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Facilitating Middle Level Pre-Service Teachers' Literacy Integration in Early Field Experiences

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This study explored how pre-service teachers integrated literacy in middle level social studies. This study was conducted in the context of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and their focus on disciplinary literacy, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards and their focus on rich clinical experiences, and concepts of interdisciplinary and integrated curriculum central to middle level philosophy (NMSA, 2010). Three pre-service teachers in their first extended field practicum took part in this collective case study (Yin, 2009). We identified two key findings. First, these pre-service teachers primarily integrated literacy in ways that were brief, teacher-directed, and sometimes optional for students. Second, and more promising, the pre-service teachers integrated more complex disciplinary literacy tasks when they made connections among literacy strategies, the content, and their students' needs. These more complex literacy tasks often were developed through collaborative, structured conversations between each pre-service teacher and the university supervisor.

Experiences

In this study, we investigated how three pre-service teachers integrated literacy in social studies classrooms during their first extended middle school practicum experience in which they designed and implemented their own instructional units. Field experiences are critical to pre-service teachers' growing knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching. Howell and colleagues (2016), in a comprehensive review of specialized middle level teacher preparation programs, recommended that programs incorporate the following four elements in as great a number as possible: understanding of the young adolescent, coursework related to middle level philosophy and pedagogy, preparation in two or more content areas, and "early, frequent, and rigorous" field experiences (Howell, Faulkner, Cook, Miller, & Thompson, 2016, p. 2). Additionally, the CAEP Standards (2013) emphasize clinical, or field, experiences so that pre-service teachers can demonstrate their growing effectiveness Research has long noted the importance of field experiences (Harp, 1974; Seiforth & Samuel, 1979), so many teacher education programs, including our own, integrate field experiences across multiple semesters instead of a single-semester student teaching experience. Ryan, Toohey and Hughes (1996) asserted:

> The major purpose of the practicum is to link theory with practice by providing regular structured and supervised opportunities for student teachers to apply and test knowledge, skills and attitudes, developed largely in campus-based studies, to the real world of the school and the school community (p. 356).

In addition to providing pre-service teachers more "real world of the school" experiences, early field practica at the middle level (grades 4-8) provide additional opportunities for pre-service teachers to integrate curriculum, a core concept in *This We Believe* (NMSA, 2010), a guiding document for middle level education. Standards that guide middle grades curriculum (AMLE, 2012) also support curriculum integration. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) advocate a renewed emphasis on the integration of literacy instruction in the disciplines of social studies, science and math (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). Candidates in our middle grades teacher education program are required to integrate language arts and social studies during their first field experience. This requirement, along with the focus on literacy in history/social studies in the Common Core standards, formed the foundation of the following research questions:

- What counts as literacy in a middle grades social studies class for pre-service teachers?
- What types of literacy activities do middle level pre-service teachers plan and teach in a social studies classroom?
- What do these pre-service teachers see as obstacles and affordances when integrating literacy into their planning, instruction, and assessment?

Relevant Literature

In framing the study, we drew on early field experiences for pre-service teachers and their developing pedagogical content knowledge, especially in the form of disciplinary literacy in social studies. The development of pedagogical content knowledge and

an understanding of disciplinary literacy relate to this study because of the nature of our program, in that it requires pre-service teachers in the second semester of the program to integrate literacy into their social studies instruction. Research on early field experiences inform this study because this field practicum occurs two semesters prior to student teaching, and it is the first opportunity for teacher candidates to design and implement instruction.

Early Field Experiences

Previous research has described stages of teacher development (Fuller, 1969; Kagan, 1992; Watzke, 2003). These stages consist of the following: stage one, a focus on *self* and non-instructional issues such as classroom management and whether they are liked by students; stage two, a focus on *task* and the enhancement of teaching skills; and stage three, a focus on *impact* or the effect of their efforts on student learning. These stages hold true for both pre-service and novice teachers, which indicates that they are context-dependent. Pre-service teachers move through these three stages as they progress through their teacher preparation program, particularly those programs that include high levels of field experiences. According to this model of teacher development, pre-service teachers in their early field experiences typically have stage one concerns related to classroom management and how students perceive them. Over time, their focus grows to encompass instructional tasks and their impact as teachers.

This stage theory relates to the design of teacher education programs that include early, multiple, and varied field experiences. Instead of relying on the single student teaching semester, programs that provide pre-service teachers with additional practical classroom experiences can "produce better teachers in hopes of improving education for children" (Seiforth & Samuel, 1979, p. 10) and increase relevance of university methods courses (Harp, 1974). Recent research has looked at field experiences that focus on connecting theory to practice in math classrooms (Cross & Bayazit, 2014), the role of context in field placement success (Cooper & Nesmith, 2013), and observations of experienced teachers (Jenkins, 2014). Schmidt (2010) examined the following types of practicum experiences in music education: peer-teaching, early field experiences, student teaching, and self-arranged teaching experiences. In regards to early field experiences, Schmidt found that quality experiences were created when there was alignment between methods coursework and the practicum placement. Additionally, she found that when teacher candidates possessed some degree of autonomy for instructional planning and delivery, they perceived field experiences as more worthwhile and relevant. In contrast, pre-service teachers did not perceive early field experiences that consisted primarily of observations to be as meaningful.

The design of our middle grades teacher education program similarly focuses on linking university course work and field experiences by the structure of courses and the nature of assignments within the course. Researchers such as Zeichner (2010) have noted a perennial lack of connection between coursework and field experiences in teacher education programs. Our program's intentional alignment of coursework and field experiences is designed to work against this disconnect and to close the gap between theory and practice. As university supervisors, we focus on the field experience. While we each aim to work in a triad comprised of the pre-service teachers, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor, this study focused on the relation between university supervisors and the pre-service teachers with whom we worked. As supervisors, we explored different approaches to supervision. Gebhard (1984) offered five models for supervision: a) a *directive* approach with the university supervisor in the position of control; b) an *alternative* supervision within which the university supervisor offers different choices; c) a *collaborative* model with the university supervisor and pre-service teacher working closely together; d) *non-directive* supervision, when the university supervisor primarily acts as a sounding board for the pre-service teacher; and e) a *creative* approach that is adapted to the needs of each supervisory context. Similarly, Glickman and colleagues (2014) described various models of supervision, including a collaborative model that includes behaviors related to, among other things, clarifying concerns, reflecting on them, problem solving to find an acceptable solution, and reflecting on plans. These models, especially the directive and collaborative models, informed our own practice as supervisors as we provided support and guidance for our pre-service teachers.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Shulman's (1987) concept of pedagogical content knowledge is one perspective that guided this study. Pre-service teachers need to develop general pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. In addition, they need to develop a knowledge of how to teach particular content or disciplines. Shulman (1987) described how pedagogical content knowledge represents the "blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (p. 8). In the case of pre-service teachers, the development of pedagogical content knowledge can occur in two contexts: in university coursework such as methods courses or in the field experiences in middle level classrooms. Pre-service teachers are at the initial stages of identifying and developing the understanding of important concepts and processes in their disciplines. They are also at the beginning stages of developing an understanding of how to teach those concepts and processes. Alignment of conceptual understandings and pedagogical knowledge between university-based coursework and field experiences can support pre-service teachers' development of pedagogical content knowledge. We are interested in the ways that pre-service teachers develop and apply pedagogical content knowledge especially in relation to their integration of literacy in Social Studies.

Literacy in Middle Level Social Studies

The pre-service teachers in our study are developing their pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge during a semester when they take methods courses in language arts and social studies and do an associated field experience. This practicum is their first experience planning and teaching an instructional unit in a middle level classroom. The Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) advocates for middle level curriculum that is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant (NMSA, 2010). Our program thus encourages pre-service teachers to engage in integrated curriculum that blends content areas, sometimes blurring distinctions between them (Beane, 1997). In this context, pre-service teachers draw on both language arts concepts and social studies concepts as they plan their instructional units. Those pre-service teachers placed in social studies classrooms need to have an understanding of general literacy as well as disciplinary literacy more specialized to social studies.

A disciplinary literacy approach includes an understanding of how knowledge is constructed in the discipline in addition to skills needed to access the knowledge of that discipline (Moje, 2008). In the case of social studies there is an emerging body of research that attempts to describe what it means to read and write like a historian (Martin & Wineburg, 2008; Reisman, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). For example, Martin and Wineburg (2008) posit that processes such as sourcing, contextualizing, and "reading the silences" are common reading practices of historians. Accordingly, a disciplinary literacy approach to Social Studies involves teaching students these discipline-specific processes, so they may be better prepared to engage in these inquiry practices in high school, college, and perhaps a future career.

There is an established research base focused on engagement with and comprehension of informational texts in elementary and middle level social studies classrooms based on general literacy strategies such as questioning (Beck, McKeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996) or text-based discussions (Vaughn et.al, 2013). While general literacy strategies are useful, content-specific strategies also become important. Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) use the concept of literacy progression to explain the differing literacy demands across grade levels using a disciplinary approach. They argue that students, as they progress through the grade levels, need to move beyond generic strategies that have utility across content areas and move into literacy skills that are specialized according to disciplines such as social studies, science and math. According to their progression, students in the upper elementary and middle school levels should be utilizing generic literacy strategies. In middle school and high school, students should be learning more sophisticated but less generalizable literacy skills that are specific to disciplines such as chemistry or history. This literacy progression does make sense – reading a section from an organic chemistry textbook requires different processes and has different purposes than reading a Shakespearean sonnet. Although a disciplinary literacy progression is helpful in thinking about continued literacy development across grade levels, a potential challenge arises at the middle level. According to Shanahan and Shanahan (2008), middle school teachers should be modeling and incorporating *both* intermediate literacy strategies and discipline-specific strategies. distinguish between generalizable literacy and disciplinary literacy, with the latter being the kinds of practices experts in the field use; when students learn and practice disciplinary literacy practices, they are engaged in "in exploring content in the way that insiders would" (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2015, p. 12). Literacy strategies are the concern of *all* middle school teachers, not only teachers of language arts (Tovani, 2004), but the types of literacy begin to vary more by content area. As one example, students' vocabulary needs become more extensive and more discipline-specific as students progress through school. A three-tier model of vocabulary includes general Tier One words, Tier Two words like *contradict* or *precede* that appear across disciplines, and Tier Three words limited to specific topics (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013).

While there are critiques of the Common Core State Standards such as Karp (2014), the standards do offer guidance on how to transition teaching and learning from a focus on general reading strategies to discipline-specific reading strategies. Beginning in the sixth grade, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts includes literacy standards in the discipline of history/social studies that "work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing the broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity" (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). The middle level literacy in history/social studies standards begin to describe discipline-specific ways of reading and producing texts while also continuing to emphasize intermediate literacy strategies (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008) that have benefits across different disciplines and in an integrated curriculum context. Table 1 shows how the ten standards in the reading strand of the CCSS literacy in history/social studies align with intermediate reading strategies and discipline-specific reading strategies. It also identifies those standards "at the crossroads" of intermediate and discipline-specific reading strategies that integrate curriculum. See Table 1, pg. 9.

Standards 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10 can be considered intermediate literacy practices because of their applicability to disciplines other than social studies. Standards 1, 2, 6 and 7, by contrast, include processes and texts that are more germane to the disciplines of history and social studies. The inclusion of primary source documents, for example, is unique to social studies. These standards are "at the crossroads" because they include texts that are specific to Social Studies while emphasizing general literacy strategies. Standard 9 is the only standard that clearly indicates processes related to reading like a historian (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Through the analysis of multiple texts on a topic, students can engage in the processes of contextualizing and sourcing, for example. This categorization is a helpful tool for showing pre-service teachers how different literacy tasks can be general or specific to a discipline like Social Studies.

Table 1

Alignment of Shanahan and Shanahan' (2008) Literacy Progression and CCSS in Literacy in History and Social Studies

Intermediate Reading Strategies	***At the Crossroads – Curriculum Integration***	Discipline Specific Reading Strategies
	RH.6-8.1 – Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of *primary and secondary sources*.	
	RH.6-8.2 - Determine the central ideas or information of a *primary or secondary source*; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.	
RH.6-8.3 - Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies		
RH.6-8.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.		
RH.6-8.5 - Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).		
	RH.6-8.6 - Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or *avoidance of particular facts*).	
	RH.6-8.7 - Integrate *visual information* (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.	
RH.6-8.8 - Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.		
		RH.6-8.9 - Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic
RH.6-8.10 - By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.		

*****italics added

Drawing on the literature related to early field experiences, pedagogical content knowledge, and disciplinary literacy in the context of curriculum integration in middle grades, we designed this exploratory study of ways that pre-service teachers integrated literacy in Social Studies.

Methodology

We used a collective case study design (Yin, 2009) to focus on each pre-service teacher's literacy integration in a middle level social studies class. A case study approach allowed us to explore in depth the processes, thinking, and decisions of each participant. A collective case study allowed us to focus on a particular phenomenon (in this study, how each pre-service teacher integrated literacy in social studies) through individual cases. While case study is not intended to be generalizable (Yin, 2009), we wondered whether issues in individual cases would help us understand general concepts of how pre-service teachers in early field experiences integrated literacy in social studies. We decided to bound the case as each pre-service teacher in the field practicum because this is the context in which we as university supervisors interacted these pre-service teachers; we observed each pre-service teacher weekly over the course of the semester and evaluated them in all aspects of the field practicum including weekly reflections, unit planning components, and classroom teaching.

Situating the Case

In light of the importance of curriculum integration in middle grades classrooms, our middle grades teacher education program is structured so that pre-service teachers understand, experience, and create possibilities for curriculum integration from their earliest field experiences. In particular, pre-service teachers take language arts methods and social studies methods concurrently. During the same semester, each is placed in a language arts or social studies classroom. In this way, pre-service teachers are able to connect their on-campus coursework with their field experience. During this semester, each pre-service teacher designs and teaches a 5-6 day unit on a topic assigned by the classroom teacher. Pre-service teachers who are placed in social studies classrooms are required to integrate literacy into their units, and those candidates placed in language arts classrooms are required to integrate social studies concepts into their units. The assignments for the field practicum prompt pre-service teachers to incorporate literacy activities in their social studies instruction in several ways. This semester is the pre-service teachers' first extended field placement that requires them to design and teach a unit; although they have had field placements in two previous semesters, this is their first sustained teaching experience. Additionally, all middle grades pre-service teachers take these two methods courses and complete the related practicum even if they have chosen content concentrations other than language arts and/or social studies. Participants were three undergraduate pre-service teachers with field placements in middle school social studies classes. They were invited to participate in the study based on two criteria: (1) each was placed in a social studies classroom and (2) one of the authors was the university supervisors for each pre-service teacher. Two of our participants had field placements at Jefferson Middle School (all names are pseudonyms) and the other was at Washington Middle School. Both middle schools include grades 6-8, and each is in a rural area of the Southeastern United States.

Each pre-service teacher was a traditional undergraduate. Lois was placed in a 6th grade social studies classroom at Washington. Barbara was placed in a 7th grade social studies classroom at Jefferson; Joy was also placed at Jefferson in an 8th grade social studies classroom. Joy planned to teach either a math or science, so this field experience, with its emphasis on social studies and language arts, presented extra challenges for her in terms of content knowledge.

Data Collection and Analysis

Sources of data included assignments and tasks required of all pre-service teachers (not just the three in this study) enrolled in the field-based practicum. For the first eight weeks of the semester, each pre-service teacher submitted a weekly practicum reflection with six guiding questions. While teaching the unit later in the semester, each pre-service teacher wrote a daily reflection on the lesson; after teaching the unit, each pre-service teacher wrote a summative teaching reflection as well. Data sources also included items developed for the social studies units: unit rationales, unit matrices, daily lesson plans (5-6 in number depending on the length of each unit), and instructional materials such as guided notes, PowerPoint or other presentation materials, assessments, and model tasks for students. While we supervised other pre-service teachers in language arts classrooms and read all their materials related to the field experience, we analyzed data only for these three pre-service teachers placed in social studies classrooms due to the focus of the study.

Our analysis began through the development of an organizational coding structure (Maxwell, 2005) based on modes of literacy, specifically language relating to reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks and activities designed for middle school students. We decided on these categories, rather than categories such as *sourcing* or *contextualizing* (Martin & Wineburg, 2008) because we wanted to focus on the ways that our pre-service teachers would conceptualize the tasks; in addition, this terminology more closely aligns with language in the CCSS and in program documents that guide the pre-service teachers' units and decisions about content. Because this study focused on pre-service teachers' initial field experience that included teaching, we set a broad structure for understanding literacy tasks. This coding structure became descriptive, or substantive, as it helped us understand different literacy tasks by fracturing the data as part of the analysis (Maxwell, 2005). Prior to independently coding the data, we talked through several documents to solidify our coding system. For example, the phrase, "complete the reflection," taken from a pre-service teacher's planning documents, was categorized as a writing activity even though the word "write" was not explicitly stated. Another pre-service teacher included a guided map activity that was categorized as a form of reading. We then separately coded components of the unit, weekly reflections, and post-teaching reflections. Regular conversations resolved coding inconsistencies. Inductive coding methods and analytical memos (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), largely based on the literacy progression model and the CCSS literacy in history/social studies standards, were utilized.

Findings

This section outlines two key findings related to our research questions. The first finding describes literacy events pre-service teachers integrated into their units. Overall, we found the literacy tasks to be brief in scope, teacher-directed, and often optional for students. Our second and more promising finding is what we term *facilitated decision-making.* It relates to the role of the university supervisor in supporting pre-service teachers as they develop their craft. We found that when the supervisor suggested structures that were modeled in university courses and helped modify those structures to fit specific teaching contexts, the pre-service teachers were better able to incorporate complex literacy tasks.

Literacy Tasks as Brief, Teacher-Directed, and Optional

The majority of literacy-based activities and tasks that pre-service teachers integrated into their social studies units can be described as brief, teacher-directed, and optional for students.

Across all pre-service teachers, reading activities consisted of tasks such as reading short passages from a test preparation workbook and answering the questions that followed, reading short informational sheets prepared by the pre-service teacher, or examining maps. There was minimal evidence of teacher candidates explaining why a particular piece of text was important or setting a purpose for reading for middle grades students. Likewise, there was little instruction related to how students should apply comprehension strategies or engage in practices to read like a historian (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Reading and writing tasks were brief and connected to right or wrong answers. Table 2 illustrates how reading events align with the CCSS literacy in history/social studies and Shanahan and Shanahan's (2008) literacy progression.

The reading tasks in Table 2 align with the CCSS standards that we assert are at the crossroads of Shanahan and Shanahan's (2008) literacy progression because they do integrate primary or secondary sources related to social studies concepts, but emphasize the reading processes associated with intermediate reading practices.

Table 2

Sample Reading Tasks, CCSS, and Literacy Progression

Reading Event	CCSS Literacy in History and Social Studies	Literacy Progression (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008)
Now that students know about trade, they **will read about** how trade and goods Georgia trades… (page from test prep workbook-read and answer questions)	**RH.6-8.2** - Determine the central ideas or information of a *primary or secondary source*; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.	At the crossroads – summarizing information from a secondary source
I gave them some simple steps to **reading different types of graphs**, and did some examples with the students	**RH.6-8.7** - Integrate *visual information* (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.	At the crossroads – comprehension of visual information from graphs. Several were graphs from company websites
The different groups **will study** the different companies from **sheets that I will supply** to them	**RH.6-8.2** - Determine the central ideas or information of a *primary or secondary source*; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.	At the crossroads – summarizing information from a primary and secondary sources as some sheets came from company websites.

*bold and italicized text added

The pre-service teachers noted fewer instances of writing, listening, or speaking in their unit materials and reflections. For example, Lois's unit on forms of government and types of economies in several European nations included short videos students watched while taking guided notes. Barbara's review unit on governments in the Middle East included instances where students reviewed topics together and compiled information in graphic organizers.

Overall, the literacy activities pre-service teachers integrated into their social studies instruction were brief, teacher-directed, and often removed if instruction needed to be adjusted. In response to our third research question, related to obstacles and affordances pre-service teachers encountered, we noted several instances where a pre-service teacher modified or omitted a planned literacy task. The most common reason for changing a task was time; some parts of the lesson took longer than anticipated, or a factor such as an altered class schedule encroached on instructional time.

Barbara's experiences provide an example of a planned literacy task that was altered in practice. Assigned to teach a review unit on forms of government in the Middle East, Barbara decided that she would instruct students to create their own graphic organizers. This intentional choice stemmed from her understanding that the content would not be new for students; she wanted them instead to review and synthesize content in a new way. In her rationale, she wrote that this approach would allow students to be "as creative as they want" and that creating a graphic organizer "not only gets them to think about the different government [s] and use technology; it also allows them to have a hands-on approach in their learning." However, once she began to teach the unit, she modified this to be an all-class activity. Also during that unit, her class had been combined unexpectedly with another class, so her instructional adaptations resulted in fewer literacy tasks.

All the same, we should restate that this was the pre-service teachers' first extended field experience, and their first experience designing and teaching a weeklong unit. Their literacy events were small in scale, yet each pre-service teacher had multiple instances of literacy throughout her unit. Although our focus for this paper is the way pre-service teachers integrated reading and texts, we did

note a range of literacy events when we coded them along the lines of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Facilitated Decision-Making

When university supervisors encouraged pre-service teachers to integrate more complex literacy tasks and supported them while they planned those tasks, they were willing to try a new structure or strategy. Furthermore, their reflections on these teaching experiences exemplified a more thoughtful understanding of the relationship between teaching, literacy and learning. While it is not surprising that pre-service teachers benefitted from supervisors' ideas, it is encouraging that these suggestions seemed to become realized in more complex instructional tasks for middle school students and greater efficacy for the pre-service teacher in terms of pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge.

These literacy events are noteworthy for three reasons. First, the pre-service teachers included instruction on literacy processes. They also involved middle school students in constructing their own understandings of content concepts. Last, these literacy events were a direct result of supervisors making connections between strategies modeled in university courses and the pre-service teacher's instructional goals.

Although the first two reasons are important, they are a direct result of the third—instructional suggestions by the university supervisor. To illustrate this point, we describe two examples. Lois, in her government and economy unit, commented to her supervisor that there was some difficult terminology. She and her supervisor discussed ways to make the vocabulary (e.g., *autocracy*, *democracy*) more accessible to students. The supervisor suggested that Lois show the students some root words that might help them organize these upper tier (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013) words. Lois taught the students, for example, that "crac/crat" means "rule or power" so that students could see a relationship between *autocracy* and *democracy*. This discrete framework took only a few minutes of instructional time but gave Lois and the students more knowledge of this terminology.

A second, more extended, example comes from Joy's processes related to a lesson in which she implemented a Jigsaw reading and discussion activity. Several weeks prior to teaching their units, pre-service teachers submit their lesson plans to their university supervisor. Supervisors then meet with individual teacher candidates to suggest revisions and adaptations. During one of these meetings, Joy expressed concern about the lack of variety in her instructional approaches and her struggle to differentiate learning for her heterogeneous group of students during her unit on economics. Joy's supervisor suggested that she incorporate a Jigsaw and discussed structures and strategies for doing so. Although Joy had been exposed to and participated in a Jigsaw structure in her language arts and social studies methods courses on campus, she did not make the connection about how it could be utilized in her current teaching context. Through conversation with her supervisor, she was able to apply the theoretical and practical benefits of the Jigsaw structure to her current teaching placement. She planned a Jigsaw reading activity during which different groups read different texts about state-level economics. Joy selected these texts for their content and varying levels of complexity. The following excerpt from Joy's lesson reflection demonstrates her understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of this structure. Phrases in bold text indicate the literacy practice and phrases in italics indicate Joy's rationale for those practices and her future decisions.

> In first period, all students were engaged and working well together reading and answering the questions. **By giving the students different readings**, *they could learn different facts about the companies and then discuss the differences they found in their readings.*
>
> For differentiation today I provided students with **different readings**. I **gave the stronger readers or the high level students more in depth articles**. I gave the readings with **bullets and pictures to the lower level readers** *to help them not be over whelmed and shut down.*

Joy's reflection indicates her understanding of benefits of the Jigsaw on two levels: comprehension of content concepts and the ability to differentiate literacy tasks. One of the learning objectives was to have students develop understanding of the major businesses in the state and their impact on the local economy. By having students become experts on one business and have exposure to several, Joy accomplished her learning objective. She did this in a way where "all students were engaged and working well together" in part because her differentiated readings "help[ed] them not be overwhelmed and shut down". Not only did Joy integrate literacy into unit on economics, her reflection indicates some understanding of why this was effective.

Additionally, when Joy's jigsaw activity is examined in terms of the CCSS and the literacy progression, it aligns with Standard 9: "Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic" (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). Joy included primary source documents about the various companies taken directly from each of their websites, and she also found secondary source documents in order to create the text set for each group of readers about the individual companies. Individual students read their texts and answered several questions independently. Then the group of students discussed the questions in terms of the different perspectives each text provided about the company.

Discussion

From the findings, we identified two key issues. The first is the potential benefit of structuring conversations between pre-service teachers and university supervisors when instructional units are being revised; this structure would support facilitated decision making as described above. Gebhard (1984) offered models for supervision that progress from more direction by the supervisor to more autonomy for the pre-service teacher; the models of Glickman and colleagues follow a similar progression.

Due to the fact that our pre-service teachers were in their first field experience with extended responsibilities, examination of our field notes indicated our tendency towards a directive approach (Gebhard, 1984); yet, as Joy's example suggested, a collaborative approach (Gebhard, 1984; Glickman et al., 2014) was more beneficial. Joy approached her university supervisor with a concern, and then they worked together to develop an instructional sequence based on a strategy suggested by her university supervisor. This structure prompted Joy to think more deeply about resources to use with students and the rationale behind her instructional choices. Perhaps, by engaging in collaborative conversations instead of directly providing strategies, we can promote reflective practice and develop pre-service teachers' capacity to make independent instructional decisions as they progress through this early field experience. The challenge with this approach, however, is structuring conversations that foster collaboration instead of simply providing direction. The supervisory continuum for a collaborative model (Glickman et al., 2014) provides guidance for us to move toward a more collaborative approach.

The second issue is the importance of early field experiences. During this semester, pre-service teachers focus specifically on language arts and social studies in their methods courses and in the related field experience. This deliberate alignment of methods courses with the associated practicum is structured to support the pre-service teachers' developing content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) in the context of middle school curriculum that is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant (NMSA, 2010). While a stage theory model (Watzke, 2003) indicated that pre-service teachers in an early field experience are concerned primarily with topics related to classroom management and whether students like them, our program scaffolds pre-service teachers to focus also on instructional tasks and impact on student learning, associated with stages two and three. To support pre-service teachers to focus also on tasks and impact on learning, the supervisor is critical in helping the pre-service teacher connect theory and practice. A collaborative model of supervision allows the supervisor and pre-service teacher to make explicit, ongoing connections between coursework and field experiences so that the pre-service teacher can apply specific approaches in middle grades classrooms, and then adapt and reflect on instruction through an ongoing process. Such a process supported the development of each pre-service teacher's pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) in this study as each selected specific literacy tasks, taught them, and then reflected on their teaching. Through a collaborative approach, we as supervisors can be more strategic and deliberate in the ways that we provide ideas, considerations, resources, and supports for our pre-service teachers.

The value of this study relates to its context in an early field experience. At this time, pre-service teachers are just beginning to plan and implement instruction. Although they learn about disciplinary literacy in their concurrent methods courses, they benefit at this stage from detailed, ongoing collaboration with the university supervisor. The supervisor, knowledgeable about both disciplinary literacy in social studies and each pre-service teacher's specific teaching context, is able to provide supports, suggestions, and alternatives for each pre-service teacher. In further research, we plan to extend this study to focus more directly on our role as supervisors with pre-service teachers implementing literacy in early field experiences.

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