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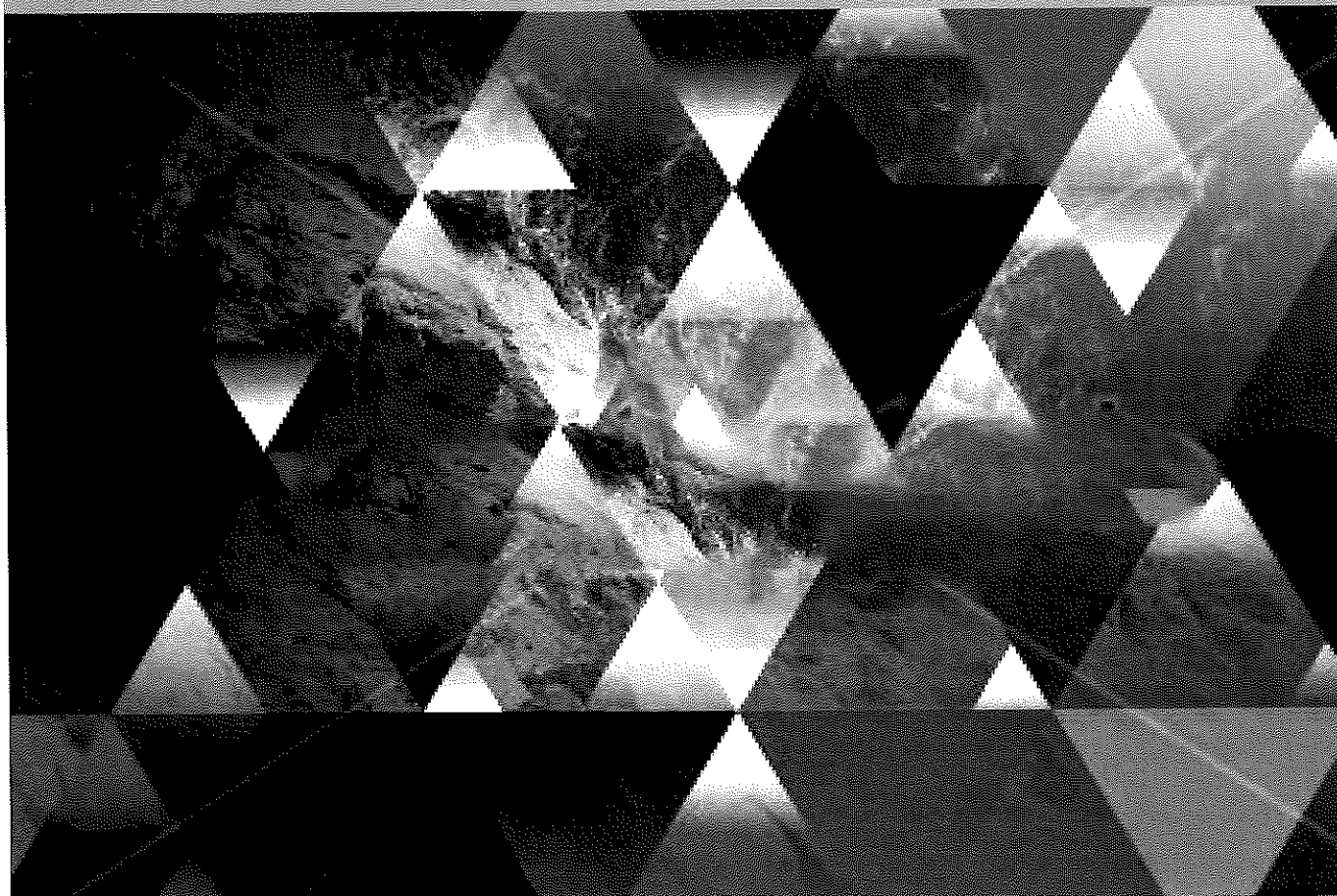
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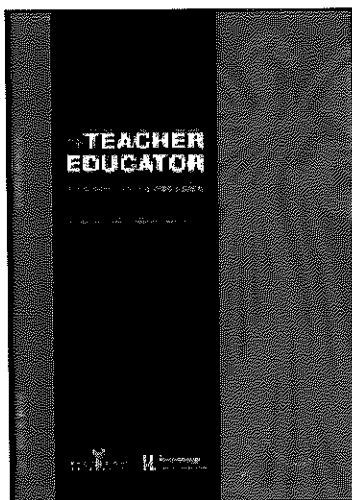
# BUILDING MENTORING CAPACITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION

A GUIDE TO CLINICALLY-BASED PRACTICE

JOHN E. HENNING • DIANNE GUT • PAMELA BEAM



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### Designing and Implementing a Mentoring Program to Support Clinically-Based Teacher Education

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## PROMISING PRACTICE

### DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A MENTORING PROGRAM TO SUPPORT CLINICALLY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

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*This article describes one teacher preparation program's approach to designing and implementing a mentoring program to support clinically-based teacher education. The design for the program is based on an interview study that compared the mentoring experiences of 18 teachers across three different contexts: student teaching, early field experiences, and entry year teaching. The findings were used to extend field experiences, to develop a clinical curriculum that clearly articulated university expectations, and to create a series of three mentoring workshops. In the description of the mentoring workshops, we show how we developed a curriculum for professional development of mentor teachers that includes a clear articulation of teacher candidate activities, co-teaching approaches, and mentoring strategies needed at different levels of teacher candidate development.*

The National Research Council identified clinical experiences as one of the three “aspects of teacher preparation that are likely to have the highest potential for effects on outcomes for students” (2010, p. 180). The increased importance given to learning through practice has resulted in a worldwide expansion of school-based experiences during preservice teacher education (Maandag, Deinum, Hofman, & Buitink, 2007; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010; Ronfeldt & Reiningger, 2012; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In the United States, the most notable of several recent calls to place more emphasis on clinical experience, was the Blue Ribbon Panel Report, NCATE’s (2010) recent call for clinically-based teacher preparation.

Clinically-based teacher education places practice at the center of teacher preparation, thus increasing the importance of mentoring. The term “mentor” teacher is intended to broadly encompass a continuum of teachers who serve as the mentors, including teachers who mentor beginning teacher candidates during early field experiences, teacher candidates engaged in their professional internship (student teaching), and teachers who mentor new teachers in their initial years of teaching. Mentor teachers have the responsibility of introducing preservice and newly inducted teachers to the practical and intellectual work of teaching by providing sustained, critical feedback to field experience students (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Zeichner, 1996). Various studies have suggested that a carefully designed mentoring program can increase the effectiveness of mentors by:

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first, supporting communication between university faculty and public school teachers; second, helping mentor teachers develop the skills to work with preservice teachers; and third, helping mentor teachers in other aspects of their everyday practice; for example, in collaborative coaching with their peers (Dever, Hager, & Klein, 2003; Evertson & Smithey, 2000).

The purpose of this article is to describe one teacher preparation program's approach to designing and implementing a mentoring program to support clinically-based teacher education. The design for the program is based on an interview study that compared the mentoring experiences of 18 teachers across three different contexts: student teaching, early field experiences, and entry year teaching. The findings were used to extend field experiences, to develop a clinical curriculum that clearly articulated university expectations, and to create a series of three mentoring workshops. In the description of the mentoring workshops, we show how we developed a curriculum for professional development of mentor teachers that includes a clear articulation of teacher candidate activities, co-teaching approaches, and mentoring strategies needed at different levels of teacher candidate development.

### Literature Review

Little has been written on the role of mentoring during early field experiences, and few comparisons have been made between differences in mentoring at the student teaching and entry year levels. Instead, the emphasis in the research literature has been on investigating a wide variety of mentoring approaches independently of their context, such as attributing a mentor's use of strategies to a style preference (Hawkey, 1997; Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2008). Hennissen and colleagues' (2008) extensive review of the literature found that mentoring styles can vary along two continuums, from active to reactive and directive to nondirective. Mentors with an active style are more assertive about introducing discussion topics than reactive mentors, and directive mentors provide more guidance and fewer choices for than nondirective mentors.

The mentor's choice of strategies also depends on whether the relationship with the mentee is more collegial or personal (Kram, 1983; Martin, 1994). Mentors comfortable with a collegial relationship are direct, formal, and informative when giving feedback: the primary means of communication may be through "showing" and "telling" (Hawkey, 1997; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). In contrast, a personal relationship is often characterized by an open dialogue that enables the mentee to ask questions more assertively and to express their concerns more directly. Kram (1983) described mentoring relationships as evolving through three stages: formal, cordial, and friendship. As mentors and mentees move through the three stages, the mentee's increasing proficiency in the classroom coupled with their growing trust in each other gradually leads to an increasingly friendly relationship, characterized by a strong sense of confidence and autonomy in the mentee (Martin, 1994).

### *Mentoring Strategies Across Contexts*

The lack of previous literature precludes a discussion of the influence of context on mentoring. Therefore, we will direct our remarks to brief characterizations of the three clinical settings in this study. Each offers different opportunities for learning to teach and

occurs at a different time in the development of a teacher. The authors were interested in exploring potential differences in the mentors' expectations for their mentees' development as a teacher across clinical settings. By examining these distinctions among mentor expectations, we intend to provide a basis for developing mentoring strategies at different places of teacher development.

#### *Early Field Experiences*

During early field experiences, teacher candidates spend a limited number of hours in the school setting, engaging in classroom interactions of lesser complexity, such as observing the teacher, assisting individual students, leading small groups, or teaching single lessons (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995; Ronfeldt & Reinger, 2012; Seiforth & Samuel, 1979). Early field experiences offer several advantages, including a more gradual socialization to the profession that translates into increased retention, better decision making, a greater willingness to take risks, and better use of technology (Fleener, 1999; Reinhartz & Stetson, 1999; Schwille & Dembele, 2007). However, early field experiences have also been characterized as brief, fragmented, disconnected, and lacking in coherence (Applegate & Lashley, 1982; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Lashley & Applegate, 1985; Smith, 1992).

#### *Student Teaching*

Because student teachers are engaged for longer, more sustained periods with their mentor, establishing a relationship is key to effective mentoring (Moffett & Zhou, 2009; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008). This can be challenging when placements are determined by convenience factors, such as the availability of the teacher and the proximity of the school (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008). Typically, student teachers must develop a new relationship based on a complex interaction of two personalities, their respective psychosocial development, and their background in education (Fletcher, 1998; Turner, 1993; Wildman, Magliero, Niles, & Niles, 1992). Successful experiences depend on using interpersonal skills to achieve a high level of trust (Brooks, 1996; Pitton, 2006; Stanulis & Russell, 2000). Mentees report that negative experiences can be attributed to poor mentor relationships, a lack of feedback and encouragement, and a general sense of inhibition when making teaching decisions (Rhoads, Radu, & Weber, 2011).

#### *Entry Year Teaching*

The level and quality of mentoring during the entry year of teaching can improve the retention rate of entry year teachers, who face multiple challenges (Joiner & Edwards, 2008). In addition to their lack of experience, entry year teachers also struggle with a new school culture, curriculum, policies, procedures, and an administration with which they are unfamiliar. Entry year teachers are often hired in lower achieving schools and classrooms with a high proportion of students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and families with low socioeconomic status (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). The stress of these challenges can be alleviated by providing professional development that improves entry year teachers' abilities to reflect on and solve problems, reduces their feelings of isolation from other teachers, and fosters positive attitudes toward their first year of teaching (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; McIntyre & Hagger, 1996).

## Methods

The design for our program was based on an interview study that examined differences in mentoring at various points in teacher education. Our interest in the study was in discovering differences in mentor teachers' approach to mentoring across different contexts. We believed that examining these differences would yield helpful information for providing support to mentor teachers. Accordingly, the authors interviewed 18 teachers with experience across three contexts of mentoring: early field experiences, student teaching, and entry year teaching. The research question for this study was: Do mentor teachers report differences in their mentoring interactions with teacher candidates based on differences in the clinical setting?

### *Participants*

The 18 participants in this study were selected from multiple school districts from both urban ( $n = 6$ ) and rural settings ( $n = 12$ ), were representative of teachers from kindergarten through secondary school, and had at least three years teaching experience. Seven participants taught at the elementary level, eight in the middle grades (4th–8th), two at the high school level, and one was a multi-age special education teacher. Each of the participants had multiple experiences with mentoring student teachers, teacher candidates in early field experiences, and entry year teachers.

### *Interview and Data Collection Procedures*

The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of 107 open-ended questions on their mentees' teacher development, their relationships with mentees, and their mentoring strategies. The interviews most often occurred at the participants' school over a two-hour period. The interviews were conducted by five teacher education faculty members.

### *Data Analysis*

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and this multicase study was analyzed using a grounded theory approach. Two of the researchers used an open-coding approach to independently code the first transcript (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). They agreed on 63 (68%) of the 93 codes produced. The remaining codes were reconciled through discussion before analyzing the other 17 interview transcripts. The individual codes were grouped through axial coding into 11 sub-themes and four themes: Teacher Development, Context for Mentoring, Mentoring Relationship, and Mentoring Approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, see Table 1).

A member check was conducted by convening seven of the original interview participants into two focus groups of three and four participants. The coding scheme was shared with both groups, and the participants were asked to respond on their validity. Typical responses included "I felt your findings were right in my opinion" and "Right on. That's just the way it works." The participants' stated that the coding reflected their understanding of mentoring across contexts and demonstrated their support of the themes by providing additional examples (Gut, Beam, Henning, Cochran, & Knight, 2014).



TABLE 1 Summary of Coding Categories

<p><b>I. Teacher Development Theme</b></p> <p>Personal Characteristics Sub-theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior Experience</li> <li>Misconceptions</li> <li>Commitment</li> <li>Non-traditional</li> <li>Openness to Mentoring</li> <li>Concerns Confidence</li> <li>Professional Behavior</li> <li>Flexibility</li> <li>Initiative</li> </ul> <p>Content Knowledge Sub-theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content Knowledge</li> <li>Differentiation/Diversity</li> </ul> <p>Pedagogy Sub-theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Behavior Management</li> <li>Connection with Students</li> <li>Data Collection</li> <li>Candidate Development</li> <li>Lesson Planning</li> <li>Preparation</li> <li>Time Management</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Context for Mentoring Theme</b></p> <p><b>Relationship Influences Sub-theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Interaction Time</b></li> <li><b>Mentor/Mentee Match</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Mentor Expectations Sub-theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Expectations for the Specific Clinical Setting</b></li> <li>Students as a Priority</li> <li>Standards-based Instruction</li> <li>Candidate Progress</li> </ul> <p><b>School Environment Sub-theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>School/teaching procedures</b></li> <li><b>School politics/policies</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>III. Mentoring Relationship Theme</b></p> <p><b>Time Sub-theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Collaboration</b></li> <li><b>Relationship Building</b></li> </ul> <p>Prior Mentoring Experience Sub-theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Experiences</li> <li>Negative Experiences</li> </ul> <p><b>IV. Mentoring Approach Theme Confidence</b></p> <p><b>Sub-theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Risk Taking</b></li> <li><b>Experience</b></li> </ul> <p><b>V. Mentoring Approach Theme Mentor's Perceived Role Sub-theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Guide</b></li> <li><b>Support</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Specific Mentoring Strategies Sub-theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Co-teaching</b></li> <li><b>Guiding</b></li> <li><b>Modeling</b></li> <li><b>Providing resources</b></li> </ul>
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Bolded categories showed differences in mentor's expectations based on the clinical setting.

### Building Mentoring Capacity

Three key findings from the interview study guided our efforts to build mentoring capacity in our teacher preparation program. First, limited interaction time during early field experiences and entry year teaching constrained opportunities for mentoring. Second, mentors had the least understanding of university expectations during early field experiences. Third, mentor teachers perceived their roles to differ across early field experiences, the professional internship, and entry year teaching. These findings led to three initiatives in our teacher preparation program: (a) the extension of clinical experiences, (b) the

development of a clinical curriculum, and (c) the creation of three mentoring workshops to address differences in role expectations. In the following sections, the authors describe these initiatives and the study findings on which they are based.

### *Extending Clinical Experiences*

The first key finding from the interview study of mentor teachers indicated there were limited opportunities for mentors and mentees to interact. To address this problem, we extended our early field experiences, an initiative that aligned well with our goal of moving to clinically-based teacher education. The abbreviated nature of early field experiences made it difficult for mentor teachers to find time to converse with teacher candidates, thus limiting the development of their relationship.

I don't have a lot of time when they come into a classroom to chit-chat and get to know them or me, but I'll always invite them if you have questions you can write them down and leave them on my desk. I'll be glad to take care of those questions or answering them the next time we meet. But I'm not going to stop my class and have a conversation, you know, that would have to happen outside of class. (4th Grade Teacher, Urban; Gut et al., 2014)

Our clinical experiences were extended by starting multiple, small initiatives. Each of these initiatives featured a yearlong clinical experience consisting of coursework and field experience during the first semester and full time professional internship during the second semester. Starting small afforded us opportunities to address problems when they were more manageable, generate momentum by creating small successes that built to larger ones, and gradually expose faculty to new approaches to teacher education. Eventually, these initiatives have expanded into sustainable and permanent program features.

At the *graduate* level our first pilot project began with the *SciMath Teaching Fellows* program in fall 2010 and the *Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows* program, which began after receiving external funding in the fall of 2012. Both were 15-month graduate programs that required Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) candidates for initial licensure to spend a year with a mentor teacher in his/her classroom. During fall semester, teacher candidates spent three full days in the classroom, and in the spring semester, teacher candidates completed their professional internship in the same classroom. Coursework was completed during the summer, fall, and following summer semester. These programs led to the creation of the *Clinical Master's* program, which utilized the same design features to serve master's students from English Language Arts Education and Social Studies Education at the middle and secondary levels.

A similar initiative was begun at the *undergraduate* level during fall semester 2011 and expanded from 15 to 50 teacher candidates over a three-year period. In this program, undergraduates complete a yearlong experience by spending 10–15 hours per week in a school setting during the fall semester and completing their professional internship in the same school during the spring semester. The program began by soliciting volunteers; however, a yearlong experience or its equivalent was required of all teacher candidates in 2014–15.

These initiatives were implemented in a teacher preparation program that serves approximately 1100 undergraduate students and 50 graduate students enrolled in four teacher preparation programs: Early Childhood Education (age 0–8 including grades 1 and 2), Middle Childhood Education (grades 4–9), Special Education, and Adolescent-

to-Young Adult (AYA) (grades 7–12 and ages 12–21), and Multiage programs. During the junior year, the Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, and Special Education programs partner with local schools to create a yearlong experience that includes two full days a week in schools for Early Childhood majors, 240 hours per year for Special Education majors, 160 hours per year for Middle Childhood majors, and 80 hours in schools for Adolescent-to-Young Adult majors. AYA and Middle Childhood majors can engage in additional clinical experiences through their methods courses or by choosing to participate in the Creating Active and Reflective Educators (CARE) program. The latter offers 120 hours in schools during the sophomore year and 160 hours during the junior year.

Extending the clinical experiences led to immediate changes in the experience of professional interns. Teacher interviews indicated they are more committed, form deeper relationships with children, attempt more complex teaching strategies, and have a bigger impact on student learning (Henning, Sickel, Taylor, & Ahmadhi, 2014). Mentor teachers were generally pleased, but expressed concern should there be a poor match between mentor and mentee or if the professional intern did not perform well. In response, we began placing teacher candidates earlier to allow time for the mentor and mentee to meet each other before beginning the clinical experience. Such meetings offer an opportunity to form a more harmonious relationship that ultimately leads to better mentoring.

#### *Developing the Clinical Curriculum*

The second key finding from the interview study indicated that mentor teachers were not clear about the expectations for teacher candidates, especially during early field experiences and to a lesser degree during entry year teaching. The need for clarifying expectations was further heightened by the pilot projects that extended the time teacher candidates spent in the field. In addition, there have been several recent calls by leaders in the field to provide more explicit, systematic instruction in the core practices of teaching (Ball & Forzani, 2009, 2011; Grossman et al., 2009).

All three of these influences served as a catalyst for creating the Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experiences. The Developmental Curriculum describes a sequence of clinical experiences that progress from simpler to more complex teaching skills, from working with fewer to larger numbers of students, and from requiring less to more planning and decision making. (For a more thorough explanation, see Henning, Erb, Randles, Fults, & Webb, in press). This description of clinical experiences can serve as the foundation for a clinically-based curriculum and as a guide for moving teacher preparation programs in that direction.

The Developmental Curriculum was developed by representatives from five teacher preparation programs across the state, all of whom were leaders interested in moving their respective institutions to clinically-based teacher education. The group established the following four design principles for the clinical curriculum: standards-based, organized in a developmental sequence, simple and easily communicable, and stated in language universally familiar to practitioners. After creating the Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experience, the representatives shared it with their faculty, revised it, and then presented it at state and national conferences (Henning, Erb, Webb, Fults, & Randles, 2012, 2013). Now in its third year of implementation, the document has been well received by stakeholders, and to date, the final version proved flexible enough to be applied to a wide variety of contexts (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2** Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experiences in Teacher Education

Standards	Exploring	Exploring/Engaging	Engaging	Engaging/Emerging	Emerging
Standard 1 Students	Talk with every student Learn names Help students make up work Sit near student with behavioral needs Deliver predetermined behavioral support plan	Collect data on individual student behavior Collect data on learning preferences Examine and compare student work for individual differences Provide environment for small groups	Design a developmentally appropriate instruction Develop motivational strategies Design and deliver differentiated instruction for an individual student	Plan adaptations for a unit of instruction Adapt lesson for a few students Create individualized materials Provide individualized feedback Create alternative assessments Evaluate some students individually	Differentiate instruction according to all students' needs Develop plan for building relationships during the first week of school Create culturally relevant lesson and unit plans
Standard 2 Content Knowledge	Find information to answer student questions Provide students w/ assistance in finding information Answer individual questions Assist individual students with technology Assist with finding resources	Develop and use real life examples Become familiar with curriculum and instructional plan for the class Develop questions that lead students from their previous knowledge to new content	Use content standards Engage students in thinking about the content at the application level of Bloom's taxonomy Use content specific instructional strategies	Use a variety of content sources Use Ohio content standards to develop unit plans Engage students in thinking about the content at the analysis and synthesis levels of Bloom's taxonomy	Students use a variety of sources Design activities that encourage students to integrate information from multiple content sources Engage students in thinking at all levels of Bloom's taxonomy

(Continued)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Standards	Exploring	Exploring/Engaging	Engaging	Engaging/Emerging	Emerging
Standard 3 Assessment	<p>Check or grade papers with a key</p> <p>Record grades</p> <p>Record and comment on student writing</p> <p>Develop a student interview or survey</p> <p>Make objective observations</p> <p>Record participation patterns</p>	<p>Develop objective test questions</p> <p>Develop essay questions</p> <p>Create a checklist</p> <p>Grade essays</p> <p>Develop a rubric</p> <p>Know school grading policies</p>	<p>Design, implement, &amp; evaluate a formative assessment consistent with Ohio standards</p> <p>Develop a preassessment</p> <p>Co-assess student work with the mentor teacher</p>	<p>Develop unit instructional goals</p> <p>Use pre- and postassessments</p> <p>Design new strategies based on formative assessment data</p> <p>Design, collect, and analyze summative assessment data</p>	<p>Use summative assessment data to adjust unit teaching strategies</p> <p>Develop, implement, and evaluate multiple formative assessments</p> <p>Develop a nine weeks grading plan</p>
Standard 4 Instruction	<p>Write notes on chalkboard or whiteboard</p> <p>Operate technology</p> <p>Create materials with teacher</p> <p>Model appropriate language &amp; share a personal interest or skill</p> <p>Teach a routine part of lesson to whole group</p>	<p>Create new learning center</p> <p>Supervise students during group times</p> <p>Review assignments w/small groups</p> <p>Facilitate small group discussions</p> <p>Create and implement a lesson for a small group</p>	<p>Create and implement a single lesson plan</p> <p>Assume leadership of the class for short periods of time</p> <p>Create and lead classroom activities</p>	<p>Co-plan unit instruction with mentor teacher</p> <p>Plan multiple lessons based on formative assessment data</p> <p>Integrate technology into instruction</p> <p>Co-teach with mentor teacher</p>	<p>Design new strategies based on formative summative assessment</p> <p>Design unit with multiple instructional strategies (e.g. discussion, inquiry, project-based learning)</p>

(Continued)

**TABLE 2** (Continued)

Standards	Exploring	Exploring/Engaging	Engaging	Engaging/Emerging	Emerging
Standard 5 Learning Environment	Take attendance/stuff mailboxes Collect lunch count Organize or file Pass out papers or assignments Create/Construct a bulletin board	Become familiar with emergency procedures Know school discipline policies Give directions and explain procedures Explain the reason for rule or policy	Create supporting materials Use appropriate classroom management (e.g., proximity control) Explain a new classroom routine	Organize effective grouping arrangements Create a variety of scaffolds to support independent learning Plan and execute effective classroom transitions Interact with professional staff Attend data assessment meetings Participate in parent teacher conferences Attend athletic events/extracurricular activities	Design a classroom management plan Develop a plan for establishing routines/classroom procedures Develop proactive and reactive classroom management plans Communicate with parents and administrators about student performance Conduct home visits Attend community events
Standard 6 Communications	Speak clearly & project voice Give directions to individual students Give concise communications to students Take lunch count	Attend faculty meetings Attend in-service meetings Observe parent/teacher conferences Collaborate with mentor teacher	Give clear instructions both verbal and written Develop materials to support student learning at home Visit local community agencies	Reflect on multiple lessons Adjust teaching strategies based on an analysis of data Provide a rationale for new strategies Analyze teaching video	Develop resumes and portfolios in preparation for professional life Develop a teaching philosophy Complete Teacher Performance Assessment
Standard 7 Professional Development	Model appropriate language & behavior Dress professionally Be punctual Call in absence Be respectful of mentor and colleagues	Write reflective journal entries Reflect on instructions with students Accurately and objectively describe student performance	Reflect on individual lessons Objectively describe student behavior Develop new strategies based on reflection		

The vertical axis of the “Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experiences” lists The State Standards for the Teaching Profession, and the horizontal axis describes three developmental levels: Exploring, Engaging, and Emerging. The Exploring level is the least complex, consisting of introductory experiences, such as learning names, recording grades, and taking the lunch count. The Engaging level is located at the midpoint of the horizontal axis and is associated with activities related to teaching a single lesson plan, such as creating a formative assessment tool, creating scaffolds to support learning, and reflecting on an individual lesson. The Emerging level describes activities associated with designing and implementing teaching units, such as developing an evaluation plan, designing activities that encourage students to integrate information from multiple sources, and designing and implementing multiple formative assessment strategies for the purpose of adjusting instruction.

### *Mentoring Workshops*

The third key finding from the interview study indicated that mentor teachers had different role expectations across early field experiences, student teaching, and entry year teaching. Accordingly, three mentoring workshops were developed as part of a sustained effort to prepare mentor teachers to address different levels of teacher and teacher candidate development. Beginning in the winter of 2010, several small grants were used to fund a series of workshops designed to provide professional development for mentor teachers. The first focused on mentoring during early field experiences at the Exploring and Engaging levels of the Developmental Curriculum. The second was developed to address mentoring student teachers and entry year teachers at the Emerging level of the Developmental Curriculum. The third was developed during the spring of 2012 to foster co-teaching across all three levels of teacher candidate development in the Developmental Curriculum.

The design of each workshop offered teachers the opportunity for participation and professional development. Gathering teachers and professors together for professional development sessions maximizes the mutual exposure to the expertise of partners within teacher education programs, provides time for communication and developing shared understandings, and creates an opportunity to brainstorm further improvements to the program. From such conversations, it was determined that teachers must see the mentoring strategies as practicable and doable, and the professors must see the curriculum for mentoring as grounded in research, theory, and best practice. By eliciting examples from a wide variety of constituents concerning their current practices, we were able to develop mentoring strategies, clearly articulate them, and communicate them through websites, written materials, workshops, and online courses.

The curriculum of the workshops consisted of mentoring strategies based on the findings of the interview study and developed in alignment with the three levels of the Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experiences. Each set of strategies included the types of activities mentees should be doing with P-12 students and the related coaching, co-teaching, and assessment strategies that mentors can use at each level: Exploring, Engaging, and Emerging. Further, Emerging was divided into two levels—one for the Professional Internship and one for the Entry Year.

#### *Exploring*

The interview study findings indicated that mentors had the least understanding of university expectations at the Exploring and Engaging levels of the Developmental

Curriculum and subsequently expressed less confidence in their mentoring compared to the Emerging and Entry Year levels. The lack of time to interact with teacher candidates, coupled with a lack of clearly articulated university expectations, caused mentor teachers to adopt very simple, low level goals, such as encouraging professionalism and helping mentees confirm education as a career choice. In the absence of explicit expectations, teacher candidate development varied considerably across settings. When the teacher candidate was required to teach a lesson, mentors would provide feedback, usually verbally and very directive in nature. Mentors answered questions when asked, but teacher candidates were hindered by their inability to conceptualize meaningful questions.

The creation of the Developmental Curriculum provided a much sounder and more ambitious basis for mentoring by clearly defining a set of teacher candidate activities in the classroom that are fairly simple, low risk, and limited to individuals or small groups of students. Strategies were developed for involving teacher candidates at the Exploring and Engaging levels to create the mentoring workshop for early field experiences. Mentors are shown how to engage teacher candidates in the classroom by assigning them to one-on-one tutoring, working with small groups of students, or assisting with whole class instruction. Activities include helping individual students with make up work, sitting near a student with behavioral issues, assisting individual students with technology, collecting the lunch count, and providing directions to individuals or the whole class.

The most appropriate co-teaching strategies at the Exploring level recognize that the mentor teacher still assumes the largest share of the responsibility for instruction. Thus, the mentor teacher retains the lead role while the teacher candidate observes or assists individual or small groups of students while using strategies such as One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist; and Station Teaching. During One Teach, One Observe the teacher candidate makes observations of student or teacher behaviors or performance for the purpose of collecting data to answer a particular question, thus providing the mentor with information he/she would not have otherwise had. During One Teach, One Assist, the teacher candidate walks around the room, providing assistance to individual or small groups of students. When engaged with Station Teaching, the teacher candidate works with a small group of students as they complete a specified task. Station Teaching is used most often in elementary settings, and the presence of a teacher candidate can often assist in its smooth functioning.

Professional development for mentoring at the Exploring level should focus on ways teachers can engage teacher candidates with P-12 students. At this early stage, mentor teachers should not hesitate to use coaching strategies that are more directive, as teacher candidates will need strong guidance. To facilitate the assessment of teacher candidate performance, mentor teachers should have a repertoire of quick, easy to administer, formative, and summative evaluation tools that can be used to provide feedback when faced with the time constraints that are a hallmark of the early field experiences. Mentor observations should focus on candidates' level of engagement in the classroom, and observation of teacher candidate dispositions should focus on fundamental attitudes and behaviors that are critical for professional success, such as attendance, punctuality, responsibility, initiative, appropriate professional dress, and responsiveness to constructive feedback.

### *Engaging*

Similarly, the Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experiences clarified expectations at the Engaging level. At this level, mentors should engage teacher candidates in activities related to developing and teaching a whole class lesson. The primary goal of



the mentor teacher should be to involve teacher candidates as fully as possible, foster their continued development, and provide opportunities to practice complex teaching behaviors. Examples include creating and leading classroom activities, delivering single lesson plans, and designing and executing formative assessments. Teacher candidates might also explain a new classroom routine, design and deliver differentiated instruction, and assume leadership of the class for short periods of time.

During co-teaching at the Engaging level, the mentor teacher is still taking the lead. Two co-teaching strategies that enable the teacher candidate to work with a subset of the class are Alternative Teaching and Parallel Teaching. When engaged in Alternative Teaching, the teacher candidate manages a single group within the class. Examples of alternative teaching include reviewing a quiz or test with students who needed extra assistance, re-teaching the previous day's lesson for a group of students who were absent, providing remediation with the previous day's homework or lesson for a group of students who struggled, or pre-teaching the day's lesson to a group of students. During Parallel Teaching, the teacher candidate is responsible for teaching half of the class. This arrangement provides an opportunity to offer more attention and more feedback to individual students.

As part of their professional development at the Engaging level, mentor teachers should learn how to design a sequence of experiences for their teacher candidates by applying the Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experiences to their specific setting. When coaching teacher candidates or giving feedback at the Engaging level, mentor teachers should be encouraged to continue providing strong direction. Assessment at this level should focus on teacher candidates' set of emerging skills and a somewhat more advanced set of dispositions. Examples include effective and appropriate communication, commitment to reflection, their investment in relationship building, and their willingness to collaborate with other professionals.

#### *Emerging—Student Teaching*

The study findings indicated that mentors conversed with their student teachers throughout the day, providing them with frequent and ongoing feedback. As a result, mentors and mentees enjoyed much deeper relationships during student teaching than early field experiences. Consequently, mentors made a greater commitment to mentoring their student teachers.

We're always talking. "Did you see this over here? This totally didn't work. What about you? You know. . . . Did you see that? Did you catch that?" So we have a lot of just that spur of the moment, whatever is going on talk. And then, in between classes we can kind of sit down and say, okay, these guys are coming in, this is what I'm planning on doing. So you know you get the time during the lesson, which is probably the most valuable. Because that spur of the minute questions when you can talk and interact are the most valuable stuff because it just comes up and you're like, "how are we gonna deal with this?" And if you have the good ones, you know, we always talk after school. There's about a good 15 minutes you can just kind of sit and kind of debrief and decompress afterwards. (Middle School Physical Education, Rural; Gut et al., 2014)

Further, mentor teachers were more familiar with the university's expectations for the student teaching experience than entry year teaching or early field experiences. The strategies for mentoring during student teaching varied, but generally included modeling,

questioning, and directed reflection. Mentors became more directive when handling problems that required immediate attention, such as inappropriate professional dress, subject matter errors, or potentially hazardous situations.

At the Emerging level, teacher candidates will have an opportunity for more sustained engagement with students. Examples of teacher candidate activities at the Emerging level include creating culturally relevant lesson plans and units; designing a unit with multiple instructional strategies; and using summative assessment data to plan new instruction. Mentor teachers should provide teacher candidates with opportunities to teach several lessons in one class during consecutive days or an entire unit of instruction in several different classes.

When co-teaching at the Emerging level, the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate reverse roles. The teacher candidate should now be leading during One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist; and Team Teaching. The mentor teacher will make observations, provide individual assistance, and lead small groups. In addition, all of the other co-teaching strategies are available and can be employed to best serve the needs of the lesson and the students. The most complex of these is Team Teaching. Implementation of this co-teaching strategy depends on whether the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate have developed enough rapport and familiarity with each other to effectively co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess during an entire unit. Doing that well requires the mentor and teacher candidate have developed a good relationship and have a good understanding of each other's teaching approaches.

At the Emerging level, teacher candidates are developing a distinctive style and approach to teaching, so coaching and feedback is often less directive. Mentors should ask questions that encourage the teacher candidates to both reflect on and draw conclusions from their thought processes. Performance assessment should focus on the complex integration of multiple skills and higher-level dispositions, and there should be an expectation for higher-level dispositions. Examples include an appreciation that knowledge includes multiple perspectives, a recognition of students' fundamental need to develop a sense of self-worth, the belief that all children can learn, a commitment to differentiating instruction, and a willingness to examine personal biases and prejudices.

#### *Emerging—Entry Year*

Interaction time and expectations were also a challenge at the entry year level of mentoring. Because mentors and entry year teachers do not share a classroom, they spend less time together than mentors and student teachers. As a result, mentors rarely modeled their teaching or observed the entry year teacher unless it was a requirement of the prescribed mentoring program or requested by the entry year teacher. Furthermore, the entry year teachers in the study did not have the opportunity to co-teach with their mentor teachers.

Often, mentors were not as familiar with the expectations for entry year teachers as student teachers, and subsequently, reported less confidence in their mentoring. As a result, they tended to let entry year teacher take the initiative in regards to requesting a meeting or introducing topics for conversation. Typically, they focused on listening, offering support, and making suggestions; taking care not to interfere with the entry year teacher's plans. When advising mentees, mentors generally took a non-directive, tentative approach except when responding to specific questions regarding school policies and procedures.

I think for the entry year, in my two experiences, it was more encouragement and not giving up, and helping them in the directions they needed help. I'm not as forward with an entry year teacher as I may be with the professional intern. With [entry year teachers], I step back and even though I'd like to say, well, here's what I think, you know. I still may question the same thing . . . would you do something differently next time? Or what did you notice about so-and-so (student)? How do you know they were able to grasp the concept? What did they do that led you to believe it was successful or mastery? (4th grade, Urban; Gut et al., 2014)

Mentors perceived their role as helping first year teachers to manage the myriad responsibilities associated with teaching and yearlong curricular planning, to establish relationships with other professionals, and to become familiar with the school policies, practices, and procedures. In addition, mentors often let induction year teachers take the initiative with regard to scheduling meetings or introducing topics for conversation, hesitated to provide feedback that could be perceived as evaluative, and subsequently limited their feedback to providing emotional support and making noncritical observations. These behaviors can be problematic if the entry year teacher is struggling but unwilling or afraid to bring attention to him/herself. Consequently, interaction time between the mentor teacher and the entry year teacher can be severely limited.

Therefore, professional development for entry year teachers should incorporate interaction time into their mentoring programs and show mentor teachers how they can create time for interacting with the entry year teacher. Further, professional development should provide strategies for establishing a collegial, long-term relationship with new teachers and the opportunity to practice having "difficult" or challenging conversations with entry year teachers in a non-threatening way.

Since mentor teachers are often unclear about expectations for mentoring entry year teachers, professional development should also focus on strategies to support entry year teachers with both classroom-related and school-wide issues. At the Emerging level during the entry year, new teachers will still be learning about classroom-related issues, such as facilitating student motivation and classroom management strategies. Examples include designing a multi-unit curriculum, creating a classroom management plan, and developing a system for calculating and recording grades. Simultaneously, they should be exposed to school-wide issues related to the school's politics, policies, and initiatives. Examples would include keeping records for the main office, becoming familiar with online grading systems, learning the school's approach to discipline, and increasing student achievement.

### **Discussion**

To maximize the learning that occurs in the clinical settings, teacher preparation programs need to support teachers by providing a professional development program that fully recognizes the vitally important role of mentoring. This is especially true for teacher preparation programs moving to clinically-based teacher education. The purpose of this article was to describe one teacher preparation program's approach to designing and implementing a mentoring program to support clinically-based teacher education. The case study presented in this article was intended to serve as a guide for other teacher preparation programs interested in enhancing their support for mentor teachers.

To further enhance the design of such programs, additional research is needed. For example, we are currently engaged in three waves of research on mentoring. The first wave is a series of additional interview studies that examine mentoring specific to the individual

standards of the teaching profession, such as classroom management and assessment. As the implementation of extended clinical experiences and professional development in mentoring stabilizes, conceptually rich studies become more feasible. A second wave of studies takes advantage of the implementation of extended clinical experiences by examining teacher development in more detail through studies on instructional decision making, classroom discourse, classroom management, and assessment. A third wave of studies examine the impact of increased professional development in mentoring by evaluating the impact of the mentoring workshops, and examining interventions or program enhancements associated with teacher development, co-teaching, and mentoring.

In addition to research, a vigorous approach to design is needed to create innovative programs for supporting mentoring. Conversations around the design of professional development programs can promote creative approaches to supporting teachers and enhancing learning in clinical settings. Currently, we are working with our school partners to review our mentoring curriculum and provide guidance in linking it to the State Resident Educator program, the four year induction program for new teachers in the state. We expect the feedback we receive during this process to lead to further changes in our mentoring curriculum. For example, we anticipate that the Developmental Curriculum for Clinical Experiences will continue to evolve and related mentoring strategies will be adjusted accordingly. As we continue to explore mentoring in the context of a clinically-based model of teacher education, we expect our awareness of teacher learning and mentoring to grow exponentially over time and our guidance of teacher learning in clinical settings to become far more precise and informed than we can now imagine.

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