Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Co-Teaching of Professional Development School Teachers and University Faculty

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ABSTRACT: Co-teaching in teacher preparation is viewed as a promising practice for fostering collaborative skills, increasing student participation, improving classroom instruction, and professional growth for all participants. Using focus group interviews as a unit of analysis, this article explores pre-service teachers' perceptions of co-teaching used in their Urban Education Option Cohort during Fall 2010. The co-teaching was conducted by university professors and professional development school teachers who taught college courses at a professional development school. Findings revealed that co-teaching was positively received although challenges also existed. The article discusses how challenges identified by pre-service teachers could be addressed and recommends additional co-teaching strategies.

NAPDS Essentials Addressed: #4/A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants; #8/Work by college university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings.

Introduction

The question of how to address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds in inclusive urban settings continues to be a critical challenge for many stakeholders. Urban public schools educate mostly low income and ethnically diverse students, and according to Thompson, Ransdell, and Rousseau (2005) these schools are confronted with numerous challenges, including low student achievement, inadequate school readiness, low parental involvement, poor access to learning resources, lack of discipline, language barriers, and poor student health. Consequently, various pedagogical models have been proposed including a co-teaching approach, hailed as an effective method for successful inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings (Friend, Reising & Cook, 1993; Stang & Lyons, 2008). This article refers to co-teaching as a delivery method by which two teachers are actively working together to address and meet the needs of diverse students, with or without disabilities, from diverse backgrounds in an

integrated educational setting. Additionally, co-teaching refers to professionals who share instruction by combining their knowledge and skills to create a learning environment in which instruction is rigorous, flexible, and standards-based while also being accommodating to students' unique learning styles (Friend, 2008).

Co-teaching, as Walther-Thomas, Bryant, and Land (1996) highlight, is not a new concept in public schools, as it enjoyed its initial popularity during the "open" schools era and then resurfaced during the early 1980s as a special education support model. Friend and Reising (1993) stated that the roots for co-teaching are found in the practice of team teaching among general education teachers that first gained a widespread popularity in the late 1950s when Trump (1956) proposed reorganizing secondary schools so that teams of teachers shared responsibility for large group presentations, follow-up sessions for groups of students, and individualized study. The idea, as Friend and Reising contend, stemmed from a need to overcome the then acute shortage of teachers, but also from Trump's belief that such a model would enable schools to offer interdisciplinary and individualized instruction to students. Nonetheless, Friend and Hurley-Chamberlain (2010) highlight that though there is not enough evidence on co-teaching's effectiveness, the knowledge base on it is growing. Also, literature shows a positive reception and support for co-teaching as considerable benefits are being reported (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008; Kamens, 2007; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

According to Friend (2008), co-teaching has tremendous potential as a strategy for improving the achievement of diverse learners. Sharing similar sentiments are Lester and Evans (2009) who argue that collaborative teaching, sometimes known as co-teaching, enhances the learning environment not only for students, but also for instructors. Co-teaching, as Walther-Thomas (1997) contends, provides classroom teachers with assistance in the development, delivery, and evaluation of effective instructional programs. It fosters ongoing support, collaborative problem solving, and professional development for the teachers involved (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Buckley (as cited in Lester & Evans, 2009) suggests that collaboration increases the level of scholarship and reduces burnout by alleviating the isolation felt by individual teachers and builds a sense of community among instructors and students. In co-teaching, as Friend and Reising (1993) state, teachers strive to create a classroom community in which all students are valued members, and they develop innovative teaching strategies that would not be possible if only one teacher was present. Primarily, it is an innovative approach for teachers, both experienced and beginning, to critically analyze their teaching (Gallo-Fox, Wassell, Scantlebury, & Juck, 2006).

Stang and Lyons (2008) indicate that teachers co-teaching in grades K-12 report that they received little training to co-teach in their university training programs. To ensure that classroom co-teaching succeeds as an integral part of schools, we believe that teachers must be optimally prepared for this collaboration, a notion that also emerged in Austin's (2001) findings in a study of co-teaching practices. Lester and Evans (2009) argue that "as institutions of higher education continue to recognize and value the importance of collaboration in developing knowledge and growth among their instructors, novel means of facilitating collaborative teaching must be more systematically instituted" (p. 380).

In teacher preparation, co-teaching is viewed as a promising practice for fostering collaborative skills, increasing student participation, and improving classroom instruction and professional growth for all participants (Bacharach, et al., 2008). It is perceived as ideal for improving program intensity, continuity, and integrity as students receive more instruction and are systematically more in-

volved in their learning than would be possible in a classroom with only one teacher. Stang and Lyons (2008) note that there has been a call to reexamine teacher preparation programs if we expect our in-service teachers to deliver instruction using a co-teaching model. They also state that if the roles and responsibilities of educators are changing then it is crucial that teacher training programs change as well.

Recent trends in research findings reveal that a number of pre-service programs are beginning to seriously consider co-teaching (Roth & Boyd, 1999; Scantlebury, Gallo-Fox, & Wassell, 2008; Tobin, 2005). Co-teaching has taken different forms with the primary purpose of teaching K-12 students, with university professors co-teaching together (Gallo-Fox et al., 2006; Roth, 2006), special education teachers co-teaching with a general education teacher (Friend & Reising, 1993), and pre-service teachers working with veteran classroom teachers (Murphy & Beggs, 2006). So far researchers have been optimistic as they report more benefits of co-teaching models.

Nonetheless, there is still insufficient information regarding co-teaching by university professors and Professional Development School teachers. And little research exists that focuses on pre-service teachers' perceptions of this co-teaching model when the co-teaching is done in a university course at a PDS school. Bacharach et al. (2008) propose that more research that focuses on components that are critical to the success of co-teaching partnerships should be undertaken. The study on which we report here intends to begin to fill these gaps.

Literature shows that co-teaching serves as a valuable model for teacher education candidates (Gately & Gately, Jr., 2001). Co-teaching helps pre-service teachers to see collaboration in action. According to Lenn and Hatch (1992), co-teaching led practicing teachers to examine "assumptions about theory and practice and what makes for sound teacher education practice" (p. 12). Lester and Evans (2009) conducted a study in which open-ended interviews were used with both team teachers in a higher education course, and as a result the co-teachers "were able to model for our students what it means to approach the classroom as a community of learners, not as my classroom but our classroom" (Lester & Evans, 2009, p. 280). As Lester and Evans contend, collaborative efforts enrich instructors, enabling them to reflect more deeply as they are pushed to question their assumptions and challenge their current level of understanding.

This article discusses pre-service teachers' views and perceptions of co-teaching as a pedagogical approach employed in their Urban Education Option Cohort as they took a university course, on-site at a Professional Development School. This co-teaching involved university professors and the teachers in a Professional Development School (PDS) in a large county in Georgia. Using focus group interviews as a unit of analysis, this article explores three questions:

1) What are pre-service teachers' views and perceptions about the co-teaching they are involved in?
2) What do they consider as benefits and challenges of co-teaching by a university faculty member and a PDS teacher?
3) What do teacher candidates think could be done in order to maximize the benefits of co-teaching in their pre-service teacher programs?

We believe that teacher candidates' perspectives are seldom considered in discussions of teacher education and teaching best practices, yet they have knowledge that might play a critical role in our understanding of the dynamics involved in co-teaching by university and school faculty members. In formulating our study, we believed that examining their perspectives might help the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) with which we were involved to better understand and strengthen

our co-teaching model, as well as inform others operating in school-university partnerships to improve their practices.

Brief Background and Literature Review

In 2009, Kennesaw State University (in Georgia) was awarded an approximate $8.9 million dollar grant by the U.S. Department of Education to establish an innovative K-12 teacher preparation program in high-need, urban schools in the nearby county. The grant was intended to support the TQP, an initiative of the university's College of Education and seven schools in the nearby Cobb County School District, one of the largest school districts in the state.

The primary goal was to develop a teacher education model that could be replicated in similar urban areas of the country. Furthermore, we aimed to craft a research agenda that would allow us to contribute to the efforts being made to link teacher preparation and effectiveness to K-12 student learning. The TQP provides resources to prepare teachers to teach in high-need schools and support them in their critical first years in the classroom.

The program was offered onsite at the schools, where candidates had intensive clinical experiences combined with coursework co-taught by university professors and the nearby PDS teachers. As part of the TQP, an Urban Education Option was developed within the university's undergraduate teaching programs in early childhood and elementary, middle grades, and secondary education. The study undertaken focused on the first year (fall semester) of co-teaching that took place at the elementary and early childhood grade level and reports the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the co-teaching experience.

This article is premised on the idea that if we are to promote co-teaching in elementary classrooms, pre-service teachers should experience firsthand co-teaching in their teacher education programs. According to Stang and Lyons (2008), it is imperative that teacher candidates are offered opportunities to observe collaboration in higher education especially if they are expected to later collaborate as in-service teachers in public schools. They must have the skills to be capable participants in the collaborative and co-teaching process (Kamens, 2007). Though co-teaching can be incorporated into coursework, Kamens (2007) highlights that the most effective way to learn about it is through realistic, hands-on experiences. These experiences, as she argues, can help to prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of the inclusive classroom. We share the same sentiments and believe that if co-teaching is to become a valid and widely accepted practice, student teachers should see and have it practiced within their undergraduate classes.

In Friend and Hurley-Chamberlain's (2010) observations, "even with a clear understanding of co-teaching, roadblocks to studying it are still plentiful" (p. 1). These authors argue that the significant challenge is its complexity as there are numerous factors that can influence its outcomes. As Friend, Reising, & Cook (1993) argue, co-teaching is not a panacea; it is labor and time intensive and requires a high level of commitment and a high degree of coordination. Thus, modeling for pre-service teachers, as Stang and Lyons (2008) note, may provide them with the best opportunities to develop into reflective practitioners.

Research literature also highlights the fact that education programs must examine their own curricula to make sure that the innovations used in the public schools are included (Stang & Lyons, 2008). Stang and Lyons (2008) recommend that innovations are empirically supported and validated before they are embedded into teacher preparation programs. Supporting this notion are Friend and Hurley-Chamberlain (2010) who assert that practice should be guided by data that will indicate what works and what does not. These authors note that the roadmap for co-

Table 1: Gender and Race of the Participants

	Race	
Gender	*Caucasian*	*African American*
Female: 18 (90%)	15 (83%)	3 (17%)
Male: 2 (10%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)

N=20.

teaching practice is still not clear. They argue that much of what has been written about co-teaching consists of advice on how to create and sustain co-teaching programs. While this is valuable information, this is not evidence of the effectiveness of such a practice. Friend and Hurley-Chamberlain (2010) also argue that there is a need to demonstrate the impact of co-teaching on student learning. Stang and Lyons (2008) note that although research focusing on co-teaching in K-12 has increased, they argue that examination of co-teaching in higher education continues to be supported by limited empirical data.

Methodology

The reported qualitative study took place at Kennesaw State University. The use of a qualitative research method was intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the investigated issues. Mertens (1998) views qualitative research as multi-method in focus as it involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subjects.

Participants and Sampling

The participants in our study were twenty pre-service teachers, referred to as interns, who were enrolled in the Urban Education Option during the fall of 2010 in a State University under the University System of Georgia. Of these participants, eighteen (90%) were females and two were males (10%). Fifteen (83%) of the females were Caucasian; three were African Americans (17%). There was one Caucasian male (5%) and one African American male (5%). Two (10%) were females between 20–21 years old; four (20%) females were between 22–25 years old; five (25%) were between 25–29; two (10%) were between 30–35; four (20%) ranged between 40–45 years old; one (5%) was above 45 years of age. The ages of the two males ranged between 25–35 years. Convenience sampling was used as pre-service teachers were already enrolled in the program and had knowledge of how the co-teaching was conducted in this context.

In this Urban Education Option, the co-teaching was conducted by three university professors, and three Professional Development School (PDS) teachers. The co-teachers taught together during the university courses that were held on-site at the elementary school. To be part of this program, the pre-service teachers were specifically selected through an application and interview process. The program was different from the university program as candidates were placed in the PDSs that are in partnership with the university. Also, the program was characterized by a significantly higher intensity in comparison to the university programs. Candidates in the program included traditional college students, students who had recently earned Associate's Degrees from other institutions, and students who had previously been employed in other fields.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data were collected through focus group interviews conducted with interns in the Urban Education Option. These focus group interviews were conducted with four groups of interns who were involved in the co-teaching partnership. Each group was comprised of five

Table 2: Age Range of the Participants

Age	*20–21 yrs*	*22–25*	*25–29*	*30–35*	*40–45*	*Above 45*
Female	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	1 (5%)
Male			1 (5%)	1 (5%)		

randomly selected interns. The focus group interview, as Mertens (1998) asserts, is a research strategy that relies not on a question and answer format but on more responsive interaction within the group. The reliance on interaction between participants is designed to elicit more of the participants' points of view than would be evidenced in more researcher-dominated interviewing.

The use of focus groups was viewed appropriate as the researchers were interested in how individuals form a schema or perspective on a problem. The focus group interaction was intended to allow the exhibition of a struggle for understanding on how others interpret key terms and their agreement or disagreements with the issues. According to Mertens (1998), the focus group interactions can provide evidence of ways that differences are resolved and consensus is built. She argues that systematic variation across groups is the key to research design with focus groups. Variation includes composing groups that vary on different dimensions in the ordering of questions that the group discuss, in terms of characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, or disability, the use of homogeneous groups versus heterogeneous groups, and comparing responses of individuals who are brought back for more than one group.

For focus group interviews we used the same questions across the groups, which focused on several issues including the interns' understanding of co-teaching as a pedagogical approach; their overall impressions of the practice; their impression of the benefits and challenges of co-teaching; what they would change about the co-teaching occurring in their classrooms; and the key elements that they would take away from the co-teaching they experienced. Each of the four focus groups was facilitated by a university professor and lasted between 50–70 minutes. The sessions were conducted concurrently and were tape recorded with interns' permission.

To enrich our data, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the university and PDS teachers who co-taught in the Urban Education Option during the fall 2010 semester. The co-teaching was focused on a reading course, technology course, and curriculum and assessment course. A university professor co-taught reading with a Title I reading teacher for grades K-2, a technology course was co-taught by a university technology professor and a technology teacher of grades K-5, and a university curriculum and assessment professor co-taught with a third grade classroom teacher.

The three school teachers were White females aged between 35 and 50 years. All of the elementary PDS teachers—the Title 1 reading teacher, the technology teacher, and the third grade teacher—had over ten years teaching experiences. The university professors were two White females between the ages of 30 and 50 years and one black male who was over 40 years old. The K-2 university professor teaching reading had about nine years of teaching experience; the technology course university professor had over ten years of teaching experience, and the curriculum and assessment university professor had over fifteen years of teaching experience.

The semi-structured interviews we conducted focused on university students' understandings of co-teaching and they how their understanding evolved over time; impressions about their co-teaching; and the views about benefits and challenges of co-teaching, to mention but a few. Each participant was interviewed for 30–60 minutes. The interviews were tape recorded with their permission and later transcribed verbatim. Nevertheless, only a few references will be made to this data as it is not the focus of this study.

Data Coding and Analysis

The data coding and analysis of the focus group interviews followed an iterative process as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). They proposed the reading of the transcript or listening to the recorded tape a number of times while noting patterns, common issues, themes, and subthemes that emerge. In this case, two university professors (who are also authors) listened to the recorded focus group interviews and separately noted the patterns, common issues, and emerging themes, and

subthemes. They later came together to compare and discuss their findings. This discussion process sometimes involved re-listening to the tapes to identify points of agreement and disagreement. During this process, the researchers kept the research questions in mind and also used these to frame their analyses. Below we report findings that emerged from the data analysis process. Throughout this article, pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of the participants.

Findings

Pre-Service Teachers Understanding of Co-Teaching

The interns in the Urban Education Option seemed to have a clear understanding of what co-teaching is and how it should be implemented. Their familiarity with the concept was based on their field experiences as well as their teacher education course work. None of the interviewed focus groups hesitated to offer their definitions of co-teaching. Analysis of these definitions revealed common elements across pre-service teachers' understandings, including the ideas that this practice involves two teachers working together, teams helping each other, co-teaching being between two regular teachers sharing a class, two teachers supporting each other, and two teachers sharing responsibilities. One co-teacher, Barbara, highlighted a common idea that co-teaching is often conducted in inclusive classroom settings:

> Co-teaching is when there are two teachers in a classroom, which could consist of a special education and a general education teacher. There are many combinations of the types of teachers who can co-teach. When you implement co-teaching you are able to meet more students' needs than in a typical classroom environment.

It was clear that teacher candidates' definitions of co-teaching mostly favored two types of co-teaching: one teach, one assist; and team teaching. According to Cook and Friend (1993) in "one teach, one assist" both teachers are present, but one—often the general education teacher—takes the lead. The other teacher observes or "drifts" around the room assisting students, whereas, in "team teaching" both teachers share the instruction of students. They may take turns leading a discussion, demonstrating concepts or learning strategies, and modeling appropriate question-asking or conflict behavior. None of the definitions offered by pre-service teachers encompassed the other co-teaching styles mentioned by Cook and Friend (1993): parallel teaching where teachers jointly plan instruction, but each delivers it to half of the class group; alternative teaching in which one teacher works with a small group of students to pre-teach, re-teach, supplement, or enrich while the other teacher instructs the large group; and station teaching in which teachers divide the content to be delivered, and each takes responsibility for part of it. Some students may also work independently. Eventually all students participate in all "stations."

The interns cautioned that for co-teaching to succeed, the individuals who are involved should first be willing to teach and should volunteer to implement such a practice, as this approach involves forming partnerships. Secondly, it should be individuals who work well with each other, have matching personalities, do not mind sharing responsibilities and personal space, invite responses from others, and enjoy working as a group as opposed to preferring to work independently. Most of the interns did not believe that teachers should be required to co-teach, as this may have negative repercussions on students' learning. Some believed that the individuals co-teaching should be from different ethnic backgrounds as this might enrich the classroom and benefit students from diverse backgrounds.

Some interns strongly emphasized the importance of a good match between those who co-teach as a significant element in the process. Interns believed this match or relationship should be forged even before teachers begin to partner in the classroom, as it sometimes becomes obvious to the students that the two

teachers do not share or match up well. One intern, Kelly, highlighted these points:

> I believe that co-teaching is not cut out for everyone, it's only for people who can work together to provide the best education for the students and that they have a personality that mixes and matches well. There are some people who don't match well and so co-teachers have to be carefully selected.

Interestingly, some interns were of the opinion that co-teaching should be undertaken by first year teachers. India offered the following comment in support of this practice:

> I think it will be helpful for beginning teachers to co-teach because there is so much one has to do in the first couple of years. I think I would find it really helpful to have someone I could count on, even if the teacher was another first year teacher. We could go through those first critical and challenging years together.

Impressions About Co-Teaching in Their Program

The interns had mixed reactions to the co-teaching that was occurring in their cohort. Some expressed that they appreciated it as they were benefiting from having two teachers. They believed that this practice mirrored the realities of co-teaching as they witnessed a sharing of knowledge, resources, and classroom space. Their impressions were that the co-teaching was beneficial as the individuals involved brought different pedagogical styles that were likely to benefit a diverse group of students like them. Some interns referred to co-teaching taking place in their placement school as a great example for them as they were able to see theory being put into practice. Summer's comments supported this notion:

> I definitely think it has been very effective for me to see both the theoretical side and the actual classroom practice component, strategies and tips and some of the difficulties or challenges that the teachers might have and how to handle them. It was also important for me to explore what the best practices for teaching are based on seeing two co-teachers teach.

Other interns had concerns about the co-teaching that was occurring in their Urban Education program classrooms. Though they believed that co-teaching was an effective teaching approach, based on their understanding and definition of co-teaching, there was no co-teaching taking place in their group. Many interns believed that there was a lack of communication in their cohort which led to a lack of collaboration between their teachers. They felt that some of the PDS faculty members came to their classes without sufficient content knowledge or information about the contexts and realities of their program. Candice was particularly articulate about these critiques:

> I have definitely seen co-teachers that are very effective with us because they seem to meet on regular basis, they collaborate, they know what the other one is doing, and they evidently plan together. Then again I have seen the flip side where the university professor barely knows the teacher, they don't know which page they are on, or they are not on the same side of the page, and they are teaching different things.

Interns were also candid about their impression that some of the university professors did not value the views of the PDS teachers. Peggy's comment offered a key insight about this dynamic:

> The other extreme is that the professors seem to resent the idea that he has to give up his instructional time to participate in having a co-teacher. I am not sure that it is a good match for us if we have a professor that is not willing to be part of that scenario and be allowed to participate anyway.

Other interns also felt that the PDS school teacher was not assertive enough in his or her interaction with the university faculty member, but rather, was there to endorse whatever was

being done by the professor. Again, Candice offered an important illustrative quote about this situation:

> Some of the teachers are intimidated; some of them are very scared because they have been out of college for many years or maybe they have only dealt with elementary situations and hadn't been exposed to us. School teachers should go through a process where our administrators may say, well maybe you are not the right fit or in other cases, I think it should be you co-teaching because of your strengths in working with adult learners.

Finally, we discovered mixed reactions regarding the PDS faculty in the Urban Education Option. Some interns proposed that the PDS faculty should also complete an interview process in order to be involved with the program. An example of one PDS teacher who just started teaching kindergarten and now was co-teaching in their cohort was mentioned as particularly problematic. Although the interns admitted that they did not know how PDS faculty were chosen, they believed that a more comprehensive selection process should be considered.

Benefits of Co-Teaching

Evident from the data analysis was that several interns viewed co-teaching as a beneficial pedagogical approach for university students. They believed that through such an approach students are likely to encounter two different viewpoints, which enhances their understanding of the discussed issues or topics. Students with different learning styles are bound to benefit from the two different personalities who are presenting to them. All the pre-service teachers mentioned that they would consider co-teaching as a viable pedagogical approach in their schools based upon their experience from the program. India's comment supported this common impression:

> Sometimes you may think that you have the best ideas in the world that may not come across like that to the students. Having someone in your class to teach the way they teach and also give me feedback and work together to figure out new strategies can be really helpful.

In our students' views, co-teaching instructors can reflect on each other's teaching, a process necessary when intending to improve your teaching practice. Thus, co-teaching allows individual instructors to continuously engage in a reflective process.

Interns also asserted that co-teaching makes the connection between K-12 schools and the university classroom more real, which is an element they considered crucial in the teacher preparation program. They felt that having their teacher education courses and learning in the school context was more beneficial than learning on site at the university. Interns believed that this model gave both the professors and pre-service teachers practical experiences that were crucial in their teacher preparation.

In addition, interns appreciated that through co-teaching university professors and the PDS school teachers have opportunities to learn from each other. This learning was viewed as crucial as pre-service teachers considered professors as contributing the theoretical and the latest research knowledge whereas the PDS teachers were bringing the practical knowledge regarding the implementation of these ideas. Finally, interns believed that they learned a great deal about the nature of professionalism through this co-teaching experience.

Challenges of Co-Teaching

Several interns believed that there was no proper co-teaching in some of their classes. Contributing to this challenge was that the PDS teacher was not employed full time in the program, resulting in a part-time presence in these co-taught classes. Some of the university classes began before the PDS school day was finished, causing some PDS teachers to arrive late to the school-based university classes or to be present for abbreviated periods. This practice left the university professor "running the show alone" and the school teacher becoming like a "visitor" in the class. Ultimately, interns felt that there was an imbalance in the handling and co-

teaching of the class as professors were doing the majority of the work. Interns noted how this practice was different from the co-teaching they were witnessing in their elementary classrooms.

Some pre-service teachers felt the co-teachers were not in complete control of their classes as they have each other's views and feelings to consider. Peggy discusses this challenge in the following comments:

> One of the biggest challenges of co-teaching is classroom management. Some co-teachers have different personalities and management styles. One thing that might arise in a situation would be classroom management and both teachers will need to be on the same page or level and it will need to be across the board.

Grace continues to discuss the challenges of co-teaching, particularly for the PDS co-teacher.

> It might also be overwhelming to come into (when you are used to teaching elementary students) a classroom full of 20 adults which are kind of like your peers. I think that could be kind of overwhelming for some PDS co-teachers.

From these comments it appears that many interns had doubts about the co-teaching between the university professors and the PDS teachers as there were challenges relating to a one-sided load in their classroom. Interns also emphasized the importance of incorporating the practical aspect of teaching that was brought in by the PDS teachers into the curriculum, an element that was sometimes missing.

What Teacher Candidates Would Change in Their Co-Taught Classes

Interns stated that they would evaluate or screen teachers who are selected to co-teach with the university professors. This approach, they believed, would ensure that there is a match between those who co-teach. It would ensure that students in the program receive high quality teachers as collaborators in the urban education cohort option.

Interns also felt that university professors should use the PDS teachers more effectively as they did. They mentioned that some PDS teachers would sit in the classroom and just agree with the university professor without bringing in their views on the discussed matter, something interns considered unacceptable.

Several interns wished that they could spend more time in the PDS teachers' classrooms. Professors could possibly implement what they have taught within the PDS teachers' classrooms. Interns wanted to see more of how theory and practice come together and are implemented in real classrooms. They also wished they could spend more time with the PDS teachers as this would have assisted and informed their teaching. These teachers dealt with real life situations daily and could demonstrate how to negotiate pitfalls and problems.

Discussion

In a report on what makes a teacher effective, NCATE (2006) asserts that the collaborative arrangements between university programs and professional development schools have a positive impact on K-12 students in measureable ways, such as increasing standardized test scores. NCATE (2006) argues that the two critically important components in teacher preparation are teacher subject knowledge and knowledge and skills in how to teach that subject. Furthermore, the report highlighted that while content knowledge is important and necessary, it alone cannot determine whether the teacher is able to teach so that students learn. From the reported study, interns had a fairly good understanding of what co-teaching is and what was happening in their program; and many had positive impressions in regards to it. All the interns viewed co-teaching as a beneficial mechanism for teaching and ideal especially for novice teachers. The authors of this article believe that such a positive attitude is essential to pre-service teachers. Later on (after completion of their teaching degree), this attitude may drive

interns to forge co-teaching partnerships with veteran teachers in their schools and the district. Intrator and Kunzman (2009) state that when we stand in front of our pre-service teachers we try to convey that teaching is about ongoing investigation of practice.

Evidently, it is crucial that prospective teachers are not only taught about co-teaching but are also exposed to it through a modeling process. The modeling of the approach is critical as it assists students to consolidate the knowledge received from the literature and their courses regarding co-teaching. Also, practicing what we preach helps students to master information. The discussed co-teaching was unique as it was between the university professor and the school teacher, offering interns another perspective of the dynamics of co-teaching. Eggen and Kauchak (2012) argue that teacher modeling is one of the most powerful forces that exist in classrooms, and it is essential for creating a positive classroom climate. Both the teaching and modeling process serves as an ideal approach to mastering the pedagogical strategy, making interns more prepared to later apply it in their teaching context. Co-teaching as Roth, Tobin, and Zimmermann (2002) argue provides an ideal context for learning by providing a 'zone of proximal development' in which the collective achieves more than any individual alone. Scantlebury, Gallo-Fox, and Wassell (2008) state that when introduced into a teacher preparation program and conceptualized as dialectic, co-teaching and co-generative dialogues become strategies that can promote learning communities based on collective teaching, respect, and responsibility within classrooms and departments. According to NCATE (2006), well prepared graduates are more likely to remain in teaching and contribute to the development of a strong professional learning community in the school they serve.

Interns had some concerns about the co-teaching that took place in their program as they believed that there was a mismatch of personalities between their teachers. They also felt that somehow there was a miscommunication and imbalance in the roles and responsibilities undertaken by their co-teachers, which made interns doubt that true co-teaching was taking place. The issues raised by the interns highlight concerns as Friend (2008) correlates co-teaching with marital relationship that depend on commitment, negotiation, and flexibility. Friend (2008) contends that co-teaching relies on two committed teachers who deeply care about their students and consequently work diligently to achieve that goal. Also significant in that relationship is a plan to solve problems and generate new strategies. Co-teachers should resolve differences of opinions and be innovative. They are committed to nurturing their professional relationship and bringing out the best in each person, all this resulting in improved student outcomes and strong teaching partnerships. Walther-Thomas and Land (1996) suggest that effective co-teachers work together as equal partners in dynamic and interactive relationships. They argue that both teachers should participate directly in the planning, teaching, and evaluation of student performances; all this requiring first and foremost an understanding of each other and effective interpersonal communication. Effective interpersonal communication, as Gately and Gately, Jr. (2001) indicate, is essential in the co-teaching relationship. This communication entails the use of verbal, nonverbal, and social skills. Thus, that lack of communication at different levels is a recipe for disaster in a co-teaching relationship. Nonetheless, Friend (2008) clarifies that in co-teaching the exact contribution that each person makes can vary. She argues that together the educators create a learning situation that cannot be produced by a solo teacher.

Several interns also cited conflict that some university professors portrayed, of being unable to completely give up that classroom power or share it with the PDS teachers. The authors believe that a conflict of this nature should be expected as the collaboration was

between professors who have academic freedom and teachers who are structural in running their classrooms. Nonetheless, we concur with Friend (2008) as she cautions that while co-teaching seems at first glance to be a relatively simple strategy for reaching diverse students, she argues that in reality it is a sophisticated service option requiring a strong professional commitment and systemic support. Though this may come up as a shock and surprise, it should be expected as teachers tend to exert power over their classroom. Giving up or sharing that power with someone else may not necessarily be an easy exercise, especially in this situation where the co-teaching between the university and professional development school teachers were in its initial stages. It is imperative that those involved in co-teaching should respectfully draw on each other's talent and acknowledge that it is unlikely that an individual could possibly know everything necessary to optimize student learning (Friend, 2008).

Also clear from the findings was that interns viewed some PDS teachers as lacking an appropriate approach in working with them as college students and not elementary school students. These findings reveal some of the complexities of co-teaching, which includes the comparison on how individual teachers address or assert themselves over their students. Obviously, this may appear as a minor issue; however, we believe that somehow it may hinder some interns' learning as they may think that an individual teacher was looking down at them or not having high regard for them. In a strong co-teaching environment, such issues can be identified by the other individual teacher and be dealt with amicably. In a co-teaching situation, one teacher can be a reflective mirror for the other, a practice that will make each individual stronger and better in his or her work.

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on a co-teaching initiative, a part of a five-year Teacher Quality Partnership grant awarded to Kennesaw State University, at its initial stages. Therefore, the generalizability of this case study is limited as the findings are only from one semester. Also, the participants of the study were sampled based on convenience sampling, which may not necessarily render a holistic picture about co-teaching. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that the presented findings will add to the literature regarding the use of a co-teaching model in preparing pre-service teachers by university professors and PDS teachers.

Conclusion

The findings from the reported study make a significant contribution to the existing literature as they discuss co-teaching between the university professors and the PDS teachers. This provides a window to the interns' ideas of co-teaching, an important element that gives us an understanding of the challenges that may be involved in the use of co-teaching by university and school faculty members. We conclude that co-teaching is not as simple as it may be thought to be, but is very intricate—requiring not only an introduction in university coursework but also thorough modeling. If we are serious about changing the unpleasant status quo of education in urban schools, it is imperative that interns should be a part of the collaboration that occurs between universities and the schools. This practice, as we believe, will encourage interns to continue working with their professors and in-service teachers. Also, the involvement of the pre-service teachers alerts them to the pros and cons of co-teaching, leaving them with a task to ponder about how they can avoid similar pitfalls or issues when they are in-service teachers. SUP

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