Dynamic Changes: Analyzing the Teacher Candidate and Mentor Teacher Relationship During Continuous Learning and COVID-19

Lucas Shivers[1], Cynthia Emery[2], and Suzanne Porath[2]

[1]Manhattan-Ogden USD 383
[2]Kansas State University

Abstract: This phenomenological study of teaching in times of uncertainty focuses on the central question: How was the relationship between teacher candidates and their mentor teachers affected by remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic? Interview data of three mentor teacher/teacher candidate pairs suggests the COVID-19 crisis impacted the mentor teacher and teacher candidate relationship and the teaching and learning situation in a variety of ways including: 1) Cultivating emotional agility in personal, family, and professional spheres; 2) Navigating constant changes in modes of communication channels; 3) Developing reciprocal support; and 4) Evolving professional learning to support teachers during distance learning.

Key words: teacher candidate, mentor teacher, COVID-19

NAPDS Nine Essentials Addressed:
- Essential 2: Clinical Preparation – A PDS embraces the preparation of educators through clinical practice.
- Essential 4: Reflection and Innovation – A PDS makes a shared commitment to reflective practice, responsive innovation, and generative knowledge.

Dynamic Changes: Analyzing the Teacher candidate and Mentor Teacher Relationship During Continuous Learning and COVID-19

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, stay-at-home orders and remote learning abruptly transformed the education world; especially for the mentor teacher and teacher candidate relationship when they were forced to teach in times of uncertainty. Districts and universities stepped in to help stabilize situations for students, families, and communities; yet the long-term extent of the pandemic's human, social and learning impacts continues to unfold. The temporary nature and quick implementation transformed the entire mentor-mentee relationship. PDS partnerships commit to the preparation of future educators, even in pandemics where both mentor teachers and teacher candidates embraced engagement strategies in the sudden digital transition to remote learning.

This study of teaching in times of uncertainty outlines dramatic implications, particularly for the teacher preparation. We seek to answer the central research question: How was the relationship between teacher candidates and their mentor teachers affected by remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020? This project notes the PDS priority of shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants.

Background and Rationale

In the education sector, mentor teachers and teacher candidates were forced to rethink relational change, student engagement and communication channels in the face of coronavirus, continuous/remote learning, increased technology reliance and immediate mental wellness concerns. The systemic, operational, and strategic challenges related to COVID-19 tested the limits of educators' capabilities. When the dust settled and educators took stock of the reckoning, the teacher candidates and mentor teachers were forced to take strategic steps to restore capacity and strength to serve students.

Literature Review

The student teaching experience serves as a capstone of a new teacher's sequence of formal post-secondary education. The internship can shape the entire trajectory of a teaching profession (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Torrez & Krebs, 2012; Wexler, 2020); and it is vital to build a positive relationship of positive influence from the mentor teacher (Anderson, 2007). Yet, in the time of COVID-19, teacher candidates and mentor teachers much better understand how to exert positive influence in times of crisis, particularly exploring the aspects of mentor teachers' evaluations, distribution of knowledge, vested authority, and charisma (Anderson, 2007).

Positive mentor-mentee relationships during the student teaching experience are a contributing factor to teacher candidate success. Mentor teachers are successful mentors when they act as a coach and a defensive 'parent' figure (Clark et al. 2014). Ideal qualities of a mentor teacher include flexibility, collaborative, friendly, and welcoming. Mentor teachers also need to know when to hold back and when to step in and help their teacher candidate (Clark et al. 2014). Mentor teachers are often carefully chosen by building administration based on their ability to coach future teachers. During regular times, many mentor teachers exude these characteristics with ease, yet in times of unprecedented pandemic, mentor teachers' ability to be flexible was put to the test (Piccolo, Tipton, & Livers, 2020). Relationship building from a distance using only virtual means was a challenge mentor teachers and teacher candidates across the country had to face.

Collaboration and communication during the student teaching experience is vital to the learning of the teacher candidate. Ong'ondo and Jwan (2009) identify important forms of two-way dialogue for teacher candidates are "collaborative conversations" between teacher

candidates and "mentoring conversations" between teacher candidates and their mentor teachers. In-person communication was affected during COVID-19 due to social distancing requirements and communicating in person was not common practice. During a typical student teaching experience, the most common communication between teacher candidates and their mentor teachers is face to face conversation with some email or phone communication. Because all schools in this district were closed at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, face to face conversations ceased to occur and other communication techniques were used instead.

Methods

This analysis uses a phenomenological methodology, which is an approach to qualitative research focusing on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group of teacher candidates and mentor teachers. Phenomenological researchers seek to arrive at a description and interpretation of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenological research uses in-depth interviews, as researchers describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts as provided by the interviewees. Wellman and Kruger state, "Phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved" (1999, p. 189). Phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people involved, or who were involved, with the issue that is being researched (Maypole & Davies, 2001).

The phenomenon under study was the experience of mentor teachers and their teacher candidates during a crisis point in education and the world: Spring of 2020 when COVID-19 shut down physical schools and teaching and learning went to remote instruction. This remote instruction significantly impacted the traditional relationship of mentor teachers and teacher candidates, along with how these teachers interacted with their students. This situation was classically a phenomenon as it was "not constructed, designed, or defined in the autonomously-encased human mind separated from the world" and had significant impact on how the teachers found themselves "being in relationships to the world with our [their] day-to-day living" (Vagle, 2018, pg. 20).

Interviews were conducted with three pairs of teacher candidates/mentor teachers who had first-hand knowledge of the COVID-19 education experience. These interviews were transcribed for coding and analysis. Each pair of mentor teachers and teacher candidates were interviewed together through Zoom with a list of open-ended questions like: As communication went digital, what tools supported you in working and planning together? Can you give any examples of how you engaged learners in the continuous learning process? What were the priorities of the continuous learning plans? How did you cover the remaining quarter of your standards? Can you share examples of resources you used in continuous learning plans?

Our data was analyzed and themed for similar phrases and grouped to form clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2013). We sought to construct some universal meanings from the COVID-19 crisis experience and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. Phenomenology researchers try not to prescribe techniques, instead they seek new areas of description and understanding (Holloway, 1997). Hycner stated, "There is an appropriate reluctance on the part of phenomenologists to focus too much on specific steps" (1999, p. 143). Researchers try to not impose existing methods on a phenomenon "since that would do a great injustice to the integrity of that phenomenon" (p. 144). Two of the researchers independently read each transcript for a holistic understanding of the entire text. Then the researchers independently completed a line-by-line reading with open descriptive codes and condensed these codes into themes. They repeated this for each transcript. Finally,

the researchers met to discuss their initial descriptive codes and themes to arrive at essential categories and develop global themes across the transcripts (Vogel, 2018).

Limitations of the study included a small sample size of only three pairs and by self-selecting into the study the interview participants may have had a more positive experience than other educators in the district and, therefore, were more willing to discuss their experiences with the researchers.

Figure 1

Participants in the Study
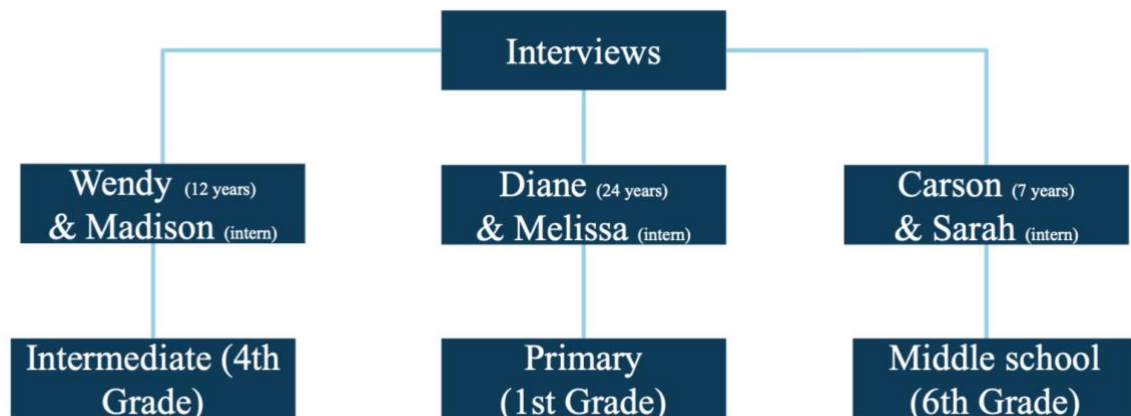
A call for participation was sent via email and three pairs of mentor teachers and teacher candidates responded. To detail each pair (See Figure 1), Wendy (12 years of experience teaching) and Madison (teacher candidate) taught fourth grade. They taught at a small Title 1 school with two sections per grade. The next set included Diane (24 years) and Melissa (teacher candidate) who taught first grade at a large Title 1 school with three or four sections per grade. The final pair Carson (male teacher with 7 years of experience) and Sarah (teacher candidate) taught sixth grade in a small Title 1 school with only one section per grade level. These teacher candidates were three of approximately two dozen placed from the university in the elementary setting in the district. Each mentor teacher had prior experience with teacher candidates, and they received multiple rounds of professional training to serve in this role, along with a small stipend for their extra time dedicated to mentoring.

<div align="center">

Analysis

</div>

Data suggests the COVID-19 crisis personally and collectively impacted the mentor teacher and teacher candidate relationships and learning situations in a variety of ways. Four themes emerged: 1) Cultivating emotional agility in personal, family, and professional spheres; 2) Navigating constant changes in modes of communication; 3) Developing reciprocal support; and 4) Evolving professional learning to support teachers during distance learning.

Theme One: Cultivating Emotional Agility in the Face of a Crisis

Emotional agility is about being healthy with one's self (Brown, 2021) and managing negative emotions to take action, even in times of great potential stress and trauma (David & Congleton, 2013). After setting up routines in-person from January to March 2020, the world turned upside down for mentor teachers and teacher candidates, including Wendy and Madison; Diane and Melissa; and Carson and Sarah. In March 2020, both the university and

school district abruptly and disjointly began a process of shutting down on-site learning. Mentor teachers and teacher candidates voiced their initial despair and overwhelming emotions as they processed together the enormous changes with descriptors such as "shocking," "gut-punched" and "really hard" in the interviews. These pairs provided great emotional support for each other due to their shared experiences.

The initial emotions were negative. Madison related feeling "worried about the unknowns" and unsure what school closures would mean for her as a teacher candidate. Diane relayed similar feelings, sharing her frustration that her teacher candidate was "cheated out of that experience of seeing the growth she helped with." Carson initially held on to a glimmer of hope that school closures would be short-term before being told students and teachers would not be returning to brick and mortar schools to finish out the school year. Both Carson and Sarah reported feelings of "disappointment," with "so many questions" that weren't being answered.

Conflicting information from district and university sources pairs to navigate through competing values of priorities. Melissa stated, "The university just kind of said, 'okay, whatever your district says.' And so at that point, it was kind of just receiving information from the principal from then on out." Being at a large building, the communication was more impersonal due the size and use of mass emails. The other pairs noted that there was a more intimate and personalized approach with the smaller size of building to remain in-touch and they had more check-ins than just sending a full one-size-fits-all message. The emotional safety net seemed stronger within the mentor teacher/teacher candidate relationships at the smaller schools. However, at all schools, mental health and self-care was emphasized as a priority for all educators. The pairs in this study reported feeling like they were providing additional support to colleagues because they were actively involved in the school's pivot to remote learning.

Each pair of mentor teachers and teacher candidates also noted the distressing waves of cancellations and lack of clarity. The initial expectations seemed to constantly change. Mentor teacher Carson said, "Things started happening really fast. So I was like, 'okay, actually, we're going to have a couple weeks off, and then try and go back. And then it was like, okay, that's not happening.'" The pairs noted the emotional upheaval was continually caused by moving targets. As teacher candidate Sarah noted, "[The university was] being very, like vague, and they were making it sound like even if they let us graduate, we still wouldn't be able to get a job because we wouldn't be able to get our license. And then once that was cleared up, it was literally like, do whatever your mentor teacher tells you to do. But otherwise, just like hanging back. So that was kind of frustrating." Teacher candidates felt caught in a bind with competing communications from the university and the district.

Social and emotional student support was essential. Carson and Sarah noted, "We worried about the kids. I mean, I think, we'll be fine. As adults, we figure things out. I just worried about the kids. That's my number one thing," mentor teacher Diane noted, "I would say our number one priority was making sure the kids are okay. That was a huge priority for us. And just making sure that [the] focus [was] on social emotional support, making sure that they were okay."

Diane and teacher candidate Melissa highlighted ways to ensure time for students to be sheltered from the raw emotions of the initial responses. For their grade one students, they noted key topics to address as priorities. As Diane noted, "I mean [there was] a lot of sadness and a lot of overwhelming feelings. How do we do these next steps and, and what comes next and will we be back. Melissa and I were able to still be that emotional springboard for the kids. I feel like a little bit more reserved, but just that emotional support that the kids needed for those last months of school." Creating space, time, and an environment where the emotional flow could continue was important as teachers bonded with students from a

distance. Yet, the pressures continued when Diane noted, "I just felt like I wasn't there for them." The guilt, shame, and feeling of being out of control weighed heavily on the pairs. It was not only levels of concern for students; but also within their pairings as Diane continued, "I had a lot of guilt because she wasn't even able to finish her portfolio the right way with as far as her end of the unit assessments and all of her requirements from the university." It became an intense professional crisis with multiple layers of sudden change. Living in chaos and uncertainty affected educators greatly.

Mentor teacher Wendy and teacher candidate Madison noted they needed to filter the emotional downflow and find positive ways to prioritize their own overall balance and ways to keep students from suffering from the incredible weight of the sudden changes. Recognizing the digital gap within the district, teachers were instructed to send home paper packets of work, though there was little accountability for completing them as grading was also paused. Wendy quickly noted the need to put emotional wellbeing before academics in the times of crisis, "By packet two, I feel like my focus was social and emotional. I had a lot of kids not do the packets. And so it was more important to me to just keep that connection." Putting the focus on the social and emotional wellbeing for the whole child was a key part of empowering pairs to balance academics and daily routines. As Wendy continued with her time with Madison, "Keeping them engaged in the Zooms for social and emotional [work], and if they didn't engage on that, reaching out to them on Dojo or email became more important to me than packets." This outreach will be covered more in the next section with communication channels.

Cultivating emotional agility, or being healthy with oneself, allowed for pairs to process through a full 'tunnel of emotions' that were challenging. Rather than pushing their own emotions aside, the pairs used their emotions as signposts to determine their needs and the needs of others, including students and families. The overall sense of the teachers and teacher candidates was best summed up by teacher candidate Madison, stating "just kind of worried about the unknowns a little bit like okay, what does this mean for me as a teacher candidate? What does it mean for me?" This emotional capacity of the pairs to hold their emotions lightly and not become locked down into rigidity with the overwhelm of the chaos. As Brené Brown stated, "Emotional agility [is the] ability to be with ourselves in ways that are curious, compassionate, and courageous, so we can take values-connected steps," (2021). Being curious about their own feelings, compassionate toward each other, and courageous in their outreach to their students and families, these pairs of educators navigated the complex emotional upheaval of the initial COVID challenges together.

Theme Two: Navigating Constant Changes in Modes of Communication

Slowed by physical distance and lacking the proximity of working together in the same room, the educators relied on a variety of communication channels. In a typical year, most teacher candidates and mentor teachers were able to meet face to face to plan and implement instruction. To continue student learning and do what was best for their students, the pairs adjusted their communication channels drastically.

Diane and Melissa said they "maintained constant communication," saying they developed "a close friendship along with a working relationship." The communication channels used included texting, talking on the phone numerous times a day, and sometimes using FaceTime video calls. Mentor teacher Wendy noted, "Obviously not seeing each other every day slowed [us] down; but I feel like we stayed connected with what we needed to for the education purposes." Often, pairs connected with whatever the "quickest communication" method was, mentioning texting, calling or social media. Teacher candidate Madison said they used texting to communicate for the most part since it was quickest, using email or phone as secondary communication methods. With many different modes of communication

readily available, Wendy noted a need to centralize with a few methods to get 'good' on those to become consistent, stating the importance of getting "communication down at the very beginning."

The whiplash of changes occurred at breakneck pace. Mentor teachers reported forwarding information sent out by the district to their teacher candidates to keep them 'in the loop'. Teacher candidates were invited to participate in a variety of Zoom meetings, including building level check-ins, informational meetings, and packet development with district grade level teams. The mentor teachers stated participation in those meetings was voluntary, but it was an offer met with willingness by the teacher candidates. The teachers and teacher candidates also found the need to constantly adjust communication with families, students, and stakeholders to build trust. Key groups like special education and other specialist classes needed layers of additional messages and coordination to support the students.

Constraints from the district caused stress for teachers, students, and families. The district hadn't regularly used Zoom with students and had no policies or protocols in place for Zoom instruction. Therefore, initially, teachers were told class Zoom meetings were not allowed, yet a few weeks later this changed and teachers were allowed to host non-instructional Zoom meetings with students. One reason for this change was students' need for social emotional support while sheltering in place. Madison noted, "We would do lunch Zooms. We did a talent show on Zoom. We just try to do different things. We planned a virtual field trip on Zoom. So it was a little chaotic because there were like 36 kids on there interrupting." The district required two adults be present during all Zoom meetings with students and other precautions to manage risk and support equity. Diane stated she felt guilty for her co-workers without teacher candidates because she and Melissa had one another during this time. Other teachers had to rely on scheduling with paraeducators or other specialist teachers for their Zoom session with children. The pairs built strong relationships within digital settings to support their students and each other. A common belief was that students and teachers may struggle with relationships online, but the teachers found ways to intentionally over-communicate and stay connected.

Theme Three: Developing Reciprocal Support

Traditionally, the mentor teacher took the role of mentor for teacher candidates. However, during crisis remote teaching, this relationship became more reciprocal for a variety of reasons. First, by district policy, the teacher candidate was with the mentor teacher on almost all Zoom sessions with children. This provided more contact time during instruction than in a traditional physical classroom. In addition, the teacher candidates had some unique technology skills and were able to step into a lead teaching role with that technology. However, each pair demonstrated different support techniques and levels, ranging from a typical teacher candidate relationship to a more peer-like relationship in which the mentor teacher and teacher candidate leaned on each other for support.

Mentor teacher Diane and teacher candidate Melissa formed a collegial relationship, relying on one another to split the workload evenly and planned both together and separately for instruction. In this relationship, the teacher candidate stepped into a co-teacher non-traditional role with more responsibilities, such as providing translation services to Spanish-speaking families. Melissa noted that when they began remote teaching, they completed the first calls to families together and then began dividing up the workload, stating, "We kept the partnership and worked closely together, but also split off to divide and conquer." This pair quickly began 'working on everything together' and the mentor teacher commented about how her experience teaching during the onset of COVID-19 was vastly different from her peers due to the teacher candidate taking on so much of the workload, more so than a typical

teacher candidate. As a result, Diane reported a lowered stress level; eased by the support of her teacher candidate Melissa.

Wendy and her teacher candidate Madison had a more traditional teacher candidate/mentor teacher relationship, with the mentor teacher leading in all aspects of teaching. In this relationship, the gradual release of responsibility did not occur as it typically would, due to the drastic changes to teaching and learning following school closures. The teacher candidate had not begun teaching content areas prior to school closures, which may have contributed to the lack of responsibility placed on her by the mentor teacher. Madison was not able to take over content areas as she regularly would have due to the district's decision to use grade-level paper packets to deliver instruction.

Carson and Sarah's relationship was a unique blend of both collegial roles and mentor/mentee mentality. In personality, mentor teacher Carson and teacher candidate Sarah were similar, which led to an easy working relationship. Some division of responsibilities with regards to contacting families for wellness checks occurred, but instruction was almost solely provided by the mentor teacher in this pairing. As with Wendy and Madison, Sarah did not fully take over the class at any point.

Theme Four: Evolving Professional Learning

During the initial onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing professional development support teachers during distance learning was non-existent. Teachers found professional development opportunities outside of the district and the local university. They had to make their own options to personalize their learning during these demanding times to support their students with the best next steps forward in the uncertainty.

Wendy and Madison found courses on educational technology from an online professional development site helpful. Madison stated, "Technology; that's being able to use it to the full force. I feel like I'm pretty tech savvy; but constantly having to be on it?" She also stated that many of the technology components she learned were not useful for her context. These new shifts in professional responsibility pivoted the learning to virtual formats.

Carson hoped information learned during a college course on cooperative Google tools in the classroom would support his distance teaching, but district restrictions surrounding technology made this difficult as paper packets were the preferred method of instructional delivery. Carson also sought trauma informed professional development. He stated, "[I was] just trying to reach kids and ask them certain questions, open ended, trying to get them to open up about anything with us." Being ready to respond to students' needs and demands often required even more, ongoing learning. Diane found special social, emotional and behavior webinars and videos about implementing blended learning with her first graders helpful, as she shared, "I'm looking at a lot of the personalized learning videos. We were looking on our own and watching lots of videos."

Conclusions

In a recent interview, Dr. Doug Fisher, co-author of *The Distance Learning Playbook*, felt that educators engaged in crisis teaching rather than distance learning at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Fisher et al., 2021). Crisis teaching and crisis management is significantly different than intentional and thoughtful remote or distant learning. In the beginning, the teachers in this study were pulling anything they could find to create packets or work for students to provide, as the district called it, "continuous learning." While a tremendous amount of work went into packet completion, students were not expected to return their work. As Carson said, "We wanted [students] to do [the work], we're going to keep checking on it, but there's no way for us to really know if they are or not." This followed

the recognition that the teaching and learning environment was in crisis. The first focus, as the teachers and teacher candidates mentioned in this study, was the social and emotional needs of the students and families, and then academics.

While the relationship between teacher candidates and their mentor teachers is a robust area of research, this study was unique because of the immediate and unanticipated switch from in-person traditional school to online or packet instruction. Not only did teacher candidates and mentor teachers need to adjust quickly to a different structure for school, they also needed to shift the ways they communicated, collaborated, and coached from mostly in-person to phone, text and email communication, creating potential roadblocks for relationship building. In addition, there were unique emotional stressors during this crucial development time for the teacher candidates. Each pair developed different ways of handing the pivot and stresses of remote learning.

These six educators all recognized the need for technology as a component of remote learning that fits the context. As there was no precedence for this type of school closure, district-level support was limited. Educators used their personal and professional networks to support their practice until district policy and professional learning caught up. Closer to the end of the school year, the local university began offering distance teaching courses, resources, and support to educators and teacher candidates. At that time, the district also announced the learning platform Canvas would be used in the fall to support distance learning and educators would have an opportunity to learn about the platform.

At the onset of this research study, there was an assumption that K-12 schools would be nearly back to normal by fall 2020, therefore the research didn't ask pairs about preparations for fall based on their experience in spring. As a result, this study was a snapshot in time during crisis teaching in the initial onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that time, there has been emerging research in this area. Understanding the challenges and successes discovered by mentor teachers and teacher candidates with lived experiences during crisis may help others in a similar situation. Since March of 2020, research has developed to support educators in remote instruction, however there is very limited research on clinical internships during crisis and, more specifically, the teacher candidate/mentor teacher relationship.

This will not be the last time schools will need to pivot and make drastic changes mid-school year. Plans developed during the COVID-19 pandemic will prepare districts for natural disasters and other pandemics that will inevitably happen in the future. In the past, school preparedness plans for natural disasters, such as hurricanes, have not included distance education but rather focus primarily on student social and emotional health and safety (Schwartz, Ahmed, Leschitz, Uzicanin, & Uscher-Pines, 2020). Lessons learned from distance learning at the onset of the pandemic in spring of 2020 and, further, from school re-openings in the 2020-2021 school year will prepare educators, students, and families to engage in successful distance learning in the future.

In conclusion, the drastic changes to teaching and learning following school closures forced many changes in the clinical internship experience and especially with the mentor and teacher candidate relationship. The shift to remote instruction precipitated a blend of collegial, co-teaching and the traditional mentor/mentee mentality. Clinical Preparation (Essential 2) highlights the crucial role a PDS has in "nurturing and developing the next generation of educators by engaging candidates and valuing them as active members of the school." This was especially true during a crisis.

Each of the teacher candidates continued to be engaged in teaching and learning activities and experienced an authentic clinical experience of teaching through a crisis. The mentoring and support of their mentor teacher ensured that they were professionally ready, regardless of the circumstances. Reflection and Innovation (Essential 4) was imperative

during the pivot to remote instruction and in refining instruction as the pandemic continued. It was through reflection that the educators recognized the immense need for social-emotional care and emotional agility their students needed, along with caring for themselves. This precipitated innovative ways of creating community with their students through remote methods. Two principles can be applied to current educational practice from the experiences of participants in this study: 1) open and consistent communication is vital for a strong community and 2) social-emotional wellbeing is essential for teaching and learning.

References

Anderson, D. (2007) The role of mentor teachers' power in student teaching. *Education*, *128* (2), 307-323.

Brown, B. (Host). (2021, March 1). Brené with Dr. Susan David on the dangers of toxic positivity, part 1 of 2. [Audio podcast episode]. *In Dare to Lead with Brené Brown. Parcast.* https://Brenébrown.com/podcast/Brené-with-dr-susan-david-on-the-dangers-of-toxic-positivity-part-1-of-2/

Clarke, A., Triggs, V., & Nielsen, W. (2014). Mentor teacher participation in teacher education: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 84*(2), 163-202. doi.org/10.3102/0034654313499618

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among the five approache*s. SAGE Publications.

David, S., & Congleton, C. (2013). Emotional agility. *Harvard Business Review, 91*(11), 125-131.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2021). *The distance learning playbook grades K-12: teaching for engagement & impact in any setting.* Corwin Press.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. SAGE Publications.

Ongrsquo, C. O., & Jwan, J. O. (2009). Research on teacher candidate learning, collaboration and supervision during the practicum: A literature review. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *4*(11), 515-524.

Piccolo, D., Tipton, S., & Livers, S. D. (2020). Transitioning to online student teaching: Factors impacting elementary education teacher candidates. In R. E. Ferdig, E. Baumgartner, & R. Hartshorne (Eds.), *Teaching, technology, and teacher education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Stories from the field* (pp. 297-301). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education. https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/

Schwartz, H. L., Ahmed, F., Leschitz, J. T., Uzicanin, A., & Uscher-Pines, L. (2020). Opportunities and challenges in using online learning to maintain continuity of instruction in K-12 schools in emergencies. RAND Education and Labor. https://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WRA235-1.html

Tabachnick, B. R., & Zeichner, K. M. (1984). The impact of the student teaching experience on the development of teacher perspectives. *Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(6), 28-36.

Torrez, C. A. F., & Krebs, M. M. (2012). Expert voices: What mentor teachers and teacher candidates say about quality student teaching placements and experiences. *Action in Teacher Education, 34*(5-6), 485-499.

Vagle, M. D. (2018). *Crafting phenomenological research.* Routledge.

Wexler, L. J. (2020). 'I would be a completely different teacher if I had been with a different mentor': Ways in which educative mentoring matters as novices learn to teach. *Professional Development in Education, 46*(2), 211-228.

Author Information

Lucas Shivers (lucass@usd383.org), Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 director of elementary education, channels his life-long passion for positive student and staff development to build the core values of student-cantered learning, responsible character development and adaptive leadership to facilitate growth for every student as a champion and advocate for innovative instruction.

Cynthia Emery (clemery@ksu.edu), at the time of this study, was an Instructional Coach in USD 383 and has since become an Educational Consultant with Curriculum Associates. Cynthia's passion for educational equity through strong instructional practices was a motivator for her to pursue her doctoral degree at Kansas State University.

Suzanne Porath (sporath@ksu.edu), Assistant Professor of literacy at Kansas State University, draws on her experiences as an English Language Arts, history, and humanities classroom teacher and reading teacher to prepare future teachers and reading specialists.