Partnering in Practice: A Look at Collaborative Student Teaching

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Partnering in Practice

A Look at Collaborative Student Teaching

by

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ABSTRACT

PARTNERING IN PRACTICE
A LOOK AT COLLABORATIVE STUDENT TEACHING

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This qualitative case study examined the experience of two student teachers as they partnered during their student teaching assignment. The relationship which developed between the pair was critical to the success of their experience and allowed them to enjoy several benefits of paired student teaching as well as overcome potential stumbling blocks. The successful experience described in this study demonstrates that paired student teaching can be an effective alternative to traditional student teaching.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Teacher preparation programs typically focus on identifying effective teaching practices, communicating these practices to preservice teachers, helping preservice teachers adopt those practices in their own professional behavior, and instilling a sense of efficacy in students (Gorrell & Capron, 1990). Student teaching, which has long been a part of the preparatory experience of teachers and is a widely accepted and important part of teacher preparation (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002), is the forum in which many of these goals are realized.

Statement of the Problem

Although student teaching is an integral part of teacher preparation, many researchers have voiced concerns over traditional student teaching programs. They suggest that the solo experience of student teaching leaves many student teachers with feelings of isolation and frustration (Bullough et al., 2002; Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990). This may be because student teachers, who are accustomed to learning with peers in a classroom setting, are now expected to learn new skills without the benefit of peer interaction and support. Although many student teachers form relationships with their cooperating teachers, the nature of the mentor/student relationship prevents them from interacting on the same level as with peers.

Additionally, as a result of competition from other educational institutions in the area, Brigham Young University is experiencing the challenge of finding an adequate number of effective placements with willing and qualified cooperating teachers. This
competition limits the number of placements available for preservice teachers from Brigham Young University. Innovative approaches to student teaching, such as paired-placement assignments, may help alleviate some of these concerns (Bullough et al., 2002). While researchers tout the benefits of collaborative student teaching, there is little research surrounding the collaborative efforts of partnered student teachers.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the experience of two secondary student teachers who were placed in a paired assignment, describe what a paired-placement student teaching assignment looks like, investigate the possible benefits that could be derived from paired placements, and suggest possible stumbling blocks that could be avoided in future paired-placement assignments. As a supervisor for student teachers at Brigham Young University, the results of this study will influence my own practice as I work with, advise, and evaluate paired student teachers in the future. In addition, this study will influence future research regarding paired student teachers by providing a thick description of one partnership.

Research Question

The specific research question this study sought to answer is: What was the experience of two student teachers who were partnered with one cooperating teacher at the secondary level during the student teaching component of their teacher preparation program?
Definition of Terms

Student Teaching / Practice Teaching

Student teaching and practice teaching refer to the process of allowing teacher education students to practice what they have learned throughout their preparatory program. It generally takes place at the end of the teacher preparation program and is typically completed in local public schools (Bullough et al., 2002; Weaver & Stanulis, 1996). In this paper, the term student teaching will be used to identify the practice experience in teacher preparation.

Cooperating Teacher / Mentor Teacher

Cooperating teacher and mentor teacher are both terms used to describe the teacher with whom a student teacher is placed during the student teaching component of an educator preparation program (Koerner, 1992). In addition to providing a classroom and students, cooperating or mentor teachers generally oversee the student teaching experience and allow student teachers to utilize materials and ideas.

Collaboration

Because this study will be an examination of paired student teaching, it may be helpful to consider the definition of collaboration. Collaboration has been defined in several ways. West (1990) defines collaboration as “interactive planning or problem solving involving two or more team members” (p. 29). Friend and Cook (1992) add that collaboration includes sharing resources to meet a common goal. In an educational environment, Welch (1998) suggests that collaboration can be used in cooperative consultation with colleagues, team teaching, or problem solving efforts. According to
Welch (1998), collaboration generally consists of two or more individuals working together to meet a common goal or solve a shared problem often resulting in an increased number and variety of solutions. For the purposes of this study, collaboration is defined as the shared efforts of two student teachers as they plan, present lessons, and evaluate pupils during their student teaching experience. Rather than turn-taking, student teachers were expected to team teach.

_Paired Placement / Dual Placement / Peer Placement / Partnered Placement_

Paired placement, dual placement, peer placement, and partnered placement all refer to the practice of assigning two or more student teachers to work with the same cooperating teacher during the student teaching component of teacher education (Bullough et al., 2002, 2003; Wynn & Kromrey, 2000).
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of Student Teaching

The practice of apprenticeship during the Middle Ages likely led to the initial concept of student teaching. During this period, an apprentice learned a trade by studying with a Master in an associated field. As education became formalized, apprenticeships became the method for preparing new teachers (Johnson, 1968). The formal beginnings of student teaching can be traced to late seventeenth century Europe when Jean Baptiste de la Salle established the first normal school at Rheims, France in 1685 followed by an elementary laboratory school in Paris whose sole purpose was to provide practice teaching (Johnson, 1968). Because of his contribution to education, de la Salle has since been deemed the father of student teaching. Many other European schools followed the example of de la Salle and instituted programs which included practice teaching (Johnson, 1968).

Student teaching in the United States had its beginnings during colonial times and came into more formal use during the nineteenth century. The American colonies, bringing European ideas and practices with them, initially prepared teachers under the apprenticeship model requiring a young person to serve as an apprentice for a schoolmaster before becoming a teacher (Haberman, 1982). In 1823, Revered Samuel Hall established the first American private normal school in Concord, Vermont. Under his tutelage, third-year students of teaching were allowed to practice on a few pupils who were admitted for the specific purpose of demonstration lessons. In 1837, James G.
Carter, an educator and lawmaker from Massachusetts, helped establish the first public normal school in Lexington. The school began with one faculty member and three students. Two years later, in 1839, Cyrus Pierce was appointed the first principal of the Lexington normal school. Along with the normal school, Pierce also conducted a model school of 30 boys and girls aged 6-10 who were instructed by the students in the normal school. Pierce visited the model school twice daily thereby becoming the first supervisor of student teachers. By the close of the nineteenth century, there were 167 public normal schools and even more private ones. Combined, these normal schools had graduated more than 11,000 students. They made only a slight impact on public education, however, as there were over 400,000 practicing teachers and an annual need for 50,000 new ones (Haberman, 1982; Johnson, 1968).

In the early years of the twentieth century, educational training and student teaching became more common. Universities began to establish schools and colleges of education, many of which also opened model or lab schools where their students could practice teaching. By 1914, every city in the United States with a population of 100,000 or more had either a normal school or a department in its high school for teacher preparation. Most of these city schools closed during the 1930s and teacher preparation was left to the state schools (Haberman, 1982). In 1920, the Association for Student Teaching was formed, and within the next several years most states began requiring practice teaching for certification. In addition, many teacher preparation programs, relying less on model schools, began to send their students off campus for practice teaching. During the 1950s the term practice teaching gave way to student teaching, and surveys, reports, and
research about student teaching became more prevalent. The practice of student teaching has remained mostly unchanged from this time until the present and is still basically modeled after the apprenticeship tradition (Johnson, 1968).

**Student Teaching**

Student teaching has long been a part of the preparatory experience of preservice teachers and typically involves spending considerable time in schools (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). Although there are many components to teacher preparation, the actual student teaching experience is often seen as the “bridge between preparation for teaching and the beginning of a teaching career” (Weaver & Stanulis, 1996, p. 27). The student teaching component of teacher education is unique in that it provides a transition between the university course work of teacher preparation and the actual application of what has been taught and learned (Kamens, 2000).

Effective student teaching programs share several characteristics. First, an effective student teaching program provides preservice teachers with the opportunity to gain experience in real classroom environments (Johnston, 1994; Koerner, 1992). Student teachers are able to utilize the practices and theories they studied in their preparatory programs as they prepare, teach, and evaluate lessons for real pupils in actual schools. This experience allows them to integrate and apply their knowledge and practice in authentic classroom and school settings. Indeed, a quality student teaching experience provides a student teacher with an intense and realistic classroom experience in which the student teacher is charged with handling the same tasks and responsibilities expected of
career teachers. Merely observing, tutoring, or managing small groups is not adequate to prepare a student teacher for the rigors of teaching (Killian & McIntyre, 1988). An effective student teaching experience, in addition to providing classroom experience, helps students to develop a higher level of professional concern and to make important career decisions (Killian & McIntyre, 1988). Student teachers will become more aware of what the profession of teaching is all about and will be able to think more clearly about teaching as a career as they experience both the joys and difficulties of teaching, interact with students on academic and personal levels, become acquainted with other teachers, and learn more about their own individual strengths and weaknesses. Lemlech and Kaplan (1990) even suggest that “teachers’ professional life patterns are influenced” (p. 13) during student teaching. Indeed, the knowledge and skills learned during student teaching will accompany student teachers as they transition into teaching careers and will impact their experience as educators.

The opportunity to interact with and learn from a mentor teacher is another characteristic of an effective student teaching program. Cooperating teachers play a significant role in helping student teachers develop effective knowledge and skills (Koerner, 1992). Although many cooperating teachers provide valuable assistance to student teachers, some placements are made out of convenience and are not necessarily in the best interest of the student teacher (McIntyre, Bird, & Foxx, 1996). Ideally, as student teachers observe and interact with their cooperating teachers, they are able to borrow ideas, materials, and even teaching styles as they work to develop their own practice. Consequently, the placement of student teachers is crucial as the school in which they are
placed, the subject(s) they are assigned to teach, and the mentor teacher with whom they work will determine how and what they learn during their student teaching experience (Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990). In fact, the experiences student teachers have are often largely determined by the cooperating teachers with whom they are placed. The teaching and management styles, expectations, expertise, and interpersonal skills of a cooperating teacher affect the placement. A student teacher who has a positive and fulfilling experience with one cooperating teacher may have had a very different experience with a less effective cooperating teacher.

Just as researchers have identified multiple components of successful student teaching programs, they have also identified several problems associated with student teaching. The purpose of public schools is to educate students, not student teachers. Although student teaching is accepted as an important part of teacher preparation, the main obligation of schools is to the students they serve. Schools must concentrate their best resources and efforts on their own students. Therefore, because schools have limited resources, they must be careful in their use. Unfortunately, cooperating teachers, who are the most important resource of a school, often feel conflicted about their responsibility toward their students and their obligations to student teachers (Koerner, 1992).

The demanding nature of student teaching is an additional problem identified by researchers. Student teachers are often unprepared for the level of stress and anxiety they will confront during student teaching (Osunde, 1999). Many student teachers worry about such issues as developing a relationship with and teaching in front of a cooperating teacher and/or university supervisor, meeting university requirements while also meeting students’
needs, learning about students, planning for actual instruction, having adequate knowledge of the subject matter and effective pedagogy, and managing classrooms (Kamens, 2000; Osunde, 1999). In addition, student teachers often face large classes with students of varying achievement levels. Excessive paperwork and long class periods also cause student teachers to feel overwhelmed.

The traditional practice of assigning one student teacher to one cooperating teacher can pose another problem. As an individual endeavor, student teaching is usually done in relative isolation (Kamens, 1997). Indeed, for many student teachers, after the initial two to three week introductory period, the cooperating teacher leaves the student teacher to handle all classroom activities and problems often checking in only once or twice daily. Thus the student teacher works alone for much of the school day. Consequently, feelings of isolation can compound the difficulties faced by student teachers (Bullough, 1991; Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990; McIntyre, Bird, & Foxx, 1996). Indeed, the stress placed upon student teachers by the demands of student teaching can be overwhelming. As preservice programs consider ways to combat some of these difficulties, they may look to the benefits of collaboration.

Collaboration and Collaborative Teaching

Teachers who participate in professional collaboration benefit in several ways. Teachers learn from each other during the process of planning instruction, developing and exchanging materials, observing each other with students, and thinking about the impact of their behavior on the learning of students (Welch, 1998; Yopp & Guillaume, 1999). Additionally, collaborating teachers demonstrate increased decision making, problem
solving, and conflict management skills. Through the collaborative process, teachers enjoy an increase in emotional support, self-esteem, job satisfaction, and interpersonal communication skills (Kamens, 1997; Welch, 1998). Furthermore, West (1990) suggests that instruction is most effective in a school environment that is characterized by collaboration, and Lemlech and Kaplan (1990) add that collaboration enhances a teacher’s ability to become a professional. Clearly, collaboration offers many benefits and may improve teacher effectiveness.

While collaboration is considered by many to be an important component of education, teacher education programs are often missing any collaborative instruction or practice (Welch, 1998; Yopp & Guillaume, 1999). Friend and Cook (1990) suggest that although preservice teachers receive instruction in theory, method, and content, they are set up to fail because they are not taught the skills to work effectively with others. Most teachers enter the field of education with little or no experience in collaboration and receive instruction related to collaboration only after they have completed their preservice program (Kamens, 1997). As teachers will generally be expected to collaborate with other professionals and parents, teacher education programs should consider developing courses that specifically address the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with collaboration (Welch, 1998). In fact, several researchers have suggested that collaboration should be part of the student teaching component of teacher education programs (Kamens, 1997; Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990; Yopp & Guillaume, 1999). Indeed, paired-placement student teaching may offer the best opportunity for student teachers to learn collaborative skills.
Paired-Placement Student Teaching

Paired-placement student teaching occurs when two collaborating student teachers are placed with one cooperating teacher during the field service component of a teacher education program. While there is little research describing what a paired placement in student teaching would look like, some researchers have suggested that paired student teachers plan together, teach together, and support each other. Rather than a turn-taking approach, paired student teachers interact as a team as they present lessons, assist students, and evaluate performance (Bullough et al., 2002; Kamens, 1997).

Paired-placement student teachers benefit from their student teaching in a variety of ways; one of which is learning valuable problem solving skills. Lalik and Niles (1990) conducted a study in which student teachers collaborated to plan reading lessons. They found that the student teachers had an enhanced ability to analyze problems. A study by Evans (1991) in which student teachers received collaborative training reported similar results. Student teachers who had received collaborative training were “more likely to discuss classroom problems as solvable” (p. 12). Finally, Bullough and Gitlin (1991) found that a paired student teaching placement enabled student teachers to locate problems as well as useful resources for resolving those problems.

In addition to developing problem solving skills, paired-placement student teachers also benefit by improving instructional skills. Lemlech and Kaplan (1990) conducted a study of paired student teachers and discovered that the nature of the paired process required student teachers to understand the teaching process more deeply as they thought about and critiqued teaching. Other studies suggest that paired student teachers are more
flexible in their instruction (Lalik & Niles, 1990), more tolerant of students with lesser
cognitive abilities and social difficulties (Evans, 1991), and are more willing to take risks
which lead to professional development (Hawkey, 1995). Wynn and Kromrey (2000)
suggest that an additional benefit of paired placement that helps student teachers develop
instructional skills is the immediate feedback they are able to provide for one another.
Whereas the university supervisor makes only occasional visits and the cooperating
teacher often has other responsibilities, the teaching partner is available to provide
ongoing and prompt feedback. Finally, cooperating teachers who work with paired-
placement student teachers often work more closely with partnered student teachers and
therefore provide more support (Bullough et al., 2002).

In addition to problem solving and instructional skill development, paired student
teachers also benefit in their personal development. Hawkey (1995) suggests that because
of their shared position as student teachers and equal status as peers, paired student
teachers develop more affective and emotional aspects of learning to teach. Lemlech and
Kaplan (1990) claim that paired student teachers “become sensitive practitioners and
acquire a different perspective on working in an institutional setting” (p. 14). Bullough and
his colleagues (2002) report that in addition to feeling better supported, paired student
teachers also feel responsible for each other’s development. They not only help each other
with classroom issues, but with life’s problems as well. Other researchers suggest that
paired student teachers develop better working relationships, as well as more effective
interpersonal and collaborative skills (Kamens, 1997). Moreover, they develop an
inclination toward collegiality through sharing responsibilities, knowledge, and resources (Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990).

Finally, as a result of their paired-placement assignment, partnered student teachers benefit from an increased sense of confidence and self-esteem. As student teachers work as partners, share experiences, and collaborate in their efforts, they gain confidence in their abilities which results in improved self-esteem (Kamens, 2000). Paired-placement assignments also help to provide an increased sense of security and often result in fewer feelings of anxiety (Lalik & Niles, 1990).

Although the majority of research on paired-placement student teaching points to positive outcomes, a few problems have been identified. Some teachers and student teachers have expressed concerns about paired assignments, questioning whether they provide sufficient, realistic experiences for student teachers who most likely will “solo” teach when hired as actual teachers (Bullough et al., 2003). In addition, some mentor teachers have indicated that working with a pair of student teachers requires more time and effort, especially in the initial weeks of the placement (Bullough et al., 2002). Finally, some student teachers have reported that working from another student teacher’s lesson plan is difficult if they have not equally participated in the planning (Kamens, 1997).

Research on Student Teaching

Research related to student teaching consists primarily of small interpretative studies which are often disconnected from other elements of teacher preparation programs. In addition, the research is largely focused on elementary school programs (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). McIntyre, Bird, and Foxx (1996) suggest that
much of the research regarding student teaching has not been systematic and is missing “quantifiable and qualitative data” (p. 173) that will allow teacher educators to determine whether a student teaching program is effective. Additionally, they claim that although many modifications to the common structure of student teaching have been attempted, little research has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness and value of the modifications. Haberman (1982) goes so far as to claim that research on student teaching is “meager, diverse, and trivial” (p. 69): meager because the knowledgeable participants are largely practitioners who focus the bulk of their efforts on practice rather than on research; diverse because much of the research comes from doctoral dissertations which are rarely followed-up with future studies; and trivial because the researchers who do occasionally study student teaching are often unfamiliar with its basic structure. Indeed, a descriptive study which gathers specific information about paired student teaching placements may provide a starting point from which further research could flow. Ellwein, Graue, and Comfort (1990) suggest that “student teachers provide learning opportunities not only for their temporary classroom wards but also for those professionals who examine and shape the teacher preparation experience” (p. 3). In recent years, many researchers have begun examining the opportunities and benefits of collaboration during the student teaching component of teacher preparation (Bullough, et al., 2002, 2003; Kamens, 1997, 2000; Welch, 1998; Yopp & Guillaume, 1999).

While there is limited research which describes and investigates collaboration in student teaching (Hawkey, 1995; Kamens, 1997), many institutions are looking for ways to reinvent student teaching by altering the status quo (Cochrane-Smith, 1991). Several
researchers are calling for programs that encourage and teach collaboration during the
student teaching component of teacher preparation (Welch, 1998; Yopp & Guiallume,
1999). Three different studies answer that call.

Kamens (1997) described a study in which five collaborating student teachers,
assigned to five different cooperating teachers, worked together to teach fifth grade. The
student teachers shared information on students, exchanged ideas, planned lessons, and
worked together to implement the schedule. Through this study, Kamens identified four
major themes. First, the collaborating student teachers felt support from each other as they
shared their problems, frustrations, and accomplishments. The student teachers reported
that the ability to share with a peer was a great benefit because they provided praise and
encouragement for each other. Second, these student teachers shared ideas, methods, and
materials. They appreciated having peers with whom they could brainstorm, discuss
methods and materials, and test new ideas. In addition, the sharing of ideas, methods, and
materials helped to reduce the workload. Third, they were exposed to a variety of teaching
styles which provided them with a broader view of the classroom experience. The
cooperating teachers felt that this allowed the student teachers to develop their own styles
more quickly and feel more comfortable with the process. Fourth, the student teachers
worked with and were exposed to a variety of different personalities. This was also
identified as an advantage as student teachers were less likely to experience personality-
related conflicts because they worked with more than one person. Kamens concluded that
the collaborative experience gave the student teachers “the opportunity to learn and
demonstrate skills essential to becoming classroom teachers who are prepared to meet the challenges which will face them in the schools of the 21st century” (p. 101).

The other two studies, conducted by Bullough and his colleagues (Bullough et al., 2002, 2003), examined student teacher pairs who worked in elementary schools to complete their student teaching. In each study, both paired-placement and single-placement student teachers were studied. The researchers determined that the paired student teachers benefitted in several ways. First, paired student teachers developed a team-like relationship with their mentor teachers. The teaming relationship likely allowed the student teachers to play a larger part in decision making. Second, paired student teachers were better able to take risks. This may be because they had the support of their partner and were not as concerned about the consequences of risky ideas and techniques. Third, paired student teachers developed richer, more interesting, and varied lessons. The ideas, experience, and knowledge of two student teachers likely contributed to the improved lessons. Fourth, paired student teachers were more helpful to students. Indeed, student teachers were able to provide more support and spend more individual time with pupils because of the improved student-teacher ratio. Fifth, paired student teachers were more engaged in planning. This may be because in order to coordinate and prepare for a team approach, they needed to concentrate extra effort on planning and were less able to teach without an organized plan. Sixth, paired student teachers were less concerned with classroom management and discipline issues. An extra pair of eyes and increased feelings of security and support likely led to this benefit.
While the research surrounding paired-placement student teaching suggests that collaboration during student teaching is beneficial and effective, the research is focused on the elementary level and has examined large groups of student teachers. An in-depth study of one secondary level student teaching pair provides a thick description of the process and will influence not only my own future supervision of student teachers, but also future research regarding paired student teaching assignments. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the experience of two secondary student teachers who were placed in a paired assignment, describe what a paired-placement student teaching assignment looked like, investigate the possible benefits that could be derived from a paired placement, and suggest possible stumbling blocks that could be avoided in future paired-placement assignments. The study answers the following research question: What is the experience of two student teachers who were partnered with one cooperating teacher at the secondary level during the student teaching component of their teacher preparation program?
CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Case study methodology, which allows a researcher to tell a story about a bounded system (Stake, 1988), was the method used in this study of paired student teaching. Orum, Feagin, and Sjoberg (1991) define case study as an “in-depth, multifaceted investigation, using qualitative research methods of a single phenomenon” (p. 2), which is conducted in great detail and generally relies on the use of several data sources. Stake (2000) adds that case study is not a specific technique, but rather a choice of what is to be studied. It is a process of inquiry about a case as well as the product of that inquiry. Mabry (1998) extends the definition by stating that case study is an approach to research and evaluation which emphasizes the “uniqueness and situationality of a case” (p. 155), and in an educational setting is focused on understanding the “complexity, particularity, and contextuality” (p. 155) of the case. In short, case study methodology involves using qualitative methods to collect and organize data from several sources which are used to understand and describe a bounded system in context.

Case study methodology offers several benefits to a researcher who seeks to study a bounded contextual system. A case study approach to research is both holistic and contextual. The holistic view provided by case study demonstrates that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, while the contextual nature of case study allows the subject(s) to be understood in its natural state (Mabry, 1998; Stake, 1978). In addition, the case study offers a researcher the opportunity to refine theory, suggest possibilities for future research, establish limits of generalizability, and reflect on human experience (Stake,
2000). Case studies make unique contributions to the knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political contexts (Yin, 1994) and are best used in adding to existing experience and understanding (Stake, 1978). Finally, the case study approach is manageable and practical in that it can be accomplished by a single researcher (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991).

Case study methodology was particularly useful in this study of paired student teachers. Yin (1994) suggests that a research strategy should be chosen based on three criteria: type of research question, researcher control over participant behavior, and focus on a contemporary versus historical subject. Case study methodology should be used when the question seeks to understand the how or why of a situation, when the researcher does not seek to control events, and when the focus is on a contemporary, real-life contextual subject. This study of paired student teachers, which sought to understand and describe the experience of paired student teachers within a natural and contemporary context, was a good match for case study methodology. In addition, case study methodology can include a participant researcher (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991; Yin, 1994). Once again, this made case study a good match for this study of paired student teachers as I acted as both researcher and student teaching supervisor.

**Context and Participants**

The student teachers participating in this case study were drawn from a group of secondary education social studies student teachers from Brigham Young University. The existing preservice program includes a 16 week student teaching component which is completed during one of the final two semesters of the program. Preservice teachers are
generally divided into groups of 10-14 students and assigned to a university supervisor. They meet as a group approximately five times during the semester where they receive training, support, and information related to their experience. Traditionally, one student teacher is placed with one cooperating teacher, but recently, some student teachers from Brigham Young University have been placed in pairs. For the purpose of this study, a pair of partnered student teachers was placed in a secondary social studies class with one cooperating teacher.

The student teachers who participated in this study were randomly paired and met for the first time at the orientation meeting. They were selected from the student teachers who were assigned to me as a supervisor during Fall Semester of 2005. In keeping with Stake’s (2000) suggestion that researchers select cases from which they can learn the most, specifically cases which are accessible and with whom the most time can be spent, participants for this study were selected, in part, by considering which pair of student teachers would provide me with the most access. In addition, the participants indicated their willingness to participate, meaning they committed to the extra effort involved in the collaboration process as well as in the data collection process.

The student teachers who participated in the study were given certain considerations in an attempt to protect them from any negative effects. First, the participants received pseudonyms (Allison and Julie) which were used throughout the research presentation. Second, because study participants were also fulfilling the student teaching requirement of their teacher preparation programs, I separated the time I spent observing them as a researcher from the time I spent observing them as a supervisor. Their
performance in relation to their efforts at collaboration did not influence their final
evaluations. Third, I allowed extra time during conferencing sessions to discuss issues
dealing with their student teaching experience as well as their collaborative experiences
related to the study. Finally, participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix
A), and the research procedures for this study were reviewed and approved by the
Institutional Review Board of Brigham Young University. Although the time required to
participate in this study was in addition to the student teachers’ regular requirements, the
feedback they received as a result of extended observation time benefitted each student
teacher.

The cooperating teacher to whom the student teachers were assigned was also
carefully selected, given a pseudonym (Mrs. Lawrence), and asked to sign a consent form
(see Appendix B). I selected a cooperating teacher who works with student teachers
because of a desire to advance the field of education. In addition, I selected a cooperating
teacher with whom I have previously had a positive experience and who has demonstrated
a capacity to work effectively with student teachers. I also looked for a cooperating
teacher who was willing to put forth the effort required to work with the partnered
student teachers and participate in the necessary components of the study. As in the
selection of student teachers, I again considered access and time availability in the
selection of a cooperating teacher.

Researcher Stance

In accordance with accepted practice in case study methodology (Yin, 1994), I
acted as both a student teaching supervisor and participant researcher throughout the
study. As one of the principal qualifications of a qualitative researcher is experience (Stake, 1995), a description of my previous experience in education may prove beneficial. I have served as a student teaching supervisor for Brigham Young University over the past eleven semesters, and have been an instructor of a secondary education orientation course (Sec. Ed. 276) for the past two semesters. Previous to this, I taught secondary English and mathematics for seven years in the public schools. My responsibilities as a university supervisor include observing student teachers in their practice, identifying areas of strength as well as areas of needed improvement, helping student teachers improve in weak areas, acting as a resource for curriculum, management skills, and pedagogical skills, communicating with their cooperating teachers, and completing a final evaluation of their experience. I attended to these duties for all of my assigned student teachers as I conducted my research with the paired student teachers in my study.

Data Collection

As multiple data sources are an important component of case study methodology and add validity to the results through triangulation (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991; Stake, 2000; Yin, 1994), I used several data sources to complete this study of paired student teachers including observations, interviews, journal entries, and artifacts.

According to Yin (1994), observation in case study allows the researcher to view the case in real time and in context, and in the specific case of participant observation, allows the researcher to view the case from the inside. As a participant observer, I observed the collaborating student teachers in two settings and used field notes to record the observations. First, in my normal course of supervision, I observed the student
teachers in their classroom environment and provided feedback on their performance as would normally be delivered. In addition to observing their progress as student teachers in an attempt to assist their progression and provide a final evaluation, I also observed their in-class interaction and collaboration. These observations occurred weekly and were unannounced. Secondly, on four separate occasions throughout the semester, I observed planning meetings. Because my first obligation as a supervisor was to the student teachers, on one occasion during these observed planning meetings I provided input and suggestions.

Interviews, which are one of the most important sources of case study information because they focus directly on the case study participants and provide first-hand insights (Yin, 1994), were also used. Each interview was audiotaped and later transcribed. I interviewed each of the participating partnered student teachers three times throughout the semester: once at the beginning of the semester (see Appendix C) to gauge their initial feelings toward collaboration, a second time in the middle of the semester to assess their progress, and a third time upon completion of their student teaching (see Appendix D) to evaluate their overall feelings toward the experience. I also looked to see if their feelings toward collaboration changed throughout the semester. In conducting the second and third interviews, I asked questions which referred to previous observations and collected artifacts involving the collaborative efforts of the student teachers. I conducted the interviews privately to ensure confidentiality.

I also interviewed the cooperating teacher three times throughout the semester (see Appendix E). In the first interview, I asked questions which explored the cooperating
teacher’s previous experiences in mentoring student teachers, the cooperating teacher’s perceptions about collaboration, and the cooperating teacher’s concerns about the paired placement assignment. In the second and third interviews, I asked questions which explored the experience of mentoring paired student teachers. I looked for any changing perceptions and opinions about collaboration and the experience of working with the paired student teachers.

Journal entries kept by the student teachers were a third data source used in this study. The participating partnered student teachers wrote a weekly journal entry in which they discussed their experience in collaborating with their partner. The journal entries were in the form of a double-entry log (see Appendix F). On one side of the log, student teachers described an episode which illustrated an experience in collaboration. On the other side, the student teachers wrote about their thoughts and feelings related to the episode. The journal entries helped the student teachers put their thoughts into words (Melnychuk, 2001) and thereby assisted me in understanding their experience. In order to encourage honest answers, I did not read the log entries until after semester grades were posted. I provided stamped envelopes addressed to Roni Jo Draper, my committee chair, and asked the student teachers to send each week’s entry as soon as it was completed. This allowed me to monitor the completion of the logs while ensuring their privacy until my duties as a supervisor were fulfilled.

As a fourth data source, artifacts such as lesson and unit plans were collected. Yin (1994) suggests that artifacts or documentation provide a researcher with a broader perspective and a way to verify or corroborate information from other sources. The lesson
and unit plans I collected allowed me to discover how the paired student teachers’ lesson
and unit plans for collaborative teaching compared to the actual teaching of a lesson or
unit.

Data Analysis

I used principles of grounded theory, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990),
to analyze the data from the study. Grounded theory, which is also referred to as a
constant comparative method of analysis, allows a researcher to inductively derive a
theory by studying the related phenomena. This approach met the needs of my study
because it allowed me to begin with an area of study, paired student teachers, and
provided the means by which a theory could emerge.

The use of grounded theory involved several steps. Because the constant
comparative nature of grounded theory requires the interaction of data collection and data
analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), I began analyzing data as soon as it was collected. The
first steps involved open coding, a process in which data are broken down into parts,
closely examined, and compared with other data. During open coding, I labeled data and
looked for categories into which data could be sorted. After using open coding to analyze
the initial data, I used axial coding to begin putting the data back together and into
categories. Axial coding includes four simultaneous steps (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which
relate subcategories to a main category, verify hypothesis against actual data, search for
the properties of categories and subcategories, and compare categories and subcategories.
I continued to use open coding on newly collected data while using axial coding on data
which had previously been submitted to open coding. Finally, I used selective coding to integrate the categories and identify core categories and a story line.

In order to present an accurate and complete description of the paired student teaching experience, I asked the participants of the study to participate in a member check in which each study participant was asked to read through an initial draft of the study to check for correct interpretation. Member checking is valuable because it ensures accuracy and provides additional triangulation of the data (Stake, 1995), allowing me to provide a full and accurate description of the experience of the paired student teachers who participated in this study.

Theoretical Lens

In analyzing the data collected from this study, I drew from literature on professional trust (Frowe, 2005; Bryk & Schneider, 2002), collaborative relationships (Dallmer, 2004; Hord, 1986), and social role-taking (Reiman & Peace, 2002).

Professional trust is critical in the establishment of interpersonal relationships and is established when an individual feels assured that another will act in his or her best interest (Frowe, 2005). According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), individuals rely on previous history, prior exchanges, or general similarities when choosing to trust. Furthermore, they state that relational trust is founded on common beliefs and observed behaviors. They suggest four considerations that must be met in the formation of trust. First, respect must be established and reciprocated. This involves the recognition of the importance of each individual’s role in the relationship as well as the willingness to take each other’s perspectives into account. Second, competence in the performance of an
individual’s role must be secured. One individual must feel confident in the other’s ability to achieve a desired outcome. Third, personal regard must exist. “Trust deepens as individuals perceive that others care about them and are willing to extend themselves beyond what their role might formally require in any given situation” (p. 25). And fourth, integrity must be demonstrated. Individuals must show a consistency between what they say and what they do.

Collaborative relationships rely on the notion that there is no hierarchy among participants and that decision making is democratic. Furthermore, collaboration requires equality of responsibility and equality of status (Hord, 1986). Collaboration does not mean giving up differences, but rather trusting in those differences in pursuit of a mutual purpose. In fact, effective collaboration depends on the establishment of trust and respect (Dallmer, 2004).

Social role-taking requires three competencies. First, a social role-taker must develop interpersonal understanding, or the understanding of the nature of relationship processes. Second, a social role-taker must develop interpersonal skills, or the ability to perform tasks which foster and maintain good relationships. And third, a social role-taker must be able to make personal meaning out of a situation. Social roles grow best out of real situations in immediate experience (Reiman & Peace, 2002).

Limitations

This study of a paired-placement student teaching assignment has several limitations. First, although the results of this study may well be informative and interesting, they are not generalizable to any other student teaching partnership or program. The many
differences which occur from one placement to another, including the cooperating teacher, school, students, teaching assignment, partner, and supervisor may affect the experience. Second, as this is a descriptive study that examined only two student teachers, the research value may be limited; however, this examination may lead to future, more in-depth research involving paired student teachers. Third, as I served as both researcher and supervisor, my observations may have been less objective. As my primary focus was the supervision of the student teachers, my research efforts were secondary. This focus may have affected the outcome of the research.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

In analyzing the data collected during this study and considering the driving question (What was the experience of two student teachers who were partnered with one cooperating teacher at the secondary level during the student teaching component of their teacher preparation program?), one particular phenomenon defined this paired experience: the relationship that developed between Allison and Julie (pseudonyms used). This relationship framed their experience and allowed them to enjoy several benefits associated with a paired placement, as well as overcome possible stumbling blocks to their success. The following chapter will consider the perceived benefits and stumbling blocks of this paired-placement experience in light of the relationship that developed between them, and will then describe the relationship-building interactions between Allison and Julie related to establishing trust, interacting collaboratively, and sharing common roles.

Perceived Benefits to the Student Teachers

The participants in this study identified several benefits to the student teachers in being paired including sharing ideas, sharing the work load, receiving support in their teaching efforts, learning to collaborate, enjoying the companionship of a shared situation, developing an increased level of confidence, and learning from each other’s strengths. The cooperating teacher, Mrs. Lawrence (pseudonym used), Allison, and Julie all spoke positively of the paired student teaching experience. Allison said, “The whole experience was positive” (AI-12/5). Julie stated, “I’m really glad I had a partner ‘cause I don’t think I would have made it through” (JI-12/5). And Mrs. Lawrence reported, “I definitely think
they [paired placements] should be continued because I can think of only positive things that have come out of them” (LI-12/5). Perhaps a description of a planning meeting and the resulting lesson will best illustrate the benefits to Allison and Julie of being in a paired student teaching experience.

On September 13, Allison and Julie spent time during their preparation period to plan the first lesson they would teach together (P-9/13). They began by discussing ways in which they could introduce themselves to the class and become more familiar with the students. They each suggested a few ideas, then settled on using a roll of toilet paper to facilitate the introductions. Allison wondered if they should demonstrate the activity first, but Julie suggested they just tell students to each take some toilet paper without any explanation and then demonstrate how they wanted the students to use the toilet paper as they introduced themselves to the class. After working out the details of the introductory activity, Julie and Allison looked at some Far Side comics which Julie wanted to use to introduce the unit on explorers. Both Allison and Julie giggled as they looked at the comics and decided on which ones to use. Allison suggested that since Julie had found the comics, she should be the one to show them to the students. Julie agreed. Allison and Julie then spent time looking through the chapter on explorers. They made a list of all of the explorers and discussed which ones they should focus on. They giggled together when neither one had heard of a couple of the explorers. After compiling a list, they discussed ways in which they could present the information to students. They considered having students read the entire chapter, but decided that might be too much information. They decided they would create a worksheet to guide the students’ learning. Allison expressed
some concern that the students might get bored. After thinking for a minute, Julie excitedly suggested that they tape a piece of paper with the name of one of the explorers under each desk, and then ask students to put their explorer on the board under the explorer’s country of origin. Allison thought it sounded like a great way to break up the lesson and give the students a chance to move around the room. They giggled together when they considered that the activity might get a little crazy. Julie and Allison then discussed how they could connect the activity to the worksheet. Allison suggested that they should discuss the timing of the lesson and make a list of everything they would need to prepare. They decided that Allison would bring the toilet paper and make the name papers, and Julie would type up and copy the worksheet.

A week later (C-9/21), Allison and Julie began their first lesson together by handing out toilet paper to the students. Allison passed the toilet paper out to one side of the room and Julie passed it out to the other side. Allison then told the students that for each square of toilet paper, they would need to tell one thing about themselves. Allison and Julie each demonstrated by using the toilet paper they had torn off for themselves. Allison then asked the students to begin on one side of the room and take turns introducing themselves. While Allison supervised the activity, Julie moved to the computer to take roll. After completing this task, Julie moved to the back of the room and helped Allison monitor students’ behavior. They both used proximity and an occasional “sh” to remind students to listen respectfully. After the last student had introduced himself, Julie told the students that now that they knew each other, it was time to get their books out and get to work. Both Allison and Julie monitored the students as they got their books out
and assisted students who did not bring books. Julie turned on the overhead and Allison turned off the classroom lights. Julie showed the students a couple of *Far Side* comics. She then explained the worksheet which would accompany their chapter on explorers. Allison walked around the room monitoring students and helping those who had questions. After explaining the worksheet, Julie asked students to reach under their desks to find a piece of paper and try to place it on the board under the country where the explorer came from. The students found their papers and tried to place them on the board. Allison and Julie worked together to assist the students who had questions. After all the papers had been placed on the board, Julie asked the students to use their books to fill in the information on their worksheet. Both student teachers walked around to monitor behavior and offer help.

This combined planning and teaching example illustrates several benefits enjoyed by Allison and Julie. First, they were able to share ideas. For example, after discussing a variety of ways in which they could introduce themselves, they settled on the toilet paper activity. Both student teachers reported that they appreciated being able to share ideas. According to Allison, “It’s nice to have a partner to run things by. Two heads are definitely better than one” (AL-11/23). Mrs. Lawrence echoed this idea when she identified that having someone to share ideas with improved their experience (LI-12/5).

Not only did Allison and Julie share ideas, but they also shared the work load. Some of the shared work involved the actual teaching load as illustrated in the above example when Allison and Julie each took the lead in different sections of the lesson (C-9/21). Some of the shared work involved preparing materials as happened when Allison
and Julie divided up the tasks involved in preparing for the lesson on explorers (P-9/13). And some of the shared workload involved routine tasks such as cleaning the room (P-11/28). In both her third interview and her fourth log, Julie mentioned that she really appreciated not having to “do it all.” Allison expressed similar feelings, “It’s just nice not to have to teach the whole time [laugh] - to have like little breaks, especially when you feel like you’re not doing good, then you can turn it over to the other person and then kind of like regroup” (AI-10/26).

Having another teacher in the class to support the teaching effort was an additional benefit for Allison and Julie. According to Allison, “It was helpful . . . to have [Julie] there to keep order and focus the classroom while I was teaching, and I tried to do the same for her as she taught” (AL-9/30). As illustrated in the lesson on explorers, both Allison and Julie provided support for the other by monitoring student behavior and assisting students. Julie discussed this benefit as she discussed a 13 colonies project they completed with the students. She stated that she would like to do a similar activity in the future but noted that “without a partner it will be much more difficult to pull off” (JL11/4).

As Allison and Julie worked together to plan, prepare, and teach the lesson on explorers, as well as many other lessons, they learned to collaborate or cooperate with each another, which was an additional benefit of being paired. Mrs. Lawrence indicated that she thought learning to collaborate would help Allison and Julie in their future teaching: “They learn to cooperate more with another person, and I think when they get into their regular teaching job they’ll want to do that cause they’ve already been collaborating” (LI-10/26). Allison reported that this experience has helped her “learn to
cooperate” (AI-10/26) and develop an appreciation for the importance of collaboration (AL-11/4).

While Julie and Allison spent time planning and teaching together, they enjoyed the additional benefit of companionship which comes from a shared situation. As demonstrated during their planning session for the lesson on explorers, Allison and Julie giggled together and enjoyed each other’s company as they worked together to plan and prepare lessons. Julie expressed that she enjoyed having someone to go through this experience with. She said, “I think I’d be much more stressed if I had to do it all by myself” (JL-9/23). She also said that it is “good to have someone that’s going through the same things” (JI-12/5). Mrs. Lawrence also noted that the student teachers benefitted from their companionship because “there is someone to talk to right off the bat” (LI-12/5). She pointed out that their shared situation was different, and often more powerful, than that of a cooperating teacher and a student teacher because of the student teachers’ shared level of experience (LI-9/12).

As illustrated in the example of a planning session, Allison and Julie were able to bounce ideas off one another as they worked to come up with a plan. In addition, as they presented the lesson, they supported each other’s efforts. These actions, combined with many others throughout the semester, led to an increased level of confidence, which was another benefit for Allison and Julie in being paired. When asked what she like about being in a partnership, Allison replied, “I was really, really scared to student teach - but I feel like I’m not even scared, you know, just cause I know that [Julie] is there and if I need help then I can turn to her” (AI-10/26). Mrs. Lawrence stated that she also felt that the
student teachers were more confident because of the paired placement. “I think they have
a greater sense of confidence. They have a greater sense of I can do different kinds of
activities” (LI-9/12).

While planning and teaching the explorers lesson, as well as numerous other
lessons throughout the semester, Julie and Allison were able to use their strengths to
contribute to the effort. Julie came up with new ideas, and Allison made sure they had
discussed the timing of the lesson and the materials they would need. In fact, throughout
the experience, Julie and Allison were able to learn from each other’s strengths, which was
a final benefit for the student teachers. Allison said, “I learned a lot from [Julie]. . . I want
to be like her” (AI-12/5). And Julie reported being glad to have worked with Allison on
several projects. “I’m glad [Allison] was there, because she is a much better artist than I
will ever be. On the other hand, it seems like I can find and organize info better than she
can” (JL-10/21). Both student teachers noted that Julie was better at suggesting new and
interesting ideas and Allison was better at thinking the ideas through and making them
work (JI-10/26, AI-10/26). Mrs. Lawrence also agreed that they balanced each other out,
“They really do support each other well. They don’t have the same strengths, which is
good” (LI-10/26).

Perceived Benefits to the Students

In addition to illustrating the benefits to the student teachers, the description of the
explorers lesson preparation and presentation may also help provide a view of the benefits
to students. First, as Julie and Allison worked together to develop ideas, prepare materials,
and teach the lesson, they were able to provide students with better learning opportunities.
Discussing a variety of ideas and using their individual strengths to contribute to the effort allowed Allison and Julie to develop and teach lessons which were interesting and varied. Furthermore, by providing support for each other during the lesson, the student teachers were able to improve the learning opportunities for the students. Allison noted that having two teachers in the room helped the students stay more focused on the lesson (AI-10/26). She also felt like they were able to provide “more and better activities” (AI-10/26) for the students. Julie echoed Allison’s idea. “Well neither of us knows everything, so I think they [students] benefit because they get two brains instead of just one - working together. And they probably have better information” (JI-12/5).

Both during the explorers lesson and throughout the semester, Julie and Allison supported each other’s teaching efforts and worked together to maintain an effective classroom environment. In fact, being able to establish and maintain an effective classroom environment was another benefit for the students. Mrs. Lawrence noted that having two student teachers allowed them to help maintain order. “There are two people in the class . . . while one of them is talking the other one can go around and can find out if the students are knowing what’s going on, or getting them back on task” (LI-10/26). Allison reported that she and Julie were able to work together to maintain control of the class (AL-10/21). And Julie noted that it’s nice . . . you know I don’t always have to be worried about the discipline - I can, you know, take care of a lot of it by myself but I don’t always notice everything while I am teaching and she’s good about watching what the students
are doing while I’m teaching so she helps keep everything under control (JI-10/26).

Indeed, working together to maintain order and provide an effective classroom environment benefitted the students and provided a better learning experience for them.

As Allison and Julie conducted the explorers activity in which the students placed the names of explorers on the board, the students were able to get help from either student teacher. This example illustrates a final benefit to the students: having better access to the teachers. According to Mrs. Lawrence, “There are two people in there helping each other. There’s two people to answer questions so the time that a person, a student, raises their hand for help is by half because there’s two people willing to go around and help them” (LI-12/5). Allison noted that the students “get better one-on-one attention” (AI-10/26) and it was “easier for them to get help” (AI-121/5). Julie also reported that the students benefitted, saying that the students “don’t have to wait in line to ask a question” (JI-11/5).

Perceived Stumbling Blocks

Although Allison and Julie enjoyed many benefits associated with paired student teaching and had an overall successful paired student teaching experience, the study participants did have two concerns which could have potentially become stumbling blocks to a successful paired-placement experience. On a couple of occasions, the student teachers reported feeling like there was an unbalanced work load. During her second interview, Allison reported feeling like she was doing more of the work. “I guess sometimes it feels like I do a lot of the work, so that’s kind of a concern” (AI-10/26). By the third interview, however, Allison had resolved these feelings. “I don’t feel like this
anymore, but for a while I was kind of frustrated. I felt like I was doing all of the work. But I don’t really feel like that anymore. I mean, I don’t know. I think that’s always how it is in a group though. Someone always has to be the one who does a little bit more” (AI-12/5). Julie also reported feeling frustrated on one occasion when Allison came unprepared to a planning session (JL-9/9). And on a second occasion, Julie expressed concern over not pulling her own weight. “I’m a bit of a slacker” (JL-10/28).

As a second concern, both student teachers reported feeling somewhat constrained in their teaching on a couple of occasions. Julie commented that it was hard to make adjustments in a lesson. “If we’re in the middle of a lesson that’s not going well I can’t just all the sudden change and go a different way with it because she’d be like, ‘Hey, what are we doing?’” (JI-12/5). And Allison reported that having a partner in the room was at times a distraction for the students. “Sometimes it was a distraction having her in the back where they’d talk to her instead of focusing in the front” (AI-12/5). A couple of in-class observations revealed evidence of this concern. For example, during one observation, while Julie was conducting an activity in which the students were identifying things they were thankful for in conjunction with a lesson about the pilgrims, a student quietly shared a comment with Allison who then visited with him briefly about his comment (C-10/7). This potentially could have been a distraction for Julie and the other students.

Although these concerns were identified by Allison and Julie as potential stumbling blocks, in reality they did not impact the success of their experience because of the strong relationship which developed between them. In fact, not only did their relationship allow them to overcome the stumbling blocks, it also allowed them to realize the benefits
associated with their paired experience. Indeed, the relationship which developed between Allison and Julie defined their paired student teaching experience. The remainder of this chapter will describe the development of Allison and Julie’s relationship.

Relationship Development

Introduction of Partners

Although Julie and Allison knew they would be given a paired assignment for their student teaching, they did not know with whom they would be partnered. They met for the first time at the student-teacher orientation session held at Brigham Young University on the first day of Fall Semester. As Julie said, “We didn’t know each other at all. I knew the other girls, but I didn’t ever know her” (JI-9/12). When asked whether she thought this was an advantage or a disadvantage, Julie said,

It’s probably some of both. Like if I knew her before then we wouldn’t be at this stage, we’d probably be a little bit farther along than we are now. But it’s also good because like when I get a real job and if I have to work with someone as a real teacher, I guess, then I probably wouldn’t know them from Adam before we started anyway, so it’s good to get to know new people and see their ideas and stuff” (JI-9/21).

Julie and Allison reported to their school and cooperating teacher, Mrs. Lawrence, the next morning. Julie had previously been assigned to Midtown Junior High School on an earlier field experience, and had attended Midtown Junior High School as a student. This was Allison’s first experience with the school.
Establishing Trust

Because trust is best established in sustained social interactions which allow a high degree of interconnectedness and communication, the paired placement provided an ideal setting for the establishment of trust. Having no initial relationship or previous knowledge of each other, however, both Allison and Julie entered the experience without a basis for trust. They were both willing to make an effort, yet both had reservations about the other as the experience began. The first interview and log entry for each partner revealed some of their initial concerns about each other. Allison expressed some concern about Julie’s laid-back style, and wondered if it meant she would have to work harder. “I was surprised that [Julie] was as laid back as she was. . . . In a way I was disappointed that [Julie] wasn’t more dominant because that meant I’d really have to work hard” (AL-9/2). Julie expressed her own concerns. “I’m a little worried because [Allison] is really nervous to teach some of the classes . . . this could be a long semester” (JL-9/2).

Fortunately, Julie and Allison shared similar expectations about the student teaching experience. Julie indicated that she expected to learn to do the work of a teacher and get an idea about what teaching would be like. Allison expressed similar expectations, stating that she wanted to learn how to create exciting lesson plans and learn how to engage and discipline students. Their expectations concerning the paired experience were also similar. Julie indicated that she expected them to do things together and find their own style. Allison stated that she expected them to work well together (AI-9/12, JI-9/12). As trust is partly founded on common beliefs and general similarities, Allison and Julie had common ground upon which to establish trust.
The establishment of trust relies on four components: respect, competence, personal regard, and integrity. A look at how each of these components developed throughout the semester will reveal how trust was built.

Over the course of the semester-long placement, Julie and Allison developed respect for each other that deepened as the semester progressed. One way in which they developed respect was by recognizing the importance of each other’s role and finding value in each other. In her second interview, Allison said she liked knowing Julie was there. “If I need help then I can turn to her . . . and that’s comforting” (AI-10/26). She also appreciated having someone to run ideas by, “two heads are definitely better than one” (AL-11/11). Julie similarly expressed an appreciation for having Allison as a partner. She liked that they each valued different elements of history (JL-9/16) and that Allison was a hard worker (JL-9/28).

An additional way in which the partners developed respect for each other was by listening to and taking each other’s perspective into account. During planning meetings, both student teachers listened to each other and responded positively to ideas. For example, during one planning session, Allison suggested that they make a worksheet to help the students review for an upcoming test. Julie suggested that since the class would be held on a Monday and the students may be more well behaved, they might want to try a review game. Allison agreed that it was worth a try (P-10/7). On another occasion, Julie suggested that they cover the Salem Witch Trials during an upcoming lesson. Allison pointed out that if they did that, they would be showing two movies in a row. Julie agreed with Allison who then suggested they cover the Mason Dixon Line. Julie thought it was a
good idea (P-10/26). In her second log, Allison reported that she liked that both she and Julie were able to give and accept criticism positively (AL-9/9).

In addition to developing respect for each other, Allison and Julie recognized each other’s competence. In the initial weeks of the placement, both Allison and Julie began to appreciate each other’s strengths. In her first few log entries, Allison expressed an appreciation for Julie’s ability to discipline students and for her contribution of great ideas (AL-9/2,9/16). Julie also recognized some of Allison’s strengths. She noted that Allison was able to come up with clues which were “cute and creative, but not something I could have come up with” (JL-9/2). She also recognized that she and Allison each had unique life and educational experiences which she thought would add to their ability to prepare interesting lessons (JL-16).

As the semester progressed, Julie and Allison developed a greater appreciation for the other’s contributions. Allison appreciated the fact that Julie had many great ideas which made their lessons interesting and allowed for student involvement (AI-10/26, AL-9/23). She also thought Julie was “really smart - she knows like answers that I don’t know” (AI-10/26). Julie admired the way in which Allison was able to think a lesson through and make it work (JI-10/26). She also appreciated Allison’s artistic abilities (JL-10/21). Recognizing and appreciating each other’s contributions helped Julie and Allison recognize each other’s competence and furthered the development of their relationship.

Developing a personal regard for each other was another important way in which Julie and Allison established trust within the partnership. Personal regard is developed as individuals show concern for one another, as they extend themselves beyond their comfort
level to support each other, and as they help reduce each other’s vulnerabilities.

Throughout the partnership experience, both Julie and Allison demonstrated a caring attitude. On one occasion, Allison thanked Julie for her idea to have the students write what they were thankful for during a lesson on pilgrims and complimented Julie on how much the activity added to the lesson (P-10/7). On another occasion, Julie expressed her appreciation of Allison’s ability to help her see the good in all students (JI-10/26). They also were both willing to extend themselves beyond their expected roles. When asked to describe the partnership, Mrs. Lawrence said, “They have been really willing to both give 110%, they have really tried, and they have lived up to each other’s [expectations]” (LI-12/5). And finally, both Julie and Allison reported that having each other as partners reduced their feelings of vulnerability and stress. As Julie said, “I like having [Allison] there so I don’t have to do it all. I’d be much more stressed if I had to do it all by myself” (JL-9/23). And Allison stated, “I feel a lot less pressure - cause I was really, really scared to student teach - but I feel like I’m not even scared, you know, just cause I know that [Julie] is there” (AI-10/26).

Having integrity was a final component in the development of trust between Allison and Julie. Integrity can be seen in people who show a consistency between what they say and what they do and whose actions are guided by moral or ethical principles. Furthermore, in teaching, integrity involves being willing to try new methods to improve instruction. When talking about the effectiveness of the partnership, Mrs. Lawrence referred to a specific incident which revealed the integrity of the relationship. She said, “This morning when I came in [Allison] said, this was [Julie’s] part of the lesson. She’ll
have it done when she gets here. [Julie] walked in, it was done. You know, so they've not let each other down. They’ve tried to build the trust level. I think that works well” (LI-12/5). Allison had confidence in Julie’s integrity. She knew that if Julie said she would do something, it would get done. As further evidence of integrity, both student teachers revealed a desire to provide a positive learning experience for the students. Allison and Julie both indicated that many of the benefits of being in a paired placement were related to being able to better meet the needs of students including being able to help students stay more focused (AI-10/26), providing better one-on-one attention (AI-12/5, JI -12/5), and being able to provide better and more varied activities (AI-10/26, JL-11/4). And finally, Julie and Allison were willing, even eager, to try new methods which would improve the learning opportunities for their students. For example, on one occasion Julie and Allison were discussing how to deal with a particularly difficult class. They wanted to find a way to adjust a lesson to accommodate the special needs of this class. Mrs. Lawrence suggested they use storyboards with this particular class. Although it would require much more effort than their original plan, they eagerly accepted her suggestion and went immediately to work on preparing the materials (P-10/26).

Indeed, the trust which developed between Allison and Julie as they learned to respect each other, recognize each other’s competence, develop personal regard for each other, and work with integrity contributed to the relationship which developed throughout their paired-placement experience. As Mrs. Lawrence said, “I think trust is probably the most important thing that’s happened. Because they know what each other can do and so
they trust them to do that part” (LI-10/26). In fact, trust and respect are critical in the development of successful collaborative relationships.

**Collaborative Interaction**

While trust played an important role in the relationship which developed between Allison and Julie, the collaborative interaction which occurred between the pair also contributed to the relationship building which defined their paired-placement experience. Successful partnership collaboration is characterized by several important components including a lack of hierarchy, democratic decision making, equality of responsibility, equality of status, contribution without regard to ego, and trust in the individual differences of each collaborator.

**Characteristics of Collaboration**

The lack of hierarchy in a partnership is an important characteristic of successful collaboration. Mrs. Lawrence, Allison, and Julie all identified this lack of hierarchy as a key component to the successful collaboration of Allison and Julie. According to Mrs. Lawrence, “From my point of view, everything was totally shared. . . . no one was really more dominant of the two” (LI-12/5).

The lack of hierarchy in the partnership helped Julie and Allison to engage in democratic decision making, which is another important characteristic of successful collaboration. During their planning meetings, Julie and Allison each considered the other’s point of view as they made joint decisions. During one planning meeting, Allison and Julie were discussing what specific information about Columbus they wanted to
provide the students and how to best present the information. The following exchange is illustrative of their decision-making process.

Allison: What will we talk about next?

Julie: Let’s talk about what happened in 1506 when he went back to Asia, then talk briefly about Balboa and Magellan.

Allison: Okay. Oh, did you want to pass it out there, or with Columbus?

Julie: I think there.

Allison: Me too. Do you think we should write all these names on the board, because it has to stay up for five periods?

Julie: Could they use the books?

Allison: We don’t want them to look in the books. What about an overhead? Is that too much of a pain?

Julie: We will already have the overhead out for the comic.

Allison: Okay (P-9/13).

By listening to each other’s ideas and concerns, and being willing to accept each other’s suggestions, Allison and Julie equally shared the planning experience and validated each other’s efforts. When asked how they decided who would teach what in a lesson, Julie responded, “In most of our lessons, like, we look at what we want to teach for a certain day and, you know, I’ll say well I know more about this and she’ll say well I know more about this, and then we’ll just kind of split up the rest of it so we teach what we know best” (JI-10/26). This democratic approach to decision making allowed the partners to
equally share in the process. Both Allison and Julie reported feeling satisfied with the decision-making process in their collaboration.

Equality of responsibility, another important characteristic of successful collaboration, also played a role in the relationship which developed between Julie and Allison. For the most part, both partners were able to equally share the responsibilities involved in their collaborative student teaching. This was the only area, however, where some disagreement occurred and where the partners seemed to struggle on a couple of occasions. During the ninth week of student teaching, Julie felt ill and did not equally contribute to the work. In both of their logs for the week, and in Allison’s second interview, which happened to occur during the same time period, both Julie and Allison referred to the frustrations they felt due to an imbalance of responsibility. In the weekly logs, Allison wrote, “This week I was very frustrated with [Julie] . . . I was sick of working with her” (AL-10/28) and Julie wrote “Allison has done more of the work and I’m a bit of a slacker” (JL-10/28). And in her second interview Allison said, “I guess sometimes it feels like I do a lot of the work, so that’s kind of a concern” (AI-10/26). By the next week, however, both Allison and Julie reported a “better distribution of work” (JL-11/4). In fact, throughout the logs, both student teachers made reference to the even distribution of work and how it helped them collaborate: “We take turns and divide the responsibilities out evenly” (AL-10/7). Certainly an equal division of work is an important component in collaboration, and though it provided some difficulty for Allison and Julie, it ultimately added to their ability to successfully collaborate.
In addition to equality of responsibility, equality of status also contributed to the successful partnership collaboration. Mrs. Lawrence equally regarded Allison and Julie as competent and capable student teachers and spoke positively about the contributions of each (MI-12/5). When asked about how students responded to them as teachers, both Allison and Julie stated that though some students seemed to relate better to one or the other of them, overall the students saw them as equals. As Julie stated, “In general I think they see us as teachers together. Not she’s the teacher and she’s the helper” (JI-112/5). The equality of status which Julie and Allison felt from both Mrs. Lawrence and the students contributed to the success of their collaboration.

As equal partners in the relationship, Allison and Julie were able to each contribute to the effort without regard to ego, which is another characteristic of a successful collaborative partnership. Both Allison and Julie were eager to praise each other and give each other credit for ideas and performance. On a number of occasions, Allison commented on Julie’s intelligence, good ideas, and classroom management skills (AI-10/26, AL-9/23, AL-9/2), and Julie commented on Allison’s artistic abilities, organizational skills, and ability to see the good in all students (JI-10/26, JL-10/21). Both student teachers acknowledged the importance of the other and neither took credit for the success of the experience. Mrs. Lawrence commented that “They really do support each other well . . . They haven’t pulled within themselves and not shared what they were doing or anything” (LI-10/26). By both contributing to the teaching effort without needing to receive credit or praise for each idea or contribution, Julie and Allison were able to better collaborate and build their relationship.
Finally, successful collaborative relationships do not require participants to give up differences, but rather to trust those differences in the pursuit of a common purpose, which certainly was the case with Allison and Julie. Both student teachers brought different strengths to the partnership. According to Allison, “Okay, in my mind it seems like [Julie] has lots of good ideas - and it seems like I am the one who keeps things moving” (AI-10/26). Julie also indicated that their varied strengths helped their relationship. She stated, “We usually balance each other out fairly well” (JI-12/5). When asked what made this partnership successful, Mrs. Lawrence said, “Their ability to collaborate, their ability to take different roles. . . . [Allison] is a little more self motivated . . but [Julie] has a lot of really good suggestions” (LI-10/26). The combination of abilities which Julie and Allison contributed made the partnership stronger.

**Collaborative Activities**

Collaborative relationships are strengthened when the participants learn from each other as they plan instruction, develop supportive material, watch each other with students, and think together about the impact of their behavior on student learning. These four areas definitely contributed to the successful collaboration and relationship development of Allison and Julie.

Planning was an important part of the collaboration which took place between Julie and Allison. In fact, Allison reported that much of their collaboration centered around planning (AI-121/5). Of the 16 weekly log entries, Allison wrote about planning in 13 entries and Julie wrote about planning in 12 entries. For example, “[Julie] and I worked together to plan a social sciences treasure hunt” (AL-9/2); “This week we planned our last
When asked what she enjoyed about the partnership, Allison reported that she liked planning with Julie. “She has lots of good ideas for what to do while we’re planning and how to involve the kids more and make it more interesting” (AI-10/26). The time spent in planning strengthened the relationship between Julie and Allison.

Developing supportive material together also strengthened the pair’s relationship. Allison and Julie worked together to prepare worksheets (P-9/13, AL-9/9, JL-9/9), make charts (P-9/13), create a test review (P-10/7), make examples of student projects (P-10/26, AL-10/28), write tests (JL-10/7, AL-10/7) and create games or activities (JL-9/2, AL-10/21). Preparing materials together allowed Allison and Julie to gain an appreciation for what each had to contribute. In talking about the process of writing a test together, Allison said, “We had no problem coming up with questions together. I’d make a suggestion and together we’d revise it or decide to toss it. Then [Julie] would suggest a question and we’d go through the same process until we had 5 good questions” (AL-11/11). Similarly, Julie expressed her appreciation for being able to work together to prepare a student project, “This week was really great. We both got a chance to do things we were good at while we worked together to get things done for the project” (JL-10/21). Working together to develop supportive material provided an opportunity for Julie and Allison to collaborate and appreciate each other’s contributions.

Watching each other with students was another way in which working together strengthened the relationship between Julie and Allison. Both student teachers identified things they admired about each other in dealing with students. Allison appreciated Julie’s intelligence and her ability to answer questions (AI-10/26). In reference to Julie, Allison
said, “She has a mind like a steel trap and she remembers everything. . . . She’s really smart and so she taught a lot that way. Umm, and like I want to be like her” (AI-12/5). Allison also appreciated being able to learn about classroom management from Julie. “I think having a partner has kind of allowed me just to see, I don’t know, just to learn how to discipline and how to teach better as I watch someone else” (AI-12/5). Julie also appreciated what Allison had to contribute. “I really like that I don’t have to be the expert on everything. Like she’s been to Mexico, she’s been go Ghana, I haven’t ever been anywhere really [laugh]. And so, she’d be like, ‘Oh I can talk about Ghana when I went there and how they have this slave castle and it was so cool,’ and I’m like, ‘That’s awesome, you go and do that and I can talk about something else that I know’” (JI-10/26). Appreciating each other’s individual abilities and concern for students strengthened the partner’s relationship.

Thinking together about their impact on student learning was a final way in which the relationship between Allison and Julie was strengthened through collaborative activities. Mrs. Lawrence reported that she appreciated that both Julie and Allison cared about the students and their performance (LI-12/5). Allison revealed her concern for students when responding to a question about what she liked about being paired. Allison stated that she and Julie were “able to do better and more exciting activities. . . . Yeah, and I guess just the variety, for them [the students], is more” (AI-10/26). Planning meetings allowed Allison and Julie to discuss their shared concerns and ideas for improving their impact on student learning. During one planning meeting, after discussing how to deal with a difficult class, Julie and Allison worked on a seating chart. They carefully
considered what would happen when they moved each student (P-10/7). In another
planning meeting, Julie expressed concern that the lesson was too boring for students.
Together, Allison and Julie discussed how they could improve their teaching. They
decided that they needed to ask more questions (P-11/28). By discussing ways to improve
instruction and sharing concern for student performance, Julie and Allison developed an
appreciation for each other, and their relationship was strengthened.

Certainly the collaborative interaction which occurred between Allison and Julie
helped to strengthen their relationship. The lack of hierarchy, democratic decision making,
equality of responsibility, equality of status, contribution without regard to ego, and trust
in each other’s differences revealed the successful collaboration of the partners. This
collaboration was strengthened as they planned together, developed supportive material,
watched each other with students, and thought together about the impact of their behavior
on student learning.

Role-Taking

In addition to being strengthened through trust and collaborative interaction,
collaborative relationships are also enhanced and strengthened when individuals
understand and take on each other’s roles. By sharing common experiences and roles,
collaborators are able to develop stronger relational ties.

As role-taking consists of direct and active participation in a complex interpersonal
task and, for teachers, may consist of employing new teaching models, paired student
teaching is an ideal forum in which role-taking can occur. Indeed, student teaching
requires direct and active participation, it is certainly a complex interpersonal task, and it
definitely requires the use of new teaching models. Furthermore, the success of role-taking experiences may be influenced by cognitive development. When discussing the partnership, Mrs. Lawrence suggested that the maturity level of Julie and Allison likely contributed to their success. “I think that [Julie] being a wife - you know, there’s that partnership with a husband, and then [Allison] is older and has been to Ghana and other places and worked with people” (LI-12/5). The maturity level of Allison and Julie likely contributed to their successful role-taking experiences, and therefore their relationship development.

By sharing roles, individuals are able to develop an understanding of and a sympathy for one other. Additionally, sharing roles allows individuals to develop an appreciation of another’s effort and participation in a task. Throughout the semester, Julie and Allison shared in a variety of role-taking opportunities which helped them foster their relationship as they learned to appreciate what each had to offer. The roles in which they shared largely revolved around their various duties within the classroom. In addition to the role of lead teacher, which consisted of conducting or directing the class activity or discussion, both Julie and Allison performed various roles as the supportive teaching partner. This role consisted of a variety of activities which provided support or assistance for the lead teacher. By each taking on the various roles, Allison and Julie developed an appreciation for the assistance provided by the other. As Allison stated, “I felt supported by her [Julie]” (AI-11/5).

When asked if they had discussed what roles the supportive partner should fill while the other partner took the lead, both student teachers reported that they had not
discussed the roles, but rather the roles had evolved according to need. Allison said, “It would just happen naturally” (AI-12/5), and Julie stated, “I don’t think we ever really talked about it - it just kind of happened” (JI12/5). This is consistent with the notion that roles grow best out of real situations in immediate experience.

Examining the various roles taken by the supportive partner will provide insight into the appreciation of assistance which enhanced the relationship developed by Allison and Julie. Monitoring students was the most common activity of the supportive partner. As Julie stated, “Most of the time while she was teaching I was in the back or walking around the classroom monitoring students and making sure that they were mostly on task and doing what they were supposed to do and not visiting as much” (JI-12/5). Mrs. Lawrence and Allison also reported this to be the most common supportive role (LI-12/5, AI-10/26). The monitoring they provided took various forms including using proximity to prompt on-task behavior (C-9/21), quietly asking students to pay attention (C-10/7), and encouraging students to remain on task (C-9/28).

Answering questions, responding to comments, and acting as a resource was another common supportive role. According to Allison, “Lots of times when she’s talking . . . they’ll want to ask me a question” (AI-10/26). Allison described her appreciation of Julie acting as a resource when she stated, “I know that [Julie] is there and if I need help then I can turn to her. She’s really smart” (AI-10/26). Julie also discussed this role: “I always, kind of, pay attention to what she’s doing in case . . . somebody asks a question that she doesn’t know the answer to . . . she helps me out with that too sometimes” (JI-10/26).
Another role, which at first created some frustration for Julie, involved interjecting unsolicited ideas or opinions into the lesson. When asked about her feelings about the interjections, Allison stated, “I appreciated it. . . . She remembers everything. . . .so I appreciated having her there and having her interject things. She’s smart” (AI-12/5). Julie’s reaction was not as positive, at least initially: “The first couple of times she did it I was like ticked off. I’m like, ‘I’m teaching, I’m teaching,’ but then I was like, ‘It’s not that bad’. Like I got over that and it’s really helpful most of the time” (JI-11/5). Some of the interjections dealt with class procedures. In one instance, Julie was discussing what things the pilgrims might have been thankful for. She asked the students to write something they are thankful for. Allison interrupted Julie to tell students they did not need to put their names on their papers (C-10/7). And some of the interjections were content related. For example, Allison was explaining to the students that when the Colonists were near their homes, they felt like they were fighting for their homes. Julie jumped in to add that the further the Colonists got from their homes, the less they felt like they were fighting for their homes (C-12/01).

Passing out papers, handling materials, and performing routine duties was another role performed by the supportive partner. According to Mrs. Lawrence, “Sometimes when they ran out of copies the other one would go and make it while the other one continued teaching” (LI-11/5). When asked about what kinds of things she did when Julie was teaching, along with identifying other roles, Allison said, “Sometimes you have to take roll” (AI-10/26). Taking roll C-9/21, C-10/19), turning the classroom lights on or off (C-
9/21, C-10/26), running the video machine (C-10/26), and handing out papers or collecting papers (C-9/21, C-10/19) were examples of this role.

Finally, working with individual groups of students and handling individual student issues was a final role performed by the supportive partner. Both Julie and Allison mentioned the value of having someone else in the room to deal with individual student issues. According to Julie, “If someone has a problem while one of us is teaching, we don’t have to stop the whole lesson” (JI-12/5). And Allison similarly said, “When one of us was teaching and they [students] had something pressing they needed to talk about during the lesson, they’d go to the other teacher and talk about that” (AI-12/5). During three in-class observations, Allison worked with one small group of students while Julie taught the class. These instances included taking a group of students into the hallway as part of a segregation lesson (C-9/28), taking small groups of students to another room to videotape a presentation (C-10/26), and taking a group of students to the computer lab (C-11/10).

By participating in shared roles, Allison and Julie were able to develop a common understanding of each other, as well as an appreciation for the support provided by the other. Knowing what was involved in each role allowed Allison and Julie to make personal meaning out of their experience as partners.

Summary

Indeed, as Julie and Allison developed trust, worked collaboratively, and participated in shared roles, they formed a relationship which helped to make their paired-student teaching experience a successful one. Although Julie and Allison met on the first
day of student teaching and had no previous relationship, their common interests and expectations helped to establish a foundation upon which to build trust. By demonstrating respect, competence, personal regard, and integrity, Allison and Julie were able to build the trust which became the foundation for their relationship. They were then able to successfully interact collaboratively and participate in shared roles which allowed them to strengthen their relationship. This relationship, which defined the paired-placement experience, was certainly a major contributor to the success of their paired assignment and allowed them to both overcome potential stumbling blocks and enjoy the benefits associated with being in a paired assignment. Perhaps a final quote from Julie will appropriately summarize the experience. “It’s been really fun. Like, I love the kids, I like the school, I like teaching, I like being with [Allison] all the time. It’s been fun to get to know her and get to work with her and do all the work with her on stuff. It’s been a really good experience” (JI-12/5).
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Importance of Relationship Development

Building an effective relationship is critical to the success of any partnership (Sinner, 2004), and certainly played an important role in the successful paired student teaching experience of Allison and Julie. According to Okech (2005), the quality of a relationship largely determines how effectively individuals work together. Because Julie and Allison were able to build an effective relationship, they were able to work together and collaborate throughout their student teaching experience. The quality of their relationship allowed them to have open communication and positive interactions. Not only did this allow them to successfully work together in completing the various tasks associated with student teaching, it also allowed them to enjoy the process. Clearly, the forming of an effective relationship played a pivotal role in Allison and Julie’s paired student teaching experience and allowed them, as well as their students, to enjoy the benefits associated with paired student teaching.

Why Paired Student Teaching Should Be Implemented

Many teacher educators and cooperating teachers are skeptical about whether a successful paired student teaching experience is possible. This in-depth look at one successful pair of student teachers demonstrates that it certainly is possible. As Allison and Julie demonstrated, by creating an effective relationship and working together to fulfill the various responsibilities involved in student teaching, paired student teachers can have a valuable student teaching experience. Along with concerns about whether or not
successful paired student teaching is possible, many educators have also expressed a concern about paired student teaching regarding whether or not it adequately prepares student teachers to solo teach. In a follow-up study of paired student teaching, Birrell and Bullough (2005) examined the experiences of first year teachers who had participated in paired student teaching. Their findings led them to suggest that paired student teaching actually increased the ability of novice teachers to solo teach because it had prepared them to better connect with and seek the assistance of other teachers when they struggled (Birrell & Bullough, 2005). Therefore, since successful paired student teaching is possible and does adequately prepare student teachers to solo teach, more teacher education programs should consider implementing paired student teaching.

Another reason why paired student teaching should be implemented is that it addresses many of the concerns surrounding traditional student teaching. For example, paired student teachers who form an effective relationship will not likely suffer the feelings of isolation which are often associated with traditional student teaching (Kamens, 1997, Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990). Furthermore, paired student teachers will be more able to deal with the demanding nature of student teaching, another problem associated with traditional student teaching (Osunde, 1999), as they collaborate in planning lessons, preparing materials, and teaching students. In fact, the opportunity to share the experience with a partner may lessen the stress and frustration which often accompanies student teaching. In addition, paired student teaching may also alleviate some of the conflicted feelings which some cooperating teachers have about their responsibility to their students and their obligation to their student teacher. Because a student teaching pair may be able
to provide better instruction and one-on-one attention, cooperating teachers may feel more comfortable entrusting their students to the student teachers. And finally, a side benefit to the university may also be realized as the problem of inadequate placement sites is addressed by fewer needed placements.

**Facilitating a Successful Experience**

Although Allison and Julie were randomly assigned as partners and no effort was made to match their personalities or experiences, they did share similar values and expectations. Furthermore, they were both willing to put forth the necessary effort. These characteristics likely contributed to the success of their partnership. Since relationship development is critical to the success of a paired student teaching experience, supervisors and cooperating teachers should be aware of how relationships develop and how they can best encourage such development. As illustrated by Julie and Allison, trust is an integral part of relationship development (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Frowe, 2005; Okech, 2005). Supervisors and cooperating teachers can help facilitate the development of trust by encouraging the student teaching pair to openly communicate with each other as they strive to develop respect and personal regard for each other, recognize each other’s competence, and work with integrity. As trust is developed, a supervisor or cooperating teacher can help the student teaching pair experience successful collaborative interactions by helping them employ democratic decision making skills, and encouraging them to contribute to the combined effort without regard to ego, to trust in each other’s individual strengths, to work together without a sense of hierarchy, and to develop an equality of responsibility and status. Certainly, by being aware of these relationship building
strategies, a supervisor or cooperating teacher can contribute to the success of a paired student teaching experience.

Future Research

This in-depth descriptive case study of a student teaching pair offers one example of a successful paired placement. Future studies should be broad based and focused on a large sample in order to determine whether Julie and Allison’s experience is typical. Paired student teaching seemingly offers a number of benefits and therefore should be more widely implemented and studied. For example, if the student teaching pair develops a healthy working relationship, they will be able to enjoy the confidence and companionship which comes from being placed in a partnership. Furthermore, not only do student teachers benefit from a paired assignment, but the students may also benefit by getting more one-on-one attention and better instruction. Additionally, the cooperating teacher could possibly benefit if the student teachers bounce ideas off each other before seeking help. Each of these areas should be examined to determine if these benefits can actually be realized and whether the benefits of paired placement student teaching extend into the first years of teaching. And if the benefits associated with paired student teaching do extend into the first years of teaching, researchers should investigate whether these benefits make a difference in the rate of teacher retention.

Another compelling argument for the implementation and study of paired student teaching is the notion that paired student teachers may be more collaborative as teachers. Researchers have expressed concern that many teachers are not prepared for professional collaboration (Welch, 1998). Collaboration is an important aspect of effective teaching, is
critical to the professional development of teachers (Yopp & Guillaume, 1999), and can increase teachers’ self-esteem and job satisfaction (Kamens, 1997). In fact, according to Little (1982), successful schools can be distinguished from unsuccessful schools in part by the extent to which teachers participate in collaborative activities. Certainly, preparing teachers to be more collaborative is a strong argument for the implementation of paired student teaching. Researchers should investigate whether participating in a paired student teaching experience translates into collaborative tendencies in teaching.

Conclusion

While traditional student teaching provides a valuable experience for preservice teachers, paired-placement student teaching may be an interesting and exciting alternative which is worth considering. Allison and Julie clearly demonstrated that student teaching with a partner can be an enjoyable and beneficial experience. By establishing a strong relationship built on trust, Julie and Allison were able to successfully fulfill the roles and responsibilities of student teachers and enjoy the benefits of being in a partnership. If the benefits suggested by this study are indicative, and if they extend beyond student teaching to create more collaborative and satisfied teachers, then paired student teaching should be made available to all preservice teachers.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Brigham Young University
Consent to Act as a Research Subject: Student Teacher
Partnering in practice: A look at collaborative student teaching

Purpose of Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study. This study is designed to examine the collaborative experience of paired student teachers. This research will be conducted by Cindy Horrocks, University Student Teaching Supervisor and Master’s Degree student and will be supervised by Roni Jo Draper, Associate Professor in Teacher Education in the David O. McKay School of Education.

Procedure: If you participate in this study, the following will happen to you:
1. You will be observed during planning and teaching. This observation will be in addition to the observation that will occur in the normal course of student teaching.
2. You will be interviewed; the interviews will be audiotaped.
3. Your cooperating teacher and student teaching partner will be interviewed.
4. Your lesson and unit plans will be photocopied.
5. You will write weekly logs in which you write about your collaborative experiences.

Data collection from the study will only be used for research purposes.

Risks and Discomforts: You may have concerns about being observed more extensively, being audiotaped, and having your log entries analyzed. However, the data will only be used for research purposes. Only pseudonyms will be used in reports of the research.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. You may, however, appreciate the extra supervision provided as a result of this research. The data collected in this study may provide insight into the benefits of paired student teaching and could lead to further research which could advance the field of education.

Confidentiality: Strict confidentiality will be maintained when reporting findings from this study. No individual identifying information will be disclosed. Where possible, all identifying references will be removed and replaced by pseudonyms. All data collected in this research study will be stored in a secure area, and access will only be given to individuals associated with this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and the right to withdraw later without any adverse effect on your grade or future relations with Brigham Young University.
Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research, you may contact Cindy Horrocks at (801) 254-7176. If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, you may contact Dr. Renea Beckstrand, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, 422 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602; phone (801) 422-3873.

Agreement: Your signature below indicates that you have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent, and desire of your own free will and volition to participate in this research and accept the benefits and risks related to the study. Your signature also indicates that you have been told that you may change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

________________________________________________________________________
Research Participant<Date>
APPENDIX B

Brigham Young University
Consent to Act as a Research Subject: Cooperating Teacher
Partnering in practice: A look at collaborative student teaching

Purpose of Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study. This study is designed to examine the collaborative experience of paired student teachers. This research will be conducted by Cindy Horrocks, University Student Teaching Supervisor and Master’s Degree student and will be supervised by Roni Jo Draper, Associate Professor in Teacher Education in the David O. McKay School of Education.

Procedure: If you participate in this study, the following will happen to you:
1. You will be observed as you interact with the student teachers assigned to you.
2. You will be interviewed; the interviews will be audiotaped.
3. The student teachers assigned to you will be interviewed.

Data collection from the study will only be used for research purposes.

Risks and Discomforts: You may have concerns about being observed and being audiotaped. However, the data will only be used for research purposes. Only pseudonyms will be used in reports of the research.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. The data collected in this study may provide insight into the benefits of paired student teaching and could lead to further research which could advance the field of education.

Confidentiality: Strict confidentiality will be maintained when reporting findings from this study. No individual identifying information will be disclosed. Where possible, all identifying references will be removed and replaced by pseudonyms. All data collected in this research study will be stored in a secure area, and access will only be given to individuals associated with this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and the right to withdraw later without any adverse effect on future relations with Brigham Young University.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research, you may contact Cindy Horrocks at (801) 254-7176. If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, you may contact Dr. Renea Beckstrand, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, 422 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602; phone (801) 422-3873.
Agreement: Your signature below indicates that you have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent, and desire of your own free will and volition to participate in this research and accept the benefits and risks related to the study. Your signature also indicates that you have been told that you may change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

________________________________________________________________________________
Research Participant                                          Date
APPENDIX C

Sample Interview Questions for Student Teachers

Interview 1

1. What are your expectations for student teaching?
2. Describe what you think collaboration looks like.
3. What previous experiences have you had with collaboration?
4. What role do you see your teaching partner playing?
5. What are some ways you might begin the collaborative process?
6. What role do you see your cooperating teacher playing?
7. What reservations do you have concerning this experience?
APPENDIX D

Sample Interview Questions for Student Teachers

Interviews 2 and 3

Standard questions:

1. Describe your role in the paired placement.
2. Describe your partner’s role in the placement.
3. Describe your cooperating teacher’s role in the placement.
4. Thus far, what do you enjoy about the paired experience?
5. Thus far, what concerns do you have about the paired placement?
6. What changes, if any, would you make in your experience?

Questions based on observations and artifacts:

1. In reference to __________ experience, what was your impression of the collaboration?
2. Why did you choose to do ____________?
3. What role did each partner play in ____________?
4. How did you are your partner decide to do ____________?
APPENDIX E

Sample Interview Questions for Cooperating Teacher

Interview 1:

1. Describe your previous experience with student teachers.
2. What role do you generally play as a cooperating teacher?
3. How would you describe collaboration? Do you consider yourself to be a collaborator?
4. What concerns do you have going into this experience?

Interview 2:

1. How would you describe the collaboration that occurs between the partners?
2. What role do you play in the collaboration?
3. What is going well in this paired placement?
4. What concerns do you have at this point in the semester?

Interview 3:

1. How would you describe the collaboration that occurred between the partners?
2. What role did you play in the collaboration?
3. What went well?
4. What changes would you make?
APPENDIX F

Sample Double-Entry Log

| Describe an episode of collaboration | Describe your thoughts and feelings about the episode. |