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Exploring Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Evaluation of Early Fieldwork Experience in an Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Program

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EXPLORING STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF EARLY

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES IN AN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER PREPARATION

PROGRAM

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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This study is a qualitative meta-evaluation of the early field experience (EFE) program at

a small, private, undergraduate teacher preparation program in Virginia focusing on the

perceptions of preservice teachers, cooperating teachers and course instructors about the EFE

evaluation objectives, evaluation experience, and resulting data usage. The EFE evaluation

protocol at the study site is explored using a participatory-oriented evaluation model that

solicited the perceptions of stakeholders. Analysis of EFE evaluation documents and semi-

structured interviews with the stakeholders were conducted to explore the extent to which (1)

official EFE objectives are congruent with the EFE evaluation, (2) the intended evaluation

experience is congruent with stakeholders' perceptions of the evaluation experience, and (3)

intended data usage is congruent with reported data usage. The findings indicate that the EFE

evaluation process is logistically sound, but does not assess and facilitate preservice teacher

learning. Recommendations to improve the merit and worth of the evaluation process are presented.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Early field experiences (EFE) for preservice teachers are a required part of the teacher

preparation curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Wasburn-Moses, Kopp & Hettersimer, 2012).

National accrediting agencies such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher

Education (NCATE), the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) and the newly

formed merger of the two, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), not

only mandate the inclusion of fieldwork, but require data confirming the effectiveness of each

program's EFEs (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010;

Retallick & Miller, 2010; Teacher Education Accreditation Council [TEAC], 2009; TEAC, 2011).

According to NCATE's Standard 3,

> The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and
>
> clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school professionals develop and
>
> demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all
>
> students learn. (NCATE, 2013a)

For this project, EFEs are defined as ongoing field-based learning experiences in P-12

classrooms completed in conjunction with an education class as part of a teacher preparation

program any time prior to the capstone student teaching experience. EFEs are also referred to as

field experience, fieldwork, practicum experiences (Brown & Danaher, 2008), or clinical practice

(Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2013a) in the literature. EFEs and

fieldwork are used interchangeably for this study. To be clear, EFEs are not the same as student

teaching. Student teaching is the capstone experience of teacher preparation and involves a full-time placement in a classroom in which the preservice teacher incrementally takes on all teaching, management and administration responsibilities of a classroom with guidance from the professional classroom teacher and a college supervisor for a semester. In contrast, EFE placements are shorter placements that occur earlier in teacher preparation, usually in public school classrooms (i.e., 10-20 hours per placement) and often completed in multiple one to two-hour visits. During EFE placements, education students usually observe and serve as instructional assistants in the assigned classroom (Applegate, 1985; Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2006).

Historical Context of Early Field Experiences

EFEs completed as part of a traditional, college-based teacher preparation program grew quickly during the 1970s and 1980s (Wasburn-Moses et al., 2012). Guyton and McIntyre (1990) described a paradigm shift in the research on field experience that occurred during that time as a "breakthrough… [that] generated more meaningful results… [was] ethnographic, sociological, anthropological, qualitative, interpretive, phenomenological, and constructivist" (p. 529). The newly applied approach was based in grounded theory and examined "field experiences as a process rather than a variable" (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990, p. 529). They suggested that the quantitative, correlational, psychometric designs of the past were premature and "hindered the development of cumulative knowledge about field experience" (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990, p. 29).

Meanwhile, landmark reports in the 1980s resulted in pressure for increased standardization and accountability in teacher preparation programs. In 1983, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, a report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, described the American education system as failing (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). The

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Holmes (1986) and Carnegie (1986) reports were published providing an evaluation of teacher education in the United States with recommendations for improvement. The reports were interpreted by many as a call to increased standardization in teacher preparation programs—a one-best-way philosophy (Fraser, 2007).

During the 1990s, EFEs became a required component of accredited teacher preparation programs (Wasburn-Moses et al., 2012), and a paradigm shift back to quantitative, correlational designs occurred. It was and is still widely held that the best teacher preparation programs include "more clinical learning opportunities throughout the program through practicum experiences tied to courses which aim to better integrate courses with clinical work" (Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 134). The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) published standards for field experiences in 2000 (see Table 1). ATE's Standard 2 states that field experiences be "assessed using a model that addresses realistic goals" (Guyton & Byrd, 2000, p. ii). Among those goals listed in the standards are ongoing program assessment, collaboration between cooperating teachers and course instructors, and a focus on the professional learning of preservice teachers (Guyton & Byrd, 2000).

In 2013, NCATE and TEAC merged making CAEP "the new, sole specialized accreditor for educator preparation" (CAEP, 2013b). CAEP's Standard 2 specifies that clinical experience, which includes EFEs, "demonstrate positive impact on all P-12 students' learning and development" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 3). Allsopp, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton, and Doone (2006) noted that it is incumbent upon teacher preparation programs to provide this data, but that there are "innate difficulties…associated with systematically collecting data to evaluate progress toward specified goals" (p. 21).

Table 1

Association of Teacher Educators' Standards for Field Experiences in Teacher Education (Guyton & Byrd, 2000, p. ii-iii)

Standard 1:
Field experiences occur in sites characterized by school/campus collaboration where there is a commitment to simultaneous review and reform of the pre-P-12 and teacher education for the purpose of better serving students in the schools

Standard 2:
Field experiences are assessed using a model that addresses realistic goals and objectives and promotes high expectations. Assessment is ongoing and used for program improvement. The model includes input from those involved in field experiences.

Standard 3:
The selection, preparation, and assignment of school-based teacher educators is systematic, collaborative, and based on a framework agreed upon by campus-based and school-based educators.

Standard 4:
The selection, preparation, and assignment of campus-based teacher educators is systematic, collaborative, and based on a framework agreed upon by campus-based and school-based educators.

Standard 5:
The focus of interaction among teacher candidates, campus-based teacher educators, and school-based educators, is on the teacher candidate's professional learning focused on teaching, and learning of children and youth.

Standard 6:
Teacher candidates receive verbal and written feedback on a continuous formative and summative basis regarding progress in demonstrating professional learning in relation to explicitly stated program and course outcomes agreed upon by campus-based and school-based educators.

Standard 7:
Teacher candidates, school-based teacher educators, and campus-based teacher educators interact on a regular basis about issues, best practice, and research related to schooling. Teaching and learning through frequent on-site observations and conferences, cross-site interactions, communication networks which link school, campus, and home locations.

Standard 8:
Field experiences incorporate opportunities for ongoing reflection on and analysis of teaching and learning, conditions of schooling, and student development in light of teacher education program goals agreed upon by campus-based and school-based educators.

Standard 9:
Field experiences occur in a context and in a sequence consistent with the goals and mission of the teacher education program.

Standard 10:
Field experiences occur in contexts that welcome teacher candidates with a warm, supportive environment.

Standard 11:
Field experiences occur with diverse student populations and in diverse settings.

Standard 12:
Field experience programs receive adequate resources including financial support for the administration and implementation of quality field experiences.

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The research indicates the importance of early field experience in teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Retallick & Miller, 2010; Sherman, 2013; Wasburn-Moses et al., 2012), but little is known about how to evaluate whether EFEs result in the intended objectives (Retallick & Miller, 2010). EFE is a highly contextual, socially complex, rich learning experience for preservice teachers involving numerous stakeholders with diverse priorities, yet no research has been published that specifically investigates EFE evaluation practices, the perceptions of stakeholders about EFE evaluation, or how the EFE evaluation data is used by stakeholders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which (1) official EFE objectives are congruent with the EFE evaluation, (2) the intended evaluation experience is congruent with stakeholders' perceptions of the evaluation experience, and (3) intended data usage is congruent with reported data usage. The researcher wanted to determine if the EFE evaluation system at the study site achieved its intended purposes using a participatory-oriented evaluation model that solicited the perceptions of program stakeholders—preservice teachers, cooperating teachers and course instructors. Specifically, the guiding research questions are:

1. How are EFEs evaluated at the teacher preparation program? Specifically, what is the evaluation process, and what are the evaluation components?
2. How do stakeholders experience the EFE evaluation process?
3. To what extent do stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the EFE evaluation process to assess and facilitate the stated learning objectives?
4. How do stakeholders use the resulting data?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Whether EFE is an important component of teacher preparation is not the question raised here, but rather, how to determine if a particular EFE evaluation has achieved its intended purposes. Accreditation agencies require data supporting the effectiveness of EFE programs (CAEP, 2013a), but there is little research available exploring how current evaluation practices are tied to learning outcomes for preservice teachers. The CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting (2013a) referred to their reliance on "wisdom of practice" (p. 16) when reporting to the CAEP Board of Directors because "research, to date, does not tell us what specific experiences or sequence of experiences are most likely to result in more effective beginning teachers" (p. 16). This gap in the literature is an area of practical importance relevant to all teacher education programs, accrediting agencies, and EFE participants.

The study was inductive research of EFE evaluation practices at one undergraduate teacher preparation program—a formative meta-evaluation case study serving as a logical step toward bridging the gap in the literature on EFE evaluation practices potentially resulting in more meaningful data collection for all stakeholders. The study affords benefit to the study site, as well as other teacher preparation programs, state departments of education and accrediting agencies. Ideally, the study will result in useful dialogue between stakeholders including preservice teachers, partnering P-12 schools, state departments of education, and accrediting agencies. The study details stakeholder feedback that may facilitate improvements in EFE design and evaluation practices.

Literature Overview

The objectives of EFEs are varied, and understanding those objectives is relevant to this study. In a literature review of field experience research from 1963 to 1989, Guyton and McIntyre (1990) reported that "variety exists in the ways these experiences are conceptualized, organized, and actually implemented, even within the same institution" (p. 514). Specific EFE objectives seem to be related to the timing of the EFE in the teacher preparation program and objectives of the concurrent coursework. EFEs completed with foundational education classes provide an opportunity for "career exploration… [and] for preservice teachers to understand that the world of teaching is complex" (Retallick & Miller, 2010, p. 62). EFEs completed in conjunction with more advanced education coursework are designed to help preservice teachers link theory and practice (Carter & Anders, 1996; Retallick & Miller, 2010). EFEs completed in conjunction with methods coursework are intended to develop specific teaching skills (Jaquith, 1995). Ideally, EFEs also prepare for and lessen anxiety about student teaching (Everhart & Turner, 1996). Sherman (2013) described the EFEs as opportunities to "nurture the dispositions and capacities associated with responsiveness… [and] build understandings about responsive teaching" (p. 69). Such varied objectives, and stakeholders' perceptions of those objectives, are relevant to EFE evaluation design.

The literature suggests that cooperating teachers are the most important factor in determining the success of field experience (McIntrye, Byrd, Foxx, 1996; Moore, 2003; Schmidt, 2010; Whitney, Golez, Nagel, & Nieto, 2002). Graduates from teacher preparation programs have reported that they were influenced more by their cooperating teachers from fieldwork than they were by their college course instructors, and certified teachers often report that they learn more from teaching experience than they do from education coursework (Schmidt, 2010; Whitney et

al., 2002). In light of their influence, cooperating teacher's perception of both EFE objectives and evaluation is worthy of investigation.

Implementing highly effective fieldwork experiences is inherently challenging (Applegate, 1985; Burant & Kirby, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Heafner & Plaisance, 2012; Passe, 1994; Stone, 1987). While serving as the Director of Field Experiences at Kent State University, Applegate (1985) wrote about the recurring dilemmas in fieldwork 30 years ago; her description of individual, programmatic, and institutional challenges are still relevant today. Individual dilemmas "emanate from personal beliefs and values" (Applegate, 1985, p. 62); preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, and teacher educators approach field experience with different priorities and expectations that can easily lead to conflict (Brown & Danaher, 2008; Cardini, 2006). The EFE evaluation process is plagued with both programmatic and institutional challenges—philosophical and logistical. Programmatic challenges include curricular, instructional, and evaluative decisions, while institutional challenges have to do with logistics, politics and personnel issues that must be addressed; there never seems to be enough time, money or personnel power to make the best case scenario a reality (Applegate, 1985). How to determine whether current EFEs are meeting the official objectives is dependent on reliable and valid evaluation practices of both preservice teacher performance during EFEs and the overall program itself. Fieldwork is supported in the literature as a logical component of teacher preparation (Retallick & Miller, 2010), but how EFEs should be most effectively organized, administered, and evaluated remains unclear.

Methodology

This research is a qualitative meta-evaluation of the EFE evaluation practices at one undergraduate teacher preparation program focusing on stakeholders' perceptions of the EFE

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objectives, evaluation process, and resulting data usage. A meta-evaluation is the evaluation of an evaluation (Scriven, 1991). Cousins and Whitmore (1998) described a participatory evaluation model in which the perspectives of stakeholders are solicited to support programmatic decision making and problem solving. Using this participatory evaluation model, semi-structured interviews were conducted with course instructors, preservice teachers, and collaborating P-12 teachers to investigate the extent to which (1) official EFE objectives are congruent with the EFE evaluation, (2) intended evaluation experiences are congruent with stakeholders' experience with the evaluation process, and (3) intended data usage is congruent with reported data usage.

A participant-oriented evaluation model, one that solicits the perspectives of individuals "who have a decided stake in the program…being evaluated" (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998, p. 5), is appropriate as accrediting agencies leverage reform toward mutually beneficial partnerships between P-12 schools and teacher preparation programs (CAEP, 2013a). Participant-oriented evaluation models are responsive in that the "major focus is attending and responding to the participant and stakeholder need for information" (Ross, 2010, p. 483). "Educator preparation providers and collaborating schools and districts bring complementary experiences that, joined together, promise far stronger preparation programs" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 9). This study design acknowledges the unique perspectives of P-12 cooperating teachers and seeks to include stakeholders as well as preservice teachers and course instructors in the evaluation process.

In their evaluation of a 16-week student teaching block, Pepper and Hare (1999) proposed that "the only way to get a true picture of what the program is like is to become involved in the program and include responses and reactions of the participants of the program in the data collected" (Pepper & Hare, 1999, p. 357). This study does exactly that by utilizing an internal

evaluator to interview preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, and course instructors. The researcher works as the fieldwork director and teaches courses in the teacher preparation program.

Official EFE evaluation documents were analyzed for key words and themes related to the research questions before conducting the interviews and again after interview data were coded to allow for cross-checking and triangulation of the data. Interview data were coded by key words, quotes and themes related to the research questions. Interviews were grouped into document families by stakeholder category (course instructor, preservice teacher, and cooperating teacher) to compare and contrast the perspectives between groups for each research question (Patton, 1990).

Findings and Conclusions

The findings indicate that the EFE evaluation process has merit in that it is convenient, logistically sound and not overly burdensome to stakeholders. The findings reveal limited worth of the departmental evaluation protocol; most stakeholders did not believe that the evaluation documents assessed and facilitated preservice teacher learning. The evaluation form is used by course instructors as a general assessment of each preservice teacher's performance during the EFE, but not necessarily a measure of what was learned as a result of the EFE. The evaluation process is congruent with some official EFE objectives, but not others. Specifically, the EFE evaluation is congruent with career exploration, professionalism, and preparing preservice teachers for student teaching. The EFE evaluation is somewhat congruent with dispositions for student teaching, skill development, application of knowledge, and melding theory to practice. The EFE does not assess preservice teacher's impact on P-12 students.

The stakeholders offered recommendations that may improve the merit and worth of the evaluation process when implemented. Stakeholders recommended having cooperating teachers

complete the evaluation form earlier in the semester and moving evaluation documents to a digital

platform. Based on the data, the researcher recommended facilitating improved communication

among stakeholders, clarification of EFE evaluation objectives, revision of the evaluation form

and ratings, developing a continuum that describes measurable behavior for each item and each

performance level to improve the reliability and validity of the evaluation form, and training for

all stakeholders about the EFE evaluation objectives and from revisions. Recommendations for

further research to determine logistically and pedagogically sound solutions addressing the

challenges of EFE evaluation are made.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, an overview of EFE literature as related to the research questions is presented. Definitions and delimitations are specified. Retallick and Miller's (2010) model of EFE is used as the conceptual model to organize the literature. Theoretical tensions are addressed and the enduring problems with fieldwork categorized by Applegate (1985) are described. Understanding theoretical foundations and the enduring problems of fieldwork is relevant to the development of useful EFE evaluation practices. Implications for the study are offered in the chapter summary.

This systematic literature review of EFE research in teacher preparation programs was accomplished in three phases. First, an online library catalog search was conducted using the Virginia Commonwealth University Library website to identify holdings related to early field experience yielding numerous books and peer-reviewed journal articles. The second phase involved reviewing references cited in those sources relevant to the research questions. Finally, a systematic search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Education Research Complete (EBSCO) databases was conducted for peer reviewed articles published in the last 10 years to ensure that the most current published research on EFEs was included in the literature review. Search terms included *fieldwork (educational method), preservice teachers* and *teacher education* for EBSCO. For ERIC, search terms were *field experience programs, field laboratory experience, teacher education,* and *preservice teachers*. Search terms were determined by identifying key words from relevant references found in the first two phases and finding

correlates using the thesaurus and synonym search features in ERIC and EBSCO. Google Scholar was also utilized to search for relevant sources throughout the review process.

Research studies were limited to early field experience literature in undergraduate teacher preparation programs. The EFE designs of undergraduate teacher preparation programs and graduate programs differ substantially; graduate program EFEs are beyond the scope of this study. While some sources referred to undergraduate and graduate field experiences, studies that specifically focused on a graduate program were excluded from this literature review. The nature of EFEs is also inherently different than the capstone experience of student teaching or teaching internships. While some sources referred to both early field experiences and student teaching, studies that specifically focused on only student teaching were excluded from this literature review. Experiences in laboratory schools were also excluded. While Metcalf & Kahlich (2006) found strong evidence of the effectiveness of on-campus laboratory experiences in their meta-analysis of such programs, most current EFEs do not occur in laboratory school settings (Wasburn-Moses, et al., 2012). The focus of this study is early field experiences completed in partnership with P-12 schools in an undergraduate teacher preparation program.

Defining Early Field Experiences

NCATE defines field experiences as "a variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research…[occurring] in off-campus settings such as schools, community centers, or homeless shelters" (NCATE, 2013b). Traditionally, field experiences take place in P-12 classrooms, but it should be noted that the NCATE definition allows for the possibility of settings outside of traditional classrooms and can include activities other than classroom observations, tutoring and assisting teachers (i.e., research).

The Virginia Department of Education (2006) describes a "continuum of field experiences" (p. 11) that includes (a) early field experiences completed prior to formal acceptance into an education program, (b) pre-student teaching field experiences for individuals in an education program and (c) student teaching. VDOE (2006) limits the setting and activity conducted during field experience by defining field experiences in teacher preparation programs as:

>...program components that are conducted in off-campus settings [or on-campus settings dedicated to the instruction of children who would or could otherwise be served by school divisions in Virginia, or accredited nonpublic schools, and are accredited for this purpose by external entities such as regional accrediting agencies]. They include classroom observations, tutoring, assisting teachers and school administrators, student teaching, and internships. (p. 8)

For this study, field experiences or EFEs refer to field-based learning experiences in P-12 classrooms completed in conjunction with an education class as part of a teacher preparation program any time prior to the capstone student teaching experience (Applegate, 1985; VDOE, 2006). While alternative models of field experience are addressed briefly in the literature review and are included in the NCATE (2013b) definition and CAEP (2013a) documents, the more traditional fieldwork placements in P-12 classrooms are the focus of this study.

For this study, preservice teacher refers to undergraduate college students taking education classes as part of an accredited teacher preparation program both before and after formal acceptance into the program. Timing and structure of EFEs vary by teacher preparation program; some EFEs may occur prior to formal acceptance into the teacher preparation program (i.e., EFEs completed in conjunction with foundational education classes), while other EFEs occur after

formal acceptance into the program in conjunction with higher level education courses. Certainly there are students who complete EFEs early in the course sequence who choose not to complete the program or are not be accepted into it. For those students, preservice teacher is a misnomer, but the term preservice teacher is used in this paper for all education students to avoid confusing college students with the P-12 students with whom they work in EFEs.

Definitions of Terms

Terms are defined as follows for this study.

Case study. A case study is a "detailed examination of one setting" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 271).

Congruence. For this study, "congruence refers to the correspondence between what is intended to take place in the program and what actually occurs" (Pepper & Hare, 1999, p. 358).

Cooperating teacher. For this study, cooperating teacher refers to a P-12 teacher who hosts a preservice teacher in his or her classroom for an early field experience.

Early field experience (EFE). Early field experiences (EFEs) are field-based learning experiences in P-12 classrooms completed in conjunction with an education class as part of a teacher preparation program any time prior to the capstone student teaching experience (Applegate, 1985; VDOE, 2006). These experiences are referred to as field experience, fieldwork, practicum experiences (Brown & Danaher, 2008), clinical practice (CAEP, 2013a), or early field experiences (Maxie, 2001; Wasburn-Moses et al., 2012) in the literature.

Evaluation. Evaluation is the process of determining the merit and worth of a product or process (Lincoln & Guba, 1980; Scriven, 1991).

Field experiences. Field experiences are "a variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research…[occurring] in off-campus settings such as schools, community centers, or homeless shelters" (NCATE, 2013b).

Formative evaluation. Formative evaluation is evaluation conducted during the development or ongoing improvement of a program and provides information for program improvement (Scriven, 1991).

Internal evaluator. An internal evaluator is an evaluator who serves on staff at the program institution (Scriven, 1991).

Logic model. A logic model is a tool for telling a program's performance story that describes program rationale, assumptions, and connections between program resources, activities and outcomes (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999).

Merit. For this study, merit refers to value that is context-free based on the "intrinsic characteristics of the entity itself" (Lincoln & Guba, 1980). For example, an evaluation protocol may be judged as having merit if it is logistically sound based on its simplicity, convenience and straightforward format.

Meta-evaluation. A meta-evaluation is the evaluation of an evaluation (Scriven, 1991). For this study, the meta-evaluation is a study of the EFE evaluation practices at an undergraduate teacher preparation program.

Objective. An objective is the intended outcome and intended purpose (Scriven, 1991). For this study, both the intended and perceived EFE learning objectives and evaluation purposes are explored.

Participatory evaluation. A participatory evaluation is an evaluation in which the perspectives of stakeholders are solicited to evaluate a program or product (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998).

Preservice teacher. For this study, preservice teacher refers to college students who have completed EFEs and intend to continue in the teacher preparation program to pursue a teaching license.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals "who have a decided stake in the program…being evaluated" (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998, p. 5). For this study, EFE participants and those with a vested interest in EFEs, specifically, preservice teachers, cooperating teachers and education course instructors.

Traditional fieldwork placements. Traditional fieldwork placements occur in P-12 classrooms where preservice teachers observe, tutor, assist and/or teach, as opposed to alternative fieldwork experiences that may take place in community agencies and virtual placements.

Worth. Lincoln and Guba (1980) defined worth as having "value within some context of use or application" (p. 61). For this study, the EFE evaluation protocol is judged on its worth based on how well it assesses and facilitates preservice teacher learning.

Early Field Experience Objectives

The learning objectives of EFEs reported in the literature are varied. Specific EFE objectives are generally related to the timing of the EFE in the teacher preparation program and objectives of the concurrent coursework. Fieldwork completed with foundational education classes provides an opportunity for "career exploration…[and] for preservice teachers to understand that the world of teaching is complex" (Retallick & Miller, 2010, p. 62). EFEs completed in conjunction with more advanced education coursework are designed to help preservice teachers link theory and practice (Carter & Anders, 1996; Retallick & Miller, 2010). EFEs completed in conjunction with methods coursework are intended to develop specific

teaching skills (Jaquith, 1995). Ideally, EFEs also prepare for and lessen anxiety about student teaching (Everhart & Turner, 1996).

Sherman (2013) described EFEs as opportunities to "nurture the dispositions and capacities associated with responsiveness…[and] build understandings about responsive teaching" (p. 69). She redesigned an EFE for a reading methods course with the goal of providing more and better support for preservice teachers' implementation of responsive, differentiated instruction. She analyzed 225 lesson plans from 34 preservice teachers. Sherman (2013) found that providing structure via student study, structured lesson plans, weekly reflection logs, readings and discussion helped her preservice teachers recognize and plan for more responsive instruction. These EFE objectives are consistent with NCATE Standard 3 which requires teacher preparation programs to develop EFEs "so that candidates develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions so that all students learn...[and] include students with exceptionalities and students from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, and socioeconomic groups" (NCATE, 2013a). Clarifying the purposes of early fieldwork is an important task before determining who is evaluated, how they will be evaluated, with what tools and to what standard.

Varied EFE objectives are further complicated by the individual construction of beliefs (Applegate, 1985; Fletcher & Luft, 2011). Fletcher and Luft (2011) followed preservice teachers (n=5) over a three-year longitudinal study and found the EFEs provided positive experiences that impact beliefs about teaching, and that "beliefs are individually constructed" (p. 1141) suggesting that learning outcomes were not necessarily consistent with the objectives of the course for all students. This underscores the importance and complexity of gathering reliable, valid and meaningful EFE evaluation data.

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Conceptual Model of Early Field Experience

Retallick and Miller (2010) proposed the conceptual model seen in Figure 1 based on their literature review of EFE research. They found 33 articles and 23 books published between 1980 and 2008 related to EFEs. Their conceptual model is used in this chapter to organize the EFE literature as it relates to the research questions. The model was based on a synthesis of the EFE literature and "was assembled and organized in a format appropriate for making practical educational decisions" about EFEs (Retallick & Miller, 2010, p. 72).
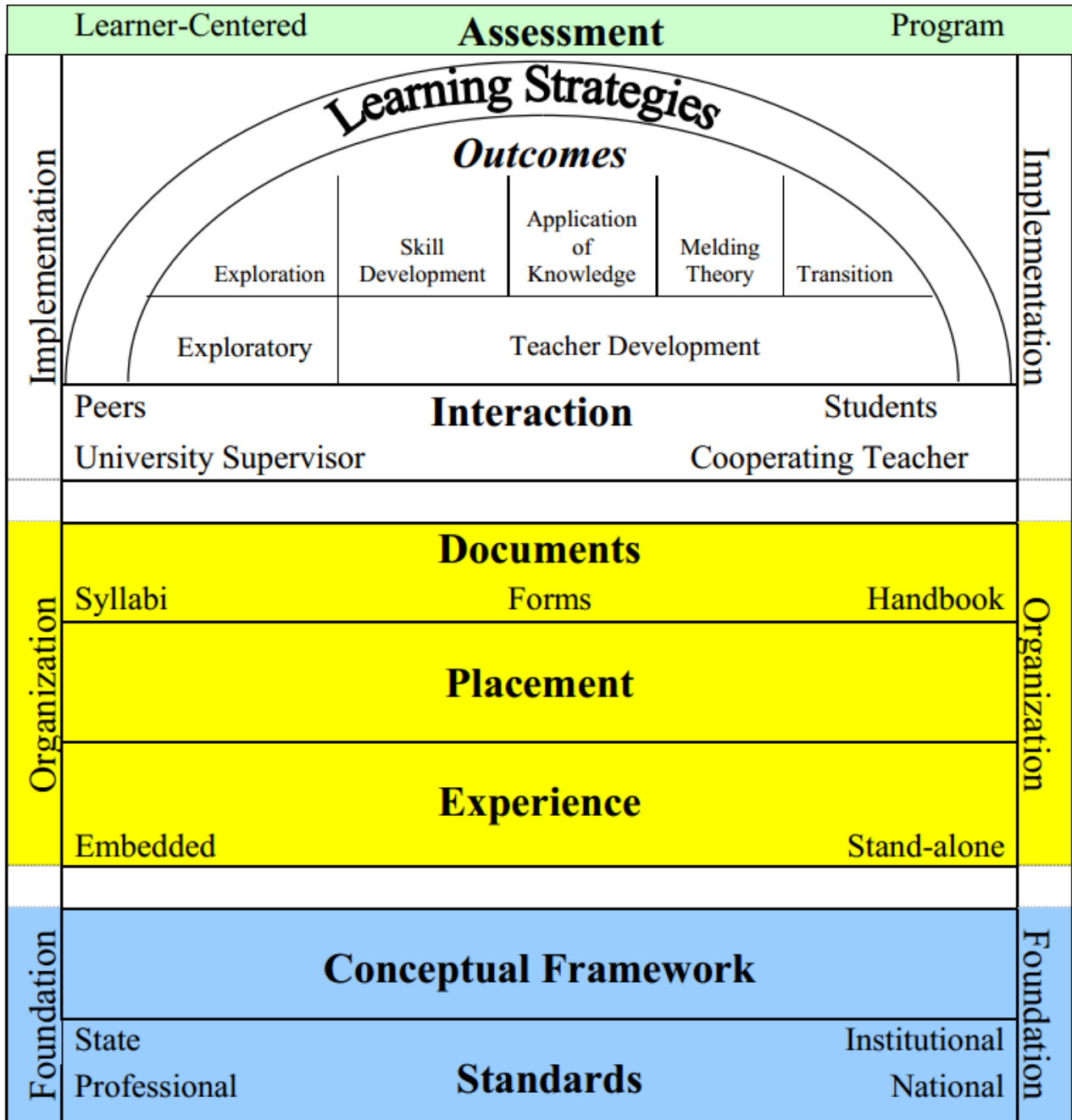
Figure 1. Model for early field experiences in teacher education (Retallick & Miller, 2010).

Foundation

Ideally, the institutional, state, and national standards are aligned and foundational to the organization, implementation and assessment of EFEs. Standards are evolving with the newly formed merger of TEAC and NCATE to create CAEP, so teacher preparation programs will likely be reassessing how their EFE organization, implementation and assessment align with the new CAEP standards as seen in Table 2 (CAEP, 2013a).

EFEs are generally intended to be opportunities to connect theory to practice (Allsopp et al., 2006; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Retallick & Miller, 2010; Ribich, 1995) and facilitate deeper understanding of content and pedagogical knowledge as described in Standard 1 (CAEP, 2013a). Based on their literature review of field experiences, Guyton and McIntyre (1990) concluded that "most descriptions of the structure of early field experiences report only the intentions of programs" (p. 518) without linking intentions to outcomes.

Evaluation of both the EFE program and preservice teacher performance is needed to determine if the CAEP standards in Table 2 have been met. If partnerships with P-12 schools are effective and EFEs are of such high quality that "candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all P-12 students' learning and development" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 3), standards 1, 2 and 4 have been achieved. Standard 5 refers to sustained, evidence-based continuous improvement of the program; evaluating whether or not EFEs facilitate achievement of standards 1, 2, and 4 serves as a quality assurance system toward continuous improvement of the teacher preparation program. Standard 3 addresses candidate quality, recruitment and selectivity. Candidate selectivity may be evident in course prerequisites (i.e., grade point average) and the EFE application process (i.e., screening procedures). Candidate quality may also be reflected in EFE evaluation data.

Table 2

CAEP Standards (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013a, p. 3-4)

Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge
The provider ensures that candidates develop a deep understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and, by completion, are able to use discipline-specific practices flexibly to advance the learning of all students toward attainment of college- and career-readiness standards.

Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice
The provider ensures that effective partnerships and high-quality clinical practice are central to preparation so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all P-12 students' learning and development.

Standard 3: Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity
The provider demonstrates that the quality of candidates is a continuing and purposeful part of its responsibility from recruitment, at admission, through the progression of courses and clinical experiences, and to decisions that completers are prepared to teach effectively and are recommended for certification. The provider demonstrates that development of candidate quality is the goal of educator preparation in all phases of the program. This process is ultimately determined by a program's meeting of Standard 4.

Standard 4: Program Impact
The provider demonstrates the impact of its completers on P-12 student learning and development, classroom instruction, and schools, and the satisfaction of its completers with the relevance and effectiveness of their preparation.

Standard 5: Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement
The provider maintains a quality assurance system comprised of valid data from multiple measures, including evidence of candidates' and completers' positive impact on P-12 student learning and development. The provider supports continuous improvement that is sustained and evidence-based, and that evaluates the effectiveness of its completers. The provider uses the results of inquiry and data collection to establish priorities, enhance program elements and capacity, and test innovations to improve completers' impact on P-12 student learning and development.

Organization

In the model (Retallick & Miller, 2010), organization includes experience, placement and documents. EFEs are organized and implemented differently within and between teacher education programs (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). Zeichner (1983) distinguished between behaviorist, personalist, traditional-craft, and inquiry orientations in teacher education programs and, by extension, field experiences. Behaviorist orientations focus on observable teaching skills. Personalist orientations focus on psychological maturity of preservice teachers—more humanist indicators. Traditional-craft orientations focus on the craft of teaching and approach EFEs as apprenticeship opportunities. Inquiry orientations focus on reflective practice and preservice teachers' active involvement in their own professional development. The orientation of a program would logically influence EFE structure and evaluation practices, but the orientations among faculty within the same program may vary—further complicating evaluation practices.

Experience. Experience refers to the number and type of EFEs in the program (Retallick & Miller, 2010). While Knowles and Cole (1996) argued that many EFEs are too short, they concluded that "simply adding more hours to existing classroom-based field experience programs is clearly a problematic trend in teacher education and ignores all cautions about the culturally reproductive nature of unexamined experience in familiar settings" (p. 573).

Using stakeholder interviews, journals, and classroom observations, Conway (2002) evaluated the effectiveness of a preservice teacher education program by researching program completers' perceptions about the experience. The qualitative design and research questions were similar to the research questions for the proposed study in that Conway (2002) wanted to determine the perceptions of beginning teacher participants, building administrators and assigned mentors about the most valuable and the least valuable aspects of the teacher preparation

program. EFEs were reported as both the most and least valuable aspects of the teacher

preparation experience (Conway, 2002). Conway (2002) found that program completers reported

EFEs to be among the most valuable aspects of preservice teacher training (second only to student

teaching), but "early observations without context" (p. 29) were reported as being the least

valuable aspects of the preservice teacher training experience (second only to teacher education

courses). That EFEs were reported by program completers in their first year of teaching as both

the most and least valuable component of a teacher preparation program emphasizes the

importance of meaningful evaluation practices, both within and of the EFE program.

 With the objective of preparing preservice teachers to be culturally responsive educators,

Barnes (2006) researched the impact of EFEs embedded in an elementary reading methods

course. Each preservice teacher (n=24) was matched with two students in an urban elementary

school with whom they worked for 35 minutes, twice a week for 15 weeks. Barnes (2006)

emphasized that simply placing preservice teachers in diverse EFE settings is inadequate. A

"systematic, cohesive cultural responsive pedagogy throughout the entire curriculum" (Barnes,

2006, p. 93) is necessary. Culturally responsive teaching "requires teachers to create a learning

environment where all students are welcomed, supported and provided the best opportunities to

learn regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds" (Barnes, 2006, p. 86). Preservice

teachers resisted the emphasis on culturally responsive teaching in the reading methods course at

first, not understanding its relevance. After completing course assignments designed to promote

cultural responsiveness and regular debriefing sessions, preservice teachers began to demonstrate

a greater understanding of and appreciation for culturally responsive teaching (Barnes, 2006).

 Placement. Placement refers to where and with whom preservice teachers are assigned to

complete the field experience (Retallick & Miller, 2010). While EFE placements at the teacher

preparation program in this case study have been historically situated in traditional P-12 public school classrooms, some of the recent EFE research describes alternative EFE placement models. Alternative models could potentially alleviate some of the institutional challenges described by Applegate (1985).

Alternative community-based settings can be particularly beneficial EFE placements. Coffey (2010) analyzed the narrative data collected from preservice teacher journals and online reflections. She found that preservice teachers (*n*=9) "gained insight" and "bridged the gap between teacher education and practice" (Coffey, 2010, p. 335) after participating in a summer service-learning EFE at an urban Children's Defense Fund Freedom School.

Burant and Kirby (2002) asserted that some traditional EFEs cemented stereotypes in the minds of preservice teachers, and recommended community-based field experiences that afford preservice teachers the opportunity to meet parents and interact with the community prior to assigning classroom placements. They analyzed the experience of 26 elementary and secondary preservice teachers who participated in an urban EFE placement using interviews, observations, reflective writings and focus groups. They concluded that community-based field experiences cultivated new and rich appreciation for multicultural differences more effectively than the traditional classroom placements. They did not have a comparison group for the study, but based their conclusion on their dissatisfaction of students' engagement during past semesters in classroom-only field experiences (Burant & Kirby, 2002, p. 563)

Heafner and Plaisance (2012) argued that effective fieldwork placements did not have to occur in the traditional way with the preservice teacher making site visits to a school classroom. They recommended and found positive results with a collaborative approach utilizing video to create shared field experiences (*n*=30). Shared viewing of field experiences via video improved

learning outcomes "making them more meaningful and relevant, created opportunities for social learning and reflection, and served as a bridge between classroom learning and experiences in the field" (Heafner & Plaisance, 2012, p. 428).

Kennedy, Cavanaugh, and Dawson (2013) researched the experience of three preservice teachers who volunteered to be matched with online teachers for an EFE. They noted that this alternative to brick-and-mortar field placements is becoming increasingly important to future educators. The preservice teachers in this study reported unmet expectations and reported that they did not feel as actively involved as they did in traditional EFE placements. Nevertheless, Kennedy et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of preparing preservice teachers to teach in online environments and noted that less than 2% of teacher preparation programs offer online field experiences. Because CAEP (2013a) includes technology-based collaborations in its description of clinical preparation, these alternative models of EFE may become more common and need to be evaluated.

Documents. Documents can include syllabi, handbooks and forms related to EFEs (Retallick & Miller, 2010). No research was found in the literature that specifically focused on syllabi, fieldwork handbooks, and forms in relation to EFE evaluation practices, stakeholder perceptions of EFE evaluation or evaluation data usage. The proposed study will include analysis of EFE evaluation documents as related to the research questions (see Appendices F and G).

Implementation

Implementation includes the interactions between all stakeholders (preservice teachers, university supervisors, P-12 students, and cooperating teachers) and the outcomes that result from the learning strategies implemented in EFEs.

Interaction. According to Paul (2005), constructivists would argue that "reality is constructed through the interaction of the creative and interpretive work of the mind with the physical/temporal world" and that "knowledge is a dynamic product of the interactive work of the mind made manifest in social practices and institutions" (p. 46). The implementation of EFEs involves complex interactions between preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, P-12 students, and course instructors. EFE is a social constructivist learning experience and highly dependent on preservice teachers' observation and reflection skills. First-year teachers (*n*=25) in Conway's (2002) program evaluation of a music teacher preparation program reported that they often did not know what to look for during EFEs. Hughes (2009) suggested that preservice teachers need training prior to EFEs to be effective observers of the complex interactions that take place in classrooms.

Preservice teachers. Anderson, Barksdale, and Hite (2005) found that preservice teachers enjoyed and benefitted from being observed by their peers. Thirty-four elementary education preservice teachers were paired for an EFE and completed guided observations of each other (Anderson et al., 2005). The preservice teachers reported that observing their peers and being observed by their peers was beneficial (Anderson et al., 2005). Consistent with the social constructivist nature of EFEs, the researchers found evidence of learning and connections to coursework in the preservice teachers' dialogic journals (Anderson et al., 2005).

While preservice teachers are usually placed individually with cooperating teachers in P-12 classrooms, preservice teachers can also be paired together with the same cooperating teacher (Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman, & Stevens, 2009; Walsh & Elmslie, 2005). Walsh and Elmslie (2005) paired 100 preservice teachers with 50 cooperating teachers for an EFE; 87% of preservice teachers reported that it was a good or excellent learning experience.

Goodnough et al. (2009) paired eight preservice teachers with four cooperating teachers. They reported that pairing preservice teachers for EFE placements resulted in increased learning, confidence, and more comprehensive feedback about teaching and classroom practice for some pairs (Goodnough et al., 2009). For other pairs, the arrangement resulted in confusion and competition between the preservice teachers (Goodnough et al., 2009). More research is needed in this area, as pairing preservice teachers potentially offers a practical solution to the common institutional challenge of limited placements and greater learning outcomes if indeed paired preservice teachers are better able to reflect deeply on shared classroom experiences.

University supervisors/course instructors. While university supervisors generally make site visits for student teaching experiences, this is not typically the case for EFEs (Applegate, 1985). With preservice teachers placed at numerous schools in multiple school districts at different times, course instructors who serve as EFE supervisors often have no first-hand experience with the EFE site (Allsopp et al., 2006). In an effort to increase preservice teachers' ability to link theory to practice, Allsopp et al. (2006) redesigned an EFE program so that education classes could be held at the EFE site and course instructors (who served as the university supervisors) were available there during field visits. Interview and survey data from 19 preservice teachers in their junior year revealed that having the course instructors on site facilitated preservice teachers making increased linkages between theory and practice. It is not typical for university supervisors to be this accessible for EFEs; in fact, Allsopp et al. (2006) acknowledged that the redesign occurred only after enrollment in their education program had declined to the point that all preservice teachers in the cohort could be placed at the same school for the EFE.

P-12 students. Chang (2009) found that preservice teachers (*n*=35) were more concerned about their impact on the elementary students with whom they worked during the EFE than with concerns about themselves or the tasks when surveyed at the beginning, middle and end of the EFE. "Impact concern included reaching students' potential, helping students to value learning, challenging unmotivated students, recognizing the social and emotional needs of students, meeting the needs of different kinds of students, and helping students to apply what they learn" (Chang, 2009, p. 21). These results suggest that preservice teachers' concerns are consistent with the priorities of accrediting agencies who require evidence of impact on P-12 students' learning and development (CAEP, 2013a), yet preservice teachers' concern about impact on P-12 students does not necessarily indicate greater impact on P-12 students.

Cooperating teachers. The cooperating teacher is the most important factor in determining success of field experience (Moore, 2003; Schmidt, 2010; Whitney et al., 2002). Graduates from teacher preparation programs have reported that they were influenced more by their cooperating teachers from fieldwork than they were by their college professors, and certified teachers often report that they learn more from teaching experience than they do from education coursework (Schmidt, 2010; Whitney et al., 2002). Whitney et al. (2002) conducted four focus groups of program graduates and found that being placed with a master teacher "had the greatest influence on how they currently teach" (p. 72). Schmidt (2010) collected qualitative data (writings, interview/discussion notes, artifacts) from a cohort of six music education students and then interviewed them after completing the program to find out what experiences in the teacher preparation program they perceived as valuable. While they acknowledged the usefulness of education course work, they reported that field experiences were more valuable "viewing other teachers as resources… [and] significant mentors" (Schmidt, 2010, p. 140). They "found less

value in situations where they had limited autonomy, contextual knowledge, or sense of community" (Schmidt, 2010, p. 141). These studies indicate that preservice teachers should be placed with master teachers whose practices are consistent with what is taught in their education classes (Schmidt, 2010; Whitney et al., 2002), but consistently facilitating placements with master teachers is difficult (Applegate, 1985).

If preservice teachers emulate cooperating teachers who do not model evidence-based pedagogy, then the EFE is not likely to facilitate the desired outcomes (Moore, 2003). In a qualitative study of 77 preservice teachers and 62 classroom teachers in an inquiry-based language arts EFE over three semesters, Moore (2003) found that preservice teachers were more likely to model cooperating teachers than practices taught in their education classes if a discrepancy arose. In this robust study, the researcher observed preservice teachers in the fieldwork classroom, met with classroom teachers, and analyzed preservice teachers' reflective journals. In this EFE specifically designed to help preservice teachers link theory to practice, Moore (2003) found that preservice teachers were hesitant to do things any differently than their cooperating teachers. Mentor teachers sometimes undermined the college's learning objectives. For example, one of the mentor teachers advised her preservice teacher, "Forget the theory stuff you learned in your methods courses—that's not the real world . . . that's not real teaching" (Moore, 2003, p. 31). Guyton and McIntyre (1990) explained that when incongruence exists between what is taught in education courses and experienced in fieldwork, preservice teachers "eventually deny allegiance to education courses, [and] fail to understand any theoretical foundation behind their own or their pupils actions" (p. 516). Negative learning outcomes can result when preservice teachers are not placed with effective teachers. Teacher educators hope

that preservice teachers will be matched with master teachers (Passe, 1994), but the research

indicates that is not always the case (Applegate, 1985).

Learning strategies and objectives. Retallick and Miller (2010) organized learning

strategies found in the EFE literature into two broad categories—career exploration and teacher

development. Observation and reflective writing/journaling were learning strategies utilized in

both categories (Retallick & Miller, 2010). Teacher development included learning strategies to

facilitate skill development, application of knowledge, meld theory into practice, and transition

from student to teacher (Retallick & Miller, 2010). Retallick and Miller (2010) identified learning

strategies in the EFE literature that included opportunities to do what teachers do and to think like

teachers think. Learning strategies that allow preservice teachers to do what teachers do included

activities like teaching, tutoring, grading, and distributing supplies, while learning strategies that

challenged preservice teachers to think like teachers think included analyzing case studies,

assessing student learning, and critiquing teaching (Retallick & Miller, 2010).

Evaluation

Applegate (1985) emphasized the need for EFE program evaluation through focused

inquiry. Unfortunately, 25 years later, Retallick and Miller (2010) found little in the literature

about the evaluation of EFEs except to say that both programs and individual preservice teacher

performance should be evaluated. The ATE established the Task Force on Field Experience

Standards in 1995 (Guyton & Byrd, 2000). The task force (Guyton & Byrd, 2000) developed the

12 standards for field experience listed in Table 1. The ATE standards refer to both EFEs and

student teaching experiences (Guyton & Byrd, 2000). Using both quantitative and qualitative

measures to assess preservice teacher competencies was recommended as an authentic, useful

way to evaluate field experience programs (Guyton & Byrd, 2000). Portfolios were the only

assessment tool mentioned in the section of their report on field experience evaluation (Guyton & Byrd, 2000). More recently, in a report to NCATE of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning (NCATE, 2010), data-driven evaluation of each candidate's progress in the teacher preparation program is listed as one of the ten design principles of a clinically-based teacher preparation. While there are published standards and recommendations indicating the importance of EFE evaluation (both program and preservice teacher evaluation), there is no research specifically addressing EFE evaluation practices. Given that gap in the literature, this study was exploratory. The EFE evaluation process at the study explored stakeholders' perceptions of EFE objectives, evaluation experience, and data usage.

Evaluation of EFE program. Darling-Hammond (2010) noted that "the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connections to university work" (p. 40). Working toward continuous improvement requires valid and reliable evaluation practices. While no meta-evaluations of the EFE evaluation practices were found in the literature, Ross (2010) described an evaluation to assess Auburn University's field-based Educational Leadership program. Their evaluation utilized an integrated approach soliciting stakeholder perspectives, exploring explicitly stated program objectives via document analysis, and acknowledging the "importance of aligning the curriculum with professional standards" (Ross, 2010, p. 485). This study was relevant as an evaluation toward continuous improvement that addressed teaching and learning practices and stakeholder perspectives utilizing qualitative methods (Ross, 2010).

Evaluation of preservice teacher. Retallick and Miller (2010) reported that EFEs create important learning opportunities, but what is learned depends on the unique EFE. Understanding if or how that learning transfers to practice will require further research. NCATE (2010) calls for preservice teacher evaluation based on "outcome data, including student artifacts, summative and formative assessments; [and] data from structured observations of candidates' classroom skills by supervising teachers and faculty" (p. 5).

Evaluation of performance. ATE (2000) recommends that preservice teacher performance during EFE be evaluated with both quantitative and qualitative measures. Portfolios are commonly used by many teacher preparation programs to assess preservice teacher performance (Guyton & Byrd, 2000). Ratings and checklists are commonly utilized evaluation methodologies (VDOE, 2006). The EFE evaluation document recommended by the Virginia Department of Education (see Appendix A) includes both a quantitative rating section and qualitative reflection questions (VDOE, 2006). The quantitative ratings include items related to professionalism and performance (i.e., punctuality, professional appearance, and completed assigned tasks effectively). The quantitative ratings also include more subjective items (i.e., positive attitude toward teaching and demonstrated professional promise).

Evaluation of learning. Qualitative items on the EFE evaluation document recommended by the VDOE (see Appendix A) include question prompts that refer to the opportunities to learn (VDOE, 2006). For example, the cooperating teachers are asking to indicate if the EFE provided an opportunity to "relate theory to actual practice in classrooms and schools… [and] develop and apply the new knowledge and skill gained in their programs" (VDOE, 2006, p. 83).

Qualitative self-studies of particular EFE experiences done at single institutions are common in the literature; researchers teaching classes with an EFE attached want to know if their

program has an effect on preservice teachers' learning and attitudes. For example, Hanline (2010) analyzed 15 female preservice teachers' reflective journal entries and found themes of effecting positive change in preschool children, increased respect for effective teaching and greater appreciation for inclusion after completion of an EFE in an inclusive early childhood classroom. Maxie (2001) studied the impact of a pilot field experience program, Better Educated Science Teachers (BEST), by qualitatively analyzing students' written course work (autobiography assignments, journals, lesson plans, and reflective writing assignments). Maxie (2001) reported that freshman education students in the study (n=5) were "intensely focused on self in relation to students and the work of teaching" (p. 129). Recchia, Beck, Esposito, & Tarrant (2009) found that preservice teachers (n=5) became more comfortable, reflective and skilled after completing an EFE in an early childhood setting. These examples are typical of the EFE research found in the literature—rich, interpretive, qualitative studies that effectively demonstrate the messiness of EFE design and evaluation even though the foci are not specifically EFE evaluation practices. The small sample sizes are challenging.

Analyzing preservice teachers' reflective writing is a common evaluation methodology in the field experience literature (Coffey, 2010; Hanline, 2010). In the previously mentioned study of an alternative EFE placement, Coffey (2010) used narrative inquiry over the course of a summer field experience at a Children's Defense Fund Freedom School. She took detailed notes during the afternoon debriefing sessions, had nine preservice teachers answer reflective questions in an online discussion, and analyzed open-ended reflective writings completed in class about the EFE. She found that the EFE was beneficial to preservice teachers in that it "helped bridge the gap between educational theory and classroom practice…[and] reflect on stereotypes and assumptions they bring into the classroom" (Coffey, 2010, p. 341). Hanline (2010) analyzed the

reflective journals, supervisor observation notes, and preservice teacher field experience evaluation documents of 15 early childhood special education (ECSE) preservice teachers. She concluded that the field experience provided an "opportunity to connect conceptual knowledge and theoretical knowledge" (Hanline, 2010, p. 349). Specifically, the preservice teachers "observed and experienced the impact of best practices…were able to recognize, value and respect the application of best practice in conducting ongoing assessment of children…[and] recognized the tremendous responsibility of and challenges faced by many families" (Hanline, 2010, p. 347). Researchers make inferences about what preservice teachers learn from reflective writing. This practice is consistent with constructivist theory which posits individuals construct new knowledge from experiences (Merriam et. al, 2007).

While utilizing preservice teachers' reflective journals is a common method for assessing preservice teacher learning, it can be problematic, requiring a critical and constructivist lens. When preservice teachers reflect on their field experiences, they write aware of their reader, the course instructor, who may include reflective journals as a graded component of the course. The power differential between preservice teacher and instructor (and perhaps the cooperating teacher) introduces a potential threat to the validity of reflective writing if used to evaluate attitudes, disposition, or learning. Preservice teachers may write what they think the instructor wants to read rather than reflecting honestly to communicate attitudes and learning. Recchia et al. (2009) used reflective journals as a primary data source, describing the writing as "organic and unfiltered" (p. 110). They specified that the journals were not graded. However, knowing journals would be read for a researcher may result in filtering even when the journals are not graded. Future research using mixed methodologies would be helpful—studies that measure demonstration of competencies quantitatively and qualitatively (Guyton & Byrd, 2000).

Theoretical Tensions

"Constructivism…begins with the learner's interaction with experience" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 293) and preservice teachers construct their own learning as they interact with teachers and have experiences in public school classrooms. They interact with teachers to learn not only what teachers do, but how teachers are. Their learning is "a process of negotiation, involving the construction and exchange of personally relevant and viable meanings" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 293). Preservice teachers discuss their fieldwork experiences with fellow preservice teachers in class and write reflective journal entries that may be exchanged with journaling partners. The learning is experiential, interactive, social and unique for each preservice teacher. Maxie (2001) noted:

> As a process, field experience is characterized by a focus on reflection and inquiry into teaching; an acknowledgement of the complexity of the work of teaching and life in schools; and an emphasis on the integration of the study of practice of teaching through collaborations between universities and schools. (p. 116)

There is a current emphasis on quantitative, scientific-based research and evidence-based practice in education research (Taubman, 2009). Taubman (2009) detailed his experience "as a program head and assistant dean to bring…[their] teacher education programs into compliance first with New York's revised regulations governing teacher certification and then with the inexorable and arbitrary demands made by…NCATE" (p. x). He examined the accountability practices in the program and lamented that "we have witnessed the resurgence of behavioral performance objectives" (Taubman, 2009, p. xii) offering the following example from his own experience. When he offered a substantive narrative about a preservice teacher's performance to the NCATE auditor when asked for more data, she responded, "I don't want a substantive

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narrative. I want numbers!" (Taubman, 2009, p. 89). Certainly there are research questions in teacher education that are well-served by a post-positivist approach—one that "seeks evidence through rigorous methods that might falsify the knowledge views held" in a "reality [that is] the collection of natural laws and social phenomena" (Paul, 2005, p. 46), but more than one method and theoretical framework is needed (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Retallick & Miller, 2010). Many questions in teacher education require both a quantitative and qualitative investigation; EFE research is no exception.

A checklist or simple rating of what was done during the field experience (i.e., dressed professionally, taught a lesson, tutored students) does not indicate what, if anything, was learned from the experience. Thus, social constructivism may be a more helpful theoretical framework to preservice teachers, professors and cooperating teachers in evaluating learning that results from field experience.

Enduring Problems

Implementing highly effective fieldwork experiences is inherently challenging (Applegate, 1985; Burant & Kirby, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Heafner & Plaisance, 2012; Passe, 1994; Stone, 1987). While serving as the Director of Field Experiences at Kent State University, Applegate wrote about the recurring dilemmas in fieldwork nearly 30 years ago (Applegate, 1985), yet her description of the programmatic, institutional and individual challenges are still relevant today.

Programmatic Challenges

Programmatic challenges include curricular, instructional and evaluative decisions (Applegate, 1985). For example, what are the specific curricular goals of fieldwork and who gets to establish those goals? How do the activities of fieldwork facilitate goal achievement? What

will be evaluated and how will that evaluation occur? Including EFEs in teacher education makes

intuitive sense, but understanding and gathering evidence for programmatic particulars is

complicated. No literature that questioned the value and logic of having preservice teachers

participate in fieldwork experience as part of their training was found. Rubbing shoulders with

experienced teachers, seeing instruction in action, and interacting with P-12 students in the busy

reality of classroom life makes intuitive sense. It is "wisdom of practice" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 16), a

form of experiential learning consistent with the philosophy of most career and technical

educators (Retallick & Miller, 2010).

Institutional Challenges

Institutional challenges having to do with logistics, politics and personnel issues must also be

addressed (Applegate, 1985); there never seems to be enough time, money or personnel power to

make the best case scenario a reality. More fieldwork experiences require more administrative

tasks and more placement sites. More placement sites mean more partnering schools and teachers

are needed. More partnering schools and teachers mean more training, more travel and more time.

Simply put, additional institutional demands mean more complications.

While evaluating learning outcomes resulting from fieldwork experiences is necessary to

assess programmatic effectiveness, the evaluation process is plagued with institutional challenges.

Course instructors generally do not make supervisory visits for early field experiences, but

monitor progress via reflective journals and/or class discussions (Applegate, 1985). Workload and

time constraints generally preclude having college professors and cooperating teachers meet in

person to evaluate each preservice teacher's fieldwork performance (Applegate, 1985). Preservice

teachers are guests in public school classrooms, so unduly burdening busy cooperating teachers

with time-consuming paperwork may discourage them from hosting future preservice teachers. Compromises must be made to account for inevitable time and personnel constraints.

As Applegate (1985) noted, cooperating teachers spend the most time with the preservice teacher during field experiences, so it makes sense for them to evaluate preservice teacher performance. On the other hand, Applegate (1985) also noted that cooperating teachers and professors often have differing expectations of preservice teacher performance. If expectations differ, then interpretations of the evaluation form likely differ leading to reliability issues with the evaluation document. Training cooperating teachers to supervise and evaluate preservice teacher performance is desirable (VDOE, 2006), but not always feasible.

The pressure to build partnerships with schools so that enough placements are available is high (Bloomfield, 2009). If college fieldwork administrators and professors are too demanding, they risk losing the partnership and classroom access for fieldwork placements altogether. Hosting preservice teachers is purely voluntary on the part of local school districts, but fieldwork is a required component of preservice teacher training for accredited programs. Institutional challenges also include issues like assigning course credit, travel time, transportation, and liability surrounding student conduct. Simultaneously meeting the institutional demands of accrediting agencies, the college, and partnering institutions is complicated.

The need for P-12 and college faculty to work together is critical to the success of EFEs and noted in the ATE Standards for Field Experiences in Teacher Education (Guyton & Byrd, 2000). Collaboration between P-12 and college faculty is referenced in seven of the 12 ATE Standards (see Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Table 1). While these ATE Standards refer to collaboration, regular interaction and agreement between P-12 schools and teacher preparation

programs, Applegate (1985) aptly described the logistical challenges of maintaining these important institutional partnerships.

Individual Challenges

Individual dilemmas "emanate from personal beliefs and values" (Applegate, 1985, p. 62). Personalities and expectations collide with reality often resulting in disillusionment and confusion. No two field experiences are alike. Preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, and teacher educators approach field experience with different priorities and expectations that can easily lead to conflict (Brown & Danaher, 2008; Cardini, 2006). What the preservice teachers do during fieldwork is negotiated between each cooperating teacher and preservice teacher pair (Applegate, 1985). While some preservice teachers are invited to tutor individuals or small groups of students, others are given a seat at the back of the classroom from which to observe or accomplish other non-instructional tasks (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). It is not surprising that preservice teachers often report feeling disappointed by their field experience because they did not get to teach as much as they anticipated (Aiken & Day, 1999). That fieldwork learning tends to be "highly contextual and uneven" (Applegate, 1985, p. 62) should not be taken as evidence against fieldwork as an important learning mechanism for preservice teachers.

College professors and public school teachers are tasked to teach students, but their perspectives and priorities differ (Applegate, 1985; Bloomfield, 2009). Likewise, their expectations of preservice teachers may differ. College instructors in teacher education rightfully focus on the professional development of their preservice teachers. Public school teachers rightfully focus on the students on their roll, and only peripherally on the development of the preservice teacher who visits their classroom a few hours each week (Bloomfield, 2009).

Summary

Fieldwork is a complex, constructivist learning experience that occurs in the messy reality of classroom relationships and instructional routines. There are numerous participants, each of which brings something of value to the process. Ribich (1995) summarized findings of the empirical research well, and little needs to be added to his two decade-old summary. Field experiences for preservice teachers should:

…be integrated as soon as possible in the preservice teacher program; be an integral part of the whole curriculum; be carefully planned and linked to course work; be sequential and developmental; and provide for opportunities for students to experience a wide range of settings and learners who represent a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. (p. 37)

Today, accrediting agencies require quantitative evidence that each teacher education program has fieldwork placements that work (CAEP, 2013a; NCATE, 2010; NCATE, 2013a; TEAC, 2011). Now having EFEs that work means having evidence that preservice teachers positively impact student learning (CAEP, 2013; Taubman, 2009). Given the enduring programmatic, institutional and individual problems of fieldwork, providing reliable and valid quantitative evidence of impact on student learning, though required, seems impractical for a sequence of multiple EFEs in different classrooms, at different schools for different education courses.

The current push to provide quantitative evidence of program effectiveness implies a post-positivist theoretical perspective that seems at odds with the constructivist nature of EFEs. The post-positivist nature of checklists and rating skills presume rigor and reliability, but a systematic search of the EFE literature did not result in empirical evidence to support that quantitative methods provide the most effective evaluation data for the constructivist learning that takes place

during EFEs. There may be a need for both a post-positivist and pragmatic approach—using checklists and rating skills responsibly, understanding threats to validity and reliability, and acknowledging the variable-rich complexities of field experience.

Teacher educators also want to know if their EFEs work, but determining whether current EFEs meet established objectives is dependent on reliable and valid evaluation practices of preservice teacher learning, preservice teacher performance, and the overall EFE program. While there is descriptive literature about EFEs, no research literature was found about EFE evaluation. There were only literature reviews that acknowledged the importance of EFE evaluation (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre et al., 1996; Retallick & Miller, 2010) and professional organizations that present standards or mandates related to EFE evaluation (Guyton & Byrd, 2010; NCATE, 2013; TEAC, 2009; TEAC, 2011).

It seems most institutions are inventing their own fieldwork wheel, as collaboration between teacher preparation programs is not evident in the literature (Pepper & Hare, 1999). Except for the literature reviews, most of the research refers to descriptions of EFEs at single teacher preparation programs. The variation between EFEs across teacher education programs makes research difficult, but collaboration between programs could be helpful. This study is an effort toward such collaboration via a transparent case study of EFE evaluation at one small teacher preparation program. Qualitatively analyzing fieldwork evaluation practices through interviews and document analysis could potentially improve curricular design alleviating programmatic dilemmas, save time and money alleviating institutional dilemmas, and improve learning among all preservice teachers despite the highly contextual, individual dilemmas inherent in fieldwork (Applegate, 1985).

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While the perceptions of preservice teachers and recent program graduates have been studied, little research was found about the perceptions and experiences of cooperating teachers, school administrators and teacher educators. As all of these groups are stakeholders in fieldwork partnerships, their perspectives are certainly of interest. "Professionalism relies on our ability to see multiple sides of the decisions that we make and to make informed judgments about which tools to use to provide the best instruction possible" (MacDonald & Shirley, 2009, p. 27). Acknowledging and tapping into the expertise of all participants seems an efficient strategy. "Characteristics of effective partnerships include: mutual trust and respect; sufficient time to develop and strengthen relationships at all levels; shared responsibility and accountability among partners, and periodic formative evaluation of activities among partners" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 15). This study is an effort toward that end.

Fieldwork is supported in the literature as an important and logical component of teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Retallick & Miller, 2010; Sherman, 2013; Wasburn-Moses et al., 2012), but how it should be most effectively organized, administrated, and evaluated remains unclear. How can meaningful evaluation occur that promotes preservice teacher learning and, at the same time, meets bureaucratic mandates? The report of the National Research Council to CAEP concluded that clinical experiences were critically important to teacher preparation but that "research, to date, does not tell us what specific experiences or sequence of experiences are most likely to result in more effective beginning teachers" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 16). Given that teacher candidates, the research, and accrediting agencies support more and better field experiences for the professional development of preservice teachers, a closer look at the evaluation practices of field experiences is in order.

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CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative meta-evaluation of the EFE evaluation practices at an undergraduate teacher preparation program focusing on stakeholders' perceptions about the EFE evaluation process. The guiding research questions are:

1. How are EFEs evaluated at the teacher preparation program? Specifically, what is the evaluation process, and what are the evaluation components?

2. How do stakeholders experience the EFE evaluation process?

3. To what extent do stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the EFE evaluation process to assess and facilitate the stated learning objectives?

4. How do stakeholders use the resulting data?

Design Rationale

This meta-evaluation case study is qualitative and intended to investigate the merit and worth of the EFE evaluation protocol at the study site. Lincoln and Guba's (1980) distinction between merit and worth can be applied to this meta-evaluation case study of EFE as follows. The evaluation protocol at the study site is judged for *merit* based on its simplicity, convenience and straightforward format. The second research question addresses merit by exploring how stakeholders experience the evaluation process (i.e., simple or complex, convenient or burdensome, straightforward or confusing).

The EFE evaluation protocol is judged on its *worth* based on how well it assesses and facilitates preservice teacher learning. The third research question addresses worth by exploring

the extent to which stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the EFE evaluation process to assess and facilitate the stated EFE learning objectives. The fourth research question also addresses worth; stakeholders' perceptions about evaluation data usage should provide an indication of the extent to which the data is being used to assess and facilitate learning. Lincoln and Guba (1980) contend that "evaluation studies of worth thus require…qualitative, naturalistic methodologies rather than the more conventional approaches that have characterized evaluation practice heretofore" (p. 61).

Stake (1967) developed a countenance model of program evaluation emphasizing the importance of describing an education program and judging it based on the extent to which intentions of the program were congruent with observations of what actually happens. Pepper & Hare (1999) adapted Stake's (1967) model to evaluate the 16-week student teaching block at Mississippi State University. Using an adaptation of Stake's (1967) model allowed Pepper and Hare (1999) to go beyond "tradition, intuition, and common sense" (p. 353) to a more systematic, research-based evaluation that identified strengths and weaknesses of their program in light of explicit standards set forth by accrediting agencies. Given that the purpose of this meta-evaluation is to explore the extent to which (1) official EFE objectives are congruent with the EFE evaluation, (2) the intended evaluation experience is congruent with stakeholders' perceptions of the evaluation experience, and (3) intended data usage is congruent with reported data usage, an adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model is useful. Figure 2 depicts the adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model applied to EFE evaluation that serves as the conceptual model of the research design.

Intended		Perceived
Objectives	**Congruence**	**Objectives**
	$\longleftrightarrow$	
Experience	**Congruence**	**Experience**
	$\longleftrightarrow$	
Data Usage	**Congruence**	**Data Usage**
	$\longleftrightarrow$	
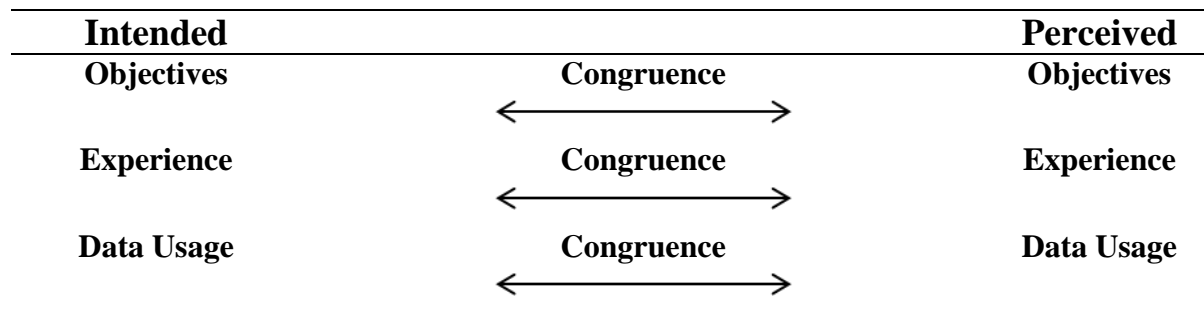
Figure 2. Adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model applied to early field experience meta-evaluation.

Given the constructivist nature of EFE as a learning opportunity, a participant-oriented evaluation model is appropriate. Participant-oriented evaluation models generally rely on qualitative methods, are classified as constructivist and have been used to evaluate higher education programs in the literature (House, 1978; Pepper & Hare, 1999; Ross, 2010). Participant-oriented evaluation models are responsive in that the "major focus is attending and responding to the participant and stakeholder need for information" (Ross, 2010, p. 483). In participatory evaluation, researchers collaborate with individuals "who have a decided stake in the program…being evaluated" (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998, p. 5). Preservice teachers, cooperating P-12 teachers, and education course instructors have a decided stake in the EFE program, so data about their perceptions can reveal the extent to which the intended evaluation experience is congruent with stakeholders' experiences with the evaluation process, and intended data usage is congruent with reported data usage.

This meta-evaluation was conducted by an internal evaluator; the researcher works in the teacher preparation program. Pepper and Hare (1999) also used an internal evaluator and participant-oriented evaluation model in conjunction with an adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model. They asserted that "the only way to get a true picture of what the program is like is to become involved in the program and include responses and reaction of the participants

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of the program in the data collected" (Pepper & Hare, 1999, p. 357). Conway (2002) noted that using an internal evaluator was helpful in her formative, participatory evaluation of a music education program. Conway (2002) served as the director of the music education program, and as such, had observed all of the participants in the field at least once prior to the study. She reported that the "previously established relationships made it easier…to maintain the necessary rapport for in-depth observation and interviewing" (Conway, 2002, p. 24).

Bracketing, member checking, and peer review were included in the design to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data given the internal evaluation model. Bracketing is a "method used in qualitative research to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process" (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 80). The researcher engages "in the self-reflective process of 'bracketing,' whereby they recognize and set aside (but do not abandon) their a priori knowledge and assumptions, with the analytic goal of attending to the participants' accounts with an open mind'" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1376). Bracketing was done prior to and throughout the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Design

The researcher analyzed the departmental EFE evaluation documents and conducted semi-structured interviews with course instructors, preservice teachers, and collaborating P-12 teachers. Open-ended discussion questions were developed to guide the interviews (see Appendices B, C, and D). Figure 3 summarizes how the proposed data sources in relation to the guiding research questions align with adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model.

Intended		Perceived	Data Sources
Official Objectives	**Congruence** ⟵⟶	**Objectives**	
	RQ1: How are EFEs evaluated at the teacher preparation program? Specifically, what is the evaluation process, and what are the evaluation components?		Analysis of EFE evaluation documents and semi-structured interviews of course instructors
Experience	**Congruence** ⟵⟶	**Experience**	
	RQ2: How do stakeholders experience the EFE evaluation process?		Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders
Data Usage	**Congruence** ⟵⟶	**Data Usage**	
	RQ3: To what extent do stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the EFE evaluation process to assess and facilitate the stated learning objectives?		Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders
	RQ4: How do stakeholders use the resulting data?		Semi-structured interviews of stakeholders

Figure 3. Adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model applied to research questions and proposed data sources in early field experience meta-evaluation.

Including multiple qualitative methods in the study design, document analysis and interviews with three stakeholder groups, provided a means of triangulation of the data for the research questions (Bowen, 2009). Content analysis was done to organize the information in the EFE evaluation documents into "categories related to the central questions of the research" (Bowen, 2009, p. 32) prior to the interviews. Content analysis of the evaluation documents was completed prior to the semi-structured interviews providing "background and context" (Bowen, 2009, p. 30). Thematic analysis of the documents was done after the interviews to investigate how themes that emerged from the interview data relate to EFE evaluation documents (Bowen, 2009).

Setting

The teacher preparation program in this meta-evaluation case study is at a private co-educational, undergraduate liberal arts college in Virginia. The college enrolls approximately 1,400 students. The teacher preparation program is small; 20 preservice teachers graduated and were recommended for teacher licensure the year of the study.

The EFEs take place in a partnering suburban school district that serves approximately 19,400 P-12 students in 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools, all of which are accredited by the VDOE and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The teacher preparation program has partnered with the school district for approximately three decades.

Participants

Participants in this study are stakeholders in the EFEs of the teacher preparation program being studied—course instructors, preservice teachers, and cooperating teachers at partnering P-12 school districts. Participants for this study were purposefully selected to provide a wide range

of relevant perspectives about their experiences with the EFE evaluation in the teacher

preparation program. Demographic data of participants can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Participants' Demographic Data

Preservice Teachers (*n*=12)	Male	Female
	3	9
	Elementary	Secondary
	8	4
Cooperating Teachers (*n*=9)	Male	Female
	1	8
	Elementary	Secondary
	5	4
	Years P-12 Teaching Experience	
	M=13 years	
Course Instructors (*n*=4)	Male	Female
	1	3
	Years Teaching Experience	
	in Teacher Preparation	
	M = 13.5	

Preservice Teachers

A stratified, purposeful sample of 12 preservice teachers was selected to participate in the study (Patton, 1990). Only preservice teachers who had completed the required EFEs at the conclusion of the 2014 fall semester and had been accepted into the teacher preparation program to student teach during the 2015 spring semester were included in the study population. This purposeful selection allowed for participants to reflect on all past EFEs over the course of the entire teacher preparation program. The researcher stratified the sample to include elementary and secondary preservice teachers. The researcher also stratified the sample to include male and female preservice teachers.

The researcher interviewed a predetermined minimum of four elementary preservice teachers and continued to saturation. The minimum number of four elementary preservice teachers represented one-third of the elementary preservice teachers eligible to participate in the study—those who had completed all of the required EFEs and had been accepted to student teach during the 2015 spring semester. The minimum number of interviews was determined to assure that there would be an adequate number of preservice teacher participants for stratification, multiple perspectives and logistical feasibility. An additional four elementary preservice teachers were interviewed. Responses in the additional elementary preservice teacher interviews were similar to the responses in the first four interviews with no unique perspectives identified indicating saturation. A total of eight elementary preservice teachers were interviewed with one of those seeking an additional endorsement in secondary natural science.

Four secondary preservice teachers were interviewed. The predetermined minimum number of four secondary preservice teachers represented two-thirds of the secondary preservice teachers who had completed all of the required EFEs and had been accepted to student teach

during the 2015 spring semester. One secondary student teacher was excluded from participation because the researcher served as his student teaching supervisor. The remaining secondary student teacher was invited, but chose not to participate in the study. Of the secondary preservice teacher participants, one was preparing to teach social studies, one was preparing to teach mathematics, and two were music preservice teachers. The secondary preservice teachers included two music education candidates. Technically, the music candidates are licensed to teach secondary and elementary students, but for the purposes of the teacher preparation program and this research, the music preservice teachers were grouped with the secondary preservice teachers. The music preservice teachers had completed the same departmental EFEs as the secondary preservice teachers, but not all of the same EFEs as the elementary preservice teachers.

All of the preservice teachers were traditional college students who came to the college directly from high school and were completing their first college degree. All of the preservice teachers graduated at the end of the semester and were recommended by the teacher preparation program for teacher licensure to the VDOE.

Interviews took place after all EFEs were completed and grades were posted. Permission to invite preservice teachers to participate in the study was requested and granted from the teacher preparation program. None of the preservice teachers invited to participate in the study were taught or supervised by the researcher during the project. Two of the preservice teachers were previously taught by the researcher in an education class with an EFE, Survey of Exceptional Children (one in the fall semester of 2013 and the other in the fall semester of 2014). Preservice teaching participants graduated at the end of the semester during which the interviews took place, so they will not be taught or supervised in the program by the researcher in the future. All data were de-identified, and no individual data were released.

Cooperating Teachers

A stratified purposeful sample of cooperating teachers who hosted students for an EFE during the fall semester of 2014 was selected to participate in the study and be interviewed. The sample included nine cooperating teachers with at least one supervising preservice teachers from each education course. The sample was stratified to include elementary, middle and high school teachers. The five elementary teachers included a kindergarten teacher, fourth grade teacher, fifth grade teacher, music teacher, and a reading specialist. The two middle school teachers taught special education and gifted education. The two high school teachers taught social studies and mathematics.

The sample was stratified to include male and female cooperating teachers. The researcher also stratified the sample to include teachers who hosted students from the teacher preparation program more than once and first-time EFE cooperating teachers. Two of the cooperating teachers had hosted one student from the teacher preparation program for an EFE. Seven of the cooperating teachers had hosted more than one preservice teacher for an EFE from the study site (M=4). Interviewing both first-time and experienced cooperating teachers was done to collect the potentially unique perspectives of each group.

The cooperating teachers had four to 39 years of teaching experience (M=13). The elementary teachers had from 9 to 17 years of experience. Three of the secondary teachers had four to eight years of experience with one secondary teacher having 39 years of classroom teaching experience.

Cooperating teacher interviews took place after EFEs were completed and grades were posted. Permission to invite cooperating teachers to participate in the study was sought and

granted by the school district in which the EFEs take place. All data were de-identified, and no individual data were released.

Course Instructors

With the exception of the researcher, all course instructors in the teacher education program who taught courses with a corresponding EFE accepted the invitation to participate in the study (*n=4*). Permission to invite course instructors to be interviewed for the study was requested and granted by the teacher preparation program. Data collected from course instructors was de-identified so that responses could not be used to influence future hiring decisions and teaching assignments. The relationships among the teacher preparation program faculty are collegial. Course instructors expressed support of and interest in this research toward the continuous improvement of EFE evaluation.

Course instructors are responsible for structuring, supervising and evaluating the EFEs for their courses (Profession of Teaching, Educational Psychology, Math Methods, Science Methods, and Reading Methods); thus, the perspectives of course instructors were particularly relevant to this meta-evaluation. The EFE components attached to the foundational education class and educational psychology class are required by all preservice teachers. The math methods, science methods, and reading methods EFEs are required only for elementary preservice teachers. The researcher teaches one section of a course with an EFE in special education that is also a required program component for all preservice teachers. As mentioned, two of the preservice teachers had been taught by the researcher for that required course; the remaining preservice teachers were taught by a different faculty member who used to teach that course.

The course instructors interviewed have taught in teacher preparation for 3-23 years (*M=13.5*). They reported having previous experience in education as school administrators (i.e.,

elementary school principal, elementary school assistant principal, middle school assistant principal), and as elementary, secondary and special education teachers. At the time of the interviews, three of the course instructors worked as full-time faculty in the teacher preparation program and one course instructor worked part-time as an adjunct instructor while serving as a full-time elementary school principal.

Evaluation Documents

The fieldwork evaluation form (see Appendix F) and fieldwork log (see Appendix G) are the only assessment tools used consistently for all EFEs at the teacher preparation program, and as such, are the focal evaluation documents in this study. During the interviews, course instructors were asked to share EFE-related course assignments to be included in the study. Only one course assignment was provided for analysis by a course instructor. Content analysis revealed that the assignment had to do with specific reading methods and was not relevant to EFE evaluation, so the course assignment was not included in the analysis.

Evaluation Form

Initial document analysis of the evaluation form was completed prior to conducting the interviews. The fieldwork evaluation form is a single-page document completed by the cooperating teachers in triplicate on carbonless copy paper. There is space at the top of the document for the preservice teacher's name, the education course with which the field experience is completed, the cooperating teacher's name and the date.

In the written directions on the evaluation form, the cooperating teacher is specifically instructed to evaluate the preservice teacher as compared to other preservice teachers on 16 items. There is a small space for a brief narrative evaluation and an overall evaluation rating as

exemplary, proficient, developing/needs improvement, and unacceptable at the bottom of the document.

The evaluation form emphasizes professional expectations of the preservice teacher. Fourteen of the 16 items rated on the form address these expectations. These items are rated as either exemplary, proficient, developing, unacceptable, or not observed. While a few items on the form refer to professional skills specific to educators (i.e., works with students individually or in groups, listens actively and pays attention to students' needs, promotes cultural sensitivity and respects diversity), more items address general characteristics that would be relevant in most professional settings (i.e., has regular attendance and is punctual and reliable, dresses appropriately, accepts and responds to constructive feedback, asks for help when needed, exercises flexibility).

There is a small area below the ratings for a brief narrative evaluation and a space for the cooperating teacher's signature. The brief narrative space leaves room for little more than one to three sentences of handwritten narrative evaluation. Writing additional narrative on the back of the form is not feasible given that the form is on carbonless copy paper.

Document analysis of the evaluation form in light of interview data shows ambiguity regarding the meaning of each rating. There is no definition of exemplary, proficient, developing and unacceptable at the top of the page. The only definitions provided for exemplary, proficient, developing, and unacceptable are at the bottom of the page where cooperating teachers are asked to mark one box indicating their overall evaluation of the preservice teacher's performance during the EFE. Cooperating teachers are instructed at the top of the form to evaluate the preservice teacher "as compared to other preservice teachers," but the definitions of exemplary and proficient—the ratings that study findings suggest almost all preservice teachers receive—are

consistent with what would be expected of an effective professional teacher. Definitions of the

ratings are listed in Table 4. The fieldwork evaluation form provides data about the cooperating

teacher's perception of the preservice teacher's performance—particularly the preservice

teacher's professionalism—during the EFE.

Table 4

Definitions of Ratings from EFE Evaluation Form

Exemplary	In addition to meeting the standard, the preservice teacher consistently demonstrates extensive knowledge of the subject matter and continually enriches the curriculum.
Proficient	The preservice teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developing needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.
Developing/Needs Improvement	The preservice teacher is progressing in the areas of the curriculum, content, and student development or lacked fluidity in using knowledge in practice.
Unacceptable	The preservice teacher bases instruction on material that is inaccurate or out-of-date and/or inadequately addresses the developmental needs of students.

Fieldwork Log

       The fieldwork log is a single page document completed by the preservice teacher throughout the EFE. There is space for the preservice teacher's name, the education class, the host teacher's name, school, and the grade level and subject level taught. A table is provided with columns for the preservice teacher to document the date, time, hours and a brief description of the activity in which the preservice teacher engaged during the field visit. There is space for the host teacher to sign the chart at the end of each field visit. The date, time and hours are straightforward listings of actual dates, times and the number of hours served for each fieldwork visit. The "brief description of activity" on the form provides a small space where students can indicate how they were involved in the classroom during each visit using a numbered list of possible fieldwork activities including teaching a mini-lesson, tutoring a student, tutoring a small group of students, teaching a station, observing and taking field notes, assisting with duties (i.e., bus, lunch, recess), serving as an aide in the classroom, attending a meeting (i.e., individual education plan, faculty, team meetings), interviewing an education professional, and "other" (see Appendix G). A textbox in the lower right quadrant next to the list of potential activities provides instructions for the preservice teachers stating, "You should engage in a variety of these activities during your fieldwork. Don't hesitate to ask your teacher, 'How can I be helpful today?'" There are only seven rows on the form to document up to seven visits. Presumably, students use additional copies of the log or the back of the form to document additional visits.

       The log also emphasizes professionalism in that the professional activities of a teacher are specified. Preservice teachers are encouraged to teach, tutor, and assist students among other professional activities. The log documents what preservice teachers do during field visits and the length of time spent in the field.

Procedure

The researcher submitted the appropriate application and paperwork to the Virginia Commonwealth University IRB for approval prior to data collection. The researcher also submitted the appropriate application to conduct research at the teacher preparation program and P-12 school district involved. IRB approval was granted by all three institutions. Figure 4 summarizes the research procedure.

```
┌────────────────────┐    ┌────────────────────┐    ┌────────────────────┐
│ Document Analysis  │    │ Stratified,        │    │                    │
│ of Official EFE    │───▶│ Purposeful,        │───▶│ In-depth, Semi-    │
│ Evaluation Form    │    │ Participant        │    │ structured         │
│ and Log            │    │ Selection of       │    │ Interviews         │
│                    │    │ Preservice         │    │ Conducted by       │
│                    │    │ Teachers and       │    │ Researcher         │
│                    │    │ Cooperating        │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Teachers; All      │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Course Instructors │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Invited to         │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Participate in     │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Study              │    │                    │
└────────────────────┘    └────────────────────┘    └────────────────────┘

┌────────────────────┐    ┌────────────────────┐    ┌────────────────────┐
│                    │    │                    │    │ Data Uploaded to   │
│ Interviews         │───▶│ Transcripts        │───▶│ Atlas.ti for       │
│ Transcribed        │    │ Provided to        │    │ Analysis; Data     │
│                    │    │ Participants for   │    │ Coded for Key      │
│                    │    │ Member Checking    │    │ Words, Quotes and  │
│                    │    │                    │    │ Themes Related to  │
│                    │    │                    │    │ Research Questions │
└────────────────────┘    └────────────────────┘    └────────────────────┘

┌────────────────────┐    ┌────────────────────┐    ┌────────────────────┐
│                    │    │ Second Document    │    │                    │
│ Data Coding and    │───▶│ Analysis of        │───▶│ Results Reported   │
│ Results are Peer   │    │ Official EFE Form  │    │                    │
│ Reviewed           │    │ Evaluation and     │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Log; Analysis of   │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Additional         │    │                    │
│                    │    │ Documents Provided │    │                    │
│                    │    │ During Interviews  │    │                    │
└────────────────────┘    └────────────────────┘    └────────────────────┘
```

Figure 4. Summary of research procedure.

Initial document analysis was conducted after IRB approvals were received and before the first interview was conducted. Participant selection and interviews occurred after the initial document analysis from April 25, 2015 to May 13, 2015. Participant consent was obtained from

all interviewees per the procedure approved by the university IRB. Cooperating teachers, course instructors and preservice teachers were initially contacted via email about participating in the study with a consent form attached to the email for review (see Appendix G).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using the preservice teacher, cooperating teacher and course instructor interview guides developed for this study (see Appendices B, C, and D). The interview guides were developed based on the research questions and logic model found in Figure 5. Interview questions were aligned to facilitate comparisons between stakeholder groups. That alignment can be seen in Appendix E. The researcher conducted all of the interviews. Adequate time for "thick description" and "sufficient detail" was provided during the interviews (Rudestam & Newton, 2015 p. 133). Member checking occurred; each participant was provided with a copy of the interview to review and invited to make changes as needed to ensure the validity of their responses. Only one participant made changes; the recording device failed to capture some of that participant's responses, so he added comments to the transcript sent to him to improve clarity. The interviews lasted between 10 and 31 minutes.

Research Foci: Data Usage · Assessing & Facilitating Learning · Stakeholder Perceptions · Evaluation Process

Inputs

- A mutually beneficial partnership exists between the college and the local school district.
- The fieldwork director, course instructors, school administrators and cooperating teachers can work collaboratively to address challenges and facilitate success.
- Historically, fieldwork has been a required and key component of every education class.

Process

- EFE program includes the application process, initial contact with host teacher and scheduling of visits.
- Preservice teacher makes multiple fieldwork visits to assigned classroom.
- Preservice teacher completes multiple EFE-related course assignments (i.e., reflective journaling, case studies, lesson delivery, teacher interview).
- Preservice teacher is evaluated by cooperating teacher.
- Grade assigned by course instructor.

Outcomes

Short-term	Long-term
Preservice teachers gain valuable experience by meeting and working with teachers and students in P-12 classrooms.	Having been placed in at least four fieldwork placements prior to student teaching, preservice teachers build a network of education professionals who are resources in the field prior to graduation.
EFE program fosters a mutually beneficial relationship between the college and local school district.	Preservice teachers are better prepared for the student teaching experience and their first year of teaching having had numerous opportunities to assist and observe in P-12 classrooms.
EFEs improve learning outcomes in education coursework by providing practice of concepts introduced in real life setting.	Ideally, better prepared preservice teachers leads to improved learning outcomes of P-12 students when those preservice teachers begin their teaching career.

Assumptions: EFEs are a beneficial component of preservice teacher training. Administrating participants in the process (school and college administrators, host teachers, and course instructors) understand the program objectives and want to participate in the professional development of future teachers. Having preservice teachers complete EFEs is not detrimental to P-12 student learning.
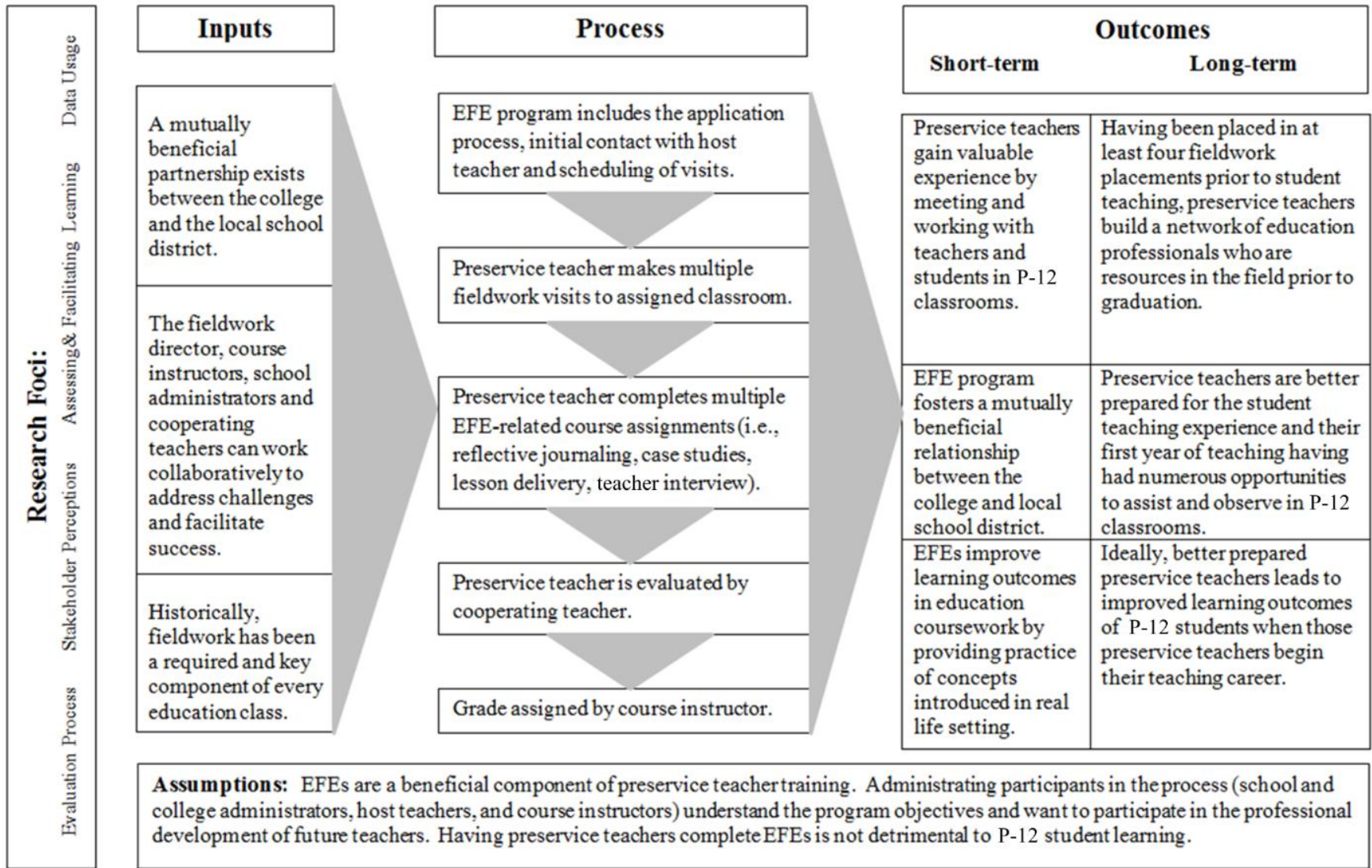
Figure 5. Logic model for fieldwork program at study site

Course instructor and preservice teacher interviews took place in the location of each interviewee's choice. Three course instructors chose to be interviewed in their offices. One course instructor requested to be interviewed at a coffee shop near the campus. Four preservice teachers chose to be interviewed at the researcher's office after returning to the college campus from student teaching. Eight preservice teachers chose to be interviewed at their student teaching site after their P-12 students were dismissed. Seven cooperating teacher interviews took place at a time and location convenient to each cooperating teacher—in their school classroom after school was dismissed or during their planning period. Two cooperating teachers responded to the initial email contact to say that they were interested in participating in the study, but preferred to provide written responses to the interview questions. The researcher emailed the interview protocol to them and allowed those two cooperating teachers to submit their answers as Word documents via email.

The face-to-face interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. All interview data were uploaded to Atlas.ti, a computer software program used for qualitative data analysis. Names of interviewees and other potentially identifying information (i.e., names of schools, course instructors, cooperating teachers, and P-12 students related to EFEs), were not included in the transcript data.

Data Analysis

Figure 6 summarizes the data analysis process. Interviewing a purposeful, stratified sample of EFE stakeholders provided different perspectives about EFE objectives, evaluation experience and data usage, further strengthening the triangulation of the data. Initial document analysis of the EFE evaluation form and fieldwork log was conducted prior to conducting the interviews. When analyzing the interview data, the researcher used an inductive and iterative

coding strategy (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) documenting common and conflicting responses in the interviews and frequently referring back to the evaluation documents. The evaluation items were read multiple times and sorted into categories. For example, the 14 items labeled "Professional Expectations" were analyzed to determine whether items referred to teaching-specific professional expectations or general professional expectations (see Appendix F). The researcher noted instructional planning and instructional delivery were evaluated with one item each, and a small space was designated for a brief narrative. The instructions, ratings (exemplary, proficient, developing, unacceptable, and not observed) and rating definitions were analyzed in light of each item.

After member checking, the interview data was uploaded to Atlas.ti for content analysis and coded for key words, quotes and themes related to the research questions. Interviews were grouped into document families by stakeholder category (course instructor, preservice teacher, and cooperating teacher; elementary or secondary preservice teachers) to compare and contrast the perspectives between groups for each research question (Patton, 1990). Analysis was an iterative process within and among interviews to explore stakeholder perceptions about the EFE evaluation process, experience and data usage referring back to the EFE evaluation documents throughout the process. Interviews were read multiple times. On the first reading, the researcher conducted open coding marking quotes related to the specific interview questions and potentially relevant topics introduced by the participants (i.e., grading, reflection,). On the next reading, the researcher looked specifically for quotes that related to issues of congruence between intended EFE evaluation objectives, experience and data usage and perceived EFE evaluation objectives, experience and data usage. The researcher read through the interviews again to code stakeholder concerns and suggestions. Themes emerged through multiple readings and review of the open

codes; specifically, grading, communication and professionalism, which were mentioned by all stakeholder groups multiple times. Quotes related to each research question and theme were read together by stakeholder group to look for patterns and differences between groups.

Twenty-five percent of the interview data were reviewed by a second reviewer, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. The peer reviewer analyzed three preservice teacher interviews, two cooperating teacher interviews (one elementary and one secondary), and one course instructor interview. The researcher purposefully selected the interviews read by the peer reviewer. The peer reviewed course instructor interview was selected based on the participant's candor and 20 years of experience teaching multiple classes with EFE components for both elementary and secondary preservice teachers. The two peer-reviewed cooperating teacher interviews were selected to include a male and female cooperating teacher, and an elementary and secondary cooperating teacher. Both cooperating teachers provided rich data with suggestions relevant to the EFE evaluation process. The peer reviewed preservice teacher interviews were selected to include an elementary, secondary and music candidate, and male and female candidates.

The peer reviewer was familiar with the research questions prior to reading the interviews and chose to code by research question. In addition to coding by research question, the peer reviewer looked for themes in the data, identifying themes when common topics were identified in multiple interviews. After the peer reviewer had completed open coding of six interviews and the researcher had completed open coding of all of the interviews, they met to discuss their findings. Prior to consulting each other, both the researcher and reviewer had independently identified grading, communication, and professionalism as themes in the data. Both had independently coded quotes that provided insight about each of the research questions. Items

coded as learning by the reviewer were included in the researcher's learning objective code. Items coded as learning objectives were also coded as addressing research question three. One hundred percent agreement was reached on peer-reviewed interviews. The researcher found additional themes in the remaining interviews (i.e., recommendations), but none that were inconsistent with the findings of the peer reviewer.

The iterative process of repeatedly returning to evaluation documents before, during and after the interview analysis facilitated the researcher's focus on the EFE evaluation process. The interview data was compared with document data to investigate the degree to which EFE evaluation objectives are congruent with official objectives, reported evaluation experiences are 3congruent with intended evaluation experiences, and reported data usage is congruent with intended data usage. The researcher referred back to the evaluation documents before the interviews were conducted, throughout the interview analysis, and again at the end of the interview analysis. The only course assignment provided for analysis by a course instructor had to do with specific reading methods and was not relevant to EFE evaluation, so no course assignments were included in the analysis.
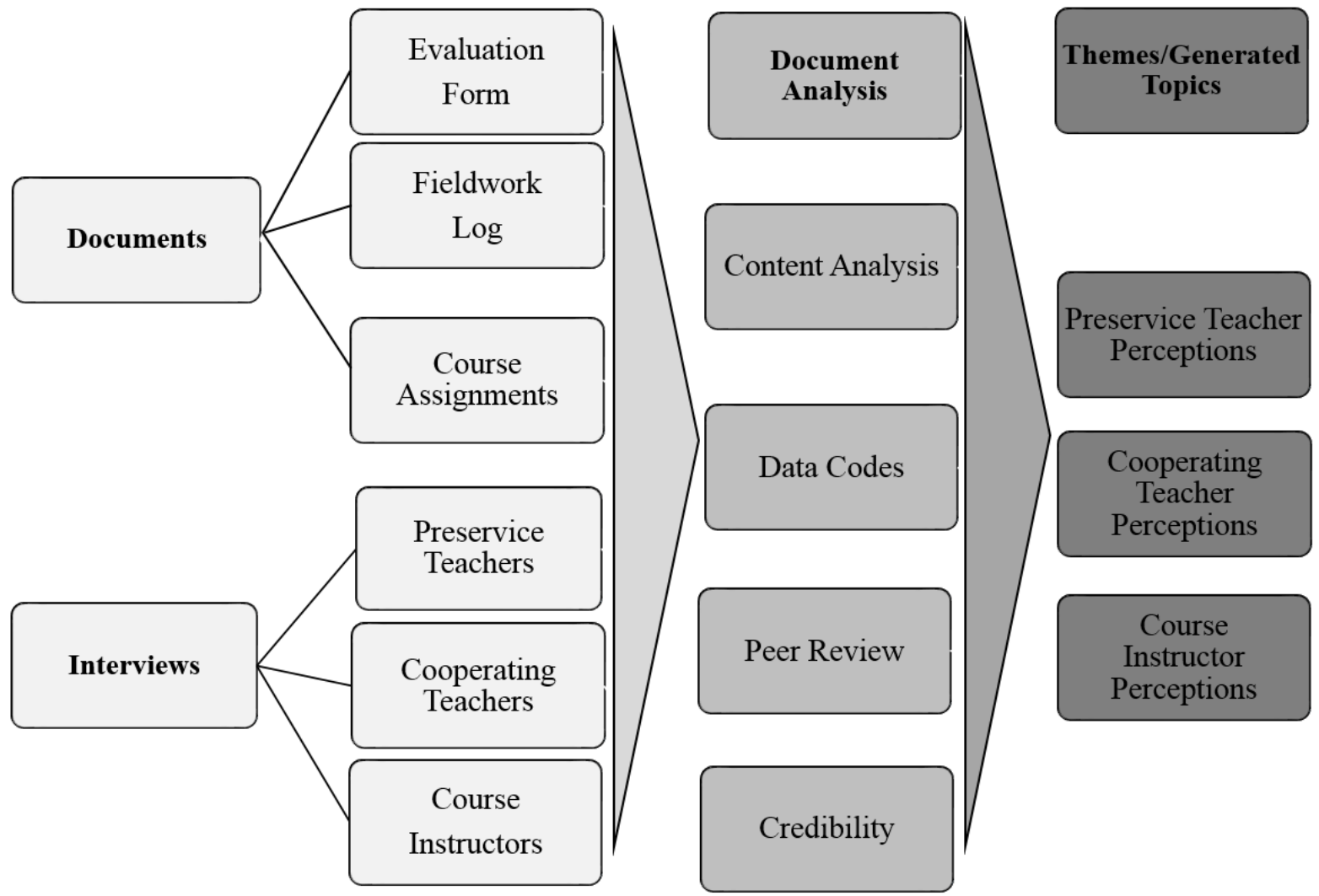
Figure 6. Data analysis process.

Limitations

Ensuring credibility requires acknowledgement of the limitations of this study. First, this study focuses on a single teacher preparation program, so results cannot be generalized to EFE evaluations at other institutions. "The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size" (Patton, 1990, p. 185); participant selection for this study was not designed to afford generalizability to EFEs at other programs, but to be valid, meaningful and useful data for a specific teacher preparation program and as a meta-evaluation case study for other programs.

This meta-evaluation was done by an internal evaluator, who endeavored to provide credible and trustworthy results. While internal evaluators need to guard more conscientiously against bias, they also bring important insider knowledge about the process and stakeholders. The researcher approached the topic as a teacher educator, program developer, and fieldwork administrator regularly called on to problem-solve by students, instructors, cooperating teachers and public school administrators. As such, the researcher approached the topic as an ethnomethodologist needing to bracket her experience—focusing on how teacher educators design and stakeholders experience fieldwork evaluation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Fieldwork programs in teacher preparation vary greatly, so it is necessary to draw "awareness to presuppositions regarding the topic" (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 88). Bracketing as "the task of sorting out the qualities that belong to the researcher's experience of the phenomenon" (Drew, 2004, p. 215) was done to acknowledge the researcher's perspective and experience from the beginning of the project. Figure 5 is a logic model (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999) created based on

the researcher's experience with fieldwork at the study site. Table 4 specifies the participants in

the fieldwork process at the study site and their roles and priorities per her understanding.

Developing Figure 5 and Table 5 were exercises in bracketing. The researcher is aware that her

experience, while not generalizable to other settings, was useful in conducting an in-depth meta-

evaluation at the study site. Labaree (2003) described educational knowledge as "soft because it is

an effort to make sense of the collective consequences of the actions of large numbers of willful

individuals who are making decisions about teaching and learning within a complex and

overlapping array of social systems" (p. 14). The project was certainly an example of that

phenomenon. The researcher's familiarity with the EFE program at the study site was helpful

given the participant-oriented evaluation model utilized, but precautions were necessary to guard

against researcher bias.

Table 5

Researcher's Preconceptions of Participants and Their Roles in the Fieldwork Process

Participant	Roles and Priorities
Course Instructor	Addresses programmatic issues of fieldwork—curricular, instructional and preservice teacher performance evaluation issues Prioritizes preservice teacher learning related to course objectives Determines fieldwork expectations for specific course Assigns grade for preservice teacher performance
College Fieldwork Administrator	Addresses programmatic issues of fieldwork, specifically program effectiveness evaluation issues Wrestles with institutional issues—both inter- and intra- institution politics, scheduling, transportation, and communication Prioritizes partnerships with school systems that facilitate fieldwork opportunities for current and future preservice teachers Requests placements for preservice teachers Works individually with preservice teachers to solve logistical issues
School Division Administrator	Prioritizes P-12 student learning outcomes and best interest of the school system Determines district policies about hosting preservice teachers in fieldwork placements Determines placement request process
School Administrator	Prioritizes P-12 learning outcomes and best interest of school Determines which teachers will be recruited to host fieldwork placements and how that recruitment is done Intervenes in problem situations
Cooperating Teacher	Prioritizes learning of his or her students Facilitates preservice teacher's involvement and engagement in classroom during fieldwork visits Provides direct supervision of preservice teacher during fieldwork experience Evaluates preservice teacher's performance
Preservice Teacher	Prioritizes own professional development and progression through program Observes and assists in P-12 classroom Completes field-related assignments per course requirements (i.e., reflective journal, plan and teach mini-lesson, interview teacher)

In an effort to protect the trustworthiness of the data and protect against any researcher bias, the following measures were taken. Member checking occurred; each participant was provided with a digital copy of the interview to review and request changes to ensure the validity of their responses. A peer reviewer who is not associated with the study site examined the data to corroborate the results. The researcher was not in a position to teach, supervise or assign any grades to preservice teachers invited to participate in the study during or after the research. Finally, the researcher stressed to potential participants that their participation was entirely voluntary. Despite bracketing, peer review, and member checking, researcher bias remains a limitation in this study.

Two cooperating teachers requested to respond to the interview protocol in writing rather than participating in a face-to-face interview. The researcher did not have the opportunity to ask follow-up questions with those two participants.

Finally, data could not be collected until grades were posted for all fall semester EFEs and IRB approval was granted, yet the interviews needed to occur as close to the ending of the most recent EFE experience as possible. The interviews occurred approximately four months after participants' completion of the most recent EFE evaluation cycle. With this in mind, a copy of the evaluation forms (evaluation and log) were provided to each participant during the interview to refresh their memory of the EFE evaluation experience. While there are limitations to the research design, this meta-evaluation case study is consistent with the field experience evaluation guidelines provided by ATE (Guyton & Byrd, 2000) in that it is "authentic…[and] useful in assessing if the teacher preparation is meeting its goals" (p. 13).

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the qualitative meta-evaluation of the EFE program at a small, private, undergraduate teacher preparation program in Virginia focusing on the perceptions of preservice teachers, cooperating teachers and course instructors about the EFE objectives, evaluation experience, and resulting data usage. The participatory-oriented evaluation model solicited the perceptions of program stakeholders to assess the merit and worth of the EFE evaluation protocol at the study site. Merit refers to the logistical soundness of the evaluation process based on its simplicity, convenience and straightforward format. Worth refers to "value within some context of use or application" (Lincoln & Guba, p. 61); for this study, the EFE evaluation process is judged on its worth based on how well it assesses and facilitates preservice teacher learning.

In this chapter, a brief overview of the design is presented and the findings are first presented by research question and stakeholder group followed by an analysis of congruence. The research questions were crafted to enable the researcher to explore the extent to which (1) official EFE objectives are congruent with the EFE evaluation, (2) the intended evaluation experience is congruent with stakeholders' perceptions of the evaluation experience, and (3) intended data usage is congruent with reported data usage by analyzing EFE evaluation documents and interview data. Additional findings and themes found in the data are also presented.

Design Overview

As described in Chapter 3, the official EFE evaluation form and log were analyzed and coded for key words, quotes and themes related to the research questions. A purposeful, stratified sample of 25 stakeholders was selected for interviews. Interviews were transcribed, member checked and uploaded to Atlas.ti for analysis. Interview data was also analyzed and coded for key words and themes related to the research questions. Interviews were grouped into document families by stakeholder category (course instructor, preservice teacher, and cooperating teacher) to compare and contrast the perspectives between groups for each research question (Patton, 1990). The researcher read each interview transcript several times to be sure that all evidence related to each research question was identified. The EFE evaluation form and log were analyzed a second time after initial coding of the interview data to allow for cross-checking and triangulation of the data. When analyzing the data, the researcher used an inductive coding strategy (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) documenting common and conflicting responses in the interviews and frequently referring back to the evaluation documents. Twenty-five percent of the interviews were peer reviewed by a doctoral candidate in the School of Education (interviews of one course instructor, two cooperating teachers and three preservice teachers), and 100% agreement of the coding was reached.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

How are EFEs evaluated at the teacher preparation program? Specifically, what is the evaluation process, and what are the evaluation components?

Document analysis of the departmental EFE evaluation documents and course instructor interview data were used to answer the first research question. The researcher was also able to speak to changes in the EFE evaluation process as an internal evaluator with six years of experience as the fieldwork director at the teacher preparation program.

Completion of the evaluation form and log is required by all preservice teachers for all EFEs at the study site. The use of these two documents comprises the formal, program-wide EFE evaluation protocol used by the teacher preparation program. According to course instructors, course-specific assignments (i.e., reflective writing assignments, teacher interviews and lesson plans) are used to assess and facilitate preservice teachers' learning from the EFE related to course content. Course-specific assignments referred to in the course instructor interviews are discussed briefly.

Fieldwork evaluation form. The fieldwork evaluation form has been revised over the years, but was originally developed to be used as evidence for TEAC accreditation reports. Data from the forms are still used as evidence for state and national accreditation reporting, but details about how that information is reported were not shared with the researcher during the interviews.

The form is delivered to each cooperating teacher by the preservice teacher near the end of the EFE in a sealed envelope with a postage-paid return envelope addressed to the course instructor, a pen for the cooperating teacher to keep, and the departmental evaluation form. Department assistants prepare the evaluation packets by prefilling the evaluation form with each preservice teacher's name and the education course number, putting the course instructor's name on the postage-paid, college-addressed return envelope, and addressing the outer envelope to the cooperating teacher. The top white copy of the evaluation form is designated for the teacher preparation program and is returned in the return envelope to the course instructor via the

preservice teacher or the United States Postal Service. Course instructors submit the white copy of the evaluation form to be stored in the student's cumulative Education Department file. The pink copy is for the cooperating teacher (identified as the host teacher at the bottom of the form) to keep; some cooperating teachers receive recertification points toward teacher licensure for hosting an EFE, and their copy serves as documentation of that work. The yellow copy is given to the preservice teacher. Some cooperating teachers give the yellow copy directly to the preservice teacher, while others return the yellow copy to the course instructor along with the white copy. If the cooperating teacher returns the preservice teacher's yellow copy to the course instructor, the course instructor delivers the yellow copy to the preservice teacher.

The blank EFE evaluation form is used as a teaching tool at the beginning of each semester. All preservice teachers are provided with a copy of the evaluation form so that they know what is expected by the course instructor and what the cooperating teacher will be using to assess them during the EFE. One course instructor said about the EFE evaluation form,

> Its purpose is to give the department, the professors, and more importantly the preservice teacher feedback on what our expectations are during fieldwork…I show it to the students. I tell them these are the things your teacher will be evaluating you on...I use the data to get an overall look at some of the very basic things that are expectations of our students as they go through the program, particularly, the professional piece.

Professional expectations are communicated to the preservice teachers at the beginning of every course by the fieldwork director and course instructors. Appropriate attire, expectations of promptness and reliability, and other professional indicators on the form are emphasized in every education course throughout the teacher preparation program.

All of the course instructors use the evaluation form as a general assessment of the preservice teacher's performance during the EFE, but it is not necessarily used to assign a grade. One course instructor used the form to determine if "there is a concern that might be brewing" that needs to be addressed. She said, "I want to make sure that there is not something that's like an outlier or raises a red flag." That sentiment is consistent with how other course instructors reported using the evaluation form in their classes.

Course instructors shared varying opinions about what ratings they expect to see on the forms in EFEs. One course instructor said, "I look at the ratings first of all, and I see if they are falling where I would hope my students would fall which would be in the area of proficient and exemplary." In contrast, another course instructor said,

I find it hard when a first-year student is getting an exemplary rating because I feel like they have so much to learn…It's rare that a first year [teacher] would get an exemplary. I don't mind it on maybe some components, but as an overall rating? I do see that sometimes from the teachers, and I think they certainly want to recognize how well the student did, but they don't see it through my lens—that this is really their first time and we've got a lot of work to do to really earn that exemplary rating.

Another course instructor said, "They [the ratings] tend to be too high." Three of the course instructors and some cooperating teachers commented that they like the rating language of exemplary, proficient, developing/needs improvement, and unacceptable because it is similar to what is used on professional teachers' evaluations, but study findings suggest that individuals differ in how they interpret and apply those terms when using the document even though a definition is specified.

Fieldwork log. This version of the EFE log has only been in use for two years. The previous log documented only the dates, times and hours of fieldwork visits, but the newer log provides an additional area for the preservice teacher to document the activities in which they were involved during each EFE. Preservice teachers are instructed to complete the log and have it signed by the host teacher at the end each fieldwork visit. Preservice teachers are encouraged to use the numbers in the space to indicate the type of activities in which they were involved, but are also allowed to write a narrative describing their activity during each visit.

All of the course instructors spoke in favor of the new log saying that it provides better data and greater accountability without being overly burdensome to the preservice teachers. One said, "The fieldwork log is much better now where they get to assign a number to the description of what they were doing and then they can elaborate on that." Another said,

> I love the fieldwork log. I think that it allows the students to be engaged, not feel the obligation to make so many comments, notes, all of those things, but just doing a quick write-down, note-taking of what they did during the course…keep the log in the form it's in right now!

The fieldwork logs are turned in to course instructors at the end of the field experience and then kept in the student's cumulative Education Department file. Keeping the logs in each student's department file is new this year to the EFE evaluation protocol. The intention is to use this data in the future for EFE research and accreditation reporting.

Course-Specific Assignments. When asked how they determine if the learning objectives of fieldwork have been achieved, the course instructors described a wide variety of assignments. All of the course instructors have the preservice teachers design and teach at least one lesson. One reported, "The lesson is really a culminating experience of everything they

learned through the semester." Another course instructor said, "I had all the students this year create a Prezi and talk about what they had learned and what they had contributed."

All of the course instructors listed some form of reflective writing. Two mentioned having students write reflective papers, and one has the students keep a reflective blog. Another course instructor uses Twitter to assess preservice teacher learning throughout the EFE experience.

> We use Twitter as a way of reflecting on what we are learning and seeing in our fieldwork. At the beginning of every class we go over what the students are tweeting about. One thing that I learned early, we used to do reflective journals, and kind of discovered through that process that the students were writing a paragraph or a page about everything that they saw that day and they were missing the forest for the trees for what connections they were seeing from what they were learning and seeing in their fieldwork. I think one of the best ways that I evaluate that they are getting it, and getting it through the fieldwork, is through that Twitter experience. They only have 140 characters to get to the point. While we certainly want them to eventually reflect on a more in-depth level, we really try to get to the point in that [tweet]. Sometimes they have to do multiple tweets because they can't get it in one or are just too excited to get it into one. For the most part, they are able to make a quick connection between what we are learning and talking about and what they are seeing in class.

Another course instructor described a discussion protocol to assess preservice teacher learning from the EFE.

> There are these things that I have that I use called sentence starters, and I probably have 13 to 15 of them…We will do what we call fieldwork forum. It's listed in my

syllabus…We don't start it until after a good month into the semester and I'll set aside

about 15 minutes in the course, three or four times during the semester, for us just to talk

about their fieldwork. And so the students grab a sentence starter and they have to finish

the question. Well, we all know how this works with a group of people. One student

might get the sentence starter that says, "I was so surprised when…" So they answer that.

Well, there are two or three others, "Oh, I know exactly what you're talking about." And

it goes on from there. It just generates great discussion.

When asked directly how they determine if the learning objectives of the EFE have been

achieved, only one course instructor mentioned the EFE evaluation form at all. She provided a

lengthy, detailed description of course assignments, paused as though she had completed her

answer, and then seeing the EFE evaluation the researcher had provided, pointed at it and said,

"And then, our department's evaluation." The data indicate that course assignments are the

primary tools used to determine if the EFE learning objectives have been achieved, but course

assignments have not been components of the teacher preparation program's official EFE

evaluation protocol. Course assignments have not been used in the past as evidence of EFE

effectiveness when reporting to state education departments and national accreditation agencies.

Research Question 2

How do stakeholders experience the EFE evaluation process?

This research question addresses the merit of the EFE evaluation process. Merit refers to

value that is context-free based on the "intrinsic characteristics of the entity itself" (Lincoln &

Guba, 1980). For this study, the evaluation protocol is judged as having merit if it is logistically

sound based on its simplicity, convenience and straightforward format. Data from semi-

structured interviews with preservice teachers, cooperating teachers and course instructors were

analyzed to answer this research question. Stakeholders were asked to describe their experience with the fieldwork evaluation process and to share what they think about the fieldwork evaluation form and log. While stakeholders made some recommendations related to the merit of the evaluation process, they generally found merit in the evaluation process; stakeholders perceived the forms to be logistically sound, convenient, and not overly burdensome.

Communication challenges between stakeholders emerged as a theme in the data as stakeholders reported on their experience with the EFE evaluation process. Recommendations related to stakeholders' experience with the evaluation process suggested a need and desire for more efficient and improved communication with course instructors. For example, one elementary teacher shared,

> I wish there was a little bit more communication [with the professor] because I did have some concerns about this student. It wasn't necessarily that she wasn't doing a good job in the classroom, but sometimes you wonder if this person is cut out to be a teacher. Those are difficult things to say to a young student who is thinking that that's what they would like to be. So, just kind of those worries on my part. What can I do to help her? I did try to communicate that to the student, but I think sometimes communicating that to the professor as well would be helpful.

A course instructor expressed a concern about miscommunication with cooperating teachers. Concerned that cooperating teachers were completing the evaluation with the mini-lesson in mind rather than the entire EFE, the course instructor said,

> I email the fieldwork teachers and try to communicate with them that this fieldwork evaluation form is strictly supposed to be about the whole experience, not just the mini-lesson. And, I think what happens is they coincide with each other naturally within the

course of the semester because, usually the students don't teach the mini-lesson until towards the end of the semester because they are comfortable by then. And then, maybe a day or two, later, the student hands them the [department evaluation] form and says, "Now you're supposed to evaluate me." So I feel as if sometimes there's some miscommunication about that, so I've tried to improve that communication with my emails to the fieldwork teachers. "Don't forget this is about the whole experience, and it helps us evaluate our whole program, the fieldwork program." But, most of the narrative is usually just about the mini-lesson.

Preservice teachers and cooperating teachers recommended putting the evaluation form and log in a digital format so that it could be completed, shared, and stored more conveniently online. Student teachers expressed the desire to meet with their course instructors about the evaluation feedback and cooperating teachers said that they wanted those conversations to take place, but course instructors found one-on-one debriefing meetings logistically challenging given how late in the semester evaluations are submitted. Multiple preservice teachers and one course instructor recommended adjusting the evaluation schedule so that those meetings could take place. Getting the evaluation forms and log to course instructors earlier in the semester and possibly at multiple points throughout the EFE via a digital format could increase convenience and communication. Such a system could also afford course instructors opportunities to address the concern some preservice teachers experience related to their evaluation ratings in a timely fashion.

Preservice teachers. Although some found it confusing, most preservice teachers had little to say about the merit of the evaluation form as they do not have to complete it. The evaluation form was described with broad statements. Preservice teachers said it measures "all

areas that a teacher needs to be prepared for" and "if you are actually ready for student teaching." Others said it measures "effort" and "how you interact with people."

Some preservice teachers found the rating scale on the evaluation form confusing and frustrating. One preservice teacher said, "I like it, but it always made me mad because you don't want to get proficient." This sentiment was common. Another preservice teacher said,

Honestly, if I got this sheet back from a classroom teacher and it had all developing on it, I'd bust out into tears and I'd be, like, now I'm questioning myself as to whether or not I'm going to be a great teacher. And, even if I got all proficient, I would still be extremely upset and be like, "I'm not a great teacher."

On one hand, preservice teachers wanted to get all exemplary ratings; while on the other hand, they requested more constructive feedback.

If I looked and saw that I got all exemplary and proficient, I was like, "Okay, onto the next." Because if there wasn't developing or unacceptable, I didn't really know where to go with it. It's like, "You're doing it right. Keep going." I didn't really know what I actually did well and what I needed to work on.

Preservice teachers had diverse opinions about the merit of the log. It was described as "handy," "easy," "standard," and "good." One preservice teacher summed it up saying, "It measures what we're actually doing, so you all know that we are in the placement and that we are actually doing something and not just twiddling our thumbs and making copies." Other preservice teachers found the log frustrating because they "forgot to fill it out" and "it was really awkward to get them [the cooperating teachers] to sign every single time."

Most students appreciated the simplicity and efficiency of documenting their EFE activities using numbers from a list of possible activities. One said, "This is a lot easier and a lot

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better to collect data with and for truly understanding what we are doing there." Students that particularly enjoy reflective writing did not like using numbers to document what they did during fieldwork visits. One said,

> I do not like these numbers…Personally, I enjoy writing. Like, what did I do today? Did I work with a small group? Did I work individually with one student? Did we take a test today? Did we do a fun activity that was part of my lesson? I think just allowing us to write it out is easier.

Cooperating teachers. The data indicate the cooperating teachers felt the EFE evaluation process has merit in that it is logistically sound and convenient. There was no indication that cooperating teachers found the fieldwork log burdensome, and no constructive recommendations were made by cooperating teachers about the fieldwork log. Preservice teachers are responsible for completing the log; cooperating teachers only need to sign it. Cooperating teachers described the evaluation form as "user-friendly." One cooperating teacher summed up the general consensus about the merit of the form saying, "I think it is a good tool. There is room at the bottom to write in other comments, so anything else that needs to be communicated can be included."

The rating scale on the evaluation form is purposefully similar to what school districts use to evaluate teachers, so the cooperating teachers are familiar with the rating language. Cooperating teachers commented that the ratings on the evaluation form were "easy to understand" and "straightforward." For example, one said, "I like the exemplary, proficient, developing, unacceptable. Those give you four pretty specific categories. The professional expectations category is pretty cut and dry."

One preservice teacher in a school that hosts a large number of preservice teachers every semester made a recommendation that could greatly improve the merit of the evaluation protocol by making it more convenient for all stakeholders. She said,

> I had several teachers ask if this could be sent to us on the computer. They felt that they would be more interested in completing the narrative if they could type it than if they would have to handwrite it because they were worried about the amount of space and the amount of time that takes…you could have everyone fill it out and all of the data would automatically go into a database for you.

The only cooperating teacher comments that suggested any concern with completing the EFE evaluation form had to do with the brief narrative section at the bottom of the form. One cooperating teacher said, "The narrative, I feel takes me a little bit more time. The narrative is a little harder." Another cooperating teacher said, "It would be better if it were more open-ended, but there would be a lot fewer responses and it would certainly be more burdensome. I bet even the brief narrative never gets filled out. I bet you anything." While some teachers find writing a narrative evaluation comments burdensome, others do not. One noted, "The evaluation process has been painless. I do provide a narrative to attach so that the students can use the positive report in their portfolios…and for instructors to get a better feel of feedback."

Course instructors. The course instructors acknowledged the importance of keeping the EFE evaluation process convenient for cooperating teachers. One said,

> Teachers are such busy people that we can't ask them to do too much here. Like I probably would want to see more, you know, more data, but I don't know that we can ask them to do any more than what we are doing.

Two course instructors commented about how the rating language on the forms makes it easier for cooperating teachers to complete because it "mirrors the state." One said, "It's also very common language for our fieldwork teachers because we know their evaluation forms from the state and from their school systems are similar."

As for the fieldwork log, all course instructors appreciated the additional data that is efficiently provided by having students indicate what they did during each fieldwork visit using numbers from a key on the form. One said,

> It's fantastic. We never really did this before. We just logged in the hours and the time and all that stuff and the teacher signed off on it. My kids, I pretty much knew what they had to do because they had that weekly task, but I think for the department, that we have this key system, it's really good. It really shows us how the classroom teachers are using these kids in their classrooms.

The only concerns course instructors had about the merit of the EFE evaluation process were related to timing. All of the course instructors expressed a desire to talk with each preservice teacher about the cooperating teacher's feedback on the form, but getting the forms back so late in each semester makes it difficult to schedule debriefing conferences with preservice teachers. One course instructor expressed it well saying, "Unfortunately, I'm getting them [the evaluation forms] back under the wire."

Research Question 3

To what extent do stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the EFE evaluation process to assess and facilitate the stated learning objectives?

For this study, the EFE evaluation protocol is judged on its worth based on how well it assesses and facilitates preservice teacher learning, so this question addresses worth. Based on

the definition of worth used in this study, the data suggest that the EFE evaluation process has limited worth. As has already been noted, course instructors do not primarily use the departmental EFE evaluation form and fieldwork log to assess preservice teacher learning. The researcher still wanted to explore the extent to which other stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the teacher preparation program's EFE evaluation process to assess and facilitate the EFE learning objectives. Stakeholders did not perceive the EFE evaluation process to assess learning. Most stakeholders reported that the EFE evaluation process facilitated or could potentially facilitate the learning objectives. Communication challenges emerged in the data regarding the extent to which the evaluation protocol facilitated or could potentially facilitate the EFE learning objectives.

To answer this research question, the stated learning objectives must be clarified and communicated. The EFE learning objectives vary for each education class, and all course instructors reported that they communicate those learning objectives to the preservice teachers verbally in class and on a printed syllabus for each course. For example, a course instructor explained:

> I really gear the course with the hope that students will have some real world application, and be able to use the course and decide if this is really the profession they want to be in. The students are able to see the rewards as well as the challenges. And, I could have told them those things, but they are able to see them first hand in their own classroom. There is just no substitute for that.

One of the stated learning goals in foundational education classes is to learn about the profession of teaching so that students can determine if they want to become professional educators. One preservice teacher said, "I was just taking it as an exploratory class. And so, that

fieldwork helped me to realize that I really did want to pursue the minor. I went in and thought, I love this!"

Another course instructor explained that preservice teachers need to learn about:

Aspects of childhood development such as cognitive development differences at different ages. They need to look at learning theories and how they are applied in the classroom. They also need to look at cultural issues such as diversity in the classroom and matters related to the whole school community.

That course instructor communicates the EFE learning objectives with the preservice and cooperating teachers using a syllabus.

We often have a quiz on that syllabus to make sure that they're clear, and then we talk about how the fieldwork objectives relate to the course itself, the three-credit-hour course…Cooperating teachers are sent an email and are also given a hard copy of the objectives, and the student then takes a hard copy when he or she introduces themselves to the cooperating teacher.

As has been mentioned, the departmental EFE evaluation forms primarily address professional expectations, but there are also course-specific EFE objectives that are not addressed on the departmental EFE evaluation forms

Results suggested that improving communication between stakeholders and providing explanatory feedback to preservice teachers about the EFE evaluation data could increase the worth of the evaluation protocol; communication between stakeholders and providing explanatory feedback for preservice teachers about the EFE evaluation data were seen by stakeholders as key to facilitating preservice teacher learning. Course instructors reported

communicating broad and course-specific EFE learning objectives to preservice teachers and cooperating teachers at the beginning of the EFE, but not throughout or at the end of the EFE.

Preservice teachers. Four preservice teachers believed that the fieldwork evaluation process assessed their learning. Of those, two referred to broad rather than specific learning objectives. For example, "I think you learn more about yourself as an individual." The other two referred to professional characteristics of teachers rather than specific course learning objectives. For example,

> Assess my learning? It shows if we actually grasped the things we were taught in the classroom that we were taught about professionalism and lesson planning and delivering that message. It shows if we are getting it, if we're doing it, and if we're doing a good job in those settings, and if we're not.

> Eight preservice teachers indicated that the EFE evaluation process did not assess the course learning objectives. Preservice teachers alluded to the need for pre- and post-data to measure growth. One said, "It didn't show what we learned over time." Another said, "My evaluations all had the same thing on them, every single time." A third said,

> I don't feel like it talked about the beginning and the end, like this is how much you learned…how did they start out and how did they end up? That's what we also want in our classroom, to measure growth. If you don't have anything to compare it to, how do you know?

> One preservice teacher said, "I've learned so much more than this piece of paper could ever be able to express." Her comment reflects well the general consensus of the group as found in the data.

All of the preservice teachers indicated that the EFE evaluation form facilitated their learning. Several noted that seeing how the cooperating teacher rated them prompted them to set new goals. One summarized it well saying, "I always take it very seriously as constructive criticism and things I need to improve on. I think semester to semester, I have improved because I had this to look at and know what I needed to do better."

Cooperating teachers. Five of the cooperating teachers felt strongly that the evaluation form does not assess preservice teachers' learning.

Based on these two forms, I would say that it's not measuring the learning that they've had. It's measuring the outcome of professional expectations and seeing if they are doing it. And it gives a very general sense of what they've learned from instructional planning and instructional delivery, but without more specific feedback on instructional planning and instructional delivery, I don't think it measures how much they've learned. I don't think the fieldwork log at all tells what they've learned. It just tells what they did.

The remaining cooperating teachers said that the fieldwork evaluation process does assess preservice teacher learning, but provided vague responses when asked to expound. For example, one said, "It's a good tool." Another said, "I think the evaluation part at the end may be one of the most valuable pieces they have to know if they are understanding the course work."

Cooperating teachers were not sure whether or not the EFE evaluation process facilitated preservice teacher learning. The consensus seemed to be that it depends on how the data is used by the teacher preparation program and the preservice teacher. The following quote is consistent with cooperating teachers' responses on the subject.

I don't know. I will say being on the school side of it, I'm not quite sure what is done with it when we send it back. So, I think that would depend on the student and what

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they're going to use it for, and also how the results are shared, and if there are any

opportunities for written or oral reflection on the evaluation form.

Course instructors. The course instructors did not believe that the EFE evaluation

process adequately assessed and facilitated preservice teacher learning. One course instructor

suggested that the evaluation process can facilitate learning, but only "if the professor

particularly uses the input from the teacher to supplement individual meetings and feedback."

Another course instructor commented on the subjective nature of the evaluation form saying,

> Well, it's very subjective. We gave the four ratings, we gave them a brief little
>
> description of what each means. And, borrowed those descriptions from the state of
>
> Virginia, and tweaked them a little bit. Like we say preservice teacher instead of teacher,
>
> but you know, maybe that is something we need to look at a little bit more to see, because
>
> sometimes they come back all exemplary and we know our preservice teachers aren't all
>
> exemplary. I mean, teachers in the classroom are not even earning all exemplary, so it's
>
> very subjective. Contributing factors could be the teacher, the classroom teacher, the
>
> student. Maybe the student missed a couple of times and so the teacher developed a bad
>
> taste in their mouth, so the preservice teacher couldn't do anything right. Who knows?
>
> So, could it be improved? Always.

One said, "I don't think that these forms evaluate the learning. But, I think that they're important.

I would never suggest getting rid of either of these things." All of the course instructors

addressed the need for a departmental EFE evaluation process and acknowledged the challenges

inherent in creating a departmental evaluation that assesses and facilitates preservice teacher

learning.

Research Question 4

    How do stakeholders use the resulting data?

    Grading and communication emerged as themes as stakeholders reported how they used the evaluation data. When asked how course instructors used the evaluation data, eight preservice teachers said that they did not know. Of the remaining four preservice teachers, two said that their course instructor used the evaluation data to assign a grade. One course instructor acknowledged that she told students that she used the evaluation data to assign a grade even though she does not. Another course instructor said that the evaluation is used as a small part of a single graded assignment. More often, the evaluation data is not used to assign a grade, but as a general assessment of how the preservice teacher performs at the EFE. Miscommunication was evident.

    Preservice teachers. All of the preservice teachers reported reading the EFE evaluation data, but the extent to which they reflected on it to facilitate their own professional growth varied. Some preservice teachers shared specifics about how they used the data. One said, "I noticed the running themes in my evaluations…I would also look at some things if I was marked low on them or if I disagreed with them." Another said,

> If they [cooperating teachers] gave me something less than exemplary I would take those categories and try to do specifically above and beyond in the next placement. And if they had any commentary at the bottom, I would be sure to read it. And it's hard because some of the things I took to heart and I got very upset about, but I would just try to do better next time.

Another preservice teacher reported,

Usually what I would do would be to look at it and pick three things that I want to focus on, like really focus on. Because if I take everything, that's too overwhelming. If I hit three things to focus on and put that into every lesson and every fieldwork placement, that helps me. And then once I feel I've started to move toward those goals, I can look at it again and talk to my teacher and say, "Okay, what else can I work on?" and then incorporate that into my teaching.

Other preservice teachers did not take the initiative to reflect deeply on the data. For example, one said, "I didn't really use it. I mean, I looked at it and thought 'Whew, yeah, I guess that's good.' I always had good ratings, so I guess it was like, 'Good, keep it up.'"

Another explained, "Honestly, I looked and saw that I got all exemplary and proficient, I was like, 'Okay.'"

Cooperating teachers. Most of the cooperating teachers stated that they did not use the data from the evaluation forms. One said, "I would look at this prior to the final evaluation to make sure that I've covered all of these areas so that they could get at least get proficient in each of the categories." Another said,

Well, I like the reminder that it provides of the things I need to be doing as a teacher. I think it helped me remember that my students are all over the place and that it's my job to be there through these expectations. It opened a lot of conversations.

Course Instructors. Overall, the data indicate that the course instructors "use the data to get an overall look at some of the very basic things that are expectations of students as they go through the program, particularly again in the professional piece." The EFE evaluation form data is used as a general assessment of preservice teacher performance during the EFE, but is not necessarily used to assign a grade. When asked what she tells them about the form, one course

instructor said, "That I will take it into consideration as I give them their final grade." When asked specifically if the form was used to assign a grade, the same course instructor said, "No." Another course instructor explained that the form was not used to assign a grade saying,

I am probably unlike most of the other courses in that I don't grade that sheet for two reasons. One, I feel that it's the student's first time doing this and they deserve the benefit of feedback before getting graded. The second reason is that I wasn't there. I remember when I taught second grade, my mentor teacher at the time said to me, "Don't ever grade something that the substitute did with your students." I've always remembered that. I value the input and review the information with the students and they get a copy and the department does. A lot of the students are nervous about them and they want to know. I think they really take them seriously. I don't tell them that I'm not grading them. I take it as seriously as if I am grading it, but I wasn't there. I think for their first time out, I want for their grade to be based on things that I have control over.

Only one of the course instructors reported using the form to assign a grade, and it accounted for a small percentage of a single graded assignment. The course instructor reported, "Typically about 25%, and part of that 25% is having the student be responsible for getting that form back."

Congruence

The research questions were couched in an adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model. The researcher not only wanted to describe the EFE evaluation experience and stakeholders' experience, perceptions and data use, but also wanted to explore the extent to which (1) official EFE objectives are congruent with the EFE evaluation, (2) the intended evaluation experience is congruent with stakeholders' perceptions of the evaluation experience,

and (3) intended data usage is congruent with reported data usage by analyzing EFE evaluation documents and interview data.

Objectives

The official EFE objectives were determined for this study from the literature and teacher preparation accrediting agency standards. Official objectives for EFEs include helping preservice teachers explore the profession of teaching and teacher development (Retallick & Miller, 2010). NCATE (2013a) emphasizes that EFEs should prepare preservice teachers to demonstrate professionalism. EFEs should also help preservice teachers link theory and practice (Carter & Anders, 1996; Retallick & Miller, 2010), develop specific teaching skills (Jaquith, 1995), lessen anxiety about student teaching (Everhart & Turner, 1996), and to "nurture the dispositions and capacities associated with responsive teaching" (Sherman, 2013, p. 69). CAEP's Standard 2 specifies that EFEs, "demonstrate positive impact on all P-12 students' learning and development" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 3). The extent to which the EFE evaluation documents are congruent with official EFE objectives is summarized in Figure 7.

Intended		Findings
Official Objectives	**Congruence**	**EFE evaluation**
	⟵——————⟶	
Career exploration (Retallick & Miller, 2010)		Congruent
Professionalism (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2013a)		Congruent
Dispositions for responsive teaching (Sherman, 2013)		Somewhat congruent
Skill development, application of knowledge, meld theory to practice (Retallick & Miller, 2010)		Somewhat congruent
Prepare for transition to student teaching (Retallick & Miller, 2010)		Congruent
Positive P-12 impact (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013a)		Incongruent

Figure 7. Adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model showing extent to which official EFE objectives are congruent with the early field experience evaluation. Somewhat congruent indicates that while there were items on the evaluation form that referred to dispositions for responsive teaching (Sherman, 2013), skill development, application of knowledge, and melding theory to practice (Retallick & Miller, 2010), those items were notably limited.

Document analysis of the EFE evaluation form indicated congruence with some, but not all of these objectives. Certainly the evaluation is congruent with career exploration and the demonstration of professionalism. Fourteen items on the evaluation form address characteristics of professionalism. The log provides a list of ways for preservice teachers to be engaged with typical activities that teachers do and documents their engagement.

The evaluation documents are moderately congruent with dispositions for responsive teaching and teaching skill development. There are three items on the evaluation form related to nurturing dispositions and responsive teaching—establishes a climate of trust, teamwork, and social interaction; promotes cultural sensitivity and respects diversity; listens actively and pays attention to students' needs. Though brief, this objective is acknowledged. Though brief, the EFE evaluation documents also include items about teaching skills—instructional planning and instructional delivery.

The evaluation process requires preservice teachers to document their engagement and be evaluated by a cooperating teacher using the same rating scale that will be used in the student teaching experience. A few preservice teachers expressed some anxiety about the rating scale, feeling upset if cooperating teachers rated them as developing/needs improvement, but that does not necessarily demonstrate incongruence with the intended experience. Course instructors certainly do not want preservice teachers to become overly anxious or distraught, but do want preservice teachers to respond proactively to address areas that need improvement. This relatively low-stakes evaluation process may help prepare preservice teachers for the more frequent and in-depth evaluations that will occur during the student teaching experience. Whether or not the evaluation process lessens anxiety about student teaching is unknown,

although preservice teachers did participate in these interviews about midway through their student teaching and all were enjoying success. One reported,

> We're well educated and we hear it all the time from interviewers and faculty and administrators. We're prepared even more than we realize we are, and especially being in the classroom now. We're fine, and that's a good feeling—feeling secure.

Document analysis and interview data indicate incongruence with CAEP's objective of P-12 impact. While there are items on the form about working with students, instructional planning and instructional delivery, there is no measure of preservice teachers' impact on P-12 students as a result of the EFE. All stakeholder groups reported that it was difficult to determine the preservice teacher's impact on P-12 students after being there for such a short time and teaching a single lesson. One course instructor said candidly, "I don't think we would have any idea at this point. I mean, they don't do enough. They do one lesson. That's it." Another course instructor commented on the lack of pre-and post- data.

One of the cooperating teachers said that she is working with her colleagues to study how to better measure preservice teachers' impact on P-12 students. She said, "We know that there is an impact, but documenting that impact is hard because there are so many variables going on. It's hard to extrapolate what we can attribute to the fieldwork student and what is maybe another factor." Preservice teacher impact on P-12 students seems to be an objective that is not measured, and therefore incongruent, with the evaluation process.

Experience

The faculty at the teacher preparation program intend for the EFE evaluation process to have merit for all stakeholders. Based on the interview data, stakeholders generally found the process and documents to be relatively convenient, straightforward, and not overly burdensome. Thus, data reveal that stakeholders' perceptions about the evaluation experience are congruent with the intention of merit; it is logistically sound and adequately convenient for all stakeholders.

Data Usage

The extent to which the data is used as intended is summarized in Figure 8. The EFE evaluation process was intended to assess and facilitate preservice teacher learning. CAEP Standard 1 refers to a relationship between learning and practice in which both content and pedagogical knowledge are addressed. It says, "The provider ensures that candidates develop a deep understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and, by completion, are able to use discipline-specific practices flexibly" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 3). From this, worth was defined for this study as how well the evaluation assesses and facilitates preservice teacher learning. Preservice teachers' learning should be evident in their practice, use or performance of the skills learned during the EFE.

Additional intentions for the EFE evaluation were found in the interview data. Course instructors intended for preservice teachers to reflect on and set professional development goals from the data. Cooperating teachers wanted the evaluative data to prompt dialogue between preservice teachers and course instructors. Preservice teachers also wanted to discuss the data with their course instructors.

Though not mentioned in the interviews, the researcher is aware that the EFE evaluation data is also intended to be used as evidence that the EFE program is effective in state and

national accrediting reports. If and how the EFE evaluation date is used in that way is not evident from the interview data.

Course instructors reported that preservice teachers should be "doing some sort of reflection on what they would like to get better at in their next fieldwork experience….that would be optimal, for students to really think about it." One course instructor said,

I would love for them to really use this as a good evaluation form in terms of this is what my teacher saw of me in a limited 10 to 20 hours. This is how I presented myself. This is the impression that I left…Then we should look at it as "How can I grow?"

Cooperating teachers expressed that they want preservice teachers to carefully consider the data, reflect on it and use it to grow. Several of them intend for the course instructors to discuss the evaluation data with the preservice teacher. One cooperating teacher expressed this common sentiment saying,

I would hope that it's used to have candid conversations with the fieldwork participant about their level of readiness to continue with the program, especially looking towards student teaching, which is a big commitment. Students vary in their readiness level, so this information would be very valuable to a student teaching candidate about what they may need to work on what areas of strength they already have moving toward their student teaching.

While some preservice teachers do reflect on the evaluation data and have debriefing conversations with course instructors, others do not. Implementing some of the recommendations made by stakeholders (i.e., completing the evaluation earlier in the semester), could lead to greater congruence between intended data use and reported data use.

Intended		Findings
Data Usage	Congruence	Reported/Perceived Data Usage
	$\longleftrightarrow$	
Assess preservice teacher learning		Incongruent
Facilitate preservice teacher learning		Somewhat congruent
Prompt reflection and goal setting of preservice teachers		Somewhat congruent
Prompt dialogue between preservice teachers and course instructor about professional development based on cooperating teachers' feedback		Incongruent
Provide evidence of EFE effectiveness for accrediting agencies		Inconclusive

Figure 8. Adaptation of Stake's (1967) countenance model showing extent to which intended data usage is congruent with reported and perceived data usage. Somewhat congruent indicates that some, but not most stakeholders reported using the data to facilitate preservice teacher knowledge and prompt reflections and goal setting of preservice teachers.

Inflated Ratings

Stakeholders from all three groups expressed concern about inflated ratings on the evaluation. Preservice teachers wanted to get only exemplary ratings, and some felt getting proficient was "the end of the world." A course instructor said, "I've never had an 'unacceptable' in my 20 years. Although I know we have students, uh, you know what I'm saying? They tend to be too high, in my estimation."

Cooperating teachers hesitate to rate preservice teachers as proficient or developing/needs improvement. "I mean, it's very easy to check exemplary and proficient. I don't know how helpful it is just to have exemplary and proficient…everybody gets exemplary or proficient, pretty much," said a secondary cooperating teacher.

While some preservice teachers expressed anxiety about being rated proficient rather than exemplary, the data suggest that preservice teachers may be more likely to reflect on how to improve their teaching practice—to use the data—when they receive a proficient or developing/needs improvement rating. An elementary preservice teacher shared,

> One thing the education department could do would be just stress that we are learning. It is going to be okay if you get a proficient and even if you get a developing. You should really start thinking if you get an unacceptable because that's the lowest box you can get. But developing and proficient? There's nothing wrong with that when we are still learning! Exemplary is above and beyond. That's what I kind of take it as…We all strive to get exemplary, and we should. But, getting proficient and developing should not be as negative as we all take it.

Inflated ratings are also an example of communication challenges between stakeholders.

Stakeholders' Recommendations

The level of stakeholder interest in this research was high. Preservice teachers and cooperating teachers were eager to be interviewed and provided insightful recommendations worthy of consideration. Multiple preservice teachers recommended that the EFE evaluation forms be turned in earlier to facilitate opportunities to meet with course instructors about the feedback. One preservice teacher recommended that the cooperating teachers complete the same evaluation form midway through the field experience so they "know halfway through what…to improve on." Another preservice teacher and two cooperating teachers recommended that the evaluation form have more items about instructional planning and lesson delivery. One cooperating teacher suggested having some items related to the preservice teacher's confidence.

> I wish there was something more on there about, is she comfortable in the classroom. Does this seem to be where she wants to be? Are they timid with the students? I understand it's all very nerve wracking. It's all very difficult to know that somebody is watching you in a classroom that you're not in every day. You don't know the students all that well, but she had been in here enough that the students knew her. They greet her and everything, so it was just a matter of confidence—that confidence. I remember thinking that was where I had an issue with this last student and there was nothing on there to address that.

Another cooperating teacher asked if the teacher preparation program could send her information about the preservice teacher prior knowledge and experience in education in advance—a resume of sorts. See Appendix I for a complete list of stakeholder recommendations.

Summary

Evaluation Process and Components

The evaluation form and log are the two formal and required EFE evaluation components used by the teacher preparation program, but these documents are not used by course instructors to assess and facilitate preservice teachers' learning from the EFE. All course instructors described an array of course-specific assignments used to determine if the course-specific EFE learning objectives are achieved. They reported that the EFE evaluation form provides a general idea of preservice teacher performance and alerts them if "there is a concern that might be brewing." The log is used to document that preservice teachers have completed the required number of hours and preservice teachers' activity during field visits.

Early Field Experience Objectives and Congruence

The EFE evaluation document analysis suggests congruence with some, but not all of the official EFE objectives. The evaluation process is congruent with EFE objectives of career exploration, professionalism and preparing preservice teachers for student teaching. It is somewhat congruent with development of skill development, application of knowledge, melding theory to practice, and dispositions for responsive teaching. It is not congruent with positive P-12 impact.

Early Field Experience Evaluation Experience and Congruence

The evaluation process is congruent with course instructors' intention of merit; it is logistically sound based on its simplicity, convenience and straightforward format. The intended evaluation experience is congruent with stakeholders' perceptions of the evaluation experience.

Evaluation documents were described as "straightforward," "clear" and as "not arduous or overly burdensome."

Early Field Experience Evaluation Data Usage and Congruence

Data usage was not conclusively congruent with the intended data usage. Most participants did not believe that the evaluation process assessed preservice teachers' learning well, and course instructors did not utilize the evaluation to assess course-specific learning. Preservice teachers did not tend to believe the evaluation process assessed what they learned from the EFE, but did believe it facilitated their learning. Cooperating teachers did not tend to believe that the process assessed preservice teachers' learning. They believed that whether or not the evaluation process facilitated learning depended on how the data was used; if preservice teachers reflected on the data and had conversations with course instructors about it, then the evaluation process was more likely to facilitate learning. Likewise, course instructors did not believe the departmental evaluation process assessed what preservice teachers learned from the EFE. They hoped that the evaluation process facilitated preservice teachers' learning, but suggested that preservice teachers may need structured opportunities to reflect on the data for that to happen. Course instructors intended for preservice teachers to reflect on the data and set professional development goals as a result, but only some preservice teachers reporting reflecting and setting goals based on the EFE evaluation data. Course instructors did not necessarily discuss the cooperating teachers' feedback with preservice teachers as desired by cooperating and preservice teachers. The evaluation data is intended to be used as evidence of EFE effectiveness for accrediting agencies, but that use was not mentioned in the data. How it is used for that purpose is unclear.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Early field experiences are essential components of effective teacher preparation. The literature (Retallick & Miller, 2010), accreditation agencies (CAEP, 2013a; TEAC, 2011; NCATE, 2013a), and the state department of education (VDOE, 2006) agree. Designing, implementing and evaluating EFEs is inherently challenging (Applegate, 1985; Retallick & Miller, 2010). The findings of this research suggest the same. This chapter synthesizes the study findings with the literature. Limitations, recommendations and implications for future research are presented.

Discussion of Findings

The data suggest that the same enduring programmatic, institutional and individual dilemmas that Applegate (1985) described thirty years ago exist at the study site. Increased and improved communication between stakeholders is needed to address these dilemmas and thus, improve the merit worth of the EFE evaluation process.

Programmatic Dilemmas

Programmatic dilemmas occur when "curricular, instructional, and evaluative decisions" have to be made and are often related to the reality that there are varied EFE objectives and varied EFE evaluation objectives. Guyton and McIntyre (1990) reported that "variety exists in the ways these experiences are conceptualized, organized, and actually implemented, even within the same institution" (p. 514) and that phenomena is evident in the findings. Course instructors at the study site had different conceptualizations of how EFEs should be organized and

implemented. For example, one course instructor talked about the value of a "developmental sequence for fieldwork" such that EFE objectives reflected course-specific objectives and were based on each preservice teacher's level of professional development. This perspective is consistent with the VDOE blueprint for successful field experiences which recommends that teacher preparation programs "develop assessment and evaluation instruments that clearly describe measurable behavior at different levels of experience and expertise." In contrast, a different course instructor said she would like to see increased "standardization among the faculty in the department about what we are expecting during fieldwork, like maybe even a common syllabi." One course instructor described an extremely structured field experience with specific tasks assigned each week (i.e., complete a running record, evaluate the basal readers) and another course instructor addressed the need for a more differentiated approach due to the vastly different nature of each preservice teacher's fieldwork placement—different subject areas, grade levels, teaching styles and opportunities for engagement. Even in such a small teacher preparation program the data suggest different perspectives and preferences, many of which are unknown or misunderstood because of communication challenges. One course instructor acknowledged, "I don't know what my colleagues use as a syllabus for fieldwork. I don't know what their expectations are. I would think that we are all very similar in describing the purposes of fieldwork." In fact, course instructors from the teacher preparation described the purposes and expectations of EFEs quite differently in the interviews. Including EFE syllabi in future research would be beneficial.

Stakeholders' perceptions about the objectives of EFEs were consistent with the varied objectives found in the literature—career exploration, teaching skill development, application of knowledge, and transition to student teaching (Retallick & Miller, 2010). Likewise, stakeholders'

perceptions varied regarding the objectives of the EFE evaluation. Preservice teachers were more likely to perceive the evaluation process as a way to determine if they had met the learning objectives, that they had performed well during the EFE, and that they were performing successfully in the program. One secondary preservice teacher said, "I think the three practicums that I did were all 'proficient,' so I think that I did accomplish the objectives." Course instructors were more likely to use the data to identify "red flags"—preservice teachers who were struggling to meet the professional expectations required in the program. The evaluation form is the document collected and filed away as evidence to demonstrate the EFE effectiveness for accreditation reporting purposes; the form was originally designed to provide an assessment of each preservice teacher's performance during the EFE, specifically aspects of professionalism. Thus, it was interesting that no course instructors mentioned that the form and log data are used for accreditation and licensure reporting.

This focused inquiry suggests ambiguity about the intended purposes of the departmental EFE evaluation form. Is it intended to be an instructional tool, an assessment of performance, an assessment of learning, evidence of EFE effectiveness for accreditors or a combination of these things? Further study is needed. Departmental discussion and revision that clarifies the purpose(s) of the EFE evaluation components and process are recommended.

Determining an evaluation's worth is dependent on clarification of its purpose. Lincoln and Guba (1980) defined worth as having "value within some context of use or application" (p. 61). There may be worth for the departmental evaluation process that was not captured in this study. For this study, the EFE evaluation protocol was judged to have limited worth based on stakeholders reports that it did not effectively assess and facilitate preservice teacher learning, but the intended purposes of the departmental evaluation form remain unclear and may be

inconsistent with the definition of worth used for this study. That preservice teacher learning was not assessed primarily by the EFE evaluation document is encouraging. NCATE (2010) calls for preservice teacher evaluation based on "outcome data, including student artifacts, summative and formative assessments; [and] data from structured observations of candidates' classroom skills by supervising teachers and faculty" (p. 5), and that is what the data suggest is happening at the study site. Course instructors reported using a variety of course assignments to assess learning—student artifacts, summative and formative assessments, and qualitative data including reflective writings. Including EFE course assignments in future research would be beneficial.

Institutional Dilemmas

Institutional dilemmas refer to the logistics of program management including policies, politics and personnel issues (Applegate, 1985). Again, communication challenges emerged as a logistical institutional dilemma that impacted the EFE evaluation process.

Questions about data usage revealed evidence of communication challenges about the EFE evaluation. Stakeholders groups were asked how they thought other stakeholders groups used the data, and generally did not know. For example, when cooperating teachers were asked how preservice teachers and course instructors use the data, they reported how they "hope" the data is used. When preservice teachers were asked how course instructors use the data, they reported that they did not know or incorrectly assumed that most course instructors use it to assign a grade. Clearer communication about the purpose of the data and how to use it to facilitate preservice teachers' professional development would be helpful. Preservice teachers and course instructors expressed that they want to talk to each other about the evaluation data provided by the cooperating teacher, so adjusting the evaluation schedule to make that feasible is recommended.

Despite the complex, constructivist nature of the learning experience, the evaluation form must be designed with respect for the time of the cooperating teacher who completes it (Bloomfield, 2009). Workload and other logistical limitations preclude having instructors and cooperating teachers meet in person to evaluate each preservice teacher's performance at their fieldwork placements, so a simple form must suffice (Applegate, 1985). Cooperating teachers volunteer to host preservice teachers for EFEs; they are not obligated to host preservice teachers and are not financially compensated to do so. At the same time, the teacher preparation program is required by the state and national accrediting boards to have an EFE program in place and to demonstrate its effectiveness. Overburdening cooperating teachers such that they no longer choose to voluntarily partner with the teacher preparation program by hosting preservice teachers in this way is not an option if the teacher preparation program intends to remain accredited. With teacher preparation programs competing for limited numbers of placements in public school classrooms and host teachers already overburdened with administrative paperwork (Bloomfield, 2009), requiring volunteer teachers to complete time-consuming evaluations does not foster continued partnerships. Maintaining the merit of the evaluation protocol is important; a logistically sound, convenient, and straightforward format is important. .

Individual Dilemmas

Individual dilemmas are those which emanate from personal beliefs and values. These dilemmas are largely related to the direct field experiences people have had, their preparation (or lack thereof) for working with those experiences, and the interactions that occurred throughout the experiences" (Applegate, 1985, p. 62).

Stakeholders' orientations toward teacher education and the professional development in EFEs vary. Zeichner (1983) distinguished between personalist, traditional-craft, inquiry, and

behaviorist orientations in teacher education programs and, by extension, field experiences. Evidence of each of these orientations was apparent among stakeholders in the data. Personalist orientations focus on psychological maturity of preservice teachers—more humanist indicators. The course instructor who emphasized the importance of preservice teachers focusing on "cultural issues such as diversity in the classroom and matters related to the whole school" during the EFE held a personalist orientation. Course instructors who taught the methods classes seemed to have a traditional-craft orientation approaching EFEs as apprenticeship opportunities; they emphasized the mini-lesson assignment and emulating best-practices modeled by the cooperating teachers. The varied orientations fit logically with the course-specific objectives, and provide for a rich teacher preparation program that benefits preservice teachers. Nevertheless, varied orientations among individual faculty members within the same program can complicate efforts to standardize EFE evaluation practices if increased standardization is desired.

Stakeholders made numerous suggestions about items they felt should be added to the form that reflected their individual beliefs about the EFE objectives. One cooperating teacher believed the purposes of EFE was for preservice teachers to determine if teaching would be a good career fit for them. She said,

Rather than focusing on that professionalism piece so much, have questions like, "Are they interacting with the student? Are they taking the initiative to try to help out with a lesson? Are they helping one student in particular that they have sought out as needing a little bit of extra help? I wish there was something more on there about is she comfortable in the classroom? Does this seem to be where she wants to be? Are they timid with the students?"

NCATE's Standard 3 refers to preservice teacher development of "knowledge, skills and dispositions" (NCATE, 2013a). Perhaps this teacher desired to assess more intangible traits—dispositions associated with effective teachers. Stake (1994) acknowledged the existence of qualities that are "beyond measurement and defying present capabilities of specification" (p. 453).

A secondary cooperating teacher who believed EFEs are supposed to be "a big practice for the ultimate student teaching that's going to happen" said,

> I think it might be helpful to break down and have more on instructional planning and instructional delivery. That might give the preservice teacher a much better idea about why they're overall proficient or overall exemplary, whatever that might be.

> Another secondary cooperating teachers agreed saying, "Since so much time was spent going over the lesson the pre-service teacher would complete, I wish more of the evaluation focused on that one component."

Two secondary cooperating teachers who believed the purpose of EFEs was to provide real-world teaching practice suggested adding a component that provides P-12 student feedback on the preservice teacher's delivery of their mini-lesson. One secondary cooperating teacher described how he had his high school students provide evaluative feedback for the preservice teacher saying,

> At the end I said [to my secondary students], "Guys, the most important thing is she's learning. We're trying to learn, and because of that, what I need you to do is take a piece of paper. Please don't put your name on it. I want you to write down one thing that they do well and one thing that they need to improve." I collect it, because who knows what

they are going to write, and I compile it and usually I send it…It's what my cooperating

teacher did [for me] for every lesson. It was amazing.

All of these suggestions make sense and are consistent with EFE objectives found in the

literature; the challenge is striking a balance between merit and worth, convenience and value,

simplicity and depth. For example, the same cooperating teacher who said, "It would be better if

it [the form] were more open-ended," also said about the small space on the form for a narrative

response, "I bet even the brief narrative never gets filled out." These individual dilemmas results

in a tension between merit and worth. That tension, in turn, results in programmatic and

institutional challenges (Applegate, 1985). What about EFEs performance and learning should be

evaluated and how will that evaluation process be logistically managed? Who decides? Further

research is needed. Both merit and worth are important in EFE evaluation.

Limitations

Some limitations were identified prior to conducting this study and were detailed in

Chapter 3. This was a single, qualitative case study—a qualitative meta-evaluation of the EFEs at

a small, private, undergraduate teacher preparation program. Results cannot be generalized to

other teacher preparation programs. Published standards and recommendations indicating the

importance of EFE evaluation were found in the literature, but there was no research specifically

addressing EFE evaluation practices. Given that gap in the literature, this study was exploratory.

This meta-evaluation was done by an internal evaluator, who endeavored to provide credible and

trustworthy results by bracketing, having 25% of the data peer reviewed, and having a committee

of experienced education researchers review her work. Other limitations became evident during

data analysis, specifically, difficulty defining EFE learning and not having access to course

assignments used by course instructors to assess and facilitate preservice teacher learning.

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Defining Early Field Experience Learning

Among those goals listed in the ATE standards is a focus on the professional learning of preservice teachers (Guyton & Byrd, 2000).What is meant by preservice teacher learning became increasingly ambiguous and broad to the researcher throughout this project. Determining the "stated learning objectives" (from Research Question 3) was far more difficult than anticipated. NCATE's Standard 3 refers to preservice teacher development of "competence in professional roles for which they are preparing" (NCATE, 2013a). Darling-Hammond (2012) emphasized that clinical experiences, or fieldwork, should be closely aligned to course content learning, in other words, connecting theory (presumably learned in the education course) to practice (presumably practiced during field experiences). CAEP Standard 1 refers to the relationship between learning and practice in which both content and pedagogical knowledge are addressed. It says, "The provider ensures that candidates develop a deep understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and, by completion, are able to use discipline-specific practices flexibly" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 3). The phrase, "by completion" (CAEP, 2013a, p. 3) acknowledges the developmental nature of each preservice teacher's journey in the teacher preparation program. The implication is that preservice teachers are involved in an ongoing cycle of developing their understanding of critical concepts and then using those discipline-specific practices in the field with increasing skill and flexibility. Still, exactly what concepts and discipline-specific practices the preservice teacher should learn as a result of the EFEs in the teacher preparation program was not conclusively identified in this project and is well beyond the scope of this exploratory study. The term learning was used broadly; further study about the specific learning objectives in EFEs is recommended.

Retallick and Miller (2010) organized learning emphases found in the EFE literature into two broad categories—career exploration and teacher development. Retallick and Miller (2010) categorized learning strategies found in the EFE literature into those opportunities for preservice teachers to do what teachers do and opportunities for preservice teachers to think like teachers think. Learning strategies that allow preservice teachers to do what teachers do included activities like tutoring, grading, and distributing supplies (Retallick & Miller, 2010)—the type of activities listed on the log done during field visits. Learning strategies that challenged preservice teachers to think like teachers think included analyzing case studies, assessing student learning, and critiquing teaching (Retallick & Miller, 2010)—the type of activities done in conjunction with a field experience. Though logically related, career exploration is one kind of learning, and teacher development seems to be another. Both are relevant to EFE. Both occur throughout the sequence of EFEs in the program and into each candidate's professional teaching career. Both are evident in the findings. Distinguishing between these would have been helpful, but again, was beyond the scope of this study.

The findings support that learning resulting from EFEs is consistent with a social constructivist approach to teacher preparation. "Constructivism…begins with the learner's interaction with experience" (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 293) and preservice teachers construct their own learning as they interact with teachers and have experiences in public school classrooms. They interact with teachers to learn not only what teachers do, but how teachers are. Their learning is "a process of negotiation, involving the construction and exchange of personally relevant and viable meanings" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 293). Preservice teachers discuss their fieldwork experiences with fellow preservice teachers in class and write reflective

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journal entries that may be exchanged with journaling partners. The learning is interactive, social and unique for each preservice teacher. It is messy, and can be rich.

Course Assignments

The data indicate that course assignments are the primary tools used by course instructors to determine if the EFE learning objectives have been achieved, but course assignments relevant to EFE evaluation were not made available to the researcher for analysis. Course instructors were asked if they would be willing to share course assignments that they use to assess and facilitate learning, and some agreed. Only one assignment (a reflective writing assignment) was actually provided and it did not provide information relevant to the study. Course assignments have not been used in the past as evidence of EFE effectiveness when reporting to state education departments and national accreditation agencies; further research of course assignments that link education course content with EFE learning is worthy of future study. Comparing and contrasting the unique evaluative capabilities of course assignments and departmental evaluation forms might provide useful insights about qualitative and quantitative EFE evaluation strategies.

Recommendations

A need for increased and improved communication between stakeholders emerged as a theme in the study. A transparent presentation of recommendations is offered as a step toward meeting that need. The recommendations provide research-based conversation starters that may facilitate improvements in EFE design and evaluation practices at the study site and other teacher preparation programs facing the same or similar challenges.

Stakeholder Recommendations

All recommendations made by the stakeholders during the interviews are listed in Appendix I. Stakeholders offered logistically feasible recommendations that could improve the merit of the evaluation process. For example, having cooperating teachers complete the evaluation form earlier in the semester so that course instructors have time to review feedback was recommended. Moving the evaluations to an online format to increase convenience for cooperating teachers was also recommended by multiple stakeholders and could make it easier for preservice teachers and the teacher preparation program to track progress. Stakeholders also offered logistically feasible recommendations that could improve the worth of the evaluation process. For example, having preservice teachers conduct a self-assessment by completing a copy of the evaluation form may facilitate learning. Adding a midpoint evaluation was another recommendation that would provide an opportunity for stakeholders to monitor progress over time. Adding items that address the cooperating teacher's perception of the preservice teacher's "fit" in the classroom, or potential capacity for teaching P-12 students may be useful documentation for the committee that reviews applications to the teacher preparation program and to assist faculty in identifying which preservice teachers need additional support.

Additional Recommendations

Additional recommendations based on the findings of the study are related to communication, clarification and training. As has been noted, miscommunication and lack of communication about EFE evaluation was evident in the data. The teacher education faculty need to discuss and decide what the overarching purposes of the EFE program are and acknowledge the course-specific objectives for each EFE in the teacher preparation sequence. Preservice teachers are taught to determine the objective before planning a lesson, and EFE

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designers must do the same to assure that preservice teachers' training is sequentially sound and complete.

Once the overarching and course-specific objectives are clarified, the EFE evaluation process should be reviewed, revised and aligned with the overarching and course-specific goals in mind. "The goal of an assessment system should be to shape and support candidates as they learn the skills and knowledge to teach" (VDOE, 2006). This is consistent with the study's definition of worth, but the definition was problematic in this project because the EFE purposes were not already explicitly defined and available. Having a departmental evaluation that assesses professionalism like the one currently in place in addition to course-specific assessments of EFE learning may be an effective protocol of both merit and worth, but more research is needed.

Inflated ratings need to be addressed. The department faculty should develop a strategy to address inflated ratings that improves the validity of the evaluation data and facilitates preservice teachers' data use for professional growth. Results show course instructors differ in their interpretation, use and expectations regarding the rating language—exemplary, proficient, developing/needs improvement. Course instructors and cooperating teachers expressed approval of the rating language because it is aligned with what is currently used the partnering public school for teacher evaluations, but the definitions on the form are not clear enough. The VDOE recommends that teacher preparation programs:

> Develop assessment and evaluation instruments that clearly describe measurable behavior
> at different levels of experience and expertise. Creating knowledge and skills that clearly
> describe the behavior of candidates during the continuum of field experiences—from
> beginner to professional educator—provides an objective basis upon which to assess a
> candidate's performance. Clear descriptions allow candidates to self-assess their

performance against professional teaching standards and provide them with a vision of

what they need to do to improve their practice. Descriptions also ensure that evaluations

are based on evidence rather than the opinion of the assessor. (p. 49)

The data indicate that each EFE is intentionally unique to meet the objectives of its

corresponding course. At the time of this study, the definitions for the ratings did not relate

directly to the items on the current evaluation form; most of the evaluation ratings have to do

with professional characteristics, but the overall rating definitions refer to instructional planning

and delivery (see Appendix F). The researcher suggests that the definitions of rating terms on

evaluation forms be revised to reflect the purpose of the unique evaluations on which the

language appears. For example, if the language is used on an evaluation assessing professional

characteristics, the definitions should be descriptive and related to professional characteristics. If

the language is used on course-specific assessments, the definitions should be descriptive and

related to those course-specific objectives. What one person deems exemplary, proficient,

developing and unacceptable can vary greatly, so developing a continuum that describes

measurable behavior for each rating and each item is needed to improve the reliability and

validity of the evaluation form.

Given the study findings and that preservice teachers are developing over time, the

researcher recommends that developing/needs improvement be separated into two distinct

categories—developing and needs improvement. The findings indicate that preservice teachers

almost always receive exemplary or proficient ratings, but course instructors reported that

preservice teachers' performance is more often consistent with the developing/needs

improvement rating than proficient and exemplary during the EFEs. A preservice teacher made

this recommendation and supported it well when she expressed her feelings about the EFE evaluation form saying,

> The only part that I don't like, and I've had other teachers tell me this as well, is the "Developing/Needs Improvement" [rating] because I feel they should be separate categories. "Developing" is where you should be because we are developing. "Needs improvement" implies that you aren't doing what you should be doing. So, I feel like grouping those together doesn't quite fit.

Given that preservice teachers aspire to be professional educators and are developing pedagogical skills, the researcher recommends that exemplary be eliminated as a rating category from the EFE evaluation form. Course instructors expressed concern about preservice teachers getting exemplary ratings early in the teacher preparation program when there is still much for them to learn. According to the data, exemplary ratings did not prompt reflection and goal-setting. A preservice teacher explained this phenomenon saying, "If I looked and saw that I got all exemplary and proficient, I was like, 'Okay, onto the next.' Because if there wasn't developing or unacceptable, I didn't really know where to go with it." Another said, "I didn't really use it [the evaluation data]…I always had good ratings."

Training stakeholders about overarching EFE objectives, course-specific EFE objectives, evaluation objectives, intended data usage and the rating scale is recommended. Training for cooperating teachers should be efficient, keeping in mind that they are needed and valued volunteers. Preservice teachers also need training about the overarching EFE objectives, course-specific EFE objectives, evaluation objectives, intended data usage and the rating scale. Preservice teachers need to understand the value of constructive feedback and how to use it to facilitate their own professional growth in order to develop into exemplary professional

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educators. Training cooperating teachers to supervise and evaluate preservice teacher performance is desirable (VDOE, 2006), but must be carefully designed for convenience and efficiency to have merit.

Soliciting stakeholders' perspectives can be a valuable time investment that strengthens partnerships and expedites progress. Not only did the stakeholders offer useful insights and recommendations, they appreciated being asked. The researcher was surprised at how willing and eager preservice teachers, cooperating teachers and course instructors were to be interviewed, and recommends that this meta-evaluation strategy be used again in the future.

Future Research

This research was "designed to address the data and decision-making needs" of an education program for reform (Ross, 2010, p. 481). A participant-oriented evaluation model is an appropriate design for teacher preparation programs as accrediting agencies leverage reform toward mutually beneficial partnerships between P-12 schools and teacher preparation programs (CAEP, 2013a). The most similar study found in the literature was an evaluation of the Auburn University Educational Leadership Team (Ross, 2010). An evaluation of a student teaching block at Mississippi State University (1999) used Stake's countenance model in a similar way. In the current culture of evidence-based accountability, more examples of transparent self-studies would be useful as programs work to meet the standards of state boards of education and national accrediting agencies.

While EFEs are supported in the literature, exactly what those concepts and discipline-specific practices that the preservice teacher should learn as a result of the EFEs in the teacher preparation program was not found in the literature and was well beyond the scope of this exploratory study. An explicit understanding of the EFE learning objectives is needed; further

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research EFE learning would be beneficial. Research on the validity and reliability of EFE evaluation rating scales and descriptive continuums would also be beneficial.

Retallick and Miller (2010) organized learning emphases found in the EFE literature into two broad categories—career exploration and teacher development. They also organized learning strategies in to two broad categories—those that teach what teachers do and those that teach how teachers think (Retallick & Miller, 2010). Further research on evidence-based assignments that help preservice teachers meet those objectives is needed.

With the current emphasis on quantitative evidence for effectiveness in the public schools, there is pressure to link teacher preparation and, by extension, EFEs to P-12 student achievement (CAEP, 2013; Imig, Wiseman, & Imig, 2011; Rabe, 2012). Partnering with stakeholders to research not only preservice teacher impact on P-12 students during EFEs, but how to extrapolate that impact is needed.

The enduring dilemmas with fieldwork categorized by Applegate (1985) still endure. Research addressing the programmatic, institutional and individual dilemmas to determine logistically and pedagogically sound solutions would be beneficial to all stakeholders in teacher preparation.

Conclusion

The EFE evaluation protocol is imperfect, but valuable. The documents are convenient, but incomplete. Does the process result in a general assessment of each preservice teacher's performance during the EFE? Yes. Does the process serve as one measure of accountability indicating the student completed the fieldwork assignment? Yes. Does the evaluation form address, if imperfectly, some of the professional skills and attitudes taught in the teacher

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education curriculum? Yes. Is the form unduly cumbersome for cooperating teachers to complete? No.

The weaknesses in the evaluation system identified in this research do not necessarily indicate neglect on the part of the teacher preparation program, but rather, the enormous challenges inherent in EFE evaluation. The faculty at the teacher preparation program expressed their commitment to providing numerous field experiences for their preservice teachers even beyond what is required by accrediting agencies and the state board of education. Yet, as the literature suggests, more is not necessarily better (Knowles & Cole, 1996); better is better. Dewey (1973) said,

> The belief that all genuine education comes about through experiences does not mean all experiences are genuinely educative. Experiences and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are miseducative. (p. 25)

That is why a meta-evaluation of EFE evaluation practices soliciting stakeholder perspectives is important. Applegate (1985) was correct when she wrote,

> Needed, too, is a climate for dialogue that will support confrontation about implicit beliefs across programs, institutions, and individuals. We must accept that the search for improvement is a way of life in teacher education. (p. 63)

Meaningful evaluation can occur that promotes preservice teacher learning, is logistically feasible, and meets bureaucratic mandates. The report of the National Research Council to CAEP concluded that clinical experiences were critically important to teacher preparation but that "research, to date, does not tell us what specific experiences or sequence of experiences are most likely to result in more effective beginning teachers" (CAEP, 2010, p. 16). Transparently

evaluating how we evaluate field experiences by soliciting stakeholder perceptions is an

important step in that direction.

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Virginia Department of Education Evaluation of Pre-Student Teaching Field Experience

Evaluation of Candidate's
Pre-Student Teaching Field Experience

Candidate: _____

School or Educational Program: _____

Evaluator: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Subject Taught: _____ Grade Level: _____

Course and Number (if applicable): _____

Date of Review: _____

Instructions:

By placing an X in the appropriate box, please rank the following characteristics using the following scale. Feel free to add comments about the candidate's participation, strengths, and areas for improvement, as well as potential to become an exemplary classroom teacher. Use the back for additional comments if necessary.

5	4	3	2	1
Exemplary	Above Average	Proficient	Below Average	Unsatisfactory

Characteristic	5	4	3	2	1
1) Performance of duties and responsibilities					
2) Punctuality					
3) Professional Appearance					
4) Positive attitude toward teaching					
5) Showed initiative and enthusiasm					
6) Accepted responsibility					
7) Completed assigned tasks effectively					
8) Developed rapport with students					
9) Demonstrated professional promise					
10) Ability to develop lesson plans independently					
11) Overall rating of student					

Reflection

In what ways did this experience provide an opportunity to:
- relate theory to actual practice in classrooms and schools?
- create meaningful learning experiences for a variety of students?
- practice in settings with students of diverse backgrounds?
- demonstrate competence in the professional teaching or administrative roles?
- interact and communicate effectively with parents, community, and other stakeholders?
- develop and apply the new knowledge and skill gained in their programs?

Interview Protocol for Course Instructors

Study Overview and Purpose

The research I am conducting is about how the early fieldwork experiences in your teacher preparation program are evaluated. I am interviewing cooperating teachers, preservice teachers, and course instructors to get multiple perspectives on how we evaluate the fieldwork program. I am particularly interested in how different people perceive the objectives of fieldwork, the evaluation process, and how they use the evaluation data. You are a valuable stakeholder in this program, so I am interested in what you have to share about it.

Confidentiality and Consent

Participation in this study is voluntary.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. A copy of the interview will be made available to you to review for member checking. You will be able to provide feedback and make changes after you see the interview transcript. If you choose not to provide permission for the interview to be audio-recorded, the interviewer will take notes during the interview.

Your name and potential identifiers will not be included in the study. A pseudonym will be used throughout the study.

This is the form you sign to indicate that you consent to participate in this study. You may sign it now or take it with you to sign later in which case we can schedule the interview at a later date. (Consent form will be presented. If consent form is signed, the interview can proceed. If the consent form is taken to be reviewed, the interview can be scheduled at a later date.)

Interview Demographic Information for Course Instructors

1. How long have you been teaching in this teacher preparation program?

2. What additional experience do you have in teaching or education, prior and concurrent to your teaching here?

3. What courses do you teach that have a corresponding fieldwork component? (For this study, student teaching is not included as early fieldwork.)

Interview Protocol Guiding Questions

1. In your opinion, what are the purposes of early field experiences in general?

2. What are the purposes of early field experiences for the class(es) that you teach?

3. How do you communicate those objectives to your students?

4. How do you determine if the learning objectives of fieldwork have been achieved?

5. How would you describe your experience with the fieldwork evaluation process?

6. What is the purpose of the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.)

7. What do you think about the fieldwork evaluation form?

    a. In your opinion, what does it measure?

8. How do you use the departmental EFE evaluation form in your class?

    a. What do you tell your students about the form? How do you use the data provided on the completed form?

    b. Is the form used to assign a grade?

9. How do you want preservice teachers to use the data on the EFE evaluation form?

10. How do you want cooperating teachers to use the data on the EFE evaluation form?

11. What do you think about the fieldwork log?

    a. In your opinion, what does it measure?

12. In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process assess preservice teacher learning?

13. In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process facilitate preservice teacher learning?

14. In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process measure impact on P-12 students?

15. Are there any other tools or strategies that you use to evaluate if the fieldwork learning objectives have been achieved?

    a. If so, tell me more about that. What tools do you use? How do you use them?

    b. If it is a paper document, may I have a copy to include in my data for this study?

16. Tell me how you think the fieldwork evaluation experience could be changed.

17. Do you have any further comments or thoughts you would like to share that relate to the focus of this study

Interview Protocol for Preservice Teachers

Study Overview and Purpose

The research I am conducting is about how the early fieldwork experiences in your teacher preparation program are evaluated. I am interviewing cooperating teachers, preservice teachers, and course instructors to get multiple perspectives on how we evaluate the fieldwork program. I am particularly interested in how different people perceive the objectives of fieldwork, the evaluation process, and how they use the evaluation data. You are a valuable stakeholder in this program, so I am interested in what you have to share about it.

Confidentiality and Consent

Participation in this study is voluntary.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. A copy of the interview will be made available to you to review for member checking. You will be able to provide feedback and make changes after you see the interview transcript. If you choose not to provide permission for the interview to be audio-recorded, the interviewer will take notes during the interview.

Your name and potential identifiers will not be included in the study. A pseudonym will be used throughout the study.

This is the form for you to sign indicating that you consent to participate in this study. You may sign it now or take it with you to sign later in which case we can schedule the interview at a later date. (Consent form will be presented. If consent form is signed, the interview can proceed. If the consent form is taken to be reviewed, the interview can be scheduled at a later date.)

Interview Demographic Information for Preservice Teachers

1. What kind of teacher license(s) are you pursuing in this program?

Interview Protocol Guiding Questions

1. In your opinion, what are the purposes of early field experiences in general?

2. What were purposes of the early field experiences you completed?

3. How did your instructors communicate those objectives to you?

4. How did you determine if you achieved the fieldwork learning objectives?

5. How would you describe your experience with the fieldwork evaluation process?

6. What do you think about the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.)

    a. In your opinion, what does it measure?

7. How did you use the data provided by the cooperating teacher on the completed form?

8. How did the instructors use the data provided on the completed form?

9. How did your cooperating teachers use the data provided on the completed form?

10. What do you think about the fieldwork log?

    a. In your opinion, what does it measure?

11. In your opinion, how well did the current fieldwork evaluation process assess your learning?

12. In your opinion, how well did the current fieldwork evaluation process facilitate your learning?

13. In your opinion, how well did the current fieldwork evaluation process measure your impact on P-12 students?

14. Were there any other tools or strategies that you used to evaluate if the fieldwork learning objectives were achieved?

    a.   Tell me more about those evaluation tools or strategies.

15. Tell me how you think the fieldwork evaluation experience could be changed.

16. Do you have any further comments or thoughts you would like to share that relate to the focus of this study?

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol for Cooperating Teachers

Study Overview and Purpose

The research I am conducting is about how the early fieldwork experiences in this teacher preparation program are evaluated. I am interviewing cooperating teachers, preservice teachers, and course instructors to get multiple perspectives on how we evaluate the fieldwork program. I am particularly interested in how different people perceive the objectives of fieldwork, the evaluation process, and how they use the evaluation data. You are a valuable stakeholder in this program, so I am interested in what you have to share about it.

Confidentiality and Consent

Participation in this study is voluntary.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. A copy of the interview will be made available to you to review for member checking. You will be able to provide feedback and make changes after you see the interview transcript. If you choose not to provide permission for the interview to be audio-recorded, the interviewer will take notes during the interview.

Your name and potential identifiers will not be included in the study. A pseudonym will be used throughout the study.

This is the form for you to sign indicating that you consent to participate in this study. You may sign it now or take it with you to sign later in which case we can schedule the interview at a later date. (Consent form will be presented. If consent form is signed, the interview can proceed. If the consent form is taken to be reviewed, the interview can be scheduled at a later date.)

Interview Demographic Information for Cooperating Teachers

1. How long have you been a P-12 teacher?

2. What grade(s) and subject(s) do you teach?

3. How many times have you hosted a student from this teacher preparation program for an early fieldwork experience?

Interview Protocol Guiding Questions

For our purposes, please respond based only on your experience with evaluation process for fieldwork student(s) from the teacher preparation program that is the focus of this study.

1. In your opinion, what are purposes of early field experiences in general?

2. What are the purposes of early field experiences for the class(es) that in which your preservice teacher was enrolled?

3. How did the course instructor(s) communicate those objectives to you?

4. How did you determine if the preservice teacher achieved the fieldwork learning objectives?

5. How would you describe your experience with the fieldwork evaluation process?

6. What do you think about the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.)

    a. In your opinion, what does it measure?

7. How did you use the data provided in the fieldwork evaluation form?

8. How did you want the course instructors to use the data that you provide on the fieldwork evaluation form?

9. How did you want the preservice teacher to use the data that you provide on the fieldwork evaluation form?

10. What do you think about the fieldwork log?

    a. In your opinion, what does it measure?

11. Were there any other tools or strategies that you use to evaluate if the fieldwork learning objectives were achieved?

    a. Tell me more about those evaluation tools or strategies.

12. In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process assess preservice teacher learning?

13. In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process facilitate preservice teacher learning?

14. In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process measure impact on P-12 students?

15. Were there any other tools or strategies that you used to evaluate if the fieldwork learning objectives were achieved?

    a. Tell me more about those evaluation tools or strategies.

16. Tell me how you think the fieldwork evaluation experience could be changed.

17. Do you have any further comments or thoughts you would like to share that relate to the focus of this study?

Alignment of Stakeholder Interview Protocols

Course Instructors	Preservice Teachers	Cooperating Teachers
In your opinion, what are the purposes of early field experiences in general?	In your opinion, what are the purposes of early field experiences in general?	In your opinion, what are the purposes of early field experiences in general?
What are the purposes of early field experiences for the class(es) that you teach?	What were purposes of the early field experiences you completed?	What were the purposes of early field experience for the class(es) in which your preservice teacher was enrolled?
How do you communicate those objectives to your students?	How did your instructors communicate those objectives to you?	
How do you communicate those objectives to the cooperating teachers?		How did the course instructor(s) communicate those objectives to you?
How do you determine if the learning objectives of fieldwork have been achieved?	How did you determine if you achieved the fieldwork learning objectives?	How did you determine if the preservice teacher achieved the fieldwork learning objectives?
How would you describe your experience with the fieldwork evaluation process?	How would you describe your experience with the fieldwork evaluation process?	How would you describe your experience with the fieldwork evaluation process?
What is the purpose of the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.)	What is the purpose of the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.)	What is the purpose of the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.)
What do you think about the fieldwork evaluation form? In your opinion, what does it measure?	What do you think about the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.) In your opinion, what does it measure?	What do you think about the fieldwork evaluation form? (Provide form.) In your opinion, what does it measure?

Course Instructors	Preservice Teachers	Cooperating Teachers
How do you use the departmental EFE evaluation form in your class? How do you tell your students about the form? How do you use the data provided on the completed form? Is the form used to assign a grade?	How did you use the data provided by the cooperating teacher on the completed fieldwork evaluation form?	How did you use the data provided in the fieldwork evaluation form?
	How did the course instructors use the data provided on the completed form?	How did you want the course instructors to use the data that you provided on the fieldwork evaluation form?
How do you want preservice teachers to use the data on the EFE evaluation form?		How did you want the preservice teacher to use the data that you provided on the fieldwork evaluation form?
How do you want cooperating teachers to use the data on the EFE evaluation form?	How did your cooperating teachers use the data provided on the completed form?	
What do you think about the fieldwork log? In your opinion, what does it measure?	What do you think about the fieldwork log? In your opinion, what does it measure?	What do you think about the fieldwork log? In your opinion, what does it measure?
In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process assess preservice teacher learning?	In your opinion, how well did the current fieldwork evaluation process assess your learning?	In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process assess preservice teacher learning?
In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process facilitate preservice teacher learning?	In your opinion, how well did the current fieldwork evaluation process facilitate your learning?	In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process facilitate preservice teacher learning?

Course Instructors	Preservice Teachers	Cooperating Teachers
In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process measure impact on P-12 students?	In your opinion, how well did the current fieldwork evaluation process measure your impact on P-12 students?	In your opinion, how well does the current fieldwork evaluation process measure impact on P-12 students?
Are there any other tools or strategies that you use to evaluate if the fieldwork learning objectives have been achieved? If so, tell me more about that. What tools do you use? How do you use them? If it is a paper document, may I have a copy to include in my data for this study?	Were there any other tools or strategies that you used to evaluate if the fieldwork learning objectives were achieved? If so, tell me more about those evaluation tools or strategies.	Were there any other tools or strategies that you used to evaluate if the fieldwork learning objectives were achieved? If so, tell me more about those evaluation tools or strategies.
Tell me how you think the fieldwork evaluation experience could be changed.	Tell me how you think the fieldwork evaluation experience could be changed.	Tell me how you think the fieldwork evaluation experience could be changed.
Do you have any further comments or thoughts you would like to share that relate to the focus of this study?	Do you have any further comments or thoughts you would like to share that relate to the focus of this study	Do you have any further comments or thoughts you would like to share that relate to the focus of this study?

Fieldwork Evaluation Form from Study Site

Student _____ **EDUC Course** _____ **Host Teacher and School** _____**Date** _____

Please evaluate this student as compared to other pre-service teachers.

Professional Expectations

		Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Unacceptable	Not Observed
1.	Has regular attendance and is punctual and reliable	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	Builds positive and professional relationship with host teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	Demonstrates consistent mastery of oral and written English	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	Dresses appropriately	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	Accepts and responds to constructive feedback	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	Asks for help when needed	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	Exercises flexibility	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	Maintains confidentiality	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	Demonstrates effort, enthusiasm, and dependability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	Establishes a climate of trust, teamwork, and social interaction	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	Promotes cultural sensitivity and respects diversity	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	Listens actively and pays attention to students' needs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	Works with students individually or in groups, as appropriate	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14.	Represents self, R-MC, and profession as positive role model	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Instructional Planning for Mini-Lesson

The pre-service teacher plans using the Virginia SOLs, the school's
curriculum, best practices, and data to meet the needs of all students. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Instructional Delivery of Mini-Lesson

The pre-service teacher effectively engages students in learning
by using a variety of instructional strategies to meet individual needs. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Brief Narrative

Host Teacher Signature_____

Please mark one box for an overall evaluation

☐ **Exemplary**	☐ **Proficient**	☐ **Developing/Needs Improvement**	☐ **Unacceptable**
In addition to meeting the standard, the pre-service teacher consistently demonstrates extensive knowledge of the subject matter and continually enriches the curriculum.	*The pre-service teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.*	*The pre-service teacher is progressing in the areas of the curriculum, content, and student development or lacked fluidity in using the knowledge in practice.*	*The pre-service teacher bases instruction on material that is inaccurate or out-of-date and/or inadequately addresses the developmental needs of students.*

White Copy = Education Department   Yellow Copy = Student   Pink Copy = Host Teacher

APPENDIX G

Fieldwork Log from Study Site

Student Name:_____

Class:_____

Host Teacher

Name:_____**School:**_____

Grade (and Subject if 6ᵗʰ-12ᵗʰ):_____

Date	Time	Hours	Brief Description of Activity	Host Teacher's Signature

Document how you were involved in the classroom during your visit. Did you do any of the following?
1. **Teach a mini-lesson**
2. **Tutor individual student**
3. **Tutor a small group**
4. **Teach a station**
5. **Observe & take field notes**
6. **Assist with duties (bus, lunch, recess, etc.)**
7. **Serve as an aide in the classroom**
8. **Attend a meeting (IEP, faculty, team)**
9. **Interview a teacher or other education professional**
10. **Other (describe)**

You should engage in a variety of these activities during your fieldwork.

Don't hesitate to ask your teacher, "How can I be helpful today?"

Appendix H

Research Subject Information and Consent Form

TITLE: *Exploring Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Evaluation of Early Fieldwork Experience in an Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Program*

VCU IRB NO.: HM20003961

If any information contained in this consent form is not clear, please ask the study staff to explain any information that you do not fully understand. You may take home an unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this research is to explore stakeholders' perceptions about the fieldwork evaluation process at a teacher preparation program. You are invited to participate in this study because you are an important stakeholder in the fieldwork program at the teacher preparation program.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT
If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be interviewed about your experience with the fieldwork program at the teacher preparation program. The interview should last 30-60 minutes. Participation is voluntary and you may stop the interview at any time. The interview will be audio-recorded. You will be provided with a written transcription of the interview and invited to make changes and/or clarify your responses if desired.

Significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The interview questions are about the evaluation process of the early fieldwork experience at the teacher preparation program. If for any reason, discussing this topic makes you uncomfortable, you may discontinue the interview and withdraw from the study.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS
You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but the information we learn from people in this study may help us design a better field experience program and evaluate it more effectively.

COSTS
There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interview and completing this consent form.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of the academic subject area that you teach or are training to teach in the future. Data is being collected only for research purposes. Pseudonyms will be used during the interview and in reporting the data. Data will be de-identified and stored separately from research data in a locked research area. All personal identifying information and interview transcripts will be kept in password protected files and these files will be deleted after the data has been analyzed and the study is complete. The researcher anticipates that the study will be complete by August 2015. All hard copies of date including the interview transcripts will be kept in a locked file cabinet for until the study the study is completed and will be destroyed at that time. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. A data and safety monitoring plan is established.

The interviews will be audio taped, but no names will be recorded. At the beginning of the session, all members will be asked to use pseudonyms so that no names are recorded. The tapes and the notes will be stored in a locked cabinet. After the information from the tapes is typed up, the tapes will be destroyed.

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us; however, information from the study and the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by Virginia Commonwealth University and/or the study site.

If something we learn through this research indicates that you may intend to harm yourself or others, we are obligated to report that to the appropriate authorities.

What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the interview. Choosing to withdraw from the study will involve no penalty.
Your participation in this study may be stopped at any time by the study staff without your consent. The reasons might include:
- the study staff thinks it necessary for your health or safety;
- you have not followed study instructions;
- the sponsor has stopped the study; or
- administrative reasons require your withdrawal.

You may leave the study before the interview ends without risk and consequence.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about your participation in this research, contact:

>   *Amber Peacock*
>   *c/o Joan Rhodes*
>   *Department of Teaching and Learning*
>   *Virginia Commonwealth University*
>   *Richmond, VA 23284*
>   *804-828-1305*

>   *and/or*

>   *Joan Rhodes*
>   *Department of Teaching and Learning*
>   *Virginia Commonwealth University*
>   *Richmond, VA 23284*
>   *804-828-1305*

The researchers named above are the best persons to call for questions about your participation in this study.

If you have any general questions about your rights as a participant in this or any other research, you may contact:

>   Office of Research
>   Virginia Commonwealth University
>   800 East Leigh Street, Suite 3000
>   P.O. Box 980568
>   Richmond, VA 23298
>   Telephone: (804) 827-2157

Contact this number to ask general questions, to obtain information or offer input, and to express concerns or complaints about research. You may also call this number if you cannot reach the research team or if you wish to talk with someone else. General information about participation in research studies can also be found at http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/volunteers.htm.

CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of the consent form once I have agreed to participate.

_____

Participant name printed   Participant signature   Date

_____

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion / Witness
(Printed)

_____   _____

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent   Date
Discussion / Witness

_____   _____

Principal Investigator Signature (if different from above)   Date

APPENDIX I

Stakeholders' Recommendations for Early Field Experience Evaluation at the Study Site

- Add evaluation items about "teacher presence" and confidence

- Add evaluation items about demonstrating initiative

- Add evaluation items that solicit cooperating teacher's perceptions of preservice teacher's "fit" or potential capacity for teaching

- Add items about P-12 impact

- Add more evaluation items about instructional delivery

- Add more evaluation items about instructional planning

- Add more space/opportunity for cooperating teachers to provide a brief narrative

- Have cooperating teachers provide constructive feedback for all preservice teachers, even if the rating is exemplary

- Have course instructors review cooperating teacher's feedback with preservice teacher

- Have preservice teachers complete the evaluation as a self-assessment

- Include a midpoint evaluation during each EFE

- Include a pre-EFE assessment as well as the post-EFE evaluation.

- Move the evaluation forms to an online format

- Provide brief training or written instruction to cooperating teachers about complete evaluation

- Provide space on the log for students to add reflections in addition to using the number system, or having students keep a journal for each visit

- Provide training to preservice teachers about the rating scale on the evaluation

- Separate "developing/needs improvement" into two separate categories on the rating scale

Vita

Amber Rhodes Peacock was born in Friona, Texas on May 18, 1969 and graduated from Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya in 1987. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas Tech University in 1991. She received a Master of Science degree from Texas Tech University in 1993 and a Master of Education degree from James Madison University in 1995. She worked as a special education teacher in Greene County prior to transitioning to a career in higher education. She entered Virginia Commonwealth to pursue her Doctor of Philosophy in Education in 2011.