealing with MTs; they usually only hold one brief meeting with the MT prior to the beginning of student teaching. Interestingly, although the MT carries the bulk of the responsibility for training the ST, the ST pays tuition to the university, and the MT usually receives no monetary compensation for the hours spent mentoring the ST. Consequently, MTs are almost always on their own, seemingly undervalued by the universities, and attempting to single-handedly sort out a method for directing their ST.

Differing Expectations

Another cause of strain noted by many studies is the differing expectations between STs and MTs. Both members of the relationship carry certain expectations into the partnership, whether these expectations are articulated or subconscious. Additionally, both members of the relationship are influenced by their previous experiences in the classroom, with other teachers, and throughout life.

Master teachers often have unrealistic expectations regarding what STs are capable of doing. They underestimate the level of their own expertise in the classroom while overestimating what the STs are able to do (Norman, 2011). Oftentimes, MTs lack an understanding of STs' needs and, consequently, do not offer the STs the level of support they require. Edgar et al. (2009) write, "Understanding the needs of student teachers during [the student teaching] phase of their professional training program is paramount to producing highly qualified and motivated professionals who will enter the profession" (p. 36). According to this study, MTs must consider the holistic needs of their STs and shape their guidance of these novices accordingly.

To compound the issue, MTs feel pressured to prepare their pupils for high stakes state testing, which will still appear on the MTs' personal records, even with a ST in the classroom. The MT is considered the instructor of record and is responsible for the pupils' performance on the tests. Therefore, MTs expect their STs to be able to carry out the responsibility of preparing the pupils for state testing. As a result, they often will require STs to plan in a very specific way, and will sometimes even require that the ST follow their plans exactly (Norman, 2011). Unfortunately, these methods of planning may or may not align with the training the STs

received at their universities. Furthermore, this expectation may squelch the ST's opportunity to try his or her own hand at developing lessons, resulting in feeling underprepared for having one's own classroom or frustrated with being unable to try out one's own teaching ideas.

Conversely, several studies have concluded that STs place unrealistic expectations on MTs as well. Bullough and Draper's (2004) study states, "There is little awareness of the mentors as people with lives outside of school, worries, concerns, responsibilities, personal needs, and desires" (p. 274). Oftentimes, STs are young, fresh out of college, with little or no experience in the workplace. They are usually unmarried, without children, and brimming with idealism. They bring this perspective to their interactions with their MTs and feel a significant gap in understanding as a result. With the lack of awareness of their MTs as holistic people, often in a different life stage, STs will inevitably be disappointed.

Additionally, while STs attend a weekly student teaching course at their universities and confer on a regular basis with their university supervisors, MTs have varying degrees of support (Jones, 2000). Many have no direction aside from a brief meeting with a university representative at the beginning of the semester. This causes strain when STs expect their MTs to support them in specific ways, while the MTs have not been trained in how to offer this support. Without consistent direction, MTs cannot be expected to meet consistent levels of quality.

Solutions Suggested by Prior Research

Past studies have suggested several solutions to help alleviate the common strains found in the student teacher-master teacher relationship. To directly address the two most frequent causes of strain mentioned above, studies suggest increasing the training offered to MTs and clarifying the expectations of STs and MTs. Additionally, research suggests other solutions,

such as being more purposeful when matching STs with MTs and changing the employed teacher training model from the monocratic traditional approach to a more collaborative co-teaching approach.

Increase Master Teacher Training

The most frequent suggestion given to help resolve the strains of the student teacher-master teacher relationship is to increase MT training. Currently, most MTs receive no training at all prior to taking on their new roles as mentors. They are usually recommended as a MT by an administrator or department head; upon acceptance of this role, the MT then has a meeting with a university supervisor, who passes on a list of requirements to use to assess the ST. The student teaching then commences.

This common approach assumes that MTs already know how to mentor their STs. However, the previous discussion of strains in this relationship reveals that this is often not the case. Schwille (2008), Loizou (2011), and Cuenca (2011) all recommend that MTs be given professional development that focuses on mentoring skills. Brown and Albury (2009) suggest that MTs receive training in the metacognitive processes beneath beginning teaching in order to develop a better framework for working with STs. Furthermore, Norman (2011) insists that MTs need to view themselves as teachers of teaching. She suggests that MT training should focus on “conceptual and practical knowledge of instructional planning, how novices learn to plan, and how to teach planning” (p. 66). Alternately, if it is not possible to offer professional development for MTs, teaching literature should be expanded to discuss the crucial role of MTs in sanctioning the entrance of STs into the teaching community and providing access to the tools, artifacts, and communication systems STs need in order to be successful teachers (Cuenca,

2011). Then, MTs should be given a copy of this literature and asked to read it prior to taking on student teachers. Hopefully, the increased training suggested by these researchers would result in improved student teacher-master teacher relationships.

Clarifying Expectations

The second most common cause of strain in the student teacher-master teacher relationship is unmet expectations. To help resolve this issue, Jones (2000) advises that the role of MTs should be more clearly defined, saying, “Everybody seems to have a general idea of what mentors should be about, and yet their roles are not clearly defined in an official job description” (p. 71). Friedman and Wallace (2006) concur with Jones on this point when they write, “Enlisting representative collaboration to establish a clear purpose and mission is essential to developing further collaboration” (p. 22). Both researchers agree that consistency in MT expectations should be developed.

Co-Teaching Model as a Solution

The development of the co-teaching model as a new alternative to traditional student teaching is a response to recommendations made by several researchers. Lane et al. (2003) suggest that a collaborative partnership between the ST and the MT could solve the problem of a lack of quality MTs found in some urban high schools. They recommend, “a change in the relationship between the guiding teacher and the student teacher to a kind of cognitive apprenticeship, where both would be involved [...] as part of a dialogical relationship, one in which both parties have an equal effect on the other” (p. 60). In this study, Lane et al. found that the STs and MTs both acknowledged positive growth as a result of this partnership.

In another study, Loizou (2011) evaluated the impact of the unequal power structure of the student teacher-master teacher relationship. He found that STs often felt very vulnerable in relation to their MTs, as though powerless in the relationship. To solve this problem, he suggests that power should be equally shared between STs and MTs by developing a co-teaching structure to replace traditional student teaching.

Other Solutions

Researchers also suggest other solutions in an attempt to improve the student teacher-master teacher relationship. In a study of teacher preparation programs in Hawai'i, Hitz and Walton (2003) find that "The teacher education programs that are most strongly field-based receive the most positive ratings" (p. 32). They propose that increased time in the classroom throughout the teacher credentialing classes would help prospective teachers be more prepared for student teaching. In a different study, Jones and Straker (2006) discovered that the student teacher-master teacher relationship was improved through increased personal reflection done by both parties. They write, "Making the knowledge which manifests itself in [the mentors'] day-to-day practice as teachers available to others can be facilitated through the process of personal reflection" (p. 167). Additionally, Wilcox and Samaras (2009) suggest increased collaboration between MTs and university professors to help improve teacher preparation programs. Kitchel and Torres (2007) recommend that universities and administrators be more intentional and selective when pairing STs with MTs, because the interpersonal dynamic between the two parties has a significant influence on the success of the relationship. Altogether, it is apparent that the suggestions given by researchers in regards to the student teacher-master teacher relationship are widely varied.

Conclusion

Much of the current research regarding student teaching and master teaching frequently identifies the tensions felt on both sides of the student teacher-master teacher relationship, suggests possible causes of this tension, and proposes potential paths toward their resolution. The studies reviewed above make comments or recommendations regarding this relationship, but these comments are often a byproduct or sidebar of the study, rather than the central focus. Other studies within the review place an emphasis on only one end of the relationship, either the STs or the MTs, but not both. The results of these studies seem unbalanced, rather than considering the whole picture, and present a lack of focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the student teacher-master teacher relationship. Thus, this study will specifically target the dynamics of the relationship between STs and MTs.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Population, Sampling, and Participants

El Dorado Unified School District

This study was completed at a school within the El Dorado Unified School District in a metropolitan area. This large, urban school district serves approximately 84,000 students living in the city where it is located. The students attending school within the district are approximately 54% Latino, 15% African American, 15% White, 14% Asian, Filipino, or Pacific Islander, and 2% two or more races. Of these students, 67% are socioeconomically disadvantaged and 36% are second language learners (California Department of Education, 2012). The size and demographics of this district are similar to many other large, urban school districts, which enables the results of this study to be easily generalized to other districts.

Impressively, EDUSD has won many national awards, earning a reputation as an excellent district. These awards include the national Broad Prize for Urban Education, World-Class District, Newsweek's Best High Schools, U.S. News and World Report's Top Schools, eight National Blue Ribbon Schools, 39 California Distinguished Schools, 26 National Title I Achieving Schools, and more (Unified School District, 2012). A significant cause of these achievements is EDUSD's quest for growth, as opposed to an acceptance of simply maintaining stability. This pursuit of reform is seen in the previously mentioned Linked Learning initiative, which brought co-teaching to EDUSD high schools. The relationship between MTs and STs participating in Linked Learning's new co-teaching approach to teacher training is the focus of this study.

Belmont State University

The ST participants in this study were all teacher candidates at Belmont State University. This institution is the only public four-year university located in the same city as EDUSD, and it is one of the 23 State Universities found throughout the state. BSU has 29,000 undergraduate students, and 5,600 graduate students (collegedata.com, 2012). The graduate students include those working on their teaching credentials through the College of Education, such as the ST participants in this study. Borne of an interest to better prepare teacher candidates to work in local schools, BSU joined with EDUSD to work on the co-teaching aspect of the Linked Learning initiative.

Bixby High School

This study was conducted at a high school within EDUSD, which will be referred to by the pseudonym Bixby High School. This school is similar to many large, urban high schools in the United States, with about 4,000 students and an ethnic makeup of approximately 58% Latino, 24% White, 10% African American, and 8% Asian, Filipino, or Pacific Islander. Sixty percent of Bixby's students are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 24% are English language learners (Unified School District, 2010). Bixby is representative of the school district it belongs to and similar to many other urban high schools; therefore, this study will explore the co-teaching relationship within a context that may be widely generalized.

Bixby has participated in the Linked Learning initiative since it was launched in 2009 (Unified School District, 2012). Its six small learning communities (SLCs) extend school-wide; each student in attendance is identified with one of the SLCs. Two of the six SLCs achieved Linked Learning Certification from "ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career"

(ConnectEd) in May of 2012 (connectedcalifornia.org, 2012). These certifications brought Bixby to the forefront of the educational arena, as a site for co-teaching, because the Linked Learning initiative called for teachers from certified SLC's to participate as MTs within the co-teaching partnership.

Sampling

The sample used for this study included six student teacher-master teacher pairs involved in co-teaching at Bixby High School. They were recruited for this study the day before the school year started, when the researcher attended a meeting of all the co-teachers, introduced the study, and passed out an informational letter to the MTs. Six MTs indicated interest in participating, and their STs became participants along with them in the study.

The six ST participants were working to attain secondary education single subject credentials in four different subjects, including English, science, math, and history. The MTs worked alongside the STs in their subjects. The MTs varied in level of experience, ranging from six years of teaching and first time as a MT to twenty years of teaching and nineteenth time as a MT. This variety in levels of experience and subject areas affords this study a level of generalization to secondary teachers of all levels of experience and all subjects of expertise.

Since this was the first pilot of co-teaching for both EDUSD and BSU, all members of the sample were new to the co-teaching program; none had previous experience in co-teaching. As part of the co-teaching program, all of the participants underwent a more involved selection and pairing process than what is usually used for traditional student teaching. The six STs applied specifically to be part of the co-teaching program when they completed BSU's application for student teaching. They were selected from the pool of applicants as top

candidates for co-teaching. Four of the six MTs were specially recruited to participate in the co-teaching program because they teach within Linked Learning Certified small learning communities. The remaining two MTs were invited to participate in the co-teaching program because there were not enough math and science teachers within the Linked Learning Certified SLCs to meet the needs of the STs who had been accepted into the co-teaching program. The participants attended a co-teaching training during the semester before they began working together. During this training, some teachers were given the opportunity to request to be paired with one another. Soon after the training, some teachers received their co-teaching assignments, enabling several of the STs began observing their MTs in the classroom prior to their co-teaching semester. Compared to traditional student teaching, these participants were much more prepared for the beginning of their quarter working together. This unique sample makes this study especially applicable to schools with Linked Learning Certified SLCs, which ConnectEd plans to expand over the course of the next few years.

Data Collection and Instruments

This data was collected during the first quarter of the 2012-2013 school year. It was collected mostly during September and October, and was finalized in November. This timeline followed the quarter-long structure of the co-teaching model.

The plan set up by EDUSD and BSU administrators required co-teaching to be a quarter-long relationship, with the STs working with one MT during the first quarter of the school year and with a different MT during the second quarter. This was a change from traditional student teaching, wherein STs worked with both MTs throughout the duration of the semester, splitting time between the two mentors. The idea behind the change was that it was necessary to make

co-teaching feasible. The administrators expected that the new requirement for participants to plan, teach, and attend school meetings in tandem, rather than individually, would make co-teaching more demanding than traditional student teaching. Thus, it was assumed that STs would not have enough time to meet all the co-teaching requirements with two MTs simultaneously. The state requirement is that STs must work in two different types of classes, so switching to a different MT at the end of the first quarter would enable co-teaching participants to still meet the state requirements for student teaching.

However, this plan to conclude the first co-teaching partnership after one quarter and move on to a new co-teaching relationship for the second quarter met several snags. First, not enough MTs were recruited in order to give each ST two different mentors. As a result, several STs were assigned to work with one MT for the entire semester, but with two different types of classes taught by that MT, in order to meet the state requirement of student teaching in two different types of classes. Furthermore, many MTs, STs, and university supervisors did not like the idea of working together for only one quarter. They felt that this was too short a timeframe to develop consistency in working together and with the pupils in their classes. Consequently, several participants decided to follow the traditional model of the ST working with both MTs for the duration of the entire semester, even with the additional responsibilities of co-teaching.

In the end, although the timeline for this study kept its original quarter-long data collection period, four of the six pairs of participants continued to work together for two more months following the end of this study.

Interviews

Interviews were the main form of collecting data. Each of the STs and MTs took part in two individual twenty-minute interviews, including an intake interview at the beginning of September, and an exit interview at the beginning of November. The individual interviews consisted of six open-ended questions, inquiring about the nature of the co-teacher relationship. The same six questions were asked during the intake and exit interviews in order to develop an understanding of changes that occurred in the relationship over the course of the two months. Additionally, the co-teachers participated in forty-five-minute-long focus group interviews, split with MTs one day and STs the next day, which occurred during the month of October. The focus group interviews also consisted of six open-ended questions about the dynamics of the co-teacher relationship. Both the STs and the MTs were asked the same set of focus group questions to assess the differences in dynamics between the two parties.

Interviews took place on campus at Bixby High School. They were completed in various classrooms and lounges, based upon what location was most convenient for the participants. Confidentiality was considered when selecting each interview location to help prevent eavesdropping or interruption by persons uninvolved in the study.

A laptop computer with voice recording and note-taking capabilities was the instrument used to collect interview data. Interview questions were developed in advance and saved on the computer's Microsoft Word notepad. During each interview, the computer was used to record the interview, and brief notes were taken on the computer's notepad. This computer was further used to transcribe and code the interviews.

Observations

Each of the co-teacher pairs was observed twice. The first observation was in mid-September and took place while the pair was meeting one-on-one during the MT's conference period to do lesson planning. The second observation occurred in mid-October during class while the pair was co-teaching.

The laptop computer was used to take notes during observations of both co-planning and co-teaching. A chart was created to record the time, MT actions, and ST actions throughout each observation. Detailed observations were recorded in the chart to create a rich description of the observed co-teacher interactions. The laptop was further used to code these observations and track patterns of the relationships.

Surveys

All participants were asked to complete three surveys over the course of the quarter, including an intake survey, a midpoint survey, and an exit survey. The intake survey was distributed after the first full week of the school year in early September, the midpoint survey was distributed in early October, and the exit survey was distributed at the end of the quarter, in early November.

The surveys were distributed and collected via email, through use of the Survey Monkey website (www.surveymonkey.com, 2012). Each participant had regular email access, and none reported problems with accessing and returning the surveys within one week of receiving them. The ten-question survey included seven multiple-choice questions and three short answer questions. Each time the survey was given, it included the same ten questions used to track changes in relational dynamics over the course of the quarter.

Data Analysis

The data collected during the interviews were analyzed in accordance with Creswell's six-step plan for qualitative analysis (2007). First, the intake interviews were transcribed, the field notes from the first round of observations were typed, and the September surveys were collected. Second, this first round of information was reviewed to develop a sense of the overall results of the first month of research. Third, the information was coded, with a focus on identifying trends in the relationships between the co-teachers. Fourth, the codes were used to generate a description of the themes occurring in the relationships.

The second round of data analysis included transcribing the focus group interviews, typing the field notes from the co-teaching observations, and collecting the October surveys. This information was then read, coded, and themed, as described above for the first round of data collection.

These steps were used once again to analyze the third round of data collection, including transcribing the exit interviews and collecting the exit surveys. Once again, this third round was read, coded, and themed.

To complete the data analysis, Creswell's fifth and sixth steps were followed. This was comprised of identifying the way the descriptions and themes should be represented in a qualitative narrative, then interpreting and articulating the meaning of the data.

Validity and Reliability Issues

Validity

One threat to the validity of this study was the possibility that participants may have answered interview and survey questions according to how they felt they were supposed to respond, rather than being genuine. The relational focus of this study enlarged this threat, because the participants were asked questions that could beg negative comments regarding their co-teaching partners. The researcher attempted to decrease this threat by introducing each interview and survey with a comment ensuring confidentiality. The participants were assured that their comments would not be shared with anyone else at the school site, and that all names would be replaced with pseudonyms in the final report.

A further threat to validity was the extra support offered to these STs and MTs as the first participants in the co-teaching model. As described above, during the semester prior to this study, both the STs and MTs were given an all-day introductory training, and the STs attended a weekly university class on Bixby's campus as well as conducted classroom observations at Bixby. At the beginning of the co-teaching semester, all the co-teachers were given a second full day of training. Throughout the co-teaching semester, Bixby's Dean of Students and EDUSD's 21st Century Literacy Coach observed the co-teachers and offered them support, in addition to the observations and support provided by the STs' BSU supervisors. This extra support was funded by the Linked Learning grant that initiated the co-teaching, and the results of the data might be significantly different if the participants had not been offered these resources.

Reliability

Throughout the study, several measures were taken to check the reliability of the findings. First, data was collected in three formats, including interviews, observations, and surveys, to help ensure accuracy through triangulation. The questions asked in the interviews and the surveys echoed one another to develop a well-rounded understanding of participants' input. Additionally, the process of following Creswell's six-step plan through several rounds of research, as described above, led to the development of rich, thick descriptions of the co-teacher relationships. Furthermore, the study was debriefed with peers, an administrator, and two faculty readers in an effort to enhance the accuracy of the account.

Limitations

Admittedly, the researcher did bring in several biases to this study. Expectations were colored by a negative experience student teaching seven years ago, and also by a negative experience as a MT two years ago. Thus, the researcher may have been inclined to expect problems to arise amongst the participants in the study. It was essential to be careful to paint an accurate picture of the relationships based on the data in the study, rather than allow the lens of past experiences to obscure the facts of the findings.

A second limitation present in this study was the brief time frame. Since this study focused on relationships, and relationships tend to grow and change over time, the findings would quite possibly differ if one or two more months were added to the length of the study. With only two months to complete all the interviews and observations, it was challenging to arrange the interviews and observations to fit the schedules of all parties. To further complicate the scheduling, the researcher was teaching while conducting the study, so the co-planning

observations and interviews had to take place either during conference periods or after school. Additionally, it was only possible to observe co-teaching once, due to the necessity of arranging a substitute teacher to cover classes during this set of observations. The STs and MTs involved in the study had similar time constraints.

A third limitation of this study was the sample size. The six pairs of co-teachers represented half of the total number of co-teacher pairs at Bixby during the semester. Occasionally, the participants in the study would mention issues that had arisen in co-teaching relationships of teachers who were not part of the study. However, since the participants in the study did not experience these particular issues, the issues did not become part of this report. If the sample size had been larger, perhaps the study would have yielded different or more robust results.

An additional limitation was the potentially biased ST sample. The STs had to specially apply to participate in the new co-teaching program as a replacement for traditional student teaching. Thus, they were often referred to as the “cream of the crop” of the semester’s STs at BSU. The potentially higher caliber of these STs could have influenced the results of the study, which may have turned out differently with a more balanced cross-section of ST participants.

Furthermore, the potentially biased MT sample posed another limitation to the study. The MTs were recruited to join in this new co-teaching model based on factors indicating their expertise. First, MTs were recruited based on their involvement in Linked Learning Certified SLC’s. This qualification reflects a high level of commitment to teaching and to their SLC’s in order to successfully attain the certification. Additional MTs were invited individually to meet the demands of the number of STs; it may be assumed that these teachers were handpicked by

administrators based on positive past experiences as mentor teachers. Consequently, the results of this study may be influenced by the possibly higher caliber of MTs, which may have turned out differently from a more balanced sample of participants.

A further limitation of this study was the fact that the MTs volunteered to participate. This may indicate that the sample includes MTs who are more actively involved and willing to take on responsibilities, rather than a well-rounded variety of teachers. Several of the MTs commented to the researcher that they elected to participate because they knew the value of research based on their own experiences earning Master's degrees, which reflects that this sample may have a higher number of MTs with graduate degrees than an average cross-section of teachers.

Additionally, the necessity of scheduling observations in advance posed a limitation to this study. Out of courtesy for the participants, as well as to ensure that the co-teachers would be present, the researcher pre-arranged all of the observations. It is possible that the advanced notice influenced the actions of the co-teachers, and they might have acted differently if they had not been notified in advance or if the researcher was not present.

A final limitation was the fact that all STs and MTs were working at the same school site: Bixby High School. Thus, the results of the study might be school-specific and difficult to generalize to STs and MTs at other school sites. However, as discussed above, Bixby has a similar demographic to many other urban schools, and the STs were working across a variety of subject areas. Hopefully these measures minimized the impact of this limitation on the study.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the personal nature of this phenomenological study of relationships, all data in this study was kept strictly confidential. This was especially important because the study took place at the researcher's own workplace, and it could have been easy to slip into discussing particular STs or MTs with others on staff.

Ultimately, it was essential to approach all participants in the study as valuable individuals. Regardless of the distinct weaknesses that may have been revealed by my analysis of the co-teacher relationship, the researcher needed to be gracious in all interactions with participants in the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

As stated in chapter one, this study is an investigation of two primary research questions:

(a) What is the experience of student teachers in their relationships with master teachers? and (b) What is the experience of master teachers in their relationships with student teachers? Together, these two questions work to explore the dynamics of both sides of the student teacher-master teacher relationship.

To begin answering these questions, this study used the mixed methods described in chapter three. The study included six student teacher-master teacher pairs, for a total of twelve participants. Each of the pairs was part of the first round of co-teaching piloted within EDUSD, with STs from BSU working at Bixby High School. After this data was collected, it was analyzed and coded into themes. This chapter will present the data in the format of a thematic narrative that will answer both of the above research questions. The first half of the chapter will focus on the experiences of STs, while the latter half will focus on the experiences of MTs. The experiences of each of the groups of participants will be told chronologically to reveal the development of the relationships over the course of the co-teaching placement.

Student Teachers

Beginning of Relationship

Within the first two weeks of the co-teaching placement, all participants completed an intake survey and an intake interview. The questions asked in the survey and the interviews inquired about three themes: (a) patterns of interaction, (b) feelings about the relationship, and (c) meeting the objectives of the relationship. The survey included six multiple choice questions followed by four short answer questions. Each multiple choice question included the option for

participants to make comments to explain their answers, but it was not required that participants include this explanation. The results of the ST intake survey are represented in the charts below, separated by each of the three themes mentioned above. Furthermore, the interview questions augmented the survey questions within these three themes. Interview responses are discussed along with the survey results discussion following each table.

Table 1.a: Intake Student Teacher Patterns of Interaction

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my MT and I met in person	70%	30%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe MT teaching several times a week • Discuss how lesson went • Discuss lesson plans • Meet after school • Attend meetings together
During the past 2-4 weeks, my MT and I exchanged communication over phone, email, or written notes	23%	23%	15%	23%	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk in person so no need for other forms of communication • Email or text on days when not meeting in person • Mix of email, text, and phone communication
	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my overall communication with my MT as	77%	23%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication • Work out questions • Communication is not structured

As this table shows, the co-teaching placement started with high levels of in-person interaction across all partnerships. All student teacher participants reported that they were meeting in person at least several times a week, and 70% of participants reported that they were meeting daily. This high amount of in-person interaction made additional communication over phone, text, or email gratuitous for many of the partnerships, with only 46% of participants reporting that they exchanged this type of communication more than once a week. The STs reported satisfaction with their overall communication, with 100% of participants reporting that their communication was good, including 77% who reported that their communication was very good.

When asked to describe their weekly interactions in the intake interview, STs reported that they were attending a lot of beginning-of-the-year teacher meetings, including an all-day workshop specifically for all co-teachers at the school site. Four of the six STs reported that they observed their MTs teach several times per week, and two said they felt they were beginning to understand how their MTs ran their classrooms. Two of the STs reported that they co-planned for the next day at the end of each day of co-teaching, and two said that their co-planning was based upon the MT's agenda. Regarding meetings of the pairs, two STs reported that their MTs gave them daily feedback on their teaching, two other STs said that they wanted more focused one-on-one attention from their MTs, and another ST reported feeling intimidated by her MT during their meetings together. The STs' roles during instruction varied amongst the pairs. One ST spent her time assisting her MT while the MT was teaching, one ST mimicked her MT during the second lesson of the day, after watching the MT lead the first lesson, while another ST taught classes herself and differed a bit from the MT's lessons.

In addition to asking about interaction patterns, the survey and interviews also investigated STs’ feelings about the relationship. See table 1.b below.

Table 1.b: Intake Student Teacher Feelings about Relationship

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt frustrated with my MT			16%		83%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT is easily distracted from meetings with ST by others who enter the room • MT is not clearly communicative, and ST feels the need to always initiate • ST trying to get used to MT’s curriculum, procedures, and style • MT seems stressed and exasperated
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt appreciative of my MT	54%	38%	8%			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT took time to observe ST and give feedback • MT was helpful and looked out for interests of ST • MT responsive to questions and willing to try new things
	Participant Comments					
During the past 2-4 weeks, the worst thing my MT did was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing! (4 of 6 ST participants) • MT pushing ST with a heavy and overwhelming workload • MT acts stressed out with students 					
During the past 2-4 weeks, the best thing my MT did was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT worked through planning lesson with ST • MT debriefed lesson with ST • MT gave ST tips for things to work on • MT treated ST as an equal in front of the students 					

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- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MT recognized ST's work and complimented ST• MT helped ST grow as a professional• MT helped clarify ST's instructions for students |
|--|

This table reveals that the student teachers felt very positive about their relationships with their MTs at the beginning of the relationship. Over 70% of them expressed that they never felt frustrated with their MTs, and four of the six ST participants had nothing that they wanted their partner teachers to improve. The two STs who did feel frustrated at the outset of the relationship had very different reasons for their frustration; one felt overwhelmed by the workload set out by his MT, while the other was bothered by patterns she observed in her MT's interactions with students.

Furthermore, all STs appreciated their MTs at least once a week, and over half of the STs appreciated their partners daily. They commented that they were grateful their MTs were working to help them to become better teachers through observing them, giving them feedback, co-planning lessons, and debriefing lessons. Additionally, STs appreciated when their MTs attributed value to them by trying their ideas, treating them as equals in front of the students, and complimenting them.

Questions in the intake survey augmented these findings by further exploring the feelings the STs had about their relationships. Overall, most of the STs expressed satisfaction with how their relationships were beginning. Three stated that they had good, open communication; two reported that they had a "good relationship;" and two others said they had an "easy relationship." Several of the STs reported that they felt "appreciative of feedback" from their MTs and said that they were already growing to become better teachers. The STs highly valued being treated as

equals by their MTs, and several mentioned appreciation of their MTs considering their ideas and using them in lessons, so as to help the STs feel more like colleagues and less like mentees. Two STs said they appreciated that their personalities were well matched with those of their MTs, but one ST reported feeling very frustrated that her personality did not mesh at all with that of her MT.

When asked to identify specific times of frustration with their MTs during the first two weeks of co-teaching, most of the STs had little to say. Upon further probing, however, the general consensus was that the STs felt a bit overwhelmed. As one ST stated, “My MT seems to forget that I’m doing this for the first time.” The STs were working to become more at ease with their new position in the classroom, but were still feeling uncomfortable. One said, “I don’t know how to implement what my MT is asking me to do.” Another ST expressed uneasiness as she was informed of drama and politics her MT relayed to her about issues occurring at the school site, while a third ST was bothered by her MT’s high level of stress displayed when interacting with pupils.

On the other hand, when asked to relay a specific positive experience with their MTs, each ST had an answer to give. One ST enjoyed co-planning with her MT and felt that her ideas were able to help supplement the lesson. Another ST was shocked by a pupil’s misbehavior during a lesson, then appreciative when his MT stepped in and quashed the issue. A third ST appreciated working with his MT at the all-day co-teaching workshop and was excited about using the workshop’s strategies in the classroom. A different ST felt appreciative that her MT stepped in to help when she blanked out on her lesson plan while in front of the class. Several STs appreciated their MTs’ detailed feedback after lessons and felt energetic about implementing

their MTs’ ideas. Altogether, although the STs felt the discomfort of inexperience, they also felt positive about being supported in a variety of ways by their MTs.

The last theme addressed by the intake survey and interviews was investigating whether the relationship was meeting its objectives. These results are below in Table 1.d.

Table 1.c: Intake Student Teachers Meeting Objectives

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Always	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my relationship with my MT achieved its objectives	54%	30%	15%			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working together to implement co-teaching strategies MT helping ST grow Lack of MT’s structure impairs determination of objectives
	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my relationship with my MT as	83%	17%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive and flexible Planning to overcome personality differences.
	Participant Comments					
If I could ask my MT to change one thing s/he did this month it would be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT needs to allow ST to help take care of attendance, paperwork, etc. MT needs to set aside time dedicated to ST alone Nothing (2 student teachers said this) MT needs to be more sensitive to ST’s personal schedule needs MT needs to relax 					

This table once again displays that ST participants in this study felt very positive about their co-teaching relationships as the quarter commenced. All of them felt that their objectives were reached to some degree, and all but one of them felt that their objectives were almost always met. All STs expressed that they felt their co-teaching relationship was good, and over 80% said that they felt it was very good. Two STs said that nothing needed to be improved to help them further advance towards their objectives. Other STs mentioned they would be aided by more time to work one-on-one with their MTs, more administrative responsibilities, or a less stressed MT. Overall, the STs expressed that they felt the semester started out with positive relationships with their MTs, helping them move towards their goals for the student teacher-master teacher relationship.

When asked during the survey if the co-teaching relationship was the same or different from their expectations, the general consensus was that the relationships were as the ST's had anticipated. Three STs reported that it was the same because they had observed their MTs teaching during the previous semester. Two reported it was better than expected because their university professors had told them horror stories about bad MT relationships. One reported that it was worse than expected because her personality did not get along with that of her MT.

Furthermore, the survey inquired about what the STs would like to change in order to better meet the objectives of the relationship. Several of the STs replied that no changes were needed. Several others responded that they needed time to grow more comfortable in working with their MTs or that they wanted more dedicated one-on-one time with their MTs. One ST stated that she desired more information regarding how to grade assignments and complete other administrative tasks, and another ST said she wanted her MT to be more articulate with the

elements of planning a lesson. Although the STs were fairly satisfied, they did have ideas for how their co-teaching relationships could better meet their needs.

Lastly, to delve into how the participants could have been better prepared in advance to meet the objectives of the relationship, the STs were asked what they wished they had known before starting co-teaching. One ST noted that the high level of collaboration demanded by co-teaching surprised him. He recognized that this was quite different from traditional student teaching, in which the ST gradually takes over the entire teaching of the class. He worried that spending his entire semester co-teaching, never fully taking over all teaching responsibilities, would leave him underprepared for the transition to running his own classroom in the future. Another ST expressed concern about switching MTs at the quarter. She felt that she was just beginning to feel comfortable with her first MT and couldn't imagine switching halfway through. A third ST noted the high level of flexibility demanded by co-teaching, with both teachers in front of the class at the same time. She wished that she could have observed other co-teachers in action prior to starting her own partnership. Two STs said that they wished their MTs had more information about co-teaching in advance. Although their college professors had taught them about the unique dynamics of the co-teaching relationship, their MTs were largely uninformed.

Middle of Relationship

During the middle of the semester, this study included observations of the co-teachers planning together, focus group interviews, a mid-point survey, and observations of the co-teachers teaching together. The findings of these four collections of data will once again be separated by (a) patterns of interaction, (b) feelings about the relationship, and (c) meeting objectives of the relationship.

It should be noted that one pair is not represented in the “Middle of Relationship” data. This is because the ST decided that her differences with her MT were so great that she was not reaching her objectives of becoming a better teacher candidate through the relationship. She decided to switch to a different MT after only three weeks working with her first MT. The ST’s announcement was a bit of a surprise to both her MT and to the researcher, because the ST had expressed to her MT and throughout the intake data collection that although she felt challenged by her pairing with an MT who had a very different personality from hers, she was interested in growing and working together with her MT. In fact, she had expressed a relatively positive outlook on her relationship with her MT throughout the intake data collection. This ending of the co-teaching relationship occurred before mid-relationship data had been collected. At that point, exit data was recorded for this pair, and it will be included with the exit data below.

This mid-point data analysis will focus on portraying the observations of the co-teachers planning and teaching together. The interview and survey results will only be discussed to the extent that they differed from the intake interview and survey results. Full exit interview and exit survey results will be discussed in the “End of Relationship” section below.

Observations of the pairs co-planning and co-teaching helped flesh out the nature of their patterns of interaction. During co-planning, several trends were apparent amongst the STs’ behaviors. Four of the five STs took notes, three of them asked their MTs questions, and three of them either nodded or verbally affirmed the MT’s ideas. Furthermore, two of the STs spent most of the co-planning time listening, two observed the MT working, two waited for the MT while he or she took care of other tasks, two expressed concerns about the upcoming lesson, two reviewed their responsibilities for the next day, and two proposed ideas for activities, then revised these

ideas based on the MT's feedback. The STs largely spoke less during the planning time than their MTs.

Each pair of co-teachers established their own patterns of working together during co-planning. Two pairs spent the time working through exactly what they would teach the next day. One pair spent a significant portion of their co-planning time discussing errors the ST had made in his lesson earlier that day. In this case, the ST accepted his MT's criticism openly, laughed about his errors, and expressed a desire for improvement. Another pair largely worked independently – the ST occasionally asked her MT questions while each of them worked on grading student work. Meanwhile, as another pair worked together, the ST presented the lesson he had prepared to his MT, and she asked him questions about it to ensure it was ready to use the next day.

Observing the pairs actively co-teaching delivered yet another degree of insight into the patterns of interaction of each pair. As with co-planning, certain trends of interaction were observed. Four of the five STs interacted with pupils by answering pupil questions that were directed to the ST for help. Four of the STs redirected pupils to get back on task. Three of the STs rotated around the classroom while the pupils worked on a group activity, and their MTs rotated around the opposite side of the room. Three STs approached their MTs and asked them questions at some point while co-teaching the lesson. Furthermore, two STs watched the MT while standing at the back of the classroom, two asked the students questions and guided them to finding answers, two allowed off-topic student conversations to carry on right next to them, two helped their MTs pass out materials, and two led whole-class discussions. Both the STs and the MTs were involved in the co-teaching of each lesson observed.

Responsibilities of the STs during the lessons varied widely amongst the co-teachers. One set up an activity, discussed its importance, and guided the pupils through the completion of the activity. Another went over a quiz with the pupils and discussed questions they had about the quiz. A third took half of the class into a courtyard and taught them on his own as his MT taught the other half of the class inside the classroom. One observed her MT give instructions to the class, then helped monitor the class during the activity. Another graded papers, answered the phone, and ran an errand while her MT taught the class.

In addition to portraying information regarding patterns of interaction, the data gathered during the middle of the relationship also portrayed the feelings the STs had about their co-teaching relationships. The STs' focus group interview elaborated upon their feelings about the relationship at the halfway point of their placement. On the positive side, they appreciated when their MTs helped refine their lessons, set up classroom policies and procedures, answered questions, and discussed ideas. On the other hand, the STs also gave more insight into their negative feelings about their co-teaching relationships. They felt frustrated when their MTs either did not give them feedback or pressured them to follow feedback exactly. They wished for freedom to put their own ideas into practice, and one wished that she had two MTs to work with, rather than just one, so that she could hear a variety of ideas. The STs were also frustrated by needing to follow structures set up by someone else, either when the structure was less organized than they might like, or, on the opposite end, more organized than they might like. Overall, the STs seemed to feel most frustrated with the tension of working in a relationship that significantly limited their freedom to take their own approaches to teaching.

Finally, the midway data reflected the status of STs meeting their objectives for student teaching. The STs built upon these answers during the focus group interview. They said that the

most helpful contribution the MTs made towards helping them meet their objectives was giving feedback after every lesson. They appreciated feedback on both good and bad parts of the lesson, including subtle interactions they had with students. Additionally, the STs felt they were helped in reaching their objectives when their MTs gave them direct instruction in the elements of teaching, such as classroom management tips and other advice. Several STs also expressed that they felt better able to reach their objectives as their MTs gave them more control over the classroom, leadership over planning, and freedom to incorporate their own ideas. The STs felt empowered when their MTs praised them for improving over the course of the quarter. The relationship between the STs and their MTs played a significant role in the STs achieving their objective of preparing to take on their own classrooms.

Furthermore, four of the five STs had ideas for actions their MTs could take to help them better achieve their objectives. Several wished that their MTs incorporated them more into their small learning communities, because their understanding was that the co-teaching model was meant to include aspects of working within a SLC, yet they had no opportunities to participate in one. Additionally, several desired more feedback from their MTs. Two others wanted more space to be allowed to try strategies without their MTs jumping into the lesson.

When asked how the co-teaching program could be improved to help them better reach their objectives, the STs had several recommendations. They shared that more training regarding the personal dynamics of the co-teacher relationship should be integrated throughout their teacher training program. They felt that this had been overlooked as their program's coursework had been more structured to prepare candidates for traditional student teaching. Due to the high level of personal interaction demanded by co-teaching, they recommended that the university set up the co-teaching partnerships far in advance – preferably a semester before the beginning of

co-teaching – to allow the STs to observe their future MTs. They recommended that personality tests be used in the creation of these partnerships to help decrease conflicts. Also, the STs highly advised having two MTs, rather than just one. Although traditional student teaching includes two MTs, the shortage of MTs interested in co-teaching resulted in three of the six ST’s in this study having only one MT. These three felt that they were missing out on valuable information gained by having two different MTs giving input during student teaching. Although the STs appreciated the availability of their MTs to answer questions and offer support when co-teaching lessons, they also acknowledged that they felt dependent upon their MTs and wanted a clearer outline of increasing their responsibilities, similar to the structure of traditional student teaching. They felt concerned that they would not be prepared for the rigors of teaching alone.

End of Relationship

At the end of the quarter, the participants completed an exit survey and an exit interview, again focusing on the same three elements of the co-teaching partnership. This table shows the results of the questions on the exit survey that focused on patterns of interaction. Please note that the pair that was excluded from the Middle of Relationship data has been reincorporated into this exit data, based upon their early exit interview and exit survey responses.

Table 2.a: Exit Student Teacher Patterns of Interaction:

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my MT and I met in person	83%	17%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressively fewer meetings leading up to end of relationship

During the past 2-4 weeks, my MT and I exchanged communication over phone, email, or written notes		50%	17%		33%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of email, text, or phone call Progressively less communication leading up to end of relationship
	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my overall communication with my MT as	67%	33%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We set our goals and work towards them

The STs still reported high levels of interaction at the end of the quarter. They continued to meet daily with their MTs and they only expressed only slightly lower levels of other modes of communication. They continued to describe their communication as “good.”

The exit interview elaborated upon the STs’ patterns of interaction as the quarter ended. For most of the pairs, the patterns of interaction were very similar, if not identical, to those at the mid-point of the quarter. Several of the STs stated that they were increasing their independence by writing their own lesson plans, creating their own lesson materials, or inputting more ideas during co-planning. The ST who had become frustrated and exited early said that she and her MT had been trying to implement co-teaching strategies, but her MT seemed directionless, leaving the ST confused about how to participate in co-teaching their lessons.

The exit survey and interview also addressed the feelings the STs had about their co-teaching partnerships. The table below displays the survey results in this arena.

Table 2.b: Exit Student Teacher Feelings about Relationship

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt frustrated with my MT		16%	16%	16%	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressively less working together until relationship ended
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt appreciative of my MT	67%	33%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT gives feedback on both good and bad MT appreciates what ST offered
Participant Comments						
During the past 2-4 weeks, the worst thing my MT did was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing MT gave ST too large of a workload that is difficult to balance (2) MT not allowing ST to be involved with administrative tasks, such as responding to emails regarding students in ST's class Too last minute with planning MT was condescending towards students 					
During the past 2-4 weeks, the best thing my MT did was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT gives immediate feedback to quickly improve ST's teaching (2) MT supports ST MT let ST struggle through lesson without jumping in to see how ST would do alone Open communication MT allowed ST to modify a test MT encouraged ST to teach by herself when MT had a substitute teacher 					

Interestingly, the results of the exit survey reflected more negative feelings than either of the previous surveys. Only half of the participants reported that they never felt frustrated with their co-teachers, as opposed to 100% of the participants reporting no frustration on the mid-point survey. Only one respondent said that his MT had done nothing negative, while the most common response was two STs reporting that their MT's gave them too heavy of a workload to

balance with their other responsibilities. However, the STs still said they had high levels of appreciation for their MTs, with 100% appreciating their MTs several times a week, including 67% who appreciated them daily. They were most appreciative of feedback the MTs gave to help them improve their teaching and of freedom to try strategies on their own.

Once again, the interview results augment these survey results. The STs had a variety of responses when asked to tell of a recent positive experience with their MTs. They felt increasing success when implementing new strategies, felt supported by their MTs, enjoyed their growing responsibilities, and appreciated the noticeable time and effort put into the relationship by their MTs. When asked to provide a recent negative experience, the STs reported feeling incapable of preparing lessons up to the standards required by their MTs, frustrated when their MTs interrupted them during co-teaching, misunderstood when they suggested ideas, overwhelmed by responsibilities, and in need of more support.

Finally, the exit survey and interviews addressed the topic of reaching the objectives of the relationship. The table below displays the results of the survey questions that addressed this topic.

Table 2.c: Exit Student Teachers Meeting Objectives

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Always	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my relationship with my MT achieved its objectives	50%	17%	17%	17%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardly ever established clear objectives

	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my relationship with my MT as	67%	17%			17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ST knows that MT cares
Participant Comments						
If I could ask my MT to change one thing s/he did this month it would be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT needs to prepare more in advance (2) MT needs to stop being stressed and condescending during lessons MT needs to take on fewer tasks in order to have quality time to dedicate to ST MT needs to allow ST to be more involved with administrative tasks MT needs to give one piece of positive feedback each day 					

Like Table 2.b, this table reflects a slightly lower level of satisfaction than the mid-point survey. The percentage of STs who felt their objectives were always met dropped to 50%, and the percentage of STs who reported that their relationship was “very good” dropped to 67%. The most common request for an action that could help the STs’ success was that two STs wanted their MTs to prepare more in advance to help develop lesson plans. The interviews echoed the sentiments expressed in the survey. One wanted her MT to take more of the lead in their co-planning and give the ST more direct instruction. Another wanted her MT to give her positive feedback on a daily basis. A third felt powerless to shift the direction of the curriculum to align it with what she wanted to do in the classroom.

Overall, when asked what helped create successful co-teaching that met objectives, the STs emphasized the importance of establishing healthy relational dynamics with their MTs. Several STs noted the importance of being flexible and open to adjusting and changing if the dynamic between the co-teachers wasn’t working. Several other STs said that clear, open communication was key when working in this close relationship. They felt that it was very

important to get to know the MT before the quarter started to begin establishing a healthy interpersonal dynamic and developing ideas of how to implement the co-teaching strategies. The STs cautioned that although it was tempting to lean on their MTs during the lesson and interrupt their own instruction to ask questions of the MTs, it was important for them to avoid doing these things to develop the autonomy necessary to be a good teaching candidate at the conclusion of the co-teaching placement. Several STs mentioned the importance of recognizing that the MTs were simply trying to help when giving feedback; therefore, the STs should not take it personally. They also expressed the importance of MTs listening to ST ideas for a true, egalitarian co-teaching relationship to develop. Overall, the STs acknowledged that the co-teaching relationship demanded more interpersonal skills than traditional student teaching to achieve its objectives.

Master Teachers

Beginning of Relationship

Data collected from the MT participants in this study were identical to that collected from the ST participants. As with the ST data, this report will describe the information in chronological order, separated into the three themes of (a) patterns of interaction, (b) feelings about the relationship, and (c) meeting objectives.

The MTs participated in the same intake survey and intake interview as the STs. On the intake survey, as shown in the table below, the MTs shared identical responses to the STs in regards to their patterns of interaction, varying only in slight differences amongst the participant comments.

Table 3.a: Intake Master Teacher Patterns of Interaction

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my ST and I met in person	67%	33%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how lesson went • Meet after school • Attend meetings together
During the past 2-4 weeks, my ST and I exchanged communication over phone, email, or written notes	23%	23%	15%	23%	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk in person so no need for other forms of communication • Email or text on days when not meeting in person • Mix of email, text, and phone communication
	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my overall communication with my ST as	77%	23%				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open with each other • Work out questions quickly

As reflected in this table, the MTs participated in high levels of in-person interaction with their STs and felt good about their communication. The MTs elaborated upon these patterns of interaction during their intake interviews. The most commonly mentioned pattern was “debrief and lesson plan at the end of each day,” which was practiced by five of the six MT’s. Three of

the six arranged regular times for their STs to observe them, and two set aside time for a quick overview of the lesson before starting each class session of co-teaching. They said that they were required to spend more time planning together than they would with traditional STs, due to sorting out their individual responsibilities for co-teaching the lesson. They also expressed the challenge of setting aside this amount of time amidst their other job related responsibilities. Several of the MTs enjoyed trying various co-teaching strategies, and several others appreciated easy communication with their STs. Overall, the MTs expressed satisfaction with the patterns of interaction they established at the beginning of their co-teaching relationships.

The table below reflects the feelings of the MTs at the outset of the co-teaching relationship. As with the survey questions in Table 3.a, regarding the patterns of interaction, the MTs and STs had the same responses as one another. However, the comments made by the MTs were different from those made by the STs.

Table 3.b: Intake Master Teacher Feelings About Relationship

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt frustrated with my ST			23%		77%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ST takes input seriously and is quick to make improvements
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt appreciative of my ST	54%	38%	8%			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ST was helpful ST took initiative ST learning quickly and wanting to succeed

	Participant Comments
During the past 2-4 weeks, the worst thing my ST did was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing! (1 MT participant) • ST made errors while teaching (1 MT participant) • ST spoke too softly while teaching (2 MT participants) • ST criticized students inappropriately and aggressively (2 MT participants)
During the past 2-4 weeks, the best thing my co-teacher did was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST helped MT • ST was ready to learn • ST is student centered • ST brought cookies for MT • ST continued lesson amidst technical difficulties • ST debriefed lesson with MT

One notable aspect of these results is that five of the six MTs had a problem with their STs in the first two weeks, as opposed to only three of the STs experiencing a problem with their MTs. All five of the problems the MTs reported centered on the STs’ interactions with the pupils. One made errors in instruction, two spoke too softly, and two were too harsh in their criticism of pupils. However, the MTs still reported feeling appreciative of their STs, with over three-quarters of the participants never feeling frustrated with their STs, and over half of them feeling appreciative of their STs on a daily basis.

The MTs’ interview responses elaborated upon their feelings about the beginning of their relationships with their co-teachers. When asked to tell a recent positive experience, one MT said that her ST had been impressed with a creative strategy she used to help an English Language Learner in her class. Another MT was pleased when her ST continued to teach his lesson, despite technical difficulties preventing him from using the Power Point presentation he

had prepared. Three MTs reported a remarkable openness for learning amongst their STs. Overall, the MTs were excited to tell of growth they had already observed in their co-teachers.

On the other hand, five of the six MTs also had negative experiences to report from their first two weeks with their STs. One felt frustrated that her ST wanted to take over control of the class immediately. Two others said that their STs seemed overwhelmed with the demands of beginning student teaching. Another was frustrated that her ST tried to improvise his lesson, which resulted in making mistakes in front of the class. One reported that his ST was struggling to develop classroom management skills; he made statements that pulled pupils off task, then had a difficult time regaining control. Overall, the MTs seemed to feel that the STs were not as prepared to enter the classroom as they should have been.

Regarding reaching objectives, once again the intake survey results yielded the same percentages for the MTs as for the STs. The table below displays these results, as well as the MT comments.

Table 3.c: Intake Master Teachers Meeting Objectives

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Always	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my relationship with my ST achieved its objectives	54%	30%	15%			
	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my relationship with my ST as	83%	17%				

	Participant Comments
If I could ask my ST to change one thing s/he did this month it would be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST needs to explain concepts and use more questioning strategies (1 MT participant) • ST needs to speak louder (2 MT participants) • Nothing (1 MT participant) • ST needs to get more sleep (1 MT participant) • ST needs to be less aggressive and critical (1 MT participant)

Concurring with the student teachers, over half of the MTs reported that they always met their objectives with their co-teachers, and 85% described their relationship as “very good,” with the remaining 15% describing it as “somewhat good.” To reach their objectives in the future, the MTs largely wanted their STs to focus on improving the areas that had caused frustration during the first few weeks, such as speaking louder, improving explanations of concepts, and criticizing less.

When asked to elaborate upon the improvements they would like to see, the MTs detailed their hopes that the STs would better reach their objectives in the months ahead. One said that her ST was learning to improve interactions with her as a MT, such as asking questions rather than criticisms. One pair set a schedule to help improve their time management. Another MT helped her ST with lesson planning. One other MT planned to give his ST more responsibilities to help him become more proactive. All MTs seemed very positive that their STs would continue to progress towards reaching their objectives.

Lastly, the MTs were asked how co-teaching could be structured to help them more effectively meet their objectives. Four of the six MTs were critical of the administrative coordination of the new co-teaching model. Of these four, two MTs wanted administrative decisions made further in advance before the start of the semester, especially because the

administration made a last-minute decision to require all co-teachers to attend a conference on the fourth day of the school year, pulling the teachers out of their classes. Two other MTs felt that they needed clearer direction on how the co-teaching structure was meant to work. Furthermore, two MTs expressed that they felt that co-teaching was significantly more responsibility than traditional student teaching, due to the heightened level of working together, including needing to work through what each teacher would say and do during each element of the lesson. Two MTs felt that the administration was heading in the right direction, with guiding the co-teachers through taking personality tests and offering trainings, but the overall consent was that further administrative support was needed for this new teacher training approach to fully reach its objectives.

Middle of Relationship

As described above with the STs, during the middle of the semester this study included observations of co-planning, observations of co-teaching a lesson, focus group interviews, and a mid-point survey. The findings of these four collections of data will once again be separated by (a) patterns of interaction, (b) feelings about the relationship, and (c) meeting objectives of the relationship. Also, as stated above, please note that one pair is not represented in the “Middle of Relationship” data.

As with the ST discussion above, this mid-point data analysis will focus on portraying the observations of the co-teachers planning and teaching together. The interview and survey results will only be discussed to the extent that they differed from the intake interview and survey results. Full exit interview and exit survey results will be discussed in the “End of Relationship” section below.

Regarding patterns of interaction, the mid-point survey data reflected a decrease in the frequency of MTs' communication with STs. Only 40% of the MTs met daily with their STs at this point of the quarter, down from 70% meeting daily at the beginning of the quarter. However, all co-teachers still met several times a week, with the remaining 60% falling into that category. Furthermore, none of the MTs exchanged phone, email, or written notes with their STs on a daily basis at this point of the quarter, compared to 23% exchanging this type of communication daily at the outset of the relationship. Additionally, once a week communication through these avenues increased from 15% at the beginning to 40% at the mid-point, and never communicating in these ways increased from 15% at the beginning to 40% at the mid-point. Overall, although the MTs decreased their amount of interaction, the description of the overall communication remained positive, with 80% of MTs describing it as very good, and the remaining 20% describing it as somewhat good.

When asked about typical weekly interactions in the MT focus group interview, the MTs noted a few other differences in their patterns of interaction with their STs. Three of the five MTs expressed that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find time to meet with their STs as the quarter progressed. Pupils needed tutoring, MTs were required to attend other meetings, and it was challenging to find time to plan co-teaching strategies or discuss logistics with their STs. Master teachers said they had less time to spend debriefing lessons with their STs and needed to simply touch base every few days to discuss lesson planning and prepare materials. However, three of the five MTs said they were able to move more quickly in co-planning sessions than they had at the beginning of the semester, which helped alleviate the pressure of increased time constraints.

Observing the teachers during their co-planning elucidated some of the patterns of interaction each pair developed. During co-planning, three of the MTs asked their STs what they would like to do for an activity during an upcoming lesson. Additionally, three MTs analyzed their STs ideas and gave them feedback to help them further develop these ideas. Two of the MTs referred to their resources, such as teacher's edition texts, to help develop their lessons as they planned together, two informed the STs of what their upcoming lessons should entail, and two jotted down notes to help develop the upcoming lessons. Several MTs gave STs tips for working with pupils, including what to do to help pupils improve their grades, how pupils' needs must be considered, and how to phrase things in such a way that pupils would respond positively.

Co-teaching observations further revealed patterns in the MTs' interactions with their STs. During the observed lessons, three of the MTs monitored small groups and answered questions, redirecting the groups as necessary. Three of the MTs sat at the front of the class at some point during the lesson, watching the pupils and monitoring the room. Two MTs approached their STs during the lesson to give suggestion or idea to the ST, two sat behind their desks and took care of paperwork, two reviewed directions for upcoming activities with the class, two asked their classes if any pupils had questions they needed clarified, two wrote on their boards or document projectors as pupils took notes, and two gave examples to demonstrate information to the class. It was apparent that the STs were not alone in these classrooms – the MTs were significantly involved in co-teaching the observed lessons.

Regarding how MTs felt about the co-teaching relationship, survey results revealed that MTs felt slightly less positive about the relationship at the mid-point as compared to their feelings at the beginning. Those who never felt frustrated with their ST dropped from 77% to 60%, with the remaining 40% feeling frustrated once during the month since the previous survey.

The MTs who appreciated their STs daily decreased significantly from 54% to 20%. Most of the MTs professed appreciating their STs once a week instead, with 60% giving this response. The remaining 20% said they appreciated their ST once during the month between surveys. The short answer survey questions prompted entirely new responses from the MTs. The MTs said the worst things their STs did were not monitor academic progress, use poor pacing, say “umm” frequently while teaching, not have notes ready for teaching, not practice doing a lab ahead of time, and arrive late without calling ahead. On the other hand, the MTs reported that the best things their STs did were improve monitoring of pupil behavior, remain consistent and dependable, work through a lesson alone, contribute to co-planning, implement MTs’ suggestions, and lead a study session. Each of these actions was different from the beginning of the semester, reflecting the changing relationships between the co-teachers.

Survey data was underscored by the MTs’ comments during the focus group interview. Three of the five MTs stated that their STs struggled when making their own lesson plans. They felt the tension of needing to teach their STs how to become better teachers, but not having enough time to do so, and feeling unsure of how much responsibility the STs should be able to handle without being overwhelmed. They felt frustrated with their STs’ lack of knowledge of content material and how to communicate it to the students. Overall, the STs were not meeting the MTs expectations. Nevertheless, four of the five MTs expressed that the best element of working with their STs was the STs’ willingness to learn and try new things. This seemed to be a significant enough positive mark to outweigh the MTs’ frustrations with their STs and assure them that the co-teaching endeavor was worthwhile.

Finally, in regards to the co-teaching relationship meeting its objectives, the survey data once again reflected a decline in the opinions of the MTs. Only 20% said they felt the

relationship always met its objectives, compared to 54% at the beginning of the quarter. The remaining 80% stated that their partnership almost always met its objectives. Interestingly, regardless of this drop, 100% of the MTs described their co-teaching relationship as very good. In the short answer survey question regarding what their STs could change to better reach their objectives, all MTs had new ideas for their STs at this point of the quarter. They suggested that their STs increase their participation in grading, become more aware of tasks that needed to be completed, vocalize ideas, make decisions independently, increase emotion during lectures, and increase asking of questions during lessons. The MTs continued to desire that their STs grow as teachers.

Once again, the survey results were further explained by the interview data. Overall, the interview revealed that the MTs felt that although the objective of becoming an independent teacher was not yet reached, the STs were growing, improving, and on track for success. Only one MT expressed concern that his ST may not ever be able to adjust to a full-time teaching career, as she seemed exhausted with maintaining the requirements of student teaching. The top two recommendations mentioned during the interview to help STs better reach their objectives were (1) sharing more ideas during co-planning and (2) increasing personal reflection on lessons that had been taught.

When asked what could be implemented in the co-teaching program to help co-teachers better reach objectives, the MTs had several ideas. Their top concern was the gap in communication between the high school, the district, and the university. It seemed that the organizations sent disparate messages regarding their expectations of the MTs, which resulted in frustration amongst the participants. As a consequence of the more intense relational dynamics demanded by co-teaching, the MTs felt that the partnerships needed to be set up farther in

advance, with STs observing their MTs during the semester prior to co-teaching as well as attending a training together before the beginning of the quarter. They felt that a change was needed to give the STs more independence, because the level of support they received as co-teachers was significantly more than they would receive when hired to teach independently. However, the MTs appreciated that their heightened involvement as co-teachers in the classroom helped reach the objective of their pupils receiving a quality education – most likely a better quality education than they would have under traditional student teaching, where all instruction is performed by the novice ST.

End of Relationship

As with the STs, the MTs concluded their participation in this study by completing an exit survey and exit interview. The pair that was excluded from the mid-point data was reincorporated into the exit data. As with the beginning and mid-point data, the end of relationship data was sorted into three themes.

This table reflects the patterns of interaction described by the master teachers’ survey at the end of the quarter.

Table 4.a: Exit Master Teacher Patterns of Interaction

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my ST and I met in person	50%	50%				

During the past 2-4 weeks, my ST and I exchanged communication over phone, email, or written notes		17%	33%		50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak daily in person, so no need for other communication
	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my overall communication with my ST as	66%	17%			17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST did not follow through on agreed plan • Talk daily • ST is good at reflecting and discussing • Need more dedicated planning time without interruptions

The frequency of interaction remained almost identical from the midway point to the end of the relationship. The percentages varied slightly, mostly due to including six participants, rather than five. The drop in the level of satisfaction with communication can also be attributed to the inclusion of the sixth MT participant; the abrupt end of this sixth partnership left the MT feeling frustrated with the lack of advance notice from the ST, so she described their overall communication as “very poor.” Aside from this, the MTs’ description of overall communication with their co-teachers remained the same.

In the exit interviews, the MTs described few changes from the middle of the relationship to the end of the relationship. The most significant change noted by the MTs was the increase in

STs participating more in lesson planning, unit planning, grading, and developing rubrics on their own. The MTs expressed that they were intentionally decreasing their number of meetings in an attempt to give the STs more freedom and independence.

The MTs also discussed their feelings as the relationship came to a close. The table below reflects their survey responses to questions regarding this topic.

Table 4.b: Exit Master Teacher Feelings about the Relationship

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Daily	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Once a Month	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt frustrated with my ST			33%	17%	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ST not following through with obligations
During the past 2-4 weeks, I felt appreciative of my ST	33%	33%	17%	17%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ST intuitive about what MT needs during lessons ST willing to learn ST helped grade work from all of MT's classes ST able to step up and participate rather than observe
Participant Comments						
During the past 2-4 weeks, the worst thing my ST did was	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing! (1 MT participant) Forgot materials needed to work with MT, thus prolonging planning time Make mistakes while teaching; unable to complete examples while teaching Act too laid back when class was loud and off topic Not completely prepare for a lab by doing it beforehand Not complete lessons assigned for the day 					

During the past 2-4 weeks, the best thing my ST did was

- Develop successful lesson ideas
- Willing to teach different ways
- Volunteer to teach all MT's classes when MT was on a field trip
- Step in and take care of tasks rather than simply observe
- Show up daily and get involved

Interestingly, the MT survey results reflected MTs feeling both increased frustration and increased appreciation as they concluded their quarter-long relationships. The MTs expressed more frustration than they had in either of the prior surveys, with 33% feeling frustrated once a week. Surprisingly, their appreciation of their STs also rose, with 33% appreciating their STs daily, as compared to 20% at the mid-point. Concerning the worst ST action, the general consensus of the MTs seemed to be that their STs were underprepared. They forgot materials, made mistakes, could not complete lessons, and did not practice labs in advance. On the other hand, the agreement was the STs performed best when trying new things. The MTs appreciated it when the STs tried new lessons or took initiative by jumping in to participate.

Exit interview responses elaborated upon the survey data. When asked to describe a recent negative experience, two MTs mentioned their STs losing pupils' attention during a lesson, two discussed their STs asking the MTs questions in the middle of the ST's teaching of a lesson, and two emphasized how they would like to see their STs take full responsibility for their classes. The MTs were concerned about their STs relying on them too heavily, especially since the nature of co-teaching gave them more opportunity to lean upon their MTs than afforded by traditional student teaching. The MTs also discussed feeling that their STs needed better prepare for their lessons, as reflected in the survey results above. Several MTs felt that their STs were not prioritizing student teaching, which resulted in arriving underprepared for their lessons.

On the other hand, when asked to describe a positive experience, each MT had an event to relate. Two MTs appreciated their STs exceeding what they had been asked to do. Two other MTs liked that their STs were consistently open to improving and changing, even in the midst of teaching a lesson. Several MTs were excited about seeing their STs’ growth in developing lessons and classroom management. One MT expressed that he was seeing glimpses of how his ST would become a very good teacher – success!

Lastly, the exit survey and interview touched on the final category: meeting objectives. This chart reflects the survey results in this category.

Table 4.c: Exit Master Teacher Meeting Objectives

Survey Question	Responses					Participant Comments
	Always	Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never	
During the past 2-4 weeks, my relationship with my ST achieved its objectives	17%	66%	17%			
	Very Good	Somewhat Good	In Between	Somewhat Poor	Very Poor	
During the past 2-4 weeks, I would describe my relationship with my ST as	83%		17%			
	Participant Comments					
If I could ask my ST to change one thing s/he did this month it would be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more confident in ST’s own ideas (2 MT’s said this) • Teach from ST’s own personal interests, rather than MT’s ideas • Spend more time studying and preparing material before teaching it • Be more firm with classroom management • Improve communication skills 					

Regarding meeting objectives, the survey results were the same at the conclusion of the quarter as they were half-way through, noting the exception of a slightly lower level of satisfaction with the overall relationship, based on the addition of responses from the sixth MT. The responses to the question of what STs could do to better meet objectives largely focused on STs' developing more confidence and independence.

Interview results corroborated these findings. Although four of the six MTs said that no improvements were needed in their relational dynamics with their STs, they still expressed areas that needed improvement to reach their objectives. Overall, the MTs desired for their STs to take more initiative by asking more questions, taking on more grading, moving forward to sort out next steps, being proactive, and participating in co-planning.

When asked what could be done to help the co-teaching model better reach its objectives, the MT participants had an array of input to offer. Their strongest recommendation was that all participants must be trained before beginning co-teaching. They felt that the structure of co-teaching was unique and needed to be taught through special co-teacher trainings. The second strongest recommendation was that care must be taken when pairing co-teachers. The dynamic of the relationship was demanding, requiring the co-teachers to work very closely together. This was difficult enough for pairs who got along naturally, and virtually impossible for pairs with conflicting personalities. They emphasized that the interpersonal dynamic was significantly more demanding than in traditional student teaching. Thirdly, the MT's voiced the importance of discussing expectations of both parties prior to the beginning of the quarter. They felt that it was critical for both STs and MTs to be transparent about their needs and wants throughout the co-teaching partnership. The heightened level of collaboration made clear communication essential for the formation of a good working relationship. Lastly, the MTs articulated a desire

for the co-teaching model to be modified to give the STs more independence. They felt that their STs relied upon them too heavily, since they were more accessible in this model than within traditional student teaching. They were concerned about their STs' ability to reach the objective of complete preparedness for full teacher candidacy within the structure of the co-teaching model.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

As introduced in chapter one, the relationship between student teachers and master teachers is a relationship that is foundational in the formation of future educators, yet it is often wrought with tension. Although this relationship is pivotal in the formation of fledgling educators, there is relatively little research exploring the nuances that contribute to a positive student teacher-master teacher relational dynamic. Co-teaching has been developed as a possible improvement to traditional student teaching, offering several benefits: greater support of STs in the classroom, enriched experiences for pupils with double teacher support, and increased opportunities for teacher candidates to experience collaboration. However, little research has focused on the co-teaching model of teacher training. Furthermore, the co-teaching model emphasizes a significant shift in approach regarding the relationship between STs and MTs. The two members of the partnership are expected to work side-by-side within co-teaching, as opposed to the more individualistic structure of traditional student teaching. This new interpersonal dynamic has been addressed by very little literature, yet it is hugely influential in the experiences of teachers within co-teaching programs.

This study was significant because it explored relatively uncharted territory – the nature of the student teacher-master teacher relationship within the co-teaching model. Educators have proposed that use of the co-teaching model be expanded in efforts to better train teacher candidates, yet this proposal lacks a substantive body of supportive research. In an effort to address this issue, this study explored the patterns of interaction between participants, their feelings about the relationship, and the efficacy of the relationship in reaching its objectives, altogether seeking to answer the following two primary research questions: (a) What is the experience of student teachers in their relationships with master teachers? and (b) What is the

experience of master teachers in their relationships with student teachers? Together, these two questions work to explore the dynamics of both sides of the co-teaching relationship.

In this next section, the researcher will address findings in response to both of these questions.

Findings

As discussed in chapter three, the participants in this study were involved in the first enactment of the co-teaching model in the El Dorado Unified School District. All STs were enrolled in the Belmont State University single subject teaching credential program, and all MTs were credentialed instructors at Bixby High School. The co-teaching model was implemented as part of the Linked Learning initiative, with BSU and EDUSD seeking to provide students with greater connections to specific career sectors through secondary education (Swisher, 2012). Linked Learning requires a higher level of collaboration amongst teachers, so co-teaching was intended to give teacher candidates an opportunity to experience collaborative teaching practices before entering classrooms of their own. Due to this higher level of collaboration, this study focused on three relational aspects of working together: patterns of interaction, feelings about the relationship, and efficacy in reaching objectives.

Patterns of Interaction

Past research has found that STs feel dependent upon their MTs (Sempowicz and Hudson, 2011; Chou, 2011; Cuenca, 2011; Brown and Albury, 2009) and seek recognition and approval from them (Loizou, 2011; Atjonen, 2011; Cuenca, 2011). Based on these findings, past studies have established the importance of STs experiencing support from their MTs and the value of co-teachers meeting together on a regular basis.

This study concurred with previous findings regarding the importance of STs feeling the support of their MTs. As the study recorded the trends occurring within the interactions between the co-teachers, it was found that the STs, while experiencing their MTs' support, followed a natural progression. They began by observing, discussing, and debriefing lesson plans with their MTs at the beginning of the quarter, moved on to co-teaching lessons prepared mainly by the MTs, asking clarifying questions as necessary, in the middle of the quarter, and finally arrived at planning and executing lessons independently by the end of the quarter. This progression observed amongst the participants in this study reflected previous findings that STs grow and develop most successfully when supported by their MTs.

This study also reinforced the importance of regular meetings of co-teachers. Throughout the duration of the study, at least 70% of the STs reported that they were meeting daily with their MTs, and the remaining 30% consistently met several times a week. Consequently, throughout the entire study, 100% of the STs in this study reported feeling good about their relationships with their MTs, and over 60% reported feeling very good. It is likely that these positive feelings were fostered by the STs feeling adequate recognition from their MTs because they met quite frequently.

Although past studies have focused far less on MTs than on STs, several trends in patterns of interaction amongst MTs have been identified. Researchers have found that MTs view themselves as coaches for their STs (Cavanaugh & Prescott, 2011; Wilcox & Samaras, 2009). It would seem to follow that MTs place a high value on their STs' openness to growth (Loizou, 2011). This study coincided with previous research in that it also found that MTs valued developing the independence of their STs. The MTs were observed moving more quickly through co-planning sessions as the quarter progressed, and they asked their STs for more input.

The MTs slowly decreased their participation in co-teaching during the second half of the quarter, while the STs increased theirs, particularly in planning and grading.

Interestingly, the MT participants reported far lower rates of meeting than their ST counterparts. Only 40% reported meeting daily midway through the quarter, while 50% reported meeting daily at the end of the quarter, and the rest of the MTs reported that they met several times a week. Perhaps the discrepancy between this and the numbers reported by the STs is due to the MTs' decreased awareness of the frequency of meeting, because they tend to view themselves in the role of coaches, thus not as dependent upon the meetings. Overall, this study agreed with previous studies regarding the patterns of interaction between STs and MTs.

Feelings about the Relationship

Previous studies have found that STs and MTs often experience frustration within their relationship. This has been attributed to the fact that STs and MTs often enter the relationship at different stages of life and consequently hold very different perspectives (Bullough & Draper, 2004). These frustrations have also been ascribed to MTs' unrealistic expectations regarding STs' capabilities and underestimation of the level of support needed by STs (Norman, 2011; Edgar et al, 2009). This study found that the level of frustration experienced by the ST participants grew as the quarter progressed. This may be attributed to several of the causes suggested by prior studies, but it also contributes new insights into the relational dynamics of co-teachers.

In this study, only one ST expressed feelings of frustration at the beginning of the relationship. Four of the six STs said that they had no problems with their MTs at all during the first two weeks of co-teaching, and over 90% were appreciative of their MTs several times a week. For the most part, the STs said that their MTs took time for them, looked out for their

interests, readily responded to their questions, offered them advice, treated them well, complimented them, and worked through lesson planning and debriefing with them. These positive feelings were again expressed at the middle of the quarter, about one month into the relationship.

Interestingly, by the end of the quarter, after two months of co-teaching, the STs expressed a significant drop in morale. Only 50% were never frustrated with their MTs, and less than 60% appreciated their MTs daily. Only one ST stated that nothing went wrong, while the other five participants complained that their MTs gave them an oversized workload, failed to plan lessons in advance, neglected to involve STs in administrative tasks, and displayed condescension towards their pupils. It should not be overlooked that the STs maintained a vocal appreciation for their MTs in many areas, such as in the continual provision of feedback, encouragement, and support.

However, the overall decline in morale is noteworthy. What happened? Simply an end to the “honeymoon” phase of the first month? Interestingly, the decline in morale aligned with external factors not directly related to the co-teaching relationship. Rather, the decrease seemed to coincide with an increase in coursework required by the STs’ university. The STs were required to complete a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), involving the composition and submission of a large report. Concurrently, the MTs asked the STs to take on more responsibilities, contributing to an overall consensus that the STs felt overwhelmed. As a result, it appears that the STs increased their level of frustration with their co-teaching relationships. This observation aligns with previous research by reflecting the vastly different perspectives the STs and MTs are coming from, as the MTs were unaware of the STs’ outside pressures of their workload at the university. It also concurs with the previously identified issue of MTs’

underestimation of the STs' needed level of support; as the MTs in this study withdrew their support in an effort to empower their apprentices' autonomy, the STs experienced frustration.

As mentioned above, MTs, as well as STs, often experience frustration in their relationships with their partner teachers. Past studies have attributed this to disparate perspectives, unrealistic expectations, and miscalculation of the necessary level of support. Additionally, previous researchers have identified that MTs often underestimate the challenge of learning to teach. They are unaware of their own expertise in the field, and thus think of teaching as easier than it actually is (Norman, 2011). This study found that although the MTs did struggle with the issues highlighted by previous research, the participants were aware of these struggles, and voiced a desire for clarity on how to solve them.

Parallel to the STs, the MTs expressed growing frustration with the co-teaching relationship as the quarter progressed. While 77% were never frustrated at the beginning of the quarter, this dropped to 60% midway through the quarter, and 50% by the end of the quarter. Similarly, 54% appreciated their STs daily at the beginning, which dropped to 20% daily appreciation by the middle of the quarter. At the beginning, the MTs complained of STs making mistakes borne of their inexperience in the classroom: making errors while teaching, speaking too softly, or criticizing pupils too aggressively. These criticisms shifted toward a focus on STs' lack of preparation to teach as the quarter wore on: failure to monitor pupils, poor pacing, arriving late, or inadequate lesson preparation. The frustration of the MTs seemed to grow when they felt that their STs should have been able to perform a specific task at a higher level. The best example of this was MTs' frustration at the STs not setting aside time to adequately prepare for lessons.

The MTs in this study recognized that their STs needed more support, but they felt unable to offer them anything further amidst the demands of attending faculty meetings, tutoring pupils, and the various other responsibilities of their profession. They felt unsure of how much their STs should be willing to handle and frustrated by STs seeming underprepared by their university courses. It appeared that the university supervisors were largely uninvolved, leaving the MTs with the overwhelming weight of training the STs in addition to the rest of their responsibilities.

Reaching Objectives

Prior studies have found that the relationship with the MT is one of the most influential components in a ST's achievement of student teaching objectives. Student teachers are directly influenced by their MTs (Sempwicz & Hudson, 2011) and often mirror their MTs in the classroom (Brown & Albury, 2009). Congruent with these previous findings, this study found that the ST participants' feelings regarding their achievement of objectives correlated with their feelings of satisfaction in their relationships with their MTs. This study also augmented previous findings by tracking the progression of STs' meeting objectives and level of satisfaction in their MT relationships over the course of their quarter-long partnerships.

Overall, the STs in this study expressed high levels of relational satisfaction and objective achievement at the beginning and middle of the quarter, but significantly lower levels at the end. At the beginning of the quarter, five of the six ST participants felt that they shared very good relationships with their MTs and stated that they either always or almost always met their objectives. They felt that they were working together to implement co-teaching strategies, with the MTs assisting their growth while maintaining a positive and flexible approach to their working relationships. Midway through the quarter, these five STs still felt the same regarding

their relational dynamic and their objectives. They felt that their MTs were helping them grow daily, and they got along well. Interestingly, at the end of the quarter, the percentage of STs who felt “very good” about their relationship with their MTs dropped to 80%, and the percentage of STs who felt they always or almost always met their objectives also dropped to 80%. This suggests a correlation between the STs’ feelings concerning the relationship and those concerning reaching objectives.

Additionally, throughout the quarter, one ST consistently felt frustrated with her MT. This sixth ST participant began the quarter stating that she shared a “somewhat good relationship” with her MT, and they “sometimes” met their objectives, but by the end of the quarter, she designated their relationship as “very poor,” and stated that they “almost never” reached their objectives. This participant stated that at the beginning she felt unsure of the objectives she and her MT were attempting to reach, and at the end of the quarter they had rarely established clear objectives. In a very negative way, this partnership also reflected the correlation of relational satisfaction and achievement of objectives in the co-teaching partnership.

Although most of the ST participants in this study expressed a high level of satisfaction and objective achievement throughout their partnerships, they still gave suggestions they felt would help them better achieve their objectives. At the beginning, two of the STs said nothing needed to change, while the others felt they would be helped if their MTs set aside more one-on-one time for individual support, expressed increased sensitivity to their personal scheduling needs, and increased their inclusion in administrative tasks. By the end of the quarter, only one ST felt nothing needed to change. The other STs continued to wish the same things, with the additional request that their MTs would prepare lessons further in advance. The STs felt

addressing each of these concerns could help them better reach their objective of becoming good quality teacher candidates.

The STs also had several recommendations for how the co-teaching program could help them better reach their objectives. They noted the high level of collaboration demanded by co-teaching, and they felt they would have benefited from more training in collaborative techniques prior to starting co-teaching. Due to this high level of collaboration, they highly recommended that attention be given to personality types when pairing co-teachers, and that the pairs be created a semester in advance to allow the STs to observe their MTs in the classroom. They also felt co-teaching should be restructured to ensure that each ST be paired with two different MTs to give them each the opportunity to glean knowledge from two different mentors.

Based on their different role in the relationship, MTs tend to differ from their STs in their approach to objective achievement. While STs focus internally on their own growth, MTs focus externally on the growth of their partner teachers. Previous studies have found that MTs tend to look for specific qualities in STs (Smith, 2001). This study contributed to prior research by investigating a different angle of the MTs' experience – how the MTs felt about their STs objective achievement, along with how the MTs felt about their relationships with their STs. These aspects of the MT experience had not been reported by previous studies.

Unlike the ST participants, the MTs did not report a correlation between how they felt about their relationship with their partners and whether they felt they were reaching their objectives. Instead, these two variables appeared to function independently of one another. The MTs consistently maintained the same level of satisfaction with the relationship throughout the partnership. In fact, five of the six participants reported that their relationship with their co-

teacher was “very good” throughout the duration of the entire quarter. They stated that their STs were teachable and interested in growth, which is what they required to designate the relationship as “very good.”

Although the MTs reported such a high level of relational satisfaction, they also reported a steady decline in the extent to which the STs met their objectives. At the beginning of the quarter, 54% said they were always meeting their objectives. This significantly declined to 20% at the midpoint, and 17% at the conclusion. The MTs seemed to have higher expectations of what the STs should be able to do than what they actually achieved, and the MTs consistently articulated areas that should be improved in order for the STs to better reach their objectives. At the beginning, these recommendations focused on acclimating to the classroom by increasing speaking volume and improving clarity of explanations. In the middle of the quarter, they expected the STs to move towards greater independence by increasing grading, heightening awareness of required tasks, vocalizing ideas, making decisions, and spending time in personal reflection. By the end of the quarter, the MTs expected to see greater independence displayed by the STs, evidenced by increased confidence, firmer classroom management, and more time spent on preparation of teaching materials. As the quarter progressed, the STs fell progressively farther behind the level of competence their co-teachers expected. The MTs seemed to expect a certain projected rate of growth the STs were unable to maintain, resulting in the MTs’ reports of STs’ failure to teach their objectives.

Additionally, the MTs also made recommendations for improvements to the co-teaching model that would help the co-teachers to reach their objectives. The MTs unanimously agreed that co-teaching was more relationally demanding than traditional student teaching. They expressed the challenge of establishing how to co-teach each lesson, scripting what each teacher

would say and do during each part of the class period. Because of this, they recommended that administrators ask all participants to complete personality tests to help determine which teachers would work well together. The MTs also requested all pairs be made at least a semester in advance to provide the STs with opportunities to observe the MTs in action before stepping into the classroom as a co-teacher. They felt that careful pairing of the co-teachers was paramount to successfully reaching objectives.

Furthermore, the MTs unanimously criticized the administration as being disorganized in their implementation of the co-teaching model. They felt that numerous decisions had been made at the last minute, including a required training held on the fourth day of school. They reported gaps in communication between the various parties involved, such as district administrators, school site administrators, university professors, university supervisors, and the co-teachers themselves. These gaps in communication created frustration and confusion for the MT participants, thus interfering with objective achievement.

Finally, the MTs recommended that the co-teaching model be restructured to give the STs more independence as the semester wore on. They felt one reason for the STs' delay in achieving the objective of autonomy was their over-reliance on their MTs. In traditional student teaching, the STs' only option was to come to class with well prepared lessons, because they functioned independently and bore the sole responsibility for teaching the pupils. However, whether intentionally or not, most of the STs within the co-teaching model took advantage of the opportunity to lean on their co-teachers for help mid-lesson. Thus, the STs were postponed in their development as self-sufficient teachers.

Implications for Practice

Student Teachers

Based on this study, several implications will help direct the improvement of future student teaching experiences. First of all, STs should prioritize meeting regularly with their MTs. The STs in this study whom experienced the most frustration were those who did not meet regularly with their MTs. Secondly, STs need to be aware that they are coming from a different perspective than their MTs and must voice the expectations they hold (Jones, 2000; Friedman & Wallace, 2006). Specifically, based on the findings of this study, STs need to communicate their other responsibilities (i.e. completion of TPA's) and voice their particular needs for support (i.e. more one-on-one meetings, more planning in advance, more involvement in administrative tasks, etc.). Finally, STs within the co-teaching model need to be aware of the temptation to lean too heavily upon their MTs and should recognize the long-term value of developing autonomy during their student teaching experience.

Master Teachers

Similar to the STs, the first implication of this study for MTs is to prioritize meeting regularly with their STs. It is true that this can prove difficult, especially as the semester progresses, and numerous demands are made for the MTs' time. However, to give STs the level of support they need to reach their objectives, the regular one-on-one meetings with their MTs are vitally important. Furthermore and similar to the STs, MTs need to be aware that they are often coming from a different perspective from their STs. They need to be aware of the needs and expectations of their STs, who are entering a new arena. Master teachers must realize that they are most likely unaware of their level of expertise in the classroom, and they cannot expect

STs to quickly develop to this level. Master teachers ought to clearly and specifically communicate what they expect of their STs (Jones, 2000; Friedman & Wallace, 2006). Based specifically on this study, the MTs must verbalize the extent of the workload their STs are expected to take on (i.e. full lesson preparation) and the degree of independence they are expected to display (i.e. refrain from asking the MT questions mid-lesson). Lastly, MTs could help STs better reach their objectives by involving them in administrative tasks, offering more support in lesson planning, and, most of all, giving both positive and negative feedback.

Administrators

This study also found several implications for administrators. As has been found by several previous studies, MTs would benefit from more training (e.g. Schwille, 2008; Loizou, 2011; Cuenca, 2011; Brown & Albury, 2009; Norman, 2011; Jones, 2000). It should be noted that the MTs in this study did receive two days of training – two days more than most MTs ever receive. Specifically, MTs entering co-teaching need advanced training (before the first week of the semester) in how to practice this model of new teacher preparation. Training not only in co-teaching strategies, but also in co-planning strategies, would help the MTs better support their STs within the co-teaching relationship. Information regarding what to expect of STs as the quarter progressed would be helpful. A manual outlining co-teaching strategies, co-planning strategies, and expectations of responsibilities may contribute to the solution of many of these issues. Overall, the MTs in this study expressed an awareness of their weaknesses (i.e. uncertainty of how much to expect of STs, uncertainty of how to use co-teaching strategies), but lacked the resources they needed to solve these problems.

This study also found several implications regarding the administration of the co-teaching model. First of all, administrators need to significantly improve their organization of the co-teaching structure and communication of details with all parties involved in the co-teaching process. Many participants were frustrated by the lack of organization and communication, which interfered with their ability to achieve as much success as they may have been able to otherwise. One key area in which increased communication is paramount to making improvements is the clarification of the expectations of all involved parties. Although the STs have passed numerous university courses and attend a weekly student teaching seminar, the MTs still felt that the STs were unprepared for the classroom. Were the MTs' expectations unreasonable? Or could the MTs' expectations have been met if they had been more clearly communicated to the STs or to the university? Additionally, the STs experienced increased frustration when their student teaching seminar increased their coursework while their MTs concurrently required them to take on more responsibilities. This seems to be the result of another gap in communication – the MTs and the university professors must work more in tandem with one another to help the STs' experience be less overwhelming.

Secondly, administrators need to recognize the heightened relational dynamic of co-teaching, in contrast to the individualized nature of traditional student teaching. With this dynamic in mind, administrators must take the time to assess the personalities of participants and intentionally pair the co-teaching partners far in advance. The STs ought to acquaint themselves with their MTs' classrooms, and both members of the partnership must discuss patterns and expectations of responsibilities when teaching together. Once the demands of the quarter begin, it is much more difficult to establish healthy patterns of working together. Third, university administrators need to consider how they might be able to better encourage and support MTs,

either by involving the university supervisors to a greater degree or by offering the MTs compensation for the increased work load they acquire when training a ST.

Finally, administrators need to consider how to restructure the co-teaching model to encourage STs toward increased independence. The STs in this study fell into relying upon their MTs, which will be detrimental to them as they eventually take on classrooms of their own. To legitimately reach the objective of becoming viable teacher candidates, the STs must establish greater autonomy, even within the co-teaching context. Perhaps a hybrid of co-teaching and traditional student teaching could be developed to incorporate the best of both worlds.

Recommendations for Further Study

Co-teaching is a relatively new and unexplored model for teacher training; therefore, it is recommended that further research focus on studying this model. Given the heightened relational dynamic of co-teaching, it is recommended that further studies also focus on the relationships within co-teaching. Perhaps future studies could investigate the impact of the administrative recommendations above, such as intentionally pairing co-teachers based on personality assessments, offering more MT training in co-teaching methods, or altering co-teaching to establish more independence for STs. Additionally, this study was limited by a brief timeframe and limited pool of participants. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study with a longer time frame and larger pool of applicants in order to extrapolate these findings.

Final Thoughts

Student teaching is a challenging, yet crucial, step in the development of novice educators. It sets new teachers on a trajectory for their careers, and these new teachers will shape the lives of thousands of future students, as well as the future educational system of our

nation. Given the importance of this step within teacher training, it is tragic that so many STs and MTs have negative experiences.

Embracing the recommendations made by this study has the potential to help future STs, MTs, and administrators take action to improve the teacher preparation process. With appropriate preparation and support, STs will be able to better articulate their needs and expectations and will delve into the student teaching process with the long-term goal of autonomy in mind. Furthermore, MTs can be instructed in how to enhance their support of their student teachers, offering better feedback and developing more accurate expectations. Finally, administrators can provide more training and guidance to MTs. If these changes are implemented, hopefully the vital relationship between the ST and the MT will be able to fulfill its intent of empowering vibrant future teachers, ready to confidently enter classrooms of their own.

Regarding the co-teaching model, this method of new teacher training has definite potential. Presently, its administrative weaknesses limit its efficacy, but following the recommendations raised by this study's findings could help it become a highly effective means of developing future teachers – teachers who are able to employ optimal teaching methods learned from their co-teaching experiences. With further research and development, perhaps co-teaching can become an avenue to more successful student teaching experiences and help achieve the goal of preparing the next generation of teachers.

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Appendix A: Monthly Survey

You will be asked to complete the following survey three times during your participation in this study, including once after week one, once after week five, and once after week nine. You will receive an email on the Friday of the designated weeks with a link to the survey, and your response within a week of receiving the email is appreciated. All responses will be kept confidential.

1. During this month, my co-teacher and I met in person
 - a. Never
 - b. Once a month
 - c. Once a week
 - d. Several times a week
 - e. DailyExplain:

2. During this month, my co-teacher and I exchanged communication over phone, email, or written notes
 - a. Never
 - b. Once a month
 - c. Once a week
 - d. Several times a week
 - e. DailyExplain:

3. During this month, I felt frustrated with my co-teacher
 - a. Never
 - b. Once a month
 - c. Once a week
 - d. Several times a week
 - e. DailyExplain:

4. During this month, I felt appreciative of my co-teacher
 - a. Never
 - b. Once a month
 - c. Once a week
 - d. Several times a week
 - e. DailyExplain:

5. During this month, I would describe my overall interactions with my co-teacher as
 - a. Very poor
 - b. Somewhat poor
 - c. In between
 - d. Somewhat good
 - e. Very goodExplain:

6. During this month, my relationship with my co-teacher achieved its objectives
- Never
 - Almost never
 - Sometimes
 - Almost always
 - Always
- Explain:

7. During this month, I would describe my overall relationship with my co-teacher as
- Very poor
 - Somewhat poor
 - In between
 - Somewhat good
 - Very good
- Explain:

8. During this month, the worst thing my co-teacher did was....

9. During this month, the best thing my co-teacher did was....

10. If I could ask my co-teacher to change one thing s/he did this month, it would be....

Other comments:

Appendix B: Individual Interview Questions

In the following interview, I would like to ask you to participate in a fifteen-to-twenty-minute survey of six short-answer questions. Please be confident that I will not be sharing your responses with your co-teacher, nor with any other members of this school community. In my thesis, your name will be replaced with a pseudonym.

1. A. How would you describe your relationship with your co-teacher at this point?
B. What do typical weekly interactions with your co-teacher consist of?

2. Is your relationship with your co-teacher the way you expected it to be? How is it the same or different?

3. What was a recent positive experience or high point you had with your co-teacher?

4. What was a recent negative experience or low point you had with your co-teacher?

5. At this point, is there anything your co-teacher could be doing differently to improve the dynamic of your relationship? Is there anything he or she could eliminate or implement to help you?

6. With the structure of our current educational system, future teachers will most likely work in the same type of relationship with a co-teacher as you are currently engaged in. What would you like to tell these future teachers about the co-teacher relationship? Perhaps something you wish you had known before starting your current co-teacher relationship?

Appendix C: Group Interview Questions

In the following interview, I would like to ask you to participate in a thirty-to-forty-five-minute survey of six short-answer questions. As much as possible, I would like each participant to respond to each question. The questions will refer to your “partner teacher.” If you are a student teacher, this partner is your master teacher (the one who is participating in this study); if you are a master teacher, this partner is your student teacher. Please understand that what is said in this interview stays in this room – please respect the confidentiality of the other participants in this interview by not sharing what is said with anyone who is not currently present.

1. A. How would you describe your relationship with your partner teacher at this point?
B. What do typical weekly interactions with your partner teacher consist of?
2. What have been the easiest aspects of working with your partner teacher?
3. What have been the most challenging aspects of working with your partner teacher?
4. Do you feel that your relationship with your partner teacher is reaching its objectives? How so? Why or why not?
5. At this point, is there anything your partner teacher could be doing differently to improve the dynamic of your relationship? Is there anything he or she could eliminate or implement to help you?
6. With the structure of our current educational system, future teachers will work in the same type of relationship with a partner teacher as you are currently engaged in. What would you like to tell these future teachers about the partner teacher relationship? Perhaps something you wish you had known before starting your current partner teacher relationship?

Appendix D: Research Information

You are being asked to participate in a study I am completing for my Master's Degree thesis at Biola University. I am conducting this study because I want to understand more about the dynamics of the relationship between student teachers and master teachers. You are being asked to participate because you are going to be a master teacher this upcoming semester. The purpose of my study is to illuminate the ways in which co-teachers may create a positive relationship with one another, yielding a good quarter-long or semester-long experience of working together as well as setting the student teacher on a trajectory to become an excellent teacher on his or her own.

Benefits of Participating:

- Having a voice regarding some of the most recent developments in student teacher-master teacher programs used at LBUSD, CSULB, and beyond
- Becoming a better master teacher through the experience of reflecting, both individually and in a focus group, on the co-teacher relationship
- Contributing to a body of literature that will help future master teachers and student teachers have improved experiences

Requirements of Participants:

- Complete a ten-question multiple choice survey, given through Survey Monkey, three times during the quarter (once at the beginning, once in the middle, and once at the end)
- Participate in two fifteen-minute-long individual interviews (one intake interview, one exit interview), to be conducted at whatever time is best for the participant (lunch, conference period, before or after school)
- Participate in one thirty-minute-long focus group interview halfway through the quarter, to be conducted from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. on whatever day is best for the participants
- Allow the researcher to observe you and your co-teacher twice during the quarter (once while you are planning together, and once while you are teaching together)

Thank you for considering participating in this study. Please indicate which of the following best describes you:

Name: _____

Yes! I am interested. Please give me more information to help me sign up.

Maybe.... Give me more information to help me decide if I can commit.

No. Sorry, but I can't participate in this study.

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a study I am completing for my Master's Degree thesis at Biola University. I am conducting this study because I want to understand more about the dynamics of the relationship between student teachers and master teachers. You are being asked to participate because you are going to be either a student teacher or a master teacher this upcoming semester. The purpose of my study is to illuminate the ways in which both student teachers and master teachers may be able to contribute to creating a positive relationship with one another, yielding a good semester-long experience of working together as well as setting the student teacher on a trajectory to become an excellent teacher on his or her own.

The research I plan will include interviews, focus groups, observations and surveys of current student teachers and master teachers. As a participant in this study, you will be interviewed about your experiences in this relationship, observed working in this relationship, and asked to complete a brief monthly survey about this relationship. I would like your permission to record and take notes on the interview and to record my observations so that I may contribute them to my study. All of the research will be conducted on campus at your high school.

You are unlikely to experience any physical, psychological, or social risks. However, if you become uncomfortable or experience any problems due to participation in this project, I will understand if you must withdraw.

There may be no direct benefit to you by your participation in this project. However, your participation may benefit numerous future student teachers and master teachers as they use the results of this study to be better informed about the dynamics that can help make this relationship successful.

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Participation in this study is confidential, and all information will be written in such a manner that you will not be identified. Both your first and last name will be replaced by a pseudonym in all notes and the final report. All research material will be kept under the control of the researcher. Procedures to protect your identity will be followed in all reports associated with this project. Information derived from this study will be used for research purposes within the context of my graduate research courses. Your identity will be kept confidential, and any recordings will be destroyed once the report is complete. The only exception to this promise of confidentiality is that I am legally obligated to report any evidence of illegal activities, abuse, or neglect.

You will not incur any costs, nor will you receive any reimbursements for your participation in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. Participation or withdrawal will not impact any rights to which you are entitled.

You may contact me at any time at kgrothe@lbschools.net with any concerns or questions about the research study. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Rebecca Hong, at rebecca.hong@biola.edu.

Consent:

I have read this form, and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions, which have been answered to my satisfaction. If I have additional questions, I have been told who to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above, and will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name	Participant Signature	Date
Katherine Grothe _____	_____	_____
Investigator Name	Investigator Signature	Date

Audio Recording:

This study will include interviews. During the interviews, the investigator will take notes, and would be aided by the ability to audio record. All audio recordings will be only heard by the researcher, and will be kept confidential. However, if a participant would rather not be recorded, his or her wish will be respected.

I give my permission to be audio recorded.

Do not audio record my interview.

Note:

There are two copies of this consent form included. Please sign one and return it to the researcher with your responses. The other copy you may keep for your records.

Questions and comments may be addressed to Katherine Grothe, Millikan High School, 2800 Snowden Ave., Long Beach, CA 90815. Phone: (562) 425-7441.