

From Evaluation to Collaborative Reflection: Teacher Candidate Perceptions of a Digital Learner-Centered Classroom Observation Form

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In efforts to promote a more learner-centered approach to supervision, faculty members at a Midwestern U.S. university piloted a new digital classroom observation form. Participants included middle/secondary teacher candidates (N=28) in their final semester of their programs. The overall goal of this study was to gather teacher candidates' perceptions of a form that incorporated self-reflection, collaborative reflection, and quality feedback. Data were gathered using an online questionnaire that collected the frequency of TCs' reflective practices, their perceptions of the impact of the form on reflection, and TCs' perceptions of supervisor written feedback. Results indicated that while TCs felt that the form took more time to complete, most felt it helped promote reflective practices, and supervisor feedback was viewed favorably. Implications for future research are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Observations and evaluations are commonplace in U.S. schools. Classroom observation models often consist of three phases: a pre-conference in which the teacher and observer discuss the lesson prior to its implementation, an in-class observation in which the teacher is observed while implementing the lesson, and a post-conference in which the teacher and observer (usually an administrator) discuss and assess the lesson (Zepeda, 2007). The outcome of observations is usually an evaluative report in which the observer rates the lesson based on a pre-established list of standards and then provides the teacher with feedback on strengths and weaknesses. While the primary purpose for traditional observation activities is to determine teacher performance and promote professional growth (Danielson, 2007), many teachers and administrators find the process limited for numerous reasons.

Problems with traditional observation models include the lengthy amount of time required for administrators to complete the process (Danielson 2011; Range, Young, & Hvidston, 2011); the limited number of classroom observations administrators use to evaluate teacher performance (Marshall, 2009); the often generic written feedback provided to teachers (Marshall, 2009); and a lack of evidence that the process leads to professional growth and improved student achievement. In addition, a major shortcoming of traditional teacher observation and evaluation procedures is that they often cast teachers into passive roles where they have little or no input in their own evaluation (Milanowski & Heneman, 2001). Danielson (2009) contends that teachers are relegated to inaction while administrators actively participate by observing lessons, writing observations and then controlling the direction of post-observation conferences.

Unfortunately, the same traditional supervision model used for practicing teachers is also used for the supervision of teacher candidates (TCs) in the field. The supervision model for TCs includes both observations and evaluations and is often very teacher-centered, lacking in dialogue and focused on the evaluation of TCs (Coombs & Goodwin, 2013). With supervision that is chiefly teacher-centered, university supervisors often play the role of "silent outsiders" who take notes at the back of the room, write reports of what is observed, and then provide TCs with ratings of their performance (Paris & Gespass, 2001). While this process is common, it tends to undervalue the prior knowledge of TCs and the metacognitive processes that TCs go through when designing and implementing lessons. In addition, it does little to promote professional growth by discouraging self-reflection and self-evaluation by TCs. With teacher-centered supervision, the responsi-

bility for reflective practice is often put in the hands of observers or supervisors, who themselves analyze lesson plans and classroom practices, and then provide TCs with evaluative ratings and feedback on how to grow professionally.

In this paper, we will further describe the limitations of traditional classroom observation models before discussing how we revamped our TC observation process by integrating research-based practices found effective for promoting teacher professional growth. With these possibilities in mind, we surveyed teacher candidates so that we might better comprehend their reflective practices, views of a new digital observation form and collaborative processes, and perceptions about university supervisor feedback. Finally, implications for future research are discussed.

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORMS AND PROTOCOLS

A key component that often guides interactions between TCs and their supervisors is the classroom observation form. Unfortunately, despite research indicating that teachers differ in their needs for professional growth based on abilities and experiences (Attinello, Lare, & Waters, 2006), the same instrument and methods are generally used with experienced and novice teachers without differentiation. Additionally, observation instruments are commonly critiqued as relying too heavily on rating scales that are inconsistently defined by supervisors, require a great deal of time to complete (time that could otherwise be used to support TCs), and may gauge TCs based on sets of standards imbued with a teacher-centered philosophy (Attinello et al., 2006; Donaldson, 2009; Paris & Gespass, 2001).

The overly simplistic structure of many forms can result in TCs receiving minimal and insufficient feedback. For example, many classroom observation forms depend highly on simplistic ratings such as “needs improvement” and “satisfactory.” The quantitative nature of some forms often results in teachers receiving only summative ratings with limited or no qualitative feedback (Donaldson, 2009). A recent survey of 15,176 teachers in 12 districts found that nearly 75% of teachers had not received specific feedback on how to improve their instructional practice (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). Unfortunately, without consistent feedback and regular reports on progress and performance, teachers are less likely to achieve their professional goals (Feeney, 2007). Rather than promoting dialogical mentor-mentee relationships in which observations become opportunities for TCs to receive constructive and supportive feedback, traditional observa-

tion models and forms often lead to sessions where TCs' performances are merely evaluated and quantified (Coombs & Goodwin, 2013). A downfall is that when teachers become accustomed to these rating systems they may prefer positive evaluations instead of adopting dispositions that desire authentic feedback for continued professional growth. This may lead teachers to present "glamorized lessons" for their supervisor in order to obtain high ratings.

Additionally, when the role of the supervisors as evaluators is over-emphasized it can beget environments fraught with anxiety that are not conducive to teacher growth and learning. Hinchey (2010) found that teachers are more likely to improve practice in non-threatening environments; however, when TCs view supervisors as evaluators, the observation process may seem hostile and hinder learning. The learning process is further impeded when supervisors do not have proper training in using these observation forms, understand how to translate observed behaviors into scores, or provide effective feedback (Milanowski, 2004).

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

While many traditional observation and evaluation practices fail to promote professional growth for teachers, there is extensive research that suggests that when these practices incorporate self-reflection, collaborative reflection, and high quality feedback, they can have a positive impact on teacher self-evaluation and learning.

Self-Reflection

Reflective practice is a key component for self-evaluation and professional growth. Reflection involves the process of teaching and the reasoning behind it. It also addresses the question of "why" as opposed to "how" and involves both reflective thinking and self-examination (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005). Through reflection, teachers come to recognize teaching as a process that should be open to continual scrutiny and change. Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (2001) fittingly divide reflective practices into two categories: reflection-in-action (RIA) and reflection-on-action (ROA). RIA encourages teachers to perpetually examine their pedagogy and make appropriate changes, while ROA requires advanced planning of processes and then evaluation after instruction. Critical reflection involves even deeper

reflection and encourages teachers to challenge their own beliefs critically while taking responsibility for their actions. Through reflection teachers' critical reflection, thinking is scaffolded, new knowledge constructed, and self-regulation promoted. Theories of teacher development, however, suggest that beginning teachers may not be developmentally ready to engage in the kind of reflective teaching characteristic of more expert teachers. This supports the importance of teacher preparation programs providing novice pre-service teachers with modeling, scaffolding, and coaching on how to be a reflective teacher.

Collaborative Reflection and Feedback

While self-reflection can lead to professional growth when integrated with feedback from others in reflective conversations, studies suggest that all parties benefit from the multiple perspectives, viewpoints, and shared reflection (Feeney, 2007; Walkington, Christensen, & Kock, 2001). Because learning can be enhanced by reflective involvement with others, professional collaborative reflection between teachers and other stakeholders is crucial. As an alternative to traditional observation models, many have suggested that teachers and TCs need opportunities for collaborative professional dialogue and learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Danielson (2009) proposes that conversations about teaching and learning lead teachers to reflect on their pedagogy and interactions with students.

Through informal professional conversations teachers can think deeply about their instructional strategies and examine methods for improving students' learning. Mezirow (1997) challenged teacher educators to help learners become aware of their own and others' pedagogical assumptions through dialogue. Mezirow further proposed that "transformative learning" fosters critical reflection and is "learner-centered, participatory, and interactive and it involves group deliberation and group problem solving" (p. 10). Opportunities for individual and collaborative critical reflection and dialogue among supervisors and TCs can move TCs beyond surface-level analysis and lead to meaningful professional learning (Walkington et al., 2001).

Recent shifts in the literature have moved towards more learner-centered supervision models where professional conversations are at the heart of professional growth is supported with collaborative learning (see Danielson, 2009; Marshall, 2009). Paris and Gesspass (2001) support this shift where the supervisor is no longer the neutral, objective evaluator to models where supervisors act as mentors and coaches who acknowledge the com-

mitment, intelligence, and dignity of TCs. This approach is characterized by supervisors offering less advice, allowing more space for TC self-evaluation, and a shift in focus towards TC self-regulation, dialogue, and reciprocal learning.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this project, we conceptualized learner-centered supervision within the Vygotskian (1978) tenet that others, including supervisors, mentor teachers, and faculty, can scaffold a TC's growth through social interaction, professional dialogue, and reflection. As such, consideration of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) supports the use of intentional assistance, not just evaluation, during classroom observations. Research suggests that TCs need opportunities for collaborative professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010), and there is evidence that when teachers work collectively on problems of practice that they are better able to meet the needs of students in their classrooms (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010).

In this study, we piloted a new classroom observation form that we hoped would prompt supervision where teacher candidates were active participants in collaborative reflection. Further, the new form and observation process aimed to integrate practices that research suggests could be effective for supporting and promoting teacher candidates' growth (e.g., self-reflection, collaborative reflection, and quality feedback). With the new observation form supervisors were better able to monitor TCs' reflective practices, and supervisors were held more accountable to provide TCs with personalized feedback. The purpose of this study was to investigate and gather feedback from TCs about their perceptions of the more learner-centered observation form. Research questions were:

- What types of reflective practices do TCs engage in and which reflection methods do they find to be most effective and why?
- Does the digital classroom observation form promote TC reflective practices? What were TCs' perceptions about the helpfulness of the form for promoting reflection?
- Does the digital classroom observation form promote high quality feedback from supervisors to TCs?

METHODS

Context of Pilot

Prior to fall 2012, faculty and university supervisors at a moderately sized Midwestern university used a locally-developed 13 item classroom observation form aligned with the contextual framework of the college. During observations university supervisors, who included both regular faculty and adjuncts, rated TCs' performances on each item using a five-point Likert scale (1=Unsatisfactory, 2=Needs Improvement, 3=Proficient, 4=Very Good, 5=Distinguished). After a lesson, supervisors and TCs generally conducted short post-conferences in which they discussed the lesson, ratings, and observation notes.

The paper observation form that had been used for the past 30+ years at the college had numerous limitations. First, the Likert scale ratings were vague and inconsistently defined among supervisors. Secondly, the quantitative nature of the form items made it a tool for evaluation rather than one that could foster the dialogue and reflection necessary for the professional growth of TCs. Further items did not provide TCs with much qualitative feedback or details as to how they could improve their teaching (Coombs & Goodwin, 2013). Furthermore, we believe teaching to be complex and situational. The standardization and rigidity of the previous form left little room for depth, context, or unanticipated factors. Finally, because supervisors generally did not have measures of TCs' prior knowledge, their feedback was solely based on lesson plans and short observations.

Participants

Participants included 28 TCs in their last semester of their senior year in a teacher preparation program. TCs came from various content areas including middle/secondary level English education (25.0%), math education (21.4%), science education (17.9%), social studies education (25.0%) and combinations of these subject areas (e.g., science/mathematics). TCs were split evenly by gender, and 53.6% were under 30 years old.

21st Century Technology Tools

Technology tools including iPads, Dropbox, and digital PDF observation forms were utilized in this pilot to foster more dynamic, collaborative,

conversational, and immediate exchanges between TCs and university supervisors. Using Dropbox, an online tool that allows multiple users to share materials in the cloud, TCs were able to share all lesson plan materials, lesson plans, and digital observation forms with their supervisor and faculty members. This also allowed all members with shared access to develop and revise the same file(s) asynchronously. Once changes were made they would automatically sync on everyone's devices (e.g., computers, laptops, tablets, iPads, cell phones), and members with shared access to folders received automatic notification when files were updated. In addition, because the new observation form was in PDF format, there were no issues with unreadable or sloppy penmanship. Using iPads in the field, supervisors accessed all digital materials in Dropbox folders and typed feedback. Following observations, changes were automatically synced. This allowed TCs and faculty members to have immediate access to any feedback or notes by the supervisor. Both TCs and supervisors were provided with technical support and training on these tools before and throughout the study.

Pilot Observation Form and Observation Procedures

The new digital observation form was distinct from the previous paper form. It consisted of eight open-ended items aligned with the research-based InTASC standards (e.g., Learner and Learning, Content Knowledge, and Instructional Practice) (CCSSO, 2011). Example items included “The teacher planned instruction based on the learning and developmental levels of all students”; “The teacher demonstrated a thorough knowledge of content”; and “The teacher used methods and techniques that are effective in meeting student needs.” On the form beside each item, two columns were provided for qualitative notes. The first column labeled “Observable Teacher Evidence” was used to document evidence of observable teacher behaviors demonstrated during a lesson, while the second column labeled “Observable Student Evidence” was provided to document observable student behaviors (see Figure 1). This observation form was developed by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and was concurrently being piloted by several school districts in the state of Kansas. The complete observation form and protocol can be found on the KSDE website (KEEP, 2012).

Construct 2: Content Knowledge		
Component	Observable Teacher Evidence	Observable Student Evidence
<p>2.1 Content Knowledge: The teacher demonstrated a thorough knowledge of content.</p> <p><i>Examples of demonstrated evidence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher used variety of instructional strategies. <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher used multiple representations, explanations, and/or learning experiences to build student understanding. 		

Figure 1. Screenshot of Observation Form Item.

In addition to changes in the form, efforts were made to encourage a more learner-centered and collaborative observation process. Before a scheduled observation, TCs reflected on the decisions that they made while planning lessons and documented anticipated observable teacher and student evidence (based on previous teaching experiences) on the observation form. In addition, TCs reflected and described *why* they designed the lesson in the manner that they did and justified their decisions based on InTASC standards. Three days prior to the implementation of their lessons TCs electronically shared lesson plans, associated lesson resources, and a preliminary completed observation form with their university supervisor and respective faculty members. Prior to the observation both supervisors and faculty members reviewed lesson materials and the partially completed observation form. If significant changes or updates were required, the supervisor would send a follow up email to the TC.

Back-and-forth electronic exchanges between TCs and supervisors typically occurred the same day lesson resources were initially submitted. In essence, the iterative process mimicked face-to-face conversations in written format. During a scheduled observation, supervisors would open the same observation form, add notes, and build onto the observable evidence the TCs had already articulated. Because the observable evidence was written by TCs before lesson implementation, supervisors were able to informally assess TCs' prior knowledge and, consequently, were better equipped to pose personalized questions and provide feedback to TCs within their ZPD. By posing questions supervisors were better able to orient TCs towards the deeper types of reflective practices that more experienced teachers engage in.

In addition, because much of the observable evidence was pre-typed by TCs, supervisors were afforded more time to observe and provide feedback. Following the lesson, or sometimes a few days after, TCs and supervisors conducted a post conference in which they discussed the lesson and observation form. TCs reviewed supervisors' typed notes, further updated the document based on new observations from the lesson, and answered questions posed by the supervisor. When necessary, supervisors requested further clarity regarding specific issues or posed questions aimed at encouraging critical reflection.

Data Sources

Throughout the spring 2013 semester TCs completed 2-4 scheduled observations using the new observation forms. At the end of the semester, TCs' perceptions of the piloted observation form and protocol were gathered using an online questionnaire comprising three sections.

Section I. The first section consisted of six Likert scale items (5=Always, 4=Very Frequently, 3=Occasionally, 2=Rarely, 1=Very Rarely, 0=Never) that gathered TCs' frequency of reflective activities. Items were adapted from the Kember's Questionnaire of Reflective Thinking (QRT) (Kember *et al.*, 2000) and Schön's Reflection-On-Action (ROA) and Reflection-In-Action (RIA) practices (Schön, 1987). Sample items included: "After a lesson, how frequently do you reflect on why a lesson was successful or unsuccessful?" (ROA); and "How often have you changed your lesson plans, in the middle of a lesson, based on feedback from students?" (RIA). Additionally, TCs were asked which method they felt was the most effective for reflecting on a lesson and which they used most frequently. TCs were provided the options "internal dialogue," "writing," "verbal conversations with others," and "other" (where they could type in other methods).

Section II. The second section included eight Likert scale items (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Strongly Agree) that gathered TCs' perceptions on the helpfulness of the observation form for promoting reflection and critical reflection practices (Kember *et al.*, 2000). Sample items included: "Completing the classroom observation form helped me reflect on my actions, as a teacher, to see whether I could have improved on what I did." A major aim of the form was to promote high quality reflective practices, and these items were used to gather TCs' perceptions with regards to the effectiveness of the observation form in meeting this goal.

Section III. The final section included six Likert scale items (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Somewhat Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Strongly Agree) which gathered TCs' perceptions about the written feedback provided to them by the supervisor on the observation form and two open ended items which asked TCs what they liked most and least about the form and observation process. Because a major goal of the new process was to provide high quality feedback beyond mere quantitative ratings, these questions aimed to gather TCs' perceptions about how effective the observation form and process was at providing and promoting quality feedback.

Limitations

Methodological limitations for this study include sample size and duration of treatment. Consequently, while results may provide valuable insights, they are suggestive and may not generalize to all TC populations. Specifically, the use of a sample of convenience limits the study to participants in middle and secondary school settings. Participants also self-reported their levels of reflection, and these perceptions could be limited by inaccurate self-reports. Nevertheless, numerous results were found that provide opportunities for insight and application.

RESULTS

This study gathered data concerning the views of TCs on a piloted digital observation form and protocol that was designed to be more learner-centered and collaborative. Specifically, the major goal was to collect information that would help us better understand TCs' reflective practices, perceptions regarding the helpfulness of the form in promoting reflective practices, and perceptions about feedback from university supervisors via the form.

Reflective Practices

Results indicated that TCs regularly engaged in reflective practices. Based on data, the most frequent reflection in action (RIA) practice employed by TCs concerned thinking about whether students were meeting learning objectives (85.7%), while less frequently used RIA practices included changing a lesson based on feedback (46.4%) and thinking about

how teaching strategies could be enriched (67.9%). TCs reported engaging more in reflection-on-action (ROA) practices. All candidates indicated that, after a lesson, they reflected on why the lesson was or was not successful. In fact, 96.4% noted that they re-evaluated their teaching experiences to improve future teaching, and 82.1% said that they thought about alternative methods for presenting content (see Table 1).

Table 1
Teacher Candidate Reflective Practices

Reflective Practices	% very frequently or always (n=28)	M(SD)
During a lesson, changed a lesson plan based on feedback from students*	46.4	3.57 (.879)
While teaching a lesson, reflected on how the teaching strategies used could be enriched with new and more effective ones*	67.9	3.93 (.766)
During a lesson, thought about whether students were meeting the learning objectives*	85.7	4.36 (.731)
After a lesson, thought about how content was taught and tried to think of alternative methods for teaching that content**	82.1	4.29 (.763)
After a lesson, re-evaluated the teaching experience to learn from it and improve future performance**	96.4	4.46 (.576)
After a lesson, reflected on why a lesson was successful or unsuccessful**	100.0	4.75 (.441)

*Reflection in action (RIA) practices; **Reflection on action (ROA) practices

When TCs were asked which method for reflection they used most frequently, 50% indicated internal dialogues and 42.9% indicated verbal conversations with others (e.g., cooperating teachers, supervisors, peers). Of these, 75% of TCs noted that verbal conversations with others was the most effective method for reflecting while 21.4% chose internal dialogues. TCs who chose verbal conversations as the most effective means for re-

flecting on a lesson stated that they liked to “get another perspective,” that feedback from others helped them “see or experience something that I [TC] have missed,” and that “feedback helped me reflect on what I did.” TCs also found verbal conversations “beneficial because they [supervisors, and cooperating teachers] have the knowledge and experience that I lack,” and they appreciated the “back and forth [exchange] with another person to work through thoughts and ideas.”

Promoting Reflection

Over two thirds (67.9%) of TCs reported that completing the form helped them reflect on their actions as teachers, 60.7% suggested that it helped them question classroom practices and think of better ways of doing things (e.g., planning, teaching, managing classroom), and 57.1% said that the form changed their normal ways of doing things in the classroom. TCs further reported that completing the observation form was most helpful because it encouraged them to re-evaluate their teaching experiences so that they could learn from their experiences and improve next time (78.6%). In addition, 64.3% of TCs felt that completing the observation forms pushed them to think more deeply about their lesson plans and consider whether lessons were student-centered (see Table 2).

Table 2
Helpfulness of Form for Promoting Reflection

Helpfulness	% somewhat or strongly agree (n=28)	M(SD)
Completing the classroom observation form helped me...		
... reflect on my actions, as a teacher, to see whether I could have improved on what I did*	67.9	3.00 (.903)
... question the way others and myself do things in the classroom and to think of better ways of doing those things*	60.7	2.75 (.887)
... challenge some of my firmly held ideas**	60.7	2.68 (.983)
... change my normal way of doing things in the classroom**	57.1	2.68 (.863)

Table 2 continued

Helpfulness	% somewhat or strongly agree (n=28)	M(SD)
Completing the classroom observation form helped me...		
... change the way I look at myself as a teacher**	60.7	2.54 (.922)
... think over my teaching and to consider alternative teaching methods*	71.4	2.93 (.903)
... re-evaluate my teaching experiences so that I can learn from them and improve for my next performance*	78.6	2.93 (.813)
Overall, I felt that completing the observation forms required me to think more deeply about my lesson plans and whether they were student centered.	64.3	2.68 (1.02)

*Reflection; **Critical reflection

Perceptions about Feedback

TCs had favorable perceptions of the feedback provided to them by university supervisors. Most TCs indicated that they frequently read over feedback from their supervisors (92.9%) and most (96.4%) said the feedback helped them improve future lessons and teaching practices (see Table 3). While feedback was viewed favorably by TCs, 39.3% indicated that they felt anxious and judged by it. Over half of the TCs (53.6%) preferred typed feedback over verbal feedback. However, one TC wrote that the “written evaluations don’t provide that personal touch and personal voice that teachers need to help them through a difficult lesson or a successful lesson.”

Table 3
Perceptions of Supervisors' Feedback

Perceptions	% somewhat or strongly agree (n=28)	M(SD)
The feedback provided by my supervisor on the observation form helped me improve my future lessons and teaching practices.	96.4	3.54 (.744)
I often felt anxious about the feedback given to me. It was as though I was being evaluated and judged as a person.	39.3	2.07 (1.086)
I frequently read over the feedback provided to me on the observation form.	92.9	3.54 (.744)
I preferred written feedback on the observation form over verbal feedback.	53.6	2.68 (1.188)

TCs' Likes and Dislikes

When asked what they liked most about the form and process, TCs indicated that they liked the “written feedback from their supervisor” and that they “could write feedback along with the supervisor.” On open response items, TCs also suggested that the form helped them “develop better organized lessons,” “stay focused on the learning tasks and think through all aspects of the lesson,” and “think about how and why I was teaching something instead of just the method.” TCs also reported that the observation form helped them “reflect on whether the lesson would be meaningful to the students or if I was just doing it for the sake of implementing a lesson” and “show the supervisor my teaching skills.” In addition, one TC wrote that completing the form helped to “ensure accountability on the time preparing the lesson and supporting devices.”

When asked what they liked least, approximately 25% of the TCs cited the “time commitments required to complete the form.” Almost half (46.4%) of TCs indicated that on average each form took between 31-60 minutes to complete. Even though TCs cited time as the most disliked factor concerning the form, others felt that the time was worthwhile. For example, a TC wrote: “It did take a little bit of time, which was added to the list of everything else; but it was worth it.” This TC stated that the form “gave both of us [TC and supervisor] a way to know what goals to meet and also improve in areas where I was lacking.” Another wrote: “It did feel like one

more thing to do however, once it was finished I was glad I had completed it.” This TC stated that the form “helped me [TC] to better organize the lesson and stay focused on the learning task, while showing the supervisor the skills I have learned to teach with.”

TCs also critiqued the pre-observation phase where they reflected on their lessons, provided justifications for pedagogical decisions, and anticipated observable teacher and student evidence. A TC stated that doing reflections before the implementation of the lesson “felt more like a chore since most the information that I presented was just restatements of my lesson plan.” Another wrote that “providing answers before the lesson began felt like putting the cart before the horse. I had no idea what the students might do or how the lesson would go.” One TC recommended that “more concentration must be focused on the AFTER not the prior.” Finally, a TC wrote that completing the form made her “feel overwhelmed and an intense pressure to make every lesson this AMAZING AWE inspiring thing.” The TC felt that the form sent her into “Gotta get an ‘A’ mode.”

DISCUSSION

While implementation of the new digital learner-centered observation form and process was not without problems and limitations, TCs indicated that their experiences led to professional growth in numerous ways. First, TCs expressed deeper engagement in reflective practices and, secondly, TCs had favorable perceptions of supervisor feedback that they felt helped them reflect and grow professionally. The latter finding is particularly encouraging because it suggests that the digital observation form might have promoted the type of collaborative scaffolding from supervisors that furthered the capabilities of TCs.

On self-reports about their reflective practices, TCs tended to reflect more after a lesson than during a lesson as was indicated by the higher reported frequencies of reflection-on-action (ROA) than reflection-in-action (RIA) practices. This could be a result of TCs focusing more on teaching strategies than reflective activities during lessons. Furthermore, this may have been due to the amount of support and guidance from supervisors towards reflection-in-action practices. Studies suggest that many TCs find it difficult to identify what matters in teaching and elaborate on what they observe in the classroom (Berliner, 2001). Therefore, providing TCs with additional training, guidance, and scaffolding regarding the types of observable evidence that can be gathered during a lesson may lead to more reflection-in-action (RIA) practices.

Supervisors and candidates showed some positive signs of growth with RIA practices. For example, most TCs reported the highest frequencies of reflection concerning whether their students were meeting learning objectives. In addition, most TCs reported frequently engaging in ROA practices to improve future instruction. Both of these findings suggest that TCs were able to consider and question whether they were meeting students' learning needs. This can be a difficult task for many TCs who can easily become consumed with the act of teaching at the expense of attending to student learning. These results could be, at least, partially attributed to TCs' satisfaction and willingness to consider and apply feedback from supervisors from the digital observation form in upcoming lessons.

While TCs reflected in different ways, they generally agreed that collaborative reflection was particularly effective. A majority of TCs (75%) indicated "verbal conversations with others" as the most effective method for reflecting on a lesson. Consistent with the literature, TCs stated that they liked collaborative interactions with others because it afforded them opportunities to engage with different perspectives (Walkington et al., 2001) and build on their knowledge base in ways that led to professional growth. Moreover, findings suggest promise in the more learner-centered observation approach used in this study as its collaborative design is more closely aligned with the conversational style of supervision that TCs reported to be a more effective means of reflecting. TCs experienced a sense of empowerment and agency (Biehler, 2013) as they collaborated with supervisors to compose a meaningful assessment of their teaching performance in the digital observation form, an approach that also aligns with Vygotsky's ZPD model, which illustrates how individuals learn most effectively through social interaction and scaffolding by a more experienced peer or mentor (Vygotsky, 1978)—in this case through both conversation and digital/written interactions.

Findings further suggest that TCs felt that the observation form was helpful for promoting their reflective practices. Over 57% of TCs expressed that completing the observation form helped them reflect on their teaching. Completing the form was most helpful in encouraging TCs to re-evaluate teaching experiences so they could learn from experiences and improve future teaching (78.6%). This type of active reflection is beneficial to learners because it scaffolds critical thinking, provides sources for knowledge construction, and encourages self-regulation. While results were positive, more reflection and critical reflection may have been achieved by TCs with more frequent observations and supportive guidance from supervisors (Coombs & Goodwin, 2013). This study took place over a semester and TCs completed

2-4 observations that may not have been sufficient for them to build on their reflective practices and/or for them to recognize the impact of the form and observation process on those practices.

Overall, TCs had favorable perceptions of the feedback provided to them by university supervisors. The majority of TCs (92.9%) stated that they frequently read over written feedback and that the written feedback helped improve their future lessons (96.4%). Interestingly, TCs were split on their preferences for written (53.6%) and oral (46.4%) feedback. This may have been due to the personal voice or tone that is often absent with written or text-based feedback. Just as TCs generally demonstrate differences in pedagogical preferences, the same can be said regarding their preferences for the mode of feedback (Attinello et al., 2006). Regardless of preferences, it seems clear that TCs desired and used feedback that was more dynamic and detailed using the more collaborative forms.

While this study aimed to cultivate professional growth through more conversational, less evaluative, and less threatening classroom observations, 39.3% of TCs indicated that they felt anxious about and judged by the feedback they received from supervisors. Although it was beyond the scope of this project, future research should delve deeper into whether these sorts of feelings are due to the types of feedback that supervisors provide or whether this anxiety might be attributed to TCs not being fully ready to accept constructive feedback. This issue should be addressed by teacher educators because anxiety can obstruct TCs' aptitude to benefit from the collaborative process. In fact, we hypothesize that TCs' more active role in this collaborative reflection process might encourage them to accept and even seek out more constructive feedback, rather than shying away from or dismissing it.

Unfortunately, not all TCs found value in reflecting on lesson plans before implementation. Some TCs saw this process as merely restating the lesson plan, and thus unnecessary. While this may have been true for some TCs, completing the form prior to instruction provided supervisors with a foundation from which to begin feedback regarding prior knowledge. We contend that this may have led to richer conversations between TCs and supervisors. In addition, TCs' self-assessment prior to lesson implementation aligns with Kansas's licensure performance assessment, the Kansas Performance Teaching Portfolio (KPTP), as well as the nationally recognized edTPA created by Stanford University's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) with support from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Haynes, 2014). Additionally, we believe that the act of articulating not only their own behaviors but also potential student behaviors prior to teaching the lesson will help TCs anticipate student responses,

rather than assuming, as one TC reported, that teachers have no way of foreseeing how a lesson will impact students. It may be necessary for supervisors to spend more time discussing the purpose for pre-lesson reflection as part of the collaborative process. Future research should investigate this further.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite limitations, the results of this study support the literature that TCs benefit from observations that integrate self-reflection, collaborative reflection, and quality feedback. Future research should delve deeper into the types of reflective practices that TCs engage in and the types of interactions with their supervisors. Educational systems often suffer from hierarchical, top-down structures that result in a culture where teachers are passive technicians. If we hope for teachers to be active and reflective practitioners then we must continue to search out ways to develop such dispositions in teacher education programs. Furthermore, while beyond the scope of this project, future researchers should also investigate the impact of using similar classroom observation forms that are more student-centered and focus on TCs' reflective practices and student learning. Additional studies could focus on the impact of such forms on the practices and perceptions of supervisors (e.g., administrators, teacher educators, mentor teachers), as well as the impact on verbal interactions among participants (i.e., Do they interact more as a result of using the form?).

CONCLUSIONS

In order to develop the next generation of reflective and collaborative teachers, it is crucial that teacher preparation programs support and mentor TCs through the reflective process. We strove to accomplish this through more learner-centered and collaborative observations in which scaffolding provided by supervisors fostered TCs' pedagogical growth. With a more learner-centered approach to supervision, the responsibility for reflective practice is put back into the hands of TCs who take a more active role in critiquing their lessons and teaching performance. While this type of supervision can require more time commitments, it has the potential to promote professional growth among TCs as they engage in active dialogue with supervisors rather than passively receiving evaluations from them. Furthermore, this new form encourages supervisors to consider and reflect

on issues, shifting TCs from a pragmatic understanding of the pedagogy to a more reflective approach (Kuit & Gill, 2001). Research has generally indicated that such collaborative learning efforts compel mentor and mentee teachers to better meet the needs of students, and address the challenges and complexities of teaching (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010).

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