

BECOMING THE TEACHER WHO 'CAN': TRANSFORMATION THROUGH  
TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first, to educators everywhere— those of you who through your devotion to teaching inspire passion within your students, to learn, to become, and to serve.

I also dedicate this to you, mom and dad, who taught me the value of education and continuously challenged me to pursue it. Thank you for showing me the way.

Finally, to my children: Sarah, Roman, Mani, Liberty, and Andre—this is for you.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	9
Purpose of the Study .....	11
Research Questions .....	13
Conceptual Framework.....	14
Limitations and Delimitations.....	18
Definitions.....	19
Assumptions.....	21
Significance of the Study .....	22
Research Design.....	23
Chapter Summary .....	24
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	26
An Overview of Occupational Stress.....	28
Teaching as a Stressful Occupation .....	30
From Student to Teacher: A Major Transformation .....	33
Transformational Learning Theory .....	35
The Acquisition of Roles .....	36
The Effect of Stress on Teacher Development .....	42
Contemporary Stress Management and Coping .....	44
Teacher Self-Efficacy Theory.....	46
Pre-Service Teacher Efficacy .....	50
Implications for Teacher Programs.....	52
Field Experience .....	52
Stress Management Programs.....	53
Implications for Teacher Programs	
Chapter Summary .....	57
3. METHODOLOGY .....	58
Introduction.....	58
Design .....	60
Reflexivity/Positionality .....	61
Timeline and Process .....	64
Site and Sample.....	64
Participants.....	69
Royal Blue .....	70

## TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED

Pastel Pink.....	70
Salmon Orange.....	71
Splendid Yellow.....	72
Emerald Green .....	72
Midnight Black .....	73
Baby Blue.....	73
Ruby Red .....	74
Data Collection .....	75
Step One: Focus Group.....	77
Step Two: Stress Management Workshop.....	78
The Workshop Design .....	83
Dinner .....	83
My Voice Writing Prompts.....	83
Pair/Share Discussion .....	84
Whole Group Sharing .....	84
Scenario Role-play.....	85
Self-Care Plan .....	85
Metaphor Activity.....	85
Step Three: Interview.....	86
Data Analysis .....	88
Trustworthiness.....	90
Chapter Summary .....	91
<b>4. RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>93</b>
Introduction.....	93
Order and Sequencing.....	93
Step One: Focus Group Results .....	96
The Interpersonal Dimension.....	99
Helping Others .....	99
Power Struggles .....	100
Respect.....	101
The Environmental Dimension .....	102
Curricular Content .....	102
Preparation and Planning .....	101
Resources .....	103
The Intrapersonal Dimension.....	104
Teacher Self-Efficacy .....	104
Vulnerabilities.....	104
Strengths .....	105
Coping Mechanisms.....	105

## TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED

Supports and Resources .....	107
Step Two: Development of a Stress Management Workshop .....	109
Step Three: Transformational Case Profiles .....	111
Midnight Black .....	112
Student Profile .....	112
Teacher Preparation Profile .....	113
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	114
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	115
Baby Blue.....	119
Student Profile .....	119
Teacher Preparation Profile .....	120
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	126
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	127
Ruby Red .....	128
Student Profile .....	128
Teacher Preparation Profile .....	128
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	130
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	131
Royal Blue .....	132
Student Profile .....	132
Teacher Preparation Profile .....	133
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	136
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	139
Pastel Pink.....	139
Student Profile .....	139
Teacher Preparation Profile .....	139
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	142
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	143
Salmon Orange.....	146
Student Profile .....	146
Teacher Preparation Profile .....	147
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	149
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	150
Splendid Yellow.....	151
Student Profile .....	151
Teacher Preparation Profile .....	152
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	154
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	155
Emerald Green .....	156
Student Profile .....	156

## TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED

Teacher Preparation Profile .....	157
Perceived Teacher Efficacy Outcomes .....	163
Perceived Supports and Resources .....	159
Step Three: Cross Case Analysis .....	160
Theme One: Trust and Affirmation .....	163
Theme Two: Connection.....	169
Theme Three: Purpose .....	174
Theme Four: Balance .....	178
Diverse Experiences.....	181
Curriculum .....	181
Results Summary .....	182
5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	183
Introduction.....	183
Research Questions .....	184
Transformation: Becoming to Being .....	185
Transformational Learning Theory.....	186
Synthesis of Findings .....	186
Transformation through Trust and Affirmation.....	187
Transformation through Connection.....	191
Transformation through Purpose .....	194
Transformation through Balance .....	197
Supports and Resources .....	199
Time .....	200
Pre-Practicum Experience.....	200
1 <sup>st</sup> Practicum Experience.....	201
2 <sup>nd</sup> Practicum Experience.....	202
Change over Time.....	202
Extended Time .....	204
Social Support.....	205
University/School/Student Networks.....	205
Learning Communities.....	206
Critical Reflection .....	208
Reflective Writing.....	208
Self-Care .....	209
Limitations .....	212
Implications for Practice.....	213
Implications at the Institutional Level .....	215
Pre-Service Teacher Preconceptions.....	216

TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED

Pre-Service Teacher Needs .....216  
    Relational Level .....217  
    Curricular Level .....219  
        Stress Management Workshop .....221  
    Individual Level .....223  
Recommendations for Future Research .....226  
Chapter Summary .....227

REFERENCES CITED.....230

APPENDICES .....240

    APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board Consent .....241  
    APPENDIX B: Practicum Concerns Focus Group.....251  
    APPENDIX C: Consent Form Focus Group Protocol.....253  
    APPENDIX D: Focus Group Protocol .....257  
    APPENDIX E: Stress Management Workshop Curriculum.....259  
    APPENDIX F: Interview Protocol.....284

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 Focus Group Participants .....	66
3.2 Research Timeline .....	76
3.3 Workshop Timeline .....	79
4.1 Participant Demographics.....	98
4. 2 Focus Group Results .....	107
4. 3 Self-Care Plans.....	180

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Conceptual Framework.....	17
2.1 Paradigm .....	28
2.2 Mezirow’s Transformation Process .....	36
4.1 Progression of Steps.....	95
4.2 Steps of the Process .....	96
4.3 Midnight’s Window Activity.....	113
4.4 Baby’s My Voice Writings Part 1.....	124
4.5 Baby’s My Voice Writings Part 2.....	125
4.6 Royal’s Disorienting Dilemma .....	135
4.7 Royal’s Individualized Self Care Plan.....	138
4.8 Pastel’s Writing Prompts .....	140
4.9 Pastel’s Individualized Self-Care Plan.....	145
4.10 Salmon’s Teaching Metaphor .....	150
4.11 Emerald’s Teaching Metaphor.....	160
4.12 Emerging Themes .....	163

LIST OF FIGURES – CONTINUED

5.1 Cross Case Analysis of Transformation .....	184
5.2 Expanded Conceptual Framework .....	211

## ABSTRACT

Deemed as a helping profession, teaching requires a combination of knowledge, skill and commitment to others. Teachers must assume varied roles in highly complex environments that fall under high accountability and demand, marking it as a stressful occupation. Particularly vulnerable are those learning to teach; they must be prepared for the realities of today's classroom, understanding the multiple roles that will be required of them. They experience a role-reversal as they transform from student to teacher. In order to negotiate this shift in perspective they must possess both an optimistic belief in their competence and ability to cope with the demands.

This phenomenological study examined the experiences of secondary education pre-service teachers as they transformed from student to teacher. It captured a sense of their general and personal preconceptions regarding stress and coping, their experiences of stress and coping as they learned to teach, and the supports and resources that they perceived as preparing them to enter the teaching profession, particularly with teacher self-efficacy. The development and implementation of a stress management workshop served a dual purpose to provide a stage to build teacher self-efficacy. Three theories provided a foundation for the conceptual framework: Karasek's (1979) Job Demand-Control-Support Theory, Mezirow's (1999) Transformational Learning Theory, and Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory. The participants were eight secondary English teacher candidates. Qualitative interviews and data collected from the workshop highlighted transformational profiles analyzed to capture the transformation.

The results indicated emerging themes of trust, connection, purpose and balance as important tenets to cultivate teacher self-efficacy. These tenets were promoted through earlier and extended time in field experiences, social support through networks and learning communities, critical reflective activities and self-care initiatives. The stress management workshop provided a mediating support. The significance of this study may inform those who prepare teaching professional about proactive ways to build teacher self-efficacy and promote wellness among teacher candidates.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The adage, “those who can, do—and those who can’t, teach” is a major misconception about the teaching profession. The notion undermines the overall importance of education and seriously underestimates the knowledge and skill required of the profession. Another widespread belief, “teachers are born—not made,” further minimizes the knowledge and skill acquired during learning to teach. This idea oversimplifies the process of becoming a teacher, suggesting it to be an ordinary profession that relies upon personality characteristics rather than skills and competencies that extend far beyond. Those who enter the profession know that teaching is, by no means, an ordinary profession—it presents many challenges and demands. Furthermore, becoming one who is capable of meeting these challenges is an extraordinary journey of learning, becoming and giving. Deemed as a “helping profession”—one that thrives on commitment and service to others, teaching embodies a combination of knowledge, skill, and transformation. Those learning to teach transform from student to teacher, acquiring new roles in highly complex environments that fall under high accountability and demand. Such a transformation requires not only an understanding of the complexities and demands, but also the perception of self as capable of meeting them—teacher self-efficacy.

Defined more specifically as a “teacher’s belief in one’s own abilities to organize and execute courses of action necessary to bring about desired results” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 203), an individual’s teacher self-efficacy is challenged by the complexity and demands of the profession that mark it as a highly stressful occupation—one that warrants specialized attention (Kyriacou, 2001). In fact, stress is regarded as “a major occupational hazard in teaching” (Saunders & Watkins, 1980, p. 3). Unmitigated stress may create barriers to perceptions of professional competence, especially for those who are forming their sense of such competencies as they learn to teach.

Generally speaking, occupational stress is a phenomenon that has been recognized and defined only within the last one hundred years (Quick, Quick, Nelson & Hurrell, 1997). Defined as the physical, psychological or emotional strains associated with the environmental demands of the workplace, occupational stress has become an important concept that has attracted considerable “empirical attention and public fascination” (Barling, Kelloway, & Frone, 2005, p. 3). The National Institute of Stress found that 80% of workers feel some level of stress on the job. In addition, nearly 50% of these workers believe they need help in learning how to manage stress, and 42% recognize that their coworkers need such help (1999). Such workplace problems are more strongly associated with health complaints than any other life stressor, even more so than financial problems. Furthermore, these problems left unresolved, increase the likelihood of lowered job satisfaction, absenteeism, diminished productivity and attrition. These issues, linked to occupational stress, cost the United States over 300 billion each year (American

Institute of Stress, 2002). The problem, however, is not limited to the United States. In 1992, a report issued by the United Nations called occupational stress “The 20th Century Disease,” later cited by the World Health Organization as a “World Wide Epidemic” (National Institute, 1999). Consequently, a large volume of research exists regarding occupational stress. However, research of certain occupations has created significant interest, and research on teacher stress has become a major area of international intrigue (Kyriacou, 2001).

Research studies since the 1980s confirm that stress among teachers is high (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982, Harris, Halpin & Halpin, 1985, Kyriacou, 1987, Gardner, 2010). A study conducted by Tuettemann and Punch (1992) found that stress in the teaching profession was twice as great when compared to the general population and four times as great when compared to the professional population (Gardner, 2010). Through a number of studies conducted world-wide, many of which have utilized self-report measures, approximately 20-33% of those in the teaching profession claim their job to be very stressful or extremely stressful ((Kyriacou, 2000). Furthermore, these statistics remain steady despite demographics such as age, gender, or position, indicating that the profession itself places demands perceived as stressful by those who are in it (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1977).

The demands upon teachers include environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal elements, all of which contribute to burnout and attrition (McCarthy et al., 2009, Swick & Hanley, 1980). According to a longitudinal qualitative study by He and Cooper (2011), classroom management, student motivation, and parental concerns are

among the highest of concerns for teachers. Although the study concluded that specific concerns became more manageable through time and experience, the results showed that teachers, no matter how experienced, continuously face new challenges. These factors extend beyond maintaining classroom order and student engagement; they also include meeting diverse learners' needs, managing time, implementing effective assessments, withstanding the pressures of accountability, learning new technology, mastering new subject matter, upholding open communication with students, colleagues, administrators as well as parents, not to mention falling under the criticisms of the public. These challenges identify key issues that teachers claim place high demands upon them, affecting their health and productivity—factors which may lead to burnout. Haberman (2004) estimated that the tenure of an urban teacher is on average only eleven years (Singer, 2010, Ingersoll, 2002). According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003), approximately 1000 teachers quit teaching each day, one-third of beginning teachers leave the field within the first three years and fifty percent of beginning teachers leave the profession with five years (Hanushek, 2007, Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, Johnson, 2004). Stress inherent within the occupation is a major contributor to these statistics and preparing new teachers to cope with the stressors is “vital in teacher retention” (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010, p. 212).

While these statistics represent the demands on practicing educators, those on the threshold of entering the profession—pre-service teachers in their initial experiences—are particularly vulnerable (Conroy, 2004). The fact that approximately half of all novice teachers leave the profession within five years may indicate that many of them enter the

profession ill-equipped to deal with the demands they face (Roulston, Legette, & Womack 2005; Fleener, 2001 in Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010). This fact should not be surprising as teaching is one of the few professions, if not the only profession, in which the novice is expected to assume as much or more responsibility than his or her experienced colleagues (Tait, 2008). When entering the first teaching assignment, 1<sup>st</sup> year teachers are often assigned relatively challenging students and classes (Hirschhorn, 2009). Furthermore, many novice teachers are expected to take on additional extracurricular duties such as coaching or advising students, and these additional responsibilities may compound the stressors they face and challenge their sense of competency (Bandura, 1997). When novice teachers view these demands as challenges, and they are successful in meeting them, it contributes to their sense of competency; however, overwhelming, threatening challenges or those viewed as failures may curtail it. Such perceptions are particularly malleable during the transformative process of becoming a teacher and may play a part in determining how much effort and persistence a novice teacher puts forth to remain in the profession (Bandura, 1997).

In addition to the challenges they face, beginning teachers may be confronted with a personal conflict—that is a “gap” between their initial perceptions about the nature of teaching and their actual experiences (He and Cooper, 2011). A marked contrast between what new teachers envisioned versus the actual circumstances they confront constitutes the “reality shock phenomenon,” contributing to 30% of new teachers leaving the profession (Friedman, 2000, p. 598).

Although the demands of teaching and the stress it creates constitutes “a complex problem” that has been researched and well- documented, relatively few studies have targeted the well-being of practicum and student teachers (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011, Malik and Ajmal, 2010). However, the stress experienced by teacher candidates has been documented enough worldwide to indicate it is not an isolated phenomenon (Murray-Harvey et al., 2005). For example, one study conducted on student teachers in the United Kingdom found that student teachers may also experience stress associated with the demands of teaching (Gardner, 2010). This study, conducted by Chaplain (2008), found that 38% of the student teachers in his study were distressed. Behavior management, workload, and a lack of support all contributed to a teaching experience that they described as overall, “extremely stressful” (Gardner, 2010). In a study conducted in Pakistan, a survey that measured the causes of student teacher stress was applied through a questionnaire, containing a list of 30 items. In this survey, 79% of student teachers claimed they felt moderately stressed, .08% were less stressed, while .04% were severely stressed (p. 19). The results showed the four most stressful factors as a heavy workload: 80% claimed it to be the most influential stressor. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were stressed about being observed and evaluated by a supervisor or teacher. In addition, 74% of the student teachers surveyed reported feeling inadequate with managing a classroom, and 57% identified writing detailed lesson plans as stressful (Malik & Ajmal, 2010, p. 20). Several other research studies have confirmed that pre-service teachers are particularly prone to stress due to a lack of experience, conflicting perceptions of expectation and reality, and a lack of coping strategies to deal with the

varied situations that may arise in teaching (Abebe & Shaughnessy, 1997; Beach & Pearson, 1998; Hopkins, Hoffman, & Moss, 1997).

Equipping pre-service teachers with coping strategies to deal with stressors they face while learning to teach, and also within the profession, may be achieved through creating opportunities for students to develop a strong sense of confidence and competency. Teacher efficacy, “the teacher’s belief in his or her abilities to organize and execute courses of action necessary to bring about desired results” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 203) has a direct effect on effort, persistence, and overall job satisfaction. Efficacious teachers believe they are better prepared to enter the profession and perceive teaching to be less difficult than those who are not as efficacious (Tschannen-Moran, 1998). They seek social support and utilize resources as needed. On the contrary, those who harbor negative self-beliefs may have difficulty asking for help (Day, 2008). These negative self-beliefs may lead to inefficacious thinking that causes distress, and more significantly may take hold to shape one’s perceived identity as a teacher.

Woolfolk & Hoy (1998) assert that some of the most powerful influences on a teacher’s development of efficacy are shaped during pre-service teaching. Once these beliefs are established they take hold and are resistant to change (Bandura, 1997; Tait, 2008). Therefore, those who enter the profession with a sense of teaching efficacy may show more optimism toward the profession and persistence to remain within it. Overall, such efficacy beliefs are related to lower levels of stress and to a commitment to teaching. In this vein, the development of teacher self-efficacy may not only aid in the

transformative process from student to teacher; it also provides an anecdote that intervenes between the inevitable stressors within the profession and the budding teacher. Such an intervention serves as a protective resource factor—a durable shield that may prevent disillusionment, depersonalization, and burnout (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). In fact, it may contribute as a source of resourcefulness rooted within one's own personal power.

In order to understand how teacher self-efficacy and coping strategies are shaped during the transformation of becoming a teacher, it is necessary to learn about the pre-service teacher experience from the pre-service teachers' perspective (Turner, Zanker, & Braine, 2010). In addition, Beltman, Mansfield, and Price (2011) note a lack of studies that highlight interventions to occupational stress in the teaching profession, particularly in the development of teacher efficacy and resilience. Additional studies, particularly longitudinal qualitative designs (Ross, 1994), are needed to parallel the existing studies which have been chronicled in various cultures around the world.

Given the challenges that beginning teachers face as they enter the profession, teacher preparation programs may better serve their students by helping them confront these conflicts, preparing them for the multiple roles and challenges they will face, and by arming them with coping skills rooted in teacher-efficacious perceptions—before they enter the profession.

### Statement of the Problem

Teacher candidates must enter the profession prepared for the realities of today's classroom. It is important they understand the multiple roles that will be required of them: subject knowledge, pedagogic knowledge and school knowledge (Banks et al 2004, p.144). In order to adapt to these roles, those learning to teach must also negotiate a shift in perspective—that is how they see themselves adapting to these new roles. Teacher candidates must possess an “optimistic belief” in their competence to deal with the daily challenges and “to engage in constructive ways of coping” (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008, p. 155).

According to Bowers, Eichner, & Sacks (1982), teacher education programs have traditionally emphasized content and methodology, with little attention focusing on the “psychological readiness” of teacher candidates—that is preparing them to cope with the “inevitable anxieties and stresses associated with the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of teaching” (Murray-Harvey, et al., 2000, p. 21). This sense of readiness is influenced by the individual's perceptions of their ability to control environmental demands placed upon them (Bandura, 1977, 1992). A teacher's efficacy, or sense of his or her perceived ability, is formed during practice teaching, when theory is first connected to practice.

It is during their initial experiences of practice teaching that students clarify their beliefs about their personal abilities to teach and begin to form an identity (Watson, Miller and Patty, 2010). These novices bring perceptions to the experience—views rooted in the complexity of prior experience: positive or negative experiences of learning,

personal views on what constitutes good teaching, personal beliefs about their own abilities and purposes for teaching (Turner, Zanker and Braine, 2010; Banks et al 2004, pg. 144). As they learn to balance content, pedagogy and an understanding of school, students must also learn to achieve a balance of self: skills to self-manage, effectively cope with stress of their new roles, and view themselves as competent. As Conway & Clark (2003) described, learning to teach is not only a journey outward, but also “a journey inward” as they assume these new roles (as cited in He & Cooper, 2011, p. 98). Furthermore, since these secondary education students are making a transformation from the role of student to the role of teacher, the gap that may exist between their initial expectations and the realities of teaching transforms as well (Mezirow, 1999).

This gap between expectation and reality often creates stress, a barrier to the development of teacher efficacy. In order to design a program that builds teacher efficacy, teacher educators must understand the factors that may diminish it. They must identify the stressors that their students face as they transform from student to teacher and those they may face in the workplace. Through this understanding, teacher education programs may proactively address these needs through deliberate measures of support and resources that enhance their transformation, develop teacher efficacy, and prepare them to cope with the demands of the profession.

Studies exploring the experiences of novices, particularly during the training period, are essential to understand how those entering the profession may learn to effectively cope with stressors inherent to the profession (Turner, Zanker, & Braine, 2010). Although several studies recommend that pre-service programs address the

development of personal attributes and skills to foster stress management and coping skills, few studies have examined the personal challenges of pre-service teachers as well as interventions that cultivate these personal attributes (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). An individual who enters the profession, possessing knowledge of the workplace stressors and coping mechanisms may be more prepared from the onset. More importantly, an individual who enters the profession *believing* him or herself equipped to cope with the stressors of the work environment may be more skilled, productive and enduring from the onset. Teacher education programs designed to target these proficiencies may provide an entirely innovative skillset to fully prepare the teacher candidate.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to hear the voices of pre-service teachers as they experienced the phenomenon of transformation from student to teacher. It aimed to identify their general and personal perceptions, to reveal their stressors and coping strategies, and to capture the richness of their transformation as they embraced needed supports and resources. The development and implementation of a stress management workshop served a dual purpose by providing a platform for data collection and a support for building coping skills and teacher self-efficacy.

Generally speaking, as organizations pursue proactive approaches to improve the coping skills of their workforces, studies are needed to understand how “preventative” measures implemented during training of these workforces might improve coping skills

further (Woodward, 2006). Few research studies exist on the development of such programs (Harris, 2011), and according to Newsome and colleagues (2006), few training programs provide education on the potential harmful effects of job stress (Newsome, Waldo & Gruszka, 2011). Research is needed to support a framework for stress management education and coping strategies, particularly if it creates awareness, develops skills, and fosters self-assurance among workers as they prepare to enter their professions. This is particularly true in teacher education.

To understand how teachers develop teacher self-efficacy as they negotiate stress and coping during this transformation, I examined the ways in which the pre-service teachers described their coping mechanisms as they confronted the stressors they encountered in the teaching environment. For the purposes of this study, teacher stress was defined as “a condition of negative effects resulting from aspects of the teacher’s job which are perceived by the teacher as a threat to his or her psychological or physical well-being” (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1977, p. 299).

Coping, defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), is the process of “changing behaviors or cognitive perceptions, or both, to control, lessen, or endure external conditions, internal conditions, or both, which are viewed by the individual” (Baloglu, 2008, p. 907). It may also be expressed as “an adaptive response to a specific stressor” (Gustems- Carnicer and Calderon, 2012, p. 1128). According to Lazarus, an individual’s cognitive appraisal and the degree of threat determines the level of stress within any situation. Since stress is a highly subjective matter, it may be nearly impossible to ascertain what aspects of a work environment pose threatening or stressful situations to

particular individuals, unless of course, the individuals first identify them, willingly voice them, and proactively address them through measures of coping.

This study utilized steps in which individuals who were learning to teach did just that: described their perceptions of transformation as they confronted stressors and developed coping mechanisms through teacher efficacy. During the first step, a focus group interview captured the general and personal preconceptions pre-service practicum teacher candidates held about stress and coping prior to serving their practice teaching experiences. Information from this interview served as the foundation for a series of stress management sessions implemented during the participants' practicum experience. These sessions addressed the nature of stress: the causes and effects. Most significantly, the sessions strived to create an awareness through exposing dilemmas they faced during their practical experience. The sessions intended to offer a measure of support to coincide with the participants' initial practicum experience.

Finally, this study aimed to ascertain pre-service teacher perceptions of the supports and resources that served them as they made this transformation—those that cultivated teacher efficacy and equipped them to cope with the demands of the profession.

### Research Questions

This investigation consists of an overarching research question (main focus question) and four sub-focus questions:

MFQ: How do secondary pre-service teachers describe their experience of the transformation from student to teacher and perceive themselves as ready to cope with the

environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors of teaching as they complete the program?

SFQ1: What are the general preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ2: What are the personal preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ3: What are the stressors that secondary pre-service teachers experience during their practicum teaching experiences and the coping strategies they utilize to address them?

SFQ4: What supports and resources do secondary preservice teachers perceive as instrumental to building strong teacher self- efficacy beliefs?

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrated below (see Figure 1.1) highlights the transformative process of learning to teach as it pertains to the occupational stress paradigm. The center of the framework features the work demand-control-support diagram, representing the interaction between the demands of the work environment and the individual. This concept is derived from the Job-Control Theory proposed by Karasek in 1979, illustrating a worker's need to balance the environmental demands, often external factors, within an internal framework of control. An individual's sense of control may mitigate the perceived threat, reducing the job strain and consequential stress that often ensues. This balance may be generated through a number of supports, including the

work organization, to lessen the demands while strengthening the individual's sense of control.

Applied to the teaching profession, the demands are categorized as intrapersonal, interpersonal and environmental (Swick and Hanley, 1980). Though steps may be taken to minimize the demands, they are an inevitable part of the occupation. When an individual gains knowledge and first-hand experience recognizing the demands as potential stressors, he or she may also gain a sense of control by dealing with them effectively and successfully, mitigating them before they become actual stressors. Through such encounters, an individual not only gains a sense of control (both internal and external), but also develops teacher self-efficacy. The various components of teacher efficacy consist of instructional, interpersonal, and classroom management domains that may be further contextualized under two social systems: the classroom and the school (Friedman & Kass, 2002). Finally, the dynamic that exists between the control and the demand elements may be supported in various ways. In learning to teach, it may best be supported through the teacher education program. Mastery experiences to promote efficacy-building activities and cultivate coping strategies may help to ensure the transformation from student to teacher.

In order to understand the complexity of this process, qualitative methods were used to understand the dynamic between the demands, the control and the supports within this paradigm. Through a phenomenological approach, new understandings emerged as I followed a process describing "what" the participants experienced and "how" they experienced it, finding the common themes, and reducing the individual experiences to

the essence of universal experience (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Following the participants over a period of two school semesters, I utilized data collected over time to understand the phenomenon. First, a focus group identified the general and personal preconceptions the pre-service teachers held prior to their initial practicum experiences. These results informed the agenda for a stress management workshop to provide support throughout their practical experience—that which gleaned journals reflecting upon their experiences. Finally, the culminating piece, the one-on-one interview, provided an in-depth description, highlighting the emerging themes that lead to an understanding of the phenomenon: transformation from student to teacher. The goal was to capture the perspective of the pre-service teachers themselves—their perceptions of how they were transformed or shaped through these experiences, thus, moving from student to teacher.

Figure 1.1 below provides an overview of the foundation for this study. Later in chapter five, the expanded conceptual framework illustrates the emerging themes—those that identify mediating factors and the conditions under which these factors provide supports and resources to set the stage for teacher self-efficacy and to cultivate the transformation from student to teacher.

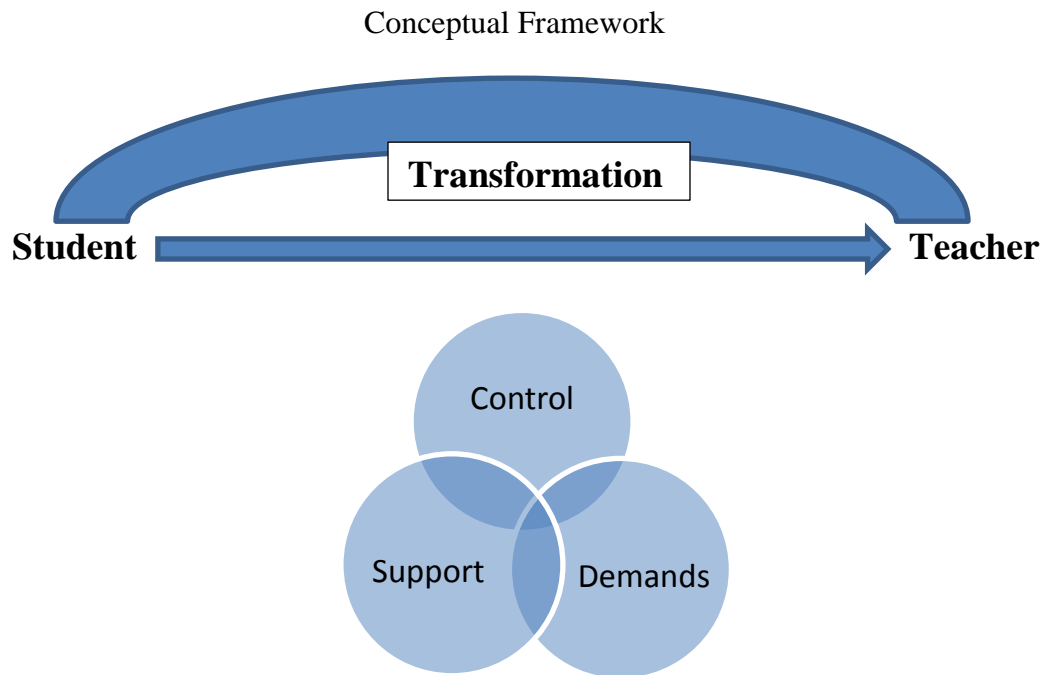


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

How do secondary pre-service teachers describe their experience of the transformation from student to teacher and perceive themselves as ready to cope with the environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors of teaching as they complete the program?

The phenomenon of the transformation from student to teacher may be understood through the interplay between the participants' perceptions of occupational demands, control or coping measures, and the supports that mediate them. Qualitative measures were used to uncover these elements, to make thematic connections, and to understand the essence of the phenomenon.

### Limitations and Delimitations

Several limitations should be noted with this study. One limitation may be the idea that stress and coping are generally personal matters and individuals may be reluctant to share their stressful experiences and the ways in which they cope with them. The data was collected through measures of self-report (focus groups, written/artistic reflection, and individual interviews); however, the possibility existed that the participants would guard their “personal domain” and only reported that with which they were comfortable revealing. In addition, since I was a cooperating teacher at the high school in which some of the sample completed their field placements and related their stressful encounters and their coping capabilities, the participants may have felt some implicit pressure to respond in a more positive manner regarding the subject matter. On a similar note, I was well aware of any bias that I personally held or conveyed to the participants to affect the ways in which they would communicate about the stressors they experienced or the ways in which they coped. Finally, another limitation may have been that the sample, although purposive, was established through convenience, and this may have limited transferability.

The study did not take into account the perspectives of other individuals who may have been involved in the teaching or learning process. This group of individuals may have included supervising teachers, cooperating teachers, administrators, or students. In addition, the study did not examine the elements of the educational program itself. The stress management curriculum was adopted for the sole purpose of this study—first as a result based on the focus group—and also as an intervention to stress management.

Definitions

1. Cognitive appraisal is an increased awareness of metacognition and thought patterns within an individual (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).
2. Coping is “the process of “changing behaviors or cognitive perceptions, or both, to control, lessen, or endure external conditions, internal conditions, or both, which are viewed by the individual” (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Baloglu, 2008, p. 907).
3. Eustress is defined as stress that brings about a positive result, such as personal strengths.
4. Locus of Control is a concept used to describe an individual’s internal mechanisms to deal with a particular situation that occurs in the external environment (Baloglu, 2008).
5. Occupational Stress is “the physical, psychological or emotional strains associated with the environmental demands of the workplace” (Sauter et al., 1999).
6. Practicum Teaching is the first pre-service teaching experience in which teacher candidates observe, assist the cooperating teacher, tutor, co-teach, plan lessons, and teach a part or entire class (Arnett and Freeman, 2008). The practicum student attends the classroom according to his or her set schedule, usually two or three times a week, for a period of approximately eight to ten weeks and a total of approximately 60 hours.
7. Resilience is “a mode of interacting with events in the environment that is activated and nurtured in times of stress” (Tait, 2008, p. 59).

8. Role Ambiguity is the lack of specificity and predictability concerning an employee's job or role functions and responsibilities (Beehr, 1976).
9. Role Conflict is defined as 'incompatible demands concerning work issues' (Beehr & Glazer, 2005, p.13).
10. Role Overload is "caused by too much work, time pressures and deadlines" (Beehr & Glazer, 2005, p.13).
11. Self-Efficacy is "the personal beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform actions at a designated level" (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1993, 1997).
12. Strain is "the individual's responses to stressors stimuli that deems harmful to them" (Beehr, 2000).
13. Stress is "a condition of negative effects resulting from aspects of the teacher's job which are perceived by the teacher as a threat to his or her psychological or physical well-being (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1977, p. 299).
14. Stress Management Intervention (SMI) is defined as "an activity or program initiated by an organization to reduce the presence of work relate stress or assist individuals in minimizing negative outcomes" (Skaalvik, 2007).
15. Stressors are "stress producing events or conditions" (Beehr, 2000).
16. Student Teaching is the second practicum experience during which the teacher candidate serves under a cooperating teacher, gradually assuming full responsibility for the teacher's responsibilities.

17. Teacher Self-Efficacy is the “teacher’s belief in their abilities to organize and execute courses of action necessary to bring about desired results” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 203).
18. Teacher Stress is “the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher” (Kyriacou, 2001, p. 28).
19. Transformative Learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating and self-reflective (Mezirow, 1997).

#### Assumptions

It was assumed that the secondary education program provided a strong theoretical foundation under which teachers were prepared to enter field placement assignments, and that the theoretical foundation in the education program shaped their initial perceptions. In addition, this study was established under the assumption that the pre-service teachers had little to no experience teaching in the secondary classroom prior to the field placement experience, although experiences within school settings may greatly vary among participants. Finally, this study did not take into account an individual’s personality characteristics, general self-efficacy, or a general predisposition for stress or anxiety. Each participant brought his or her own experiences to the context of learning to teach; therefore, the notion of stress and coping was entirely subjective, in effect.

### Significance of the Study

In understanding the phenomenon of occupational stress, Lazarus (2003) contended that it is crucial for research to capture a sense of work through everyday experiences (Dewe and Cooper, 2012). The reality of the teaching profession often includes numerous demands within the school setting as well as limited time and resources. Often sacrificing his or her personal needs for the sake of student learning, a teacher must possess coping skills in order to avoid stress and burnout. While stress is considered a normal part of the process in becoming a teacher, it is important to understand how stress and coping unfolds as one learns to teach under the pre-service education program (Brackenreed and Barnett, 2006). While research surrounding the student teacher experience is “somewhat limited,” (Rogers, 2011), of those that do exist, few have addressed the view of the students themselves (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000).

Through this study, I sought to understand the transformative process of becoming a teacher and whether a holistic approach designed to develop teacher self-efficacy and address stress management may help secondary education programs prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching. In order to capture a sense of the phenomenon of the transformation, it first aimed to understand the general and personal preconceptions of secondary pre-service teachers at a major university in the northwest. It attempted to describe their personal experiences in their initial field placement assignments, particularly the varied stressors they anticipated and encountered, as well as the ways they may have coped. I was particularly interested in finding ways to improve the coping skills that individuals may use to combat the natural stressors experienced on a

day-to-day basis in the secondary classroom. The results of this study are important because they may inform those invested in preparing teaching professionals about proactive ways to prevent occupational stress from affecting the lives of individuals, and consequently the effectiveness of the educational system and the service provided to students and their learning. Attention to developing the teacher efficacy of those entering the profession may ensure that more practicing teachers will enter the profession well prepared and will remain within the profession to become excellent teachers.

### Research Design

Conducted according to a phenomenological design, this study utilized several methods of collection such as focus groups, journals, and personal interviews to triangulate the data and increase the trustworthiness of the results (Creswell, 2013). Collected within time extending over two semesters within the school year, each piece of data was carefully analyzed, transcribed, coded, and grouped according to themes that emerged throughout the process (Moustakas, 1994). In addition, member checking served as an additional measure of confirm ability. The results of the study, reported so that those involved in teacher education programs may reflect upon their own roles, hoped to serve the needs of those entering the profession. Chapter three describes the methodology in more detail.

### Chapter Summary

A highly subjective, yet complex issue, job stress affects most individuals in any given work environment and occupation. This research investigation focused upon occupational stress as it affects the teaching profession, in particular, secondary teacher candidates who are preparing for the profession. Teaching is a “helping profession” defined by high accountability and expectation; it depends upon building a solid sense of self-knowing, strong interpersonal connections, and a capacity to embrace multiple roles and skills within the school environment. Therefore, the profession warrants specialized attention on how to maximize effective preparation for those entering the profession. Teacher candidates must possess knowledge about their realities of the profession, and develop strategies in order to manage the stressors they will face in their initial experiences and throughout the profession. In addition to gaining knowledge of content, pedagogy, and the school environment, those learning to teach may be further prepared by having early authentic experiences that develop teacher-efficacy (Freeman, 2009). Teacher qualities and skills find their foundation in the teacher education program and take shape upon the initial teaching experience.

It is plausible that education has rendered significant attention regarding occupational stress because education provides a foundation for all other occupations. It is through education that individuals not only learn to do the technical aspects of their jobs, but also develop a sense of competency and confidence required of them to thrive within their occupation. It is through education that individuals may not only learn about the nature of stress, the causes, and the effects, but also about themselves. Through a

holistic approach to education, one may not only learn about the work environment and interpersonal connections with others, but also how to develop life-long skills for coping and self-management. Perhaps learning to cope with stress is simply a matter of education.

## CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATUREIntroduction

Rooted in the complexities of everyday life, stress is a concept that affects each individual in different ways. In the workplace, a combination of environmental demands and an individual's response to them constitutes a stressful event. The outcome of stress manifests itself through an individual's reaction to it—that is, the way in which he or she manages or copes with the stressor. It is the development and wellbeing of the individual in which this study takes a particular special interest.

The theoretical framework of this study draws from three bodies of work: job-control theory, transformational learning theory, and teacher self-efficacy theory. A review of the literature examines the effect of stress on teacher development and the dimension of teacher self-efficacy as a personal coping resource. Chapter Two will first provide a general overview of stress and its presence in the teaching profession, highlighting the paradigm of stress itself, the ways it affects individuals and the mitigating strategies employed through organizational interventions. Central to this paradigm is Karasek's Job-Control Theory (1979) that illustrates a relationship between the job demands, an individual's sense of control, and the support provided to balance them. Applied to the learning to teach model, the review explores origins of teacher stress and the particular needs of those endeavoring to become teachers. Transformational learning theory provides a basis for understanding the needs of these particular

individuals as they assume new roles, and shape the individual's perception of himself or herself within these roles—in this case, moving from student to teacher. (Mezirow, 1999). The transformation from student to teacher involves the acquisition of new roles, and the ability to deal with the stressors inherent in the teaching profession. The individual's perception of self lies at the heart of this transformation—the sense of personal power or efficacy in order to teach.

While teacher preparation programs focus curriculum on content and pedagogy, they traditionally do not provide stress education curriculum that may equip teachers with coping strategies (Harris, 2011). Such a curriculum draws attention to self: developing the inner authority to teach—a strong sense of personal power and resourcefulness through teacher self-efficacy, purpose and identity. This overview outlines the process of learning to teach and provides insight for teacher education programs to enhance practicum experience through the resources that may foster such development. The framework provides a rationale for implementing supports that promote coping skills and prepare individuals for the teaching profession.

The occupational stress paradigm illustrated below provides a general overview of the interplay between job demands, an individual's perceived control, and the support systems that may help to balance them. I will utilize this paradigm to display the demands of the teaching profession, the sense of control a pre-service teacher may gain through developing teacher self-efficacy, and the supports and resources utilized during the transformational learning process. Although occupational stress itself is not the intended

central focus of my study, understanding its precepts and underlying dynamics are essential to the conceptual framework involving transformation from student to teacher.

The following figure provides a foundation for the conceptual framework:

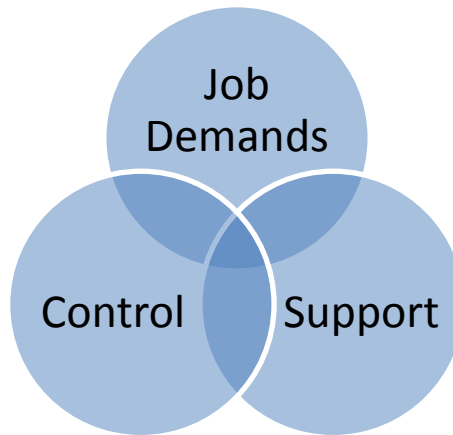


Figure 2.1: Occupational Stress Paradigm

### An Overview of Occupational Stress

The work of Hans Selye (1936) provided a foundation for theory and research on the concept of occupational stress. He recognized stressors as bio-psychosocial variables that intervene between workplace factors and individual health (Lennart, 2000).

Although not considered inherently negative or positive, occupational stress potentially causes “harmful, physical, and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker” (Sauter, et al., 1999). The individual worker’s response to the stressor produces the effect of job strain (Beehr, 2000). Therefore, the concept of occupational stress must be understood as an

interaction between workplace characteristics and the individual worker's appraisal—that is, his or her judgment about the degree of threat that the stressor presents as well as the evaluation of potential coping resources (Hansen and Sullivan, 2003). The variable conditions within any work environment, as well as the dispositions, vulnerabilities, tolerances, and skills of individual workers (demands versus response), reveal a complexity that is difficult, if not impossible, to be quantifiably measured. Some studies have attempted to gain an understanding of the nature of the workplace in general and the stressors inherent within various occupations. Most recent research, however, has focused on the ways in which individuals typically respond to the stressors produced in the workplace (Cooper, 2000).

Today's workplaces are high demand environments. Workplace stressors may arise from a multitude of factors: however, the most prevalent and widely researched environmental demand is task-related roles (Beehr & Glazer, 2005). The most prevalent are role conflict, ambiguity, and role overload. Role conflict occurs as the demands presented are "incompatible" to some degree. For example, meeting personal commitments that interfere with work would fall in this category. Role overload occurs when demands are excessive or overwhelming—extreme deadlines may provide an example. Finally, role ambiguity is "a lack of clarity about duties, objectives, and responsibilities needed to fulfill one's role" (Beehr & Glazer, 2005, p. 13). This creates a kind of uncertainty that leads to job strain.

Strategies such as social support and job control may address stress associated with task-related roles. Showing care, concern, and understanding for others in the

workplace may diminish stress that occurs because of the expectations workers put upon one another in the workplace. Workers are often viewed as human assets that thrive upon growth, challenge, and creativity; therefore, the undertaking for workplace organizations is to provide a dimension of support by adopting policies that will bring about positive effects for individuals rather than negative effects. As a result, many organizations have taken initiatives to develop effective coping mechanisms within their individual workers (Beehr & Glazer, 2005, p. 18). However, it is impossible to examine the individual without first understanding the context or the nature of the work environment. Job stress, ultimately understood through the interaction of work demands, individual job control and social support, constitutes one dimension of a complex construct.

#### Teaching as a Stressful Occupation

Kyriacou (2001) defined teacher stress as “the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher (p.28). First categorized according to interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental demands by Swick and Hanley (1980), researchers later further conceptualized it according to personal and contextual factors (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). Regardless of its origin, the overall impact of teacher stress on the quality and condition of education is a critical issue (Farber, 1984).

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1977) conducted the earliest studies on stress within the profession, as early as 1972, and developed models of teacher stress based on three factors: the demands of the profession, the difficulty of meeting demands, and the perception of threat or degree of control. Since that time, various studies conducted

worldwide have examined the origins of stress within the teaching profession (Dunham, 1984; Farber, 1984, Galloway, et al; Pratt, 1978, Moracco, Danford, & D'Arienzo, Schwab, 1983, and Smilansky, 1984), largely through self-report surveys in which teachers indicated factors that most affect them over an extended period of time (Farber, 2000). While cultural differences and school environments may account for inconsistencies, Farber asserts throughout his work that researchers have gleaned substantial knowledge about the salient stressors that affect teachers and ultimately lead to burnout. Defined as "the result of unmediated stress," burnout may be the consequence of a myriad of factors, found to include working relationships, working conditions, misbehavior, salary, status, and role conflict (Farber, 1984, p. 325). These issues constitute risk factors that must be mediated with protective influences to avoid burnout (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011).

Contextual challenges are an inherent part of the day-to-day, environmental demands within teaching. For example, the individual school or classroom context often defines specific challenges that prove stressful, such as difficult schools, courses, or classes, relationships with students' parents, and relationships with colleagues. Behavior management is cited as the most frequent challenge of the school or the classroom context (Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011). In a 2007 study, Geving found ten dimensions of student behavior, especially for secondary level teachers, as an increasing source of stress (Fisher, 2011). These dimensions included hostility, inattentiveness, apathy, and destructive behaviors.

Also embedded within the contextual construct are professional work challenges that may include a heavy workload— several studies in which teachers have cited the “paperwork overload” to be the most significant cause of burnout (Farber, 1984). Other leading causes of distress report ineffective administrative support and externally imposed regulations. These regulations, imposed through policy reform may inflict a powerful stressor upon teachers by the undervaluation of the profession itself. Work involving children— that which is “primarily performed by women,” may be the “underlying sociopolitical factor emasculating the profession” (Farber, 2000, p. 676). As a result, many contend teaching to be grossly demoralized, yet held to a high standard of accountability. Grant (2007) asserts characteristics of effectiveness as a major factor leading to stress and burnout, while Sorenson (1999) relates it to increase measures of accountability (Fisher, 2011). Despite the contextual challenges that vary from school to school, protective supports may provide a buffer of relief. This may include external controls, such as school policy and administrative support, peer and colleague support and family support. Protective supports may also help teachers overcome the personal challenges they face.

Such personal challenges for teachers may include negative self-belief, a reluctance to seek social support, and trouble negotiating conflicts between personal beliefs and practices. Protective factors to work against these challenges might comprise of developing strong personal attributes: coping skills and teacher self-efficacy. Such internal mechanisms may also include a strong intrinsic motivation for teaching and

provide strong intrinsic control found to correlate with the ability to cope with stress more effectively (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011).

Preparation for the contextual and personal challenges associated with teaching may improve job satisfaction. One study, conducted by Farber in 1984, examined teachers' overall satisfaction with their career choice and found that over 86% of teachers believe "they were not adequately prepared for the stressors of teaching" (p. 327). While the stressors affecting those in the profession likely change as a career develops, these results indicated the link between teacher training, stress, and preparation for the profession. Farber's study indicates that teachers in the profession clearly believe that preparation for stress is an essential part of learning to teach.

#### From Student to Teacher: A Major Transformation

While many studies have examined stress in the teaching profession, few studies have focused on stress as it affects pre-service teachers. However, these few studies have consistently identified their specific needs by categorizing "tensions" typically experienced in practicum or in student teaching experience. Again, these "tensions" arise from environmental and interpersonal dimensions, but perhaps place a greater emphasis on the intrapersonal dimension as one "learning to teach" makes a dramatic transformation from student to teacher, negotiating his or her new roles.

Britzman (2003) describes that learning to teach is a complex, skilled process—"a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny and what one is doing and who one can become" (p. 31). Such transformation, captured within the work of Mezirow's transformational learning theory, constitutes "the reframing of perspective" (1999). It is

through the reframing of habits of mind and point of view that the learner moves from student to teacher—transformed through critical reflection and the processes of learning. According to Mezirow’s transformational learning theory, the learner becomes autonomous, critically reflective of his or her own judgments, and capable of engaging effectively in discourse to validate these judgments (Snyder, 2012).

The notion that individuals begin this transformation as they “learn to teach by teaching” dates back as far as 1839, written by the principal of the first American school (Watson, Miller and Patty, 2010, p. 798). While the main experience has traditionally been rooted in the culminating experience of the secondary program, student teaching, efforts to expand this practical experience began in 1948 when the American Association of Teachers Colleges’ Flowers Report suggested that education programs expand opportunities for “laboratory experiences” to provide for observation and teaching (Watson, Miller, Patty, 2010, p. 799). Presently, most states require practicum experiences for prospective teachers enrolled in teacher education programs. During this experience, teacher candidates first familiarize themselves to the nature of teaching in schools, helping them to understand the holistic realm of the profession, and to determine their own purposes for pursuing a place within it. The literature supports the model, stating that these requirements provide authentic experiences for prospective teachers in K-12 settings (Snyder, 2012). Here teacher candidates first experience the to the day- to-day demands of teaching; teacher candidates themselves claim these experiences to be an integral part of their education toward becoming teachers (Arnett and Freeburg, 2008). Although many researchers have confirmed pre-service teaching to be the most valuable

experience in learning to teach, Morton, Vesko, Williams and Awender (1997) cite it as considered to be the most stressful (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000).

### Transformational Learning Theory

Mezirow's construct for the transformational model is guided by several phases of experiential learning (Snyder, 2012). First, the learner experiences a disorienting dilemma, an experience that may shatter the perceptions and orient the learner as to the realities of teaching. Critical reflection allows for self-examination—a reconciliation of emotional responses, such as fear, anger or shame. The learner then critically assesses his or her assumptions, those preconceived ideas about the situation. Opportunities for discourse through social support with peers, university faculty, cooperating teachers and mentors, as well as family members may help the learners recognize shared misconceptions and challenges. The learner then identifies options for new roles, relationships, or action and pursues a plan of action by acquiring new knowledge and skills. Finally, the learner may implement the plan, assume new roles, and build confidence and competence through them. Through the acquisition of roles, an individual transforms from the student role, a deeply embedded role, to the richly complex teacher role. With this comes a new social role cultivated by internal thinking and action as well as external expectations.

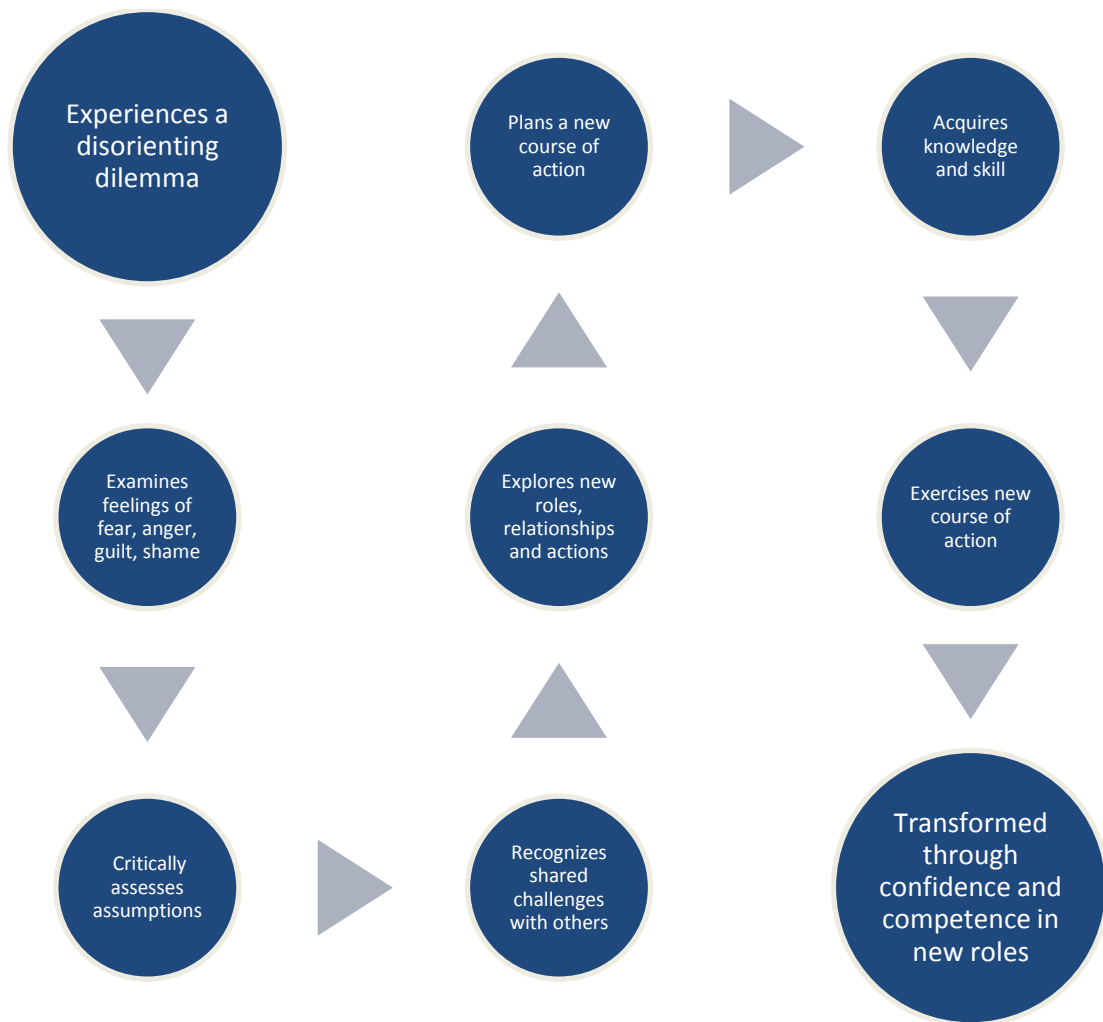


Figure 2.2 Mezirow's Transformation Process (Snyder, 2012).

### The Acquisition of Roles

Central to Mezirow's description of transformation is the acquisition of new roles—those experience that alter the student biography. Thornton and Nardi (1975) identified four particular stages associated with the acquisition of roles (Kraus, 2012) that further highlight the transformational process of becoming a teacher. They first describe

anticipatory socialization, during which an individual adopts a core set of values to identify with this group and the anticipated transition into the group. This stage occurs before the individual has received formal training; therefore, these core values are largely associated with informal experiences—for the teacher candidate, these experiences are likely fostered through role models such as inspirational former teachers and favorable learning experiences. These experiences may shape a highly generalized concept of teaching—thus, a misconception about the realities of the school environment or the profession itself.

The second stage and third stage each involve the learning of role expectations—in first a formal and then an informal way. Formal role expectations are learned from a distance—that is, from the inside (Kraus, 2012). Applied to the learning to teach model, this stage may occur during an individual’s theoretical training—that is, during the time in which students are learning “about” education: content and delivery, as well as generalities about students and the school environment itself. Again, this stage does not render specific opportunities for personal reflection or connection to the experiences or roles of teaching. It is in Thornton and Nardi’s third stage, the learning of informal role expectations that these personal connections and reflections become pertinent. During the initial opportunities for informal learning, discrepancies may first be confronted—gaps that exist between the perceptions and the realities of the experience become apparent to the individual and a true transition toward change may begin.

Thornton and Nardi highlight the final stage as the development of personal role expectation, during which time an individual develops personal strategies in order to

express his or her own expectations and to utilize talents, skills and strengths. The student teaching experience typically occurs as the final stage of the learning to teach model, and is the logical time during which these personal role expectations may be nurtured. Although it seems as though these stages naturally occur for the student who transitions from student to teacher role, awareness of these processes may create a higher probability that they will occur for each and every teacher candidate—the process is planted as a deliberate and intentional aspect of learning to teach. Awareness such as this is fostered through structured support, opportunities and resources offered during a teacher's practical experience.

In order to help pre-service teachers transform from the perspectives of student to teacher, Stokking, Leenders, Jong & Tartwijk (2003) noted that pre-service training must be approached in a multi-level manner. Consideration must occur at the institutional, curricular, relational, and individual level in order to ensure that pre-service teachers effectively link theory to practice. Establishing strong community partnerships between university and school provide a strong support system for pre-service teachers and build a foundation for the relational level. The curricular level may address the structure of curricular content and resources as well as the time of the transition period. Finally, at the individual level, the model emphasizes the significance of critical reflection (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010). Despite the varied levels, however, Walkington (2005) asserts that the ultimate responsibility of preparing teachers lies within the university program. The implementation of the multilevel approach requires that education programs

understand the concerns and needs of their learners and proactively address them. It is an essential part of preparation for entering the stressful occupation of teaching.

In her work with pre-service teachers, Frances Fuller (1969) developed a three phase model known as the stages of concern (Sandholtz, 2011). Her model describes learning to teach as a journey through three distinct stages or concerns: self, task, and impact (Ballard & McBride, 2010). The theory first contends that a pre-service teacher is primarily concerned with self, establishing a locus of control and negotiating his or her identity and roles before moving on to other concerns. According to the theory, once these issues with self are resolved, the pre-service teacher may then give concern to task related roles, that is, developing lesson plans, delivering instruction, and assessing student work. The third concern ultimately involves the impact of effectiveness: developing strong interpersonal connections and concerns for the needs of individual students (Smith, 2000). This third level marks the necessary component to teaching and learning. Such a model suggests that pre-service teachers must have a strong concept of competency through which a professional self-identity emerges—in essence, to see himself or herself as a teacher in order to assume contextual and personal roles of the profession.

However, pre-service teacher may not readily recognize the need to cultivate this self-concept. Instead, they may focus more on interpersonal factors such as classroom management and student motivation, as they are among the highest of concerns for many pre-service teachers. In a pilot study I conducted with practicum students in the spring of 2014, the participants revealed classroom management to be their greatest concern. They

believed that what they really needed was more direction and instruction in classroom management—that is, a specific course devoted to helping secondary teachers with classroom management strategies as a necessary part of their teacher education requirement. The pre-service teachers in this study also found it difficult to motivate students. They cited it difficult to relate to students they quoted to be “not like me.” These findings parallel other studies: Morris and Morris (1980) found that disciplining and motivating students to be the most stressful for pre-service teachers. Similarly, Bowers, Either & Sacks (1983) condensed sources of stress under two categories: classroom discipline and relationships, both of which are interpersonal factors. Relating to others lies at the heart of a helping profession, and the ability to establish strong relationships is a known key element of teaching and learning. However, interpersonal connections often hinge upon the intrapersonal dimension—that is the concept of self.

Beach and Pearson (1998) recognized intrapersonal dimensions as sources of stress; first, a conflict between that expected to occur and what actually occurs. This conflict may suggest that many pre-service teachers enter schools with a simplistic notion about teaching, possessing a naïve set of assumptions about the environment: the students, the curriculum, and the administration. They may experience a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000) in which they must reevaluate their assumptions about schools, the policies that govern them, the students that learn in them, and the individuals that oversee them. In addition, they may even need to confront misconceptions about themselves and negotiate their own self-concept or role as a teacher. In essence, they must transform preconceived notions of how school factors interact to affect student

learning based on authentic practicum or practice teaching experiences. This reassessment occurs under a multitude of interacting contextual factors that affect organizing the classroom, planning lessons, and delivering instruction.

Other sources of disequilibrium for pre-service teachers is the conflict between their personal beliefs about teaching and learning versus those exposed by the teacher education program compromising their success in practicum and student teaching experiences (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010). When this situation occurs, the student continues to function as a student, yet must assume the role of the teacher. Richardson and Briggs (1983) assert that this role is difficult for pre-service teachers because “they are neither a student nor a teacher, but a combination of both” (as cited in Smith, 2000, p. 639). This creates an unbalanced hierarchy of power (student to teacher) that may complicate or confuse the roles or task of the student teacher. In order to alleviate some of these challenges, pre-service teachers must possess knowledge and skill to mitigate the effects of interpersonal and intrapersonal stressors caused by dissonance between their belief systems and those of the teacher education program. They must also manage a host of various factors, such as matching pedagogy to learning outcomes, classroom management and other classroom organization issues that exist under the contextual “umbrella” of a school environment. A key component of balancing the application of knowledge and skill within the school environment is first knowing self—assuming the roles, relationships and responsibilities of teaching (Murray-Harvey, et al., 2000).

### The Effect of Stress on Teacher Development

The experience of stress may have both positive and negative effects throughout a teacher's development. Through the transformational learning process, the pre-service teacher is exposed to many experiences that shape a set of beliefs about his or her competencies to assume roles, relationships and responsibilities of teaching. Though these first-time occurrences present themselves as challenging, potentially stressful events, they may have a positive effect rather than a negative effect. Stress itself is not inherently good or bad—it depends on one's perception of it and the degree of threat it presents. A teacher candidate who perceives his or her performance as successful may experience eustress—a dimension of stress that yields a positive effect. This occurs when the novice faces a challenge and overcomes the difficulty, thus establishing a sense of confidence and competence (Snyder, 2012). Through a pattern of mastery experiences over challenging events, a pre-service teacher will develop a strong sense of capability to assume the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of teaching (Murray-Harvey, et al., 2000) and to recover from setbacks through resilience. Defined as “a mode of interacting with events in the environment that is activated and nurtured in times of stress” (Tait, 2008, p. 59), resilience allows an individual to mitigate the strains of job stress through taking a problem-solving approach to overcome it. Through this approach, the concept of stress emerges as a positive force, because the individual is strengthened through facing and overcoming the experiences of adversity. Several studies on teacher resilience report it as the result of “multiple individual and contextual factors working together in complex, dynamic ways” (Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011, p. 4). Most importantly,

rather than a personality characteristic, resilience is considered a skill that may be acquired (Howard and Johnson, 2004).

A study that measured the resilience of 22 participants, correlated resilience with attributes of self-efficacy. Three strands of the study tested the “personal power” of individuals, as it measured healthy responses to stressors. Those who possessed high level of resilience showed characteristics of demonstrating strong social competence, caring for self, taking advantage of opportunities for growth, using problem solving strategies, maintaining a positive outlook, setting goals, and showing a capacity for handling difficult experiences (Tait, 2008). The traits associated with resilience manifest through creating a positive work environment and meeting the personal and professional needs of those learning to teach (Turner, Zanker, & Braine, 2010).

However, in contrast, individuals who experience repeated patterns of perceived failures through actual experiences and do not address them through problem-solving strategies may experience distress, which has the opposite effect on their perceived capabilities to meet the roles, relationships and responsibilities of teaching. A pattern of distress may compound a lower sense of teacher self-efficacy, affecting motivation, effort and persistence to overcome the disorienting dilemmas they face. These negative patterns may not only stifle the transformational process, but also affect a pre-service teacher’s emerging identity. Such belief systems are most malleable during the learning to teach process, making it crucial for pre-service teachers to repeatedly engage in challenging, yet positive experiences. Furthermore, these experiences shape ways of coping, that once formed, are resistant to change (Tait, 2008). A teacher’s sense of capability to manage the

roles, relationships and responsibilities influences how he or she will choose to cope. Learning to cope with stressors in a healthy productive way is critical during the transformation from student to teacher as well as within the profession itself.

### Contemporary Stress Management and Coping

An overview of contemporary stress management and coping strategies provides a wide spectrum of the ways in which individuals cope with stressors that affect their lives on a professional and personal level (Gardner, 2010). Cohen (1987) identified four ways in which people generally cope with stress: problem-focused, emotion-focused, approach (support seeking) and avoidance. Negative coping strategies are maladaptive and may include denial, self-blame or blaming others, withdrawal, avoidance, or other problem-focused behaviors such as the overuse of alcohol. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) further designated coping through two categories: direct action techniques and palliative techniques. Any action taken to change the environment or confront an issue constitutes direct action, whereas palliative techniques are those that serve to change an individual's perspective or emotional response to the issue.

Regardless of the strategies used, people strive to have a sense of control over the significant aspects of their lives (Schunk and Zimmerman, 2006). The strategies determine an individual's ability to develop coping mechanisms, and the approaches that he or she may choose to take may be related to the ability to control and acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses—that is, their personality, disposition and emotions (Turner, Zanker, and Braine (2010). The locus of control theory relates to self-efficacy because it may be used to describe an individual's internal mechanisms to deal with a

particular situation that occurs in the external environment (Baloglu, 2008). Studies may suggest that those who do not develop a strong sense of internal control may rely on external factors such as luck or fate, thus confronting higher levels of stress (Farber, 2000). While an individual's locus of control may relate to a personality dimension, those who assume an internal control may also have stronger coping skills, such as expressing actions or seeking support, taking action and changing perceptions (Kyriacou, 1987). Applied to the workplace, Karesek (1979) proposed the theory of Job-Control, that an individual may buffer the strains of stress through a perception of control (Spector, 2000). Job control is the degree to which individuals have some type of input into the functioning of the workplace, whether that is through some element of choice, autonomy, participation, or empowerment (Beehr & Glazer, 2005). Accomplished through new approaches initiated within organizations themselves, they promote both institutional and preventative measures of coping.

The occupational stress paradigm illustrates the interaction between job demands, an individual's sense of control, and the measures of support provided to help balance the interaction. Though various treatments for occupational stress exist, providing support to help individuals gain personal control and strengthen coping abilities may help them fulfill the demands of their occupation. Social cognitive approaches to develop coping strategies prove to be the most effective (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). These programs facilitate "adaptive coping" through educating individuals about the "role of their thoughts and emotions" as they encounter stressful situations (Bond and Bunce, 2000). Such measures enhance the personal power and resourcefulness of the individual by

strengthening his or her personal human affects. In the profession of teaching, activities designed to develop teacher self-efficacy may serve as a stress management intervention that promotes a sense of control and personal power.

### Teacher Self- Efficacy Theory

Albert Bandura (1977) conceptualized the model of self-efficacy through his social cognitive theory. The social cognitive perspective emphasizes the exercise of human agency—that people will act according to their personal beliefs about their capabilities and the anticipated results of their actions (Schunk, 2012). Evolving within the social environment, general self-efficacy is a complex process—the result of self-persuasion and cognitive processing, shaped through enactive, vicarious, social, and physiological experiences (Bandura, 1986). These sources provide a multi-dimensional process that takes place within specific contexts, underscoring skill, task, or domain. Various types of self-efficacy, such as general self-efficacy and personal efficacy, harbor different meanings in specific contexts (Schunk, 2012). While the factors affect how an individual may think, feel, and act, people seek to gain control over important events in their lives.

Bandura (2006) asserts that people take proactive measures to self-organize, self-regulate, and reflect. They form intentions, set goals, anticipate outcomes, and manage thoughts, emotions, and actions. In addition, people manage progress through awareness and self-reflection. These self-processes relate to what a person can do, rather than his or her personal attributes (Skaalvik, 2007). In this, a person's ability is not a fixed attribute—he or she may gain a sense of control in managing self: emotional reactions,

motivation, effort, and persistence in the face of obstacles and failures. It is through these measures that transformational learning and growth may take place.

Applied to the workplace, self-efficacy is described as a “dispositional control variable” that may moderate workplace stressors and the perceived threat of those stressors (Spector, 2000, p. 156). A study conducted by Nelson and Suttor (1990) found workers to have lower levels of stress when they perceived themselves to have mastery of job tasks (Spector, 2000). This connection has been particularly important in fields of high levels of stress and burnout, particularly those that involve human service workers (Jennett, Harris, and Mesibor, 2003). While occupational stress cannot reasonably be eliminated, developing a strong sense of self-efficacy within the roles and tasks of one’s occupation may be a formidable method to manage it.

This has significant implications for the teaching profession. Perceived self-efficacy may be a “job-specific disposition” as it distinguishes between “those who can,” and those who can’t—those who can’t being individuals who “collapse under the stress of the profession” (Schwarzer & Hallum, 1999, p.155). A general definition establishes teacher self-efficacy as the “teacher’s belief in their abilities to organize and execute courses of action necessary to bring about desired results” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 203). However, it is important to note that an individual may have a high sense of efficacy in certain domains, but a low level in others. For example, a teacher may feel strong in his or her ability to plan lessons, but weak in the ability to deliver them. For this reason, many researchers have developed survey measurements to identify specific constructs within the profession (Schwarzer, Schmitz & Daytner, 1999,

Bandura, 1986, Tchannen-Moran Hoy & Hoy, 1998, Skaalvik, 2001). However, given its multidimensional, domain-specific nature, there is no one way to fully measure teacher self-efficacy. Consequently, research on teacher self-efficacy may benefit through employing longitudinal studies that utilize qualitative measures (Ross, 1994). These types of studies may capture the essence of transformational learning and growth that takes place over time for an individual who experiences a heightened sense of efficacy regarding specific roles within certain domains.

In addition, due to the complexity and demand of the teaching profession, the definition of teacher self-efficacy itself is somewhat inconclusive. In fact, the definition of teacher self-efficacy has continually evolved in the attempt “to capture a more realistic picture of teacher professional functioning and context” (Friedman & Kass, 2002, p.191). Early definitions have focused the “desired results” of teacher self-efficacy to be the outcomes of student learning. Instructional efficacy involves the teacher’s activities, effort and motivation in dealing with students (Ashton and Webb, 1986, Schunk, 2012). Teachers who possess instructional teacher self-efficacy develop activities that are more challenging, enhance student achievement, and address student needs. In fact, Woolfolk and Hoy (1998) found that teacher efficacy strongly correlates with student achievement. On the contrary, teachers with low self-efficacy may avoid difficult tasks because they see them as threatening. Their focus is on their obstacles, negative outcomes, and their own deficiencies. In turn, they may show a weak commitment to teaching their students and in fact, may blame their perceived inabilities on external factors such as student motivation or the students themselves (Bandura, 1986). The perceived control associated

with efficacy beliefs operate within a cyclical pattern—experiences that bring a sense of failure tend to perpetuate lower self-efficacy, while those mastery experiences viewed as success, in turn, beget more success.

Expanded definitions of teacher self-efficacy extend beyond the instructional dimension to include classroom management efficacy and interpersonal relational efficacy. Cherniss (1993) noted a three dimensional construct to include instructional tasks, organizational elements and interpersonal relationships (Friedman and Kass, 2003). In addition, the conceptual model of teacher efficacy has been expanded to view the organizational dimension of the school environment. This model includes two contexts: classroom and school. These two contexts are distinguished because they draw attention to two very different social systems, in which the teacher must function in contradictory roles. For example, the teacher is a leader in the classroom, and at the same time, a follower within a much larger organization. Functioning within the organization requires the development of communication, group decision making skills, informal interpersonal skills, and handling difficult social situations (Friedman & Kass, 2002).

Teacher self-efficacy has been linked to the amount of stress experienced in teaching. Empirical studies show a moderate to strong correlation between teacher self-efficacy and the amount of stress experienced in teaching (Smylie, 1988) and there is considerable research evidence of the direct main effect that strong efficacy beliefs have on well-being and work-related performance (Dewe and Cooper, 2012 ). Stronger teacher self-efficacy indicates lowered stress levels and adaptive ways of coping. Several

studies have utilized efficacy-measuring instruments to indicate this connection, and the results unanimously show that efficacy may itself provide a strong internal coping mechanism to deal with work related demands. As a result, efficacy building initiatives may constitute an intervention designed to cultivate stress management, a stress management intervention (SMI)—defined as “an activity or program initiated by an organization to reduce the presence of work related stress or assist individuals in minimizing negative outcomes” (Skaalvik, 2007, p. 161). Through this, teacher self-efficacy serves as a problem-focused adaptive coping resource achieved through enactive mastery experiences (Bandura, 1986). Research findings suggest that practicing teachers could benefit from instruction that promotes teacher self-efficacy, particularly in areas of student engagement. This is especially true for secondary teachers.

Evidence exists to show that teacher self-efficacy beliefs are most malleable during pre-service experiences and early in a teacher’s career. Despite the dynamic of teaching contexts, efficacy beliefs, once set, often remain static and resistant to change (Tait, 2008, p. 59). For this reason, strong efficacy beliefs are most likely to take hold when instilled early in a teacher’s career—ideally, when one is learning to teach within the teacher education program.

### Pre-service Teacher Efficacy

Marcus Aurelius once wrote, “You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength” (*Meditations*). Everything that an individual needs to deal with the complexities of his or her personal and professional life, lies deep within. This is an important concept, particularly for those entering a helping

profession. An individual must reach deep within to find the qualities in order to extend them to others. After all, one cannot give something that he or she does not possess.

Gaining personal power encompasses an awareness of self and the exploration of one's human qualities and capabilities. This awareness provides one with a sense of factors that may be controlled and what factors simply must be accepted. It is through critical reflection that an individual surveys a situation and examines his or her ability to change it. The exercise of personal power involves utilizing resources to take action, address problems, and intentionally create solutions. Not only does this process provide a powerful coping mechanism to manage the stressor "in the moment," it fosters a sense of confidence and competency within the domain, in turn yielding transformational learning and growth. An individual becomes empowered for the long-term, contributing to a professional identity not easily shaken.

An important challenge is for pre-service teacher programs to utilize the types of activities that develop teacher-self efficacy during the transformative process of learning to teach. According to Bandura, such activities transpire through actual teaching experiences, observations, persuasive feedback, and physiological cues (Bandura, 1986). Opportunities for these interactions occur during the authentic experiences of practicum teaching and strong support systems. Related activities may include peer support meetings and discussions, journaling, goal setting, and time management.

Through the dynamic of awareness, time, and experience, changes in teacher self-efficacy occur, forging a sense of competency to fulfill the roles of teaching and to

establish the identity of a teacher (Tait, 2008). Teacher efficacy beliefs may provide a personal resourcefulness that allows the individual to manage and cope with stress as they learn to teach and enter the profession.

### Implications for Teacher Programs

Many work place organizations design intervention programs to foster coping skills. Categorized as stress management interventions (Woodward, 2006), they are designed to reduce the intensity of distress by altering the individual's appraisal of stressful situations as well as strengthening their responses to them through coping strategies (Bond and Bunce, 2000). Designing teacher education programs to foster efficacy building may also serve as a stress management intervention (SMI); however, such as design comprises a "primary prevention" rather than an intervention. While SMI's serve to reduce stress that is already occurring, a preventative measure may reduce a potential stressor before it becomes an actual stressor.

While students who experience practice teaching have a strong theoretical foundation, the initial experience requires continued support. This support includes a multi-faceted approach building self-efficacy that promotes coping and stress reducing strategies through actual mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and physiological elements (Bandura, 1986).

### Field Experiences

Researchers have suggested that earlier, extended exposure to field experience may reduce the stress and anxiety pre-service teachers may experience, especially if they

are provided opportunities to do so without the pressures of evaluation by university or cooperating teachers (Freeman, 2009). Studies have shown that such opportunities may provide novices with a “complete perspective” of the profession, elevating their self-image and confidence (Bowers, Eichner, & Sacks, 1984; Sumpter, 1995). During this time, these students experience a prelude to more formal placements (practicum and student teaching). Freeman (2009) contends that stress and anxiety may be reduced for pre-service teachers through extended time within the environment, especially as the university faculty takes a more collaborative role with cooperating teachers and school administrators. Pre-service teachers who experience this new environment without the pressures of evaluation are likely to experience less stress (Murray-Harvey, et al, 2000).

### Stress Management Programs

Moreover, workshops and other stress management programs should also be available to promote wellbeing strategies for teacher candidates (Woodward, 2006). Some suggest university teaching programs go beyond a role of support, but rather take the measures to promote “preventative” stress by creating additional experiences for practicing teacher candidates. Workshops, programs, and other curricular resources intentionally crafted to challenge students to think critically and realistically about their abilities at various stages of teacher training create such opportunities. To help pre-service teachers build coping skills, Walizer (1998) and Wilkins-Canter (2000) suggested four components of a stress education workshop: to build support systems, to learn time management, task management, and to utilize problem solving strategies (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010). However, not many of these programs seem to exist currently. In a

Canadian study, Harris (2011) surveyed fifty-four university programs to determine how many made stress education training a part of coursework. In this study, he determined that only five programs offered some type of training, and within these five, he found a high degree of disparity within the programs. Some of them only provided “snapshots” at best, such as developing a healthy lifestyle or focusing primarily on physical fitness or exercise. Stress management did not seem to be the focus (p. 110).

Swick and Hanley (1980) asserted that taking a proactive and informative approach toward well-being ensures that stress and coping becomes a “meaningful part of the learning process” (p. 25). Harris, Halpin & Halpin (2008) supported this view and provided a basis for creating stress management programs: “Teachers should be aware of the negative effects of stress and how it can negatively impact them, their teaching performance and their students’ learning” (p. 137). Strategies for identifying, monitoring, and coping with stress should be covered in teacher training and in-service programs. Other researchers agree that the awareness of the realities of teaching, often the sources of stress, should be an integral part of the education of teachers (Platt & Olson, 1990; Wong & Wong, 2004, Wong, 2005). One way to accomplish this is through stress management workshops that provide support with four goals: meeting together to discuss feelings, to identify stressors, to identify and focus upon strengths, and to develop a plan for developing and preventing stress (Swick & Hanley, 1980).

In designing such a program, Dewe and Cooper (2012) contend that the focus not be placed on stress itself, but rather on well-being. While the two are intricately “linked to each other” the significant question surrounding stress is how we may achieve well-

being—an exploration of how people “flourish.” (p. 56). A recent movement designated as “positive psychology” would provide attention to how stress and coping affect one another, with the purpose of cultivating positive outcomes, coping resources embedded in human virtues or strengths. (Dewe and Cooper, 2012).

While many work organizations have developed programs to promote well-being among their workers, some university programs have also investigated ways to do so. The overview of contemporary stress management and coping strategies emphasize relationship, cognitive behavior therapy, and meditation. Some universities, particularly those preparing individuals for “the helping professions” have originated mindfulness-based programs for stress reduction. (Shapiro, Shapiro and Schwartz, 2000). The framework for these initiatives have typically included activities such as exercise, relaxation, social support (Chan, 2002). While the content of such varied programs may vary considerably, such programs have found support. This is particularly true of medical programs. A study conducted at Arizona State indicated a considerable decrease in stress among medical students after an eight-week meditation-based intervention of group meetings with peers and/or leaders. These results imply that developing relationships with peers and leaders in structured settings may significantly reduce stress. Similarly, a program offered to medical students in Korea emphasized stress reduction techniques of talking to others— those involved found the program extremely helpful, and stated it should be a lasting part of the university curriculum.

Woodward (2006) articulated that although some university faculties offer stress management programs, programs initiated to support pre-service teachers are not as

prevalent. Given the successes of such programs within the medical profession, consideration to stress and well-being should be adopted within pre-service preparation programs (Saunders and Watkins, 1980). The first step in considering such programs is to hear the needs pre-service teachers themselves voice; however, not many studies exist, especially qualitative studies. Walkington (2005) asserted that pre-service teachers need three elements: time to talk, critical reflection, and modeling of reflective practices. With high stakes of maintaining a strong educational program and attrition among those new to the profession, teacher education programs could design various interventions to support these needs and promote well-being. Such programs could launch well-being and coping as well as build teacher self-efficacy prior to entering the profession.

Programs that emphasize experience in the school environment, coupled with foundational knowledge about the nature of stress may offer teacher candidates additional preparation. Course topics might also include motivation and goal setting, prevention and intervention (addressing cognitive, emotional, physiological, and behavioral components) through an individualized approach (Harris, 2011). In order to fully equip prospective teachers for the profession they are to enter, the focus must center on the qualities they possess as individuals—those human assets that make up their abilities to cope. Programs must adopt an individualized approach to ensure that prospective teachers are well equipped to be self-managers and life-long learners, and to reach within to access their own personal power and resourcefulness.

### Chapter Summary

It is critical to address the significant problems of occupational stress. This study focuses on the experiences of those entering the teaching profession, a demanding profession that requires a transformation from student to teacher to acquire the roles and responsibilities inherent within it. Creating an environment that promotes awareness of the realities of the profession, the stressors within it, as well as the coping skills, may help reduce burnout and attrition rates. Gold and Roth (1999) assert that all those involved in teacher preparation: university teaching programs, school boards, and individual schools, may have a stake helping prospective teachers become self-efficacious and committed to the profession of teaching (Tait, 2008).

A significant challenge for pre-service teacher education programs is to develop opportunities for enhanced practical experiences that foster “efficacy building sources” (Schunk, 2012, p. 157). Such opportunities may help individuals “gain the confidence needed to fulfill their innate potential” (Bathina, 2013, p. 44). Therefore, the goal of these efficacy building opportunities is not to shape pre-service teachers into one “ideal” style of managing stress, but rather to help each student develop his or her own approach of coping and well-being. The following chapter will explain the methods and strategies used to determine the needs of pre-service teachers as well as how teacher education may address those needs in order to produce strong, efficacious teachers.

## CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

A highly skilled and complex profession, teaching is also a stressful profession. Those learning to teach are particularly vulnerable as they make the transformation from student to teacher—they must develop a series of attributes in relation to pedagogy, content, student learning, classroom management, and their own critical reflection (Joseph & Heading, 2009). In addition, prospective teachers must understand the complexity of multiple roles that will be required of them: subject knowledge, pedagogic knowledge and school knowledge (Banks et al 2004, p. 144). Although teacher education programs provide a platform, in which students may connect theory to practice, additional support, time and curricular resources may help students build teaching self-efficacy, and develop coping mechanisms to reduce stress associated with these demands. Through these measures, students may be more fully equipped to apply their content and pedagogic knowledge within the school setting as they adapt to a new sense of self—that is a new identity or role.

The purpose of this study was to hear the voices of pre-service teachers as they experienced the phenomenon of transformation from student to teacher. It aimed to identify their general and personal perceptions, to reveal their stressors and coping strategies, and to capture the richness of their transformation as they embraced needed supports and resources. The development and implementation of a stress management

workshop served a dual purpose by providing a platform for data collection and a support for building coping skills and teacher self-efficacy.

Through the implementation of a qualitative approach, the study described the lived experiences of pre-service teachers as they engaged in an enhanced practical school experience and transformed from student to teacher. I sought to determine whether their practical experiences helped students perceive themselves as gaining a psychological readiness for the profession. Through this project, I also planned, designed, developed, and implemented a series of sessions, a stress management workshop that provided support and emphasized the development of teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is defined as the “teacher’s belief in their abilities to organize and execute courses of action necessary to bring about desired results” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 203). The development of these beliefs, paralleled with a general knowledge of stress and the stressors within the teaching profession, may enable a prospective teacher to more readily identify and combat these stressors. The following questions guided the investigation:

MFQ: How do secondary pre-service teachers describe their experience of the transformation from student to teacher and perceive themselves as ready to cope with the environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors of teaching as they complete the program?

SFQ1: What are the general preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ2: What are the personal preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ3: What are the stressors that secondary pre-service teachers encounter during their pre-service teaching experience and the coping strategies they utilize to address them?

SFQ4: What supports and resources do secondary pre-service teachers perceive as instrumental to building strong teacher self- efficacy beliefs?

This chapter will outline the design, methodology and procedures utilized in order to investigate these questions.

### Design

This phenomenological study described the experiences of pre-service teachers as they transformed from student to teacher and encountered stress and coping during their practicum experiences. Creswell (2013) defines phenomenology as an approach to describe the lived experiences of several individuals as they encounter a particular phenomenon (p. 76). Through a phenomenological approach, new understandings emerge as the researcher follows a process through which he describes “what” the participants experience and “how” they experience it, finding the common themes, and reducing the individual experiences to the essence of universal experience (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology, adapted from the writings of Husserl, rests on the philosophical assumption that all judgments must be suspended to allow the new understandings to unfold without any predetermination or expectation (Moustakas, 1994).

A phenomenological study deemed appropriate in order to illustrate the experiences of pre-service teachers as they encounter a particular phenomenon: transformation amidst stress and coping (Creswell, 2013). As each individual lives the experience and relates his or her personal story, a rich, detailed description of the phenomenon unfolds to provide new understandings only gleaned through qualitative measures. While quantitative measures may identify stress-inducing factors and coping measures, quantitative design is insufficient to “tell the story” of the experience or reveal the true essence of the phenomenon. Consequently, a qualitative approach was utilized in this study in order to capture the perspective of the pre-service teachers themselves—their perceptions of how they were transformed or shaped through these experiences, thus, moving from student to teacher.

### Reflexivity and Positionality

My personal story illustrates how the varied circumstances each individual encounters presents unique challenges. My interest in this research study stemmed from the challenges of my own circumstances, and recognizing that others face their own set of challenges, I hold a genuine concern and admiration for those learning to teach.

Currently in my eighteenth year as a secondary English teacher, I have experienced both the joys and the difficulties of teaching. My varied experience includes working in several high schools— from teaching at a school consisting of 1600 students to a rural school consisting of approximately 100 students. I also have experienced teaching middle school students. My first classroom teaching position took place at a Hutterite Colony—I taught all subjects and grades four through eight while overseeing

the entire program beginning with non-English speaking kindergarten students. Prior to obtaining my English degree, my teaching experience centered upon private piano pedagogy—I operated my own piano studio consisting of sixty students. I was a private piano instructor for over twenty-one years.

I characterize my pre-service practicum and student teaching placement as rich, varied experiences that further prepared me to enter the profession of teaching. My practicum experience consisted mostly of observation, but I also earned hours by tutoring students at a high school writing center. This served as an invaluable experience. Later, my student teaching experience, split between high school and middle school, provided an opportunity to work with students grades seven through twelve. While teaching at the high school, I commuted thirty miles one way each day because my family lived in a neighboring community.

As a student teacher, I remember the demands of my schedule very clearly. My assignment involved teaching four different classes—a speech class, a composition class, a literature class, and a research class: a load that overwhelmed me. As a somewhat reserved individual, I found adapting to the role of teaching personally difficult—the vulnerability I felt being “on stage” in front of thirty students caused anxiety and stress. Even minor tasks, such as using an overhead projector for the first time, intimidated me. To deal with these issues, I relied on my personal strengths—I worked hard and prepared my lessons as thoroughly as possible. I also interacted with the students on an interpersonal level and established a strong rapport with them. Although my cooperating teachers had high expectations and standards, they provided unwavering support

throughout my student teaching experience and proved to be resources as I began my teacher career. These individuals were indispensable in helping to shape my confidence and skill as a beginning teacher. Dealing with these unique challenges helped to shape my teacher self-efficacy and my professional identity as I set out to become an English teacher.

As a mentor and cooperating teacher for practicum students and student teachers, my interest is to be an effective model, a source of support and a long-term resource for each of them. In this role, I had a genuine stake in conducting this study so that I could gain a greater understanding about the challenges and needs of pre-service teachers. This helped me to serve them in this capacity. However, for the purposes of this study, I was a graduate student conducting a qualitative inquiry for my dissertation study. Therefore, the relationship that I had with the potential participants was characterized as student to student. I maintained this position from my perspective, and also monitored the participants' perspectives—that is their reactivity toward my position. To do this, I provided each of my participants with an account of my educational experiences and goals so that each had an opportunity to know me on a more personal level. In addition, I included information about my professional experiences and goals so that they could also relate to me in that way. On another level, I established a professional climate for my teacher candidates. I desired for them to experience the role of being a high school teacher. In order to do this effectively, I needed to relate to each of them—teacher to teacher.

### Timeline and Process

This longitudinal phenomenological study was conducted over two semesters within one full school year. The participants, enrolled in methods courses during spring of 2015, completed practicum prior to or during autumn of 2015, and planned to complete student teaching during spring of 2016. The study consisted of several steps. The first step, a focus group interview, was conducted prior to the first practicum. The results of the focus group informed the development of the stress management workshop, conducted during the participants' practicum experience. The final step, a one on one interview, took place near the end of student teaching, during the following semester.

### Site and Sample

Since I studied the experiences of secondary education majors from a northwest university as they participated in their pre-service teaching experiences, the site of my study occurred within the university setting and at local high schools. The participants were a criterion sample chosen from a pool of teacher candidates who were secondary education majors. The various phases of the research study took place in the school settings as the sample engaged in the authentic, practical experience of learning to teach.

The university was a medium-sized research institution located in the northwest. It provided an educationally thriving community with a strong perspective for learning and the pursuit of higher education. The education program implemented a strong theoretical foundation and practical experience for those students who pursue teaching as a major. The university worked closely with several schools in the area, those with varied

demographics, collaborating with them to provide practical experience for pre-service teachers. One high school used in this study educated approximately 850 students, offering a wide variety of courses, including Advanced Placement, dual-credit and remedial courses. A larger high school in the area had nearly 2000 students, offering a wide array of courses, including a strong alternative school program. Secondary education majors from the nearby institution were consistently a part of the “educational landscape” for both schools and considered a resource for high school teachers and students. In hopes that these high schools reciprocated as a resource for the university program, these teacher candidates were welcomed into these school environments as practicum students and student teachers, and some had opportunities to interact in the high school environment prior to these formal experiences. Efforts to build strong partnerships between the college and high schools provided evidence of these measures.

Upon IRB approval, I initiated selecting my pool of participants. In order to access the participants, I collaborated and discussed the logistics with key informants—those who served as insiders about the position or availability of the participants and the feasibility for carrying out this study (Weiss, 1994). This included members of the university and high school faculty, the university’s field placement officer, and the high school principal.

I initially presented the opportunity before forty-two prospective participants: those enrolled in a practicum course at the northwest university. I discussed the premise of my research study, and the criteria for participation in the focus group session and/or stress management sessions. Students interested in participating indicated so by providing

their email address. Of the forty-two potential candidates, I yielded sixteen prospective candidates. From there, I invited all to participate in the focus group. Prior to the focus group, I initiated contact with each prospective candidate: five stated they would participate in the focus group, seven said they were not able to attend the focus group, but were still interested in the stress management session, and four simply did not respond to initial contacts. Five individuals participated in the focus group. The demographics of these individuals include the following:

Table 3.1 Focus Group Participants

Student 1 Male, Age 23	English major
Student 2 Female, Age 21	English major, business minor
Student 3 Female, Age 21	English major
Student 4 Female, Age 21	English Major, music minor
Student 5 Female, Age 21	English major

The focus group protocol was designed to address the first two sub-focus research questions: What are the general preconceptions secondary education majors have about stress and coping within the teaching profession? What are the personal preconceptions secondary education majors have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

The list of questions for the focus group were first piloted with three individuals similar to the potential group in that they were all young teachers who had each

completed a secondary teacher education program within the last three years. Throughout the pilot interview, I tested the content and syntax of my questions, and discovered that some of the questions, though intended to build upon the previous question, yielded repetitive responses. Therefore, I discovered that several questions needed to be revised and some, omitted.

The next step involved accessing potential participants for my focus group. In order to do so, I contacted several key informants. They helped me arrange to speak before a group of forty-two pre-service teachers who served as potential participants in the focus group. From this opportunity, sixteen pre-service teachers expressed interest in taking part in the focus group. I communicated with those interested through email, and from there, and I established a set time and place based on expressed convenience of those interested. Although sixteen initially expressed interest, only five participated in the focus group. However, this proved to be a suitable number—one that formed a group of varied perspective and experience, yet also allowed for a conversant exchange on each question.

The focus group session took place in a classroom setting on the college campus. The participants filled out demographic information and read through the interview protocol. Ensured that their identities would remain confidential, they were initially identified by student numbers 1-5 (S1—S5), and later assigned pseudonyms. While I facilitated the interview, a third party typed each participant's responses. We also audiotaped the entire session, and once the interview was completed, the data was compiled, transcribed, coded, and categorized according to distinct themes.

From the pool of prospective participants, I spoke with each individually to determine whether they held interest in the research topic and if they were able to commit to a study for the duration—through practicum and student teaching. Eight indicated a strong interest to participate in my study as they embarked upon their journey toward becoming teachers. The following provides a list of the criteria for selection:

- Currently enrolled in the secondary education program
- Planning to complete practicum during fall semester, 2015
- Planning to complete student teaching during spring 2015 or fall semester, 2016
- Interested in research on stress and coping
- Consented to participate in this study

One prospect hoped that she could participate in the study, even though she would not be completing her student teaching until fall semester 2016. She stated that she would be actively engaged in the classroom beyond the practicum requirement during the interim semester.

Another student who had completed her practicum during Spring 2015 and was taking another semester to observe and grow before student teaching, approached me and asked to be a part of the study. Because she was actively part of the process, I believed she could lend a voice to this research study.

At the time, I had nine participants, but one of the original eight dropped out due to time conflicts and other commitments. From here, my group comprised of eight participants—the five who had participated in the focus study plus three others. The group

consisted of seven females and one male, ranging from age twenty-one to age twenty-nine, with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perceptions. Eight members was a small enough group to foster a close-knit workshop group; yet one large enough to offer a dynamic range of personality, experience, and voice.

### The Participants

I accessed the potential participants for this phenomenological longitudinal study through their practicum placement course during fall semester, 2015. I shared my background, my experience, and my interest in the study. I also explained to them the criteria of possible participants. Those students who met this criterion provided their email address so that I could have further contact with each of them. We established a set meeting time and place for our sessions to occur, based on proximity and convenience for the participants.

With the eight participants, all secondary English majors, I proceeded with my study. I established an overall workshop protocol. They each signed a consent form, understanding that their identities would remain anonymous and that they could choose to drop out of the study at any time. Our first session provided an overview of the workshop, highlighting the purpose and learning goals of the session. This included establishing ground rules: all participant information would remain confidential. In order to protect their identities, I developed pseudonyms for each of the participants. Providing each with a colored notebook and matching folder to collect data, I first identified them according to the color of their materials. Once I began to know more about each of them,

I assigned each a pseudonym. The following offers a brief introduction to each of the eight pre-service teachers who participated in this study.

Royal Blue:

Royal, age 21, was seeking an English Education degree as well as a minor in Business Administration. The name Royal suited her well because she possessed a dignified, gracious quality as she related to people with compassion and sensitivity. Royal's pre-teaching experiences in working with students, though limited at fewer than twenty hours, included mentoring and tutoring within a writing workshop, an experience she found to provide "a lesson in professionalism" (Focus Group Interview). Aligned with her long-term goal to work with lower SES students who struggle in school, Royal's practicum experience afforded her the opportunity to work in credit recovery with 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders. Royal believed that good teachers are relatable, considerate, funny, and "in the know."

Pastel Pink:

Pastel exhibited a true enthusiasm and passion for teaching—her positive approach is one she shared with those around her. The pseudonym "Pastel" served her well as she was petite in stature, gentle in spirit, but large in heart. She brought a variety of pre-teaching experience as a nanny, camp counselor, and mentor. Paired with another practicum student during pre-service teaching, Pastel stated she loves being in the classroom, finding it enjoyable rather than stressful. Describing herself as organized and prepared, Pastel believed that these traits would serve her well in the profession—she

claimed, “The best teachers are involved and caring” (Focus Group Interview). Pursuing a major in English Education major with a minor in music, she planned to student teach fall semester 2016. At age twenty-one, her special professional interests included choral groups and the tennis team.

#### Salmon Orange:

Salmon’s high school class graduated over 600 students, and she was at the top of her class with a 4.2 GPA. In college, she was a presidential scholar and a published author. In addition to academics, Salmon’s other interests included fly-fishing, bear research, and climbing. She experienced teaching third graders at her learning center, coached climbing, and educational outreach for the forest service about bear safety. Salmon’s research folder matched the color of Salmon orange; however, Salmon was an appropriate pseudonym for her because of her strong affection for the great outdoors. In her “teacher metaphor,” she captured the essence of salmon through an analogy of a creek. After completing her education, Salmon planned to return to her home state to teach, and to marry her fiancé.

#### Splendid Yellow:

Splendid, age twenty-one, exuded a bright, cheerful demeanor. Growing up in a rural Montana community—a high school of only thirty students, she claimed teachers who were positive role models most inspired her. An honor student, this outstanding student won several awards and was a part of her university’s honors college. Splendid’s practicum experience aligned with her background and special interests, receiving

placement in an AP class, European History/Honors English II, for both her practicum placement and student teaching assignment. With aspirations to one day become a college professor of literature, her interests included reading, writing, art, sports and spending time with family and friends.

Emerald Green:

Just as the gemstone, Emerald sparkled with intensity and depth— the pseudonym suited her well. At age twenty-six, she had varied experiences working with others through coaching and creating positivity programs with her personal interests surrounding athletics, emotional health, metaphysics and art. Unlike the other participants, she had completed her practicum during the previous semester in an AP history/English class, reporting it to be a highly positive experience. Although she was slated to student-teach spring of 2016, the placement fell through. However, her goal was to remain actively engaged in gaining practical experience by continuing to observe master teachers and to prepare for student teaching.

Midnight Black:

At twenty-three, Midnight, was a bold, dynamic fifth year senior majoring in English Education. Working various jobs since sixteen years of age, Midnight perceived himself to be a well-rounded individual, well prepared to enter the profession of teaching. He had worked as a professional writing tutor, and spent over one hundred hours in his practicum placement. He shared his interest in implementing Harkness discussion techniques in his classroom as well as utilizing movies as text. Graduating from a large

high school of over 4000 students, Midnight believed one of his strengths to be his ability to interact with others and to relate to students who may dislike school. An accomplished student who took AP classes throughout high school, Midnight believed he could contribute positively to students and confidently viewed himself as ready to enter the profession of teaching after completing his student teaching. He expressed a love of hunting, fishing, and spending time outdoors.

#### Baby Blue:

The pseudonym for Baby stemmed first, from the light blue color of her data folder as well as her endearing, respectful demeanor. Highly sensitive to others' needs, Baby sincerely approached everything in which she involved herself with careful attention and diligent effort. Serving her practicum and student teaching assignment in a creative writing classroom, she found herself well suited to her environment, believing the best teachers embrace creativity and explore new ways of teaching. As a result, she asserted these teachers may be "critical of and challenge the established curriculum" (Focus Group Interview).

#### Ruby Red:

Ruby, age twenty-nine, displayed a robust, charismatic style, earning her this pseudonym. Although passionate about the subject of English, she did not originally set out to be an English teacher. Enduring many life experiences, including traveling and living abroad, cultivated her interest to pursue a career as an educator. Completing a university-school aligned research project during her practicum experience helped her to

discover that she was most interested in working with students who are “self-proclaimed haters of canned curriculum”—those placed in vocational tracks who are often termed as “at-risk” students (Workshop Data).

Although designed for secondary education majors in various disciplines, the study comprised secondary English teaching majors—some also minoring in another area. Each participant had a varied degree of experience within his or her disciplines within the secondary school setting. For example, some of these individuals had participated in a university/school partnership program, of which I was part, and through this opportunity they may have been afforded previous practical experience in the secondary education classroom. Prior arrangements established through university faculty and cooperating teachers who serve as models and mentors, provided experiences in which the Education majors may have observed, assisted, and interacted within the environment. Throughout this experience, some tutored students, informally helped evaluate student work, and became exposed to the day-to-day culture of the secondary school environment. This exposure may have provided these potential participants a glimpse of the school environment as well as their place within it, particularly the challenges they anticipated as they transformed from student to teacher.

### Data Collection

The design and procedure of this phenomenological study revolved around a series of steps that chronicled the development of pre-service teachers as they learned to teach. Through these steps, I utilized data triangulated by various methods and the multiple voices of my participants. Triangulation allows for each method of data to serve

as a check for one another, weighing whether various methods ultimately lead to the same conclusion (Maxwell, 2013). The data sources, including written and artistic reflections, focused primarily on the “rich description” as well as perceptions of the participants acquired through a focus group interview and a semi-structured one-on-one interview protocol. In a phenomenological study, the perceptions of the participants exemplifies the primary source of knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). In addition, I took steps to continually check my personal perspectives through self-reflection, attempting to suspend my previous notions, biases and judgments prior to each step of the research process—a process Moustakas coins as *epoche*, or bracketing (1994). This process was an essential step toward capturing the true experiences of the participants as they experienced stress and coping, achieved as I established rapport and built trust with each of the participants. I hoped to build trust and to gain an understanding of their perspectives toward me as an individual and the research project itself (Maxwell, 2013). Once I established this relationship, I carried out the steps of data collection outlined through the following timeline:

Table 3.2 Research Timeline

Step: Method	Proposed Date	Setting	Protocol	Outcome
Step 1: Focus Group	Autumn 2015	University Conference Room	One hour focus group session  Field notes by 3 <sup>rd</sup> party  Audio Recorded	Data coded, tabulated, and analyzed  Used to inform the workshop  Make thematic connections between the data
Step 2: Planning and Implementation of Stress Management Intervention (SMI) Sessions	Autumn Semester 2015	High school (in conjunction with practicum experience).	Offered weekly sessions using Mezirow's transformational process to guide discussion, activities, role play, and "My Voice" writings and drawings	Analyze, code, and categorize data collected through the journals and through my observations of the workshop.  Make thematic connections between the data
Step 3: Semi-Structured Interviews	Spring Semester 2015	University Campus private setting	60-90 minute sessions  Semi-structured protocol  Audio Recorded	Analyze, code and categorize the data  Make thematic connections between the data

### Step One: Focus Group

Step one, administered at the beginning of autumn semester, 2015, involved a focus group session in which questions were adapted from a list of practicum stress items identified by D’Rozario & Wong in 1996 (Murray-Harvey et al., 2005). A focus group interview served as an appropriate data collection tool because it helped to constitute the substantive frame of the study (Weiss, 1994). Focus groups are useful when respondents share commonalities, yet bring diverse perspectives to provide a generalized, collective view about a particular topic.

These questions attempted to capture the concerns of students before they entered their practicum experience, and they aligned with the research sub-questions one and two, as outlined in Table 3.2. First posed to a group of individuals similar to the participants, I tested the questions for clarity and application. Through this process, I discovered the questions were somewhat repetitive and needed revision.

Focus group interviews are useful when interviewees are similar and cooperative and when time is limited (Maxwell, 2013). In this case, it served well to break the ice among the pre-service teachers. Of sixteen prospective participants, the focus group comprised of five secondary English teaching majors: four females and one male ranging from ages twenty-one to twenty-three, prior to beginning their practicum teaching assignment. The focus group took place within a classroom at the university, the time and place scheduled at the convenience of the participants, and lasting for approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. As the researcher, I served as the facilitator during the session, posing the questions (Appendix D). The interview was audio-recorded, and a colleague,

who was familiar with study, recorded the information by typing the interview verbatim during the interview. During this session, I posed questions, and each participant shared freely. After the session, I reviewed the recording, several times, comparing it to field notes. From there, I personally entered the information into a database. The data was coded, tabulated and analyzed, and the results informed the development of the stress management mediating support: the workshop.

### Step Two: Stress Management Workshop

Step two focused upon the development and implementation of the Stress Management Workshop. This step took place during autumn semester of 2015. Four goals served as a basis for the Stress Management Workshop--those first identified by Swick & Hanley (2010):

- To provide a network of social support to meet together and to discuss feelings;
- To identify environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors;
- To identify and focus upon building coping skills
- To develop individualized plans for preventing stress and coping with it in balanced, healthy ways.

For this present study, the workshop complemented the participants' practicum experience by serving as a "mediating support" to address stressors associated with learning to teach, and through this support, aimed to cultivate well-being and coping by drawing upon personal strengths and teacher self-efficacy. Conducted over six sessions, the workshop took place over nine weeks. Lasting one and one half hour, each session was set at the same time and in the same locale. Guided by one of the five dimensions,

(the big idea) and an essential question, the activities design included dinner, brainstorming, structured writing prompts, small group sharing, whole group sharing, role play, and drawing.

Aligned to the focus group categories, the curriculum included the following activities and topics:

Table 3.3: Workshop Timeline

Session Date	Big Idea: Essential Question(s)	Activities/Topics for Discussion	Addresses focus group category
September 30, 2015	<u>Examine Self:</u> What experiences and conditioning do I bring to the teaching situation?	Workshop Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Conceptual Framework</li> <li>✚ Consent Form</li> <li>✚ Ground Rules</li> </ul> Name It! Stress Concepts Overview Student Lens: Window Activity	Perceptions of teaching/  Personal perceptions
October 14, 2015	<u>Examine the Environment:</u> What conditions within my practicum teaching environment are revealing discrepancies between my initial perceptions and my actual experiences?	My Voice Writing Prompt: Choose two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ The ideal teaching environment...</li> <li>✚ I used to think...</li> <li>✚ An “aha” moment happened...</li> <li>✚ I felt anxious about...</li> <li>✚ Victory was mine when...</li> </ul> Pair Share/Whole Group	Perceptions of teaching/  Personal perceptions

October 21, 2015	<p><u>Examine the environment:</u> In what ways am I utilizing eustress (good stress) and handling distress (bad stress) in my practicum teaching environment?</p>	<p>My Voice Writing Prompts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ An example of positive stress that increased my confidence</li> <li>✚ An example of negative stress that got the best of me</li> </ul> <p>Pair Share/Whole Group Role-Play Scenarios</p>	Personal preparation and experiences
October 28, 2015	<p><u>Examine the Student:</u> What particular characteristics do adolescent learners exhibit?</p> <p><u>Examine Self, Bias, and Diversity:</u> How might understanding these characteristics help combat distress?</p>	<p>My Voice Writing Prompts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ The typical adolescent...</li> <li>✚ The student with whom I am most interested in working...</li> <li>✚ The student with whom I am least interested in working</li> </ul> <p>Pair Share/Whole Group My Voice Writing Prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ I typically see the cup...half full or half empty?</li> </ul>	Personal preparation and experiences

<p>November 4, 2015</p>	<p><u>Examine Self:</u> How am I as an individual prone to stress? <u>Examine Roles/Strategies:</u> What roles and strategies must we adopt to effectively cope with stressors within the profession?</p>	<p>My Voice Writing Prompts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Stress typically affects me...</li> <li>✚ Ways stress has been affecting me (related to roles of teaching)...</li> <li>✚ Ways I have found myself coping with these stressors...</li> </ul> <p>The Effects of Stress Adaptive versus Maladaptive Coping Pair Share/Whole Group Sharing</p> <p>Basic Stress Management Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Recognizing Warning Signs of Excessive Stress</li> <li>✚ Reducing Stress through Self-Care</li> <li>✚ Stress Reduction Techniques: Breathing, Muscle Relaxation, Visualization</li> </ul>	<p>Personal preparation and experiences</p>
<p>November 18,</p>	<p><u>Examine all elements within the framework:</u> How do we see ourselves in light of our new roles? What may be an individualized plan that we may adopt in order to maintain balance within these new roles?</p>		

With eight participants, all secondary English majors ranging in age from twenty-one to twenty-nine, seven females and one male, I proceeded with the workshop sessions, establishing an overall workshop protocol. Each participant signed a consent form, understanding that he or she could choose to drop out of the study at any time. In addition, each participant understood that his or her identity would remain anonymous. Although I briefed each individual as to what the study would entail, our first session provided an overview of the workshop, highlighting the purpose and learning goals of the session. This included establishing ground rules: all participant information would remain confidential. In order to protect their identities, participants were identified by criteria other than their actual names. In addition, I provided a color-coded notebook and a color-matched folder for each of them to utilize during our sessions. Each week, I collected the colored folders and notebooks of data, transcribed it within a database, and stored the original within a locked portable file. After six sessions of varied activities, my voice journal writings, and discussions, I collected a range of data from each participant. Each week, I collected the materials and stored the data within a locked portable file, transporting them to my home. After compiling data each session, I entered it into a database. The participant pseudonyms, first adopted by their color, developed through an reference to their unique profiles. Through each individual's transformation, I provide a description of data collected during this period.

### The Workshop Design

This section explains how the stress management sessions unfolded. I will begin by describing each of the activities within the workshop: how the focus group informed them, how resources inspired them, and how the participants themselves contributed to the emerging design through their needs and wants. In addition to Klatt's *The Ultimate Training Handbook*, I also utilized a workshop designed for health care workers. Developed from Concern Worldwide (U.S.) Inc.'s *Innovations for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health* initiative, this resource inspired activities that I adapted for the workshop curriculum.

#### Dinner:

Our workshop sessions began each week with a shared meal. Originally, this aspect was not a part of the curriculum design, but it was developed out of necessity. Our meetings were held at the convenience of the participants, and in order to accommodate their schedules, we held them in the evening, during the dinner hour, after participants had attended classes for the day. Each week the menu was different—usually a home cooked meal involving at least three courses. After a week or two, it became apparent that sharing a meal together helped the students unwind for the day, set an informal tone that increased the comfort level of the sessions, and established a comradery among the participants that strengthened the workshop sessions.

#### My Voice Writing Prompts:

Journaling serves as a technique that promotes critical self-reflection.

Uline, Wilson & Cordry (2004) affirmed the value of utilizing journals through extended clinical experiences in which pre-service teachers could share their most significant experiences in teacher training and examine themselves through critical reflection. The journal prompts, classified as “my voice” writings, were designed to address the anticipated concerns voiced in the focus group, and expose the disorienting dilemmas or the actual stressors participants were experiencing within their practicum placements. Many times participants chose from a series of prompts; however, all the prompts helped unveil the preconception, revealing any gaps between initial perceptions and the realities.

Pair/Share:

This activity allowed for one-on one conversations between participants before the opportunity to discuss among the whole-group. Such discussions promote stronger connections, more intimate disclosure, and interpersonal communications. These types of interactions occurred almost every session, and participants shared one on one with a variety of individuals in the room.

Whole group dialogue:

A group of eight provided feasibility for whole group discussions in which every participant could have an opportunity to share if so desired. This size of group seemed perfect for the workshop sessions because we had an even number of eight (to have four pair-share groups), offering enough diversity to spark intriguing discussions.

### Scenario Role Play:

Role-play served as an opportunity to create vicarious experiences, those through which participants could survey varied responses to challenging situations. In this capacity, the participants chose from several scenarios. They also had an opportunity to create some of their own scenarios based on anticipated or actual experiences. Roleplay provided a light-hearted release for the participants—one in which they shared laughter.

### Self-Care Plan:

Personal goal setting is an important by-product of critical self-reflection. In this case, it is a palliative coping strategy to mitigate strains of occupational stress, and to initiate and maintain a balanced approach to self-care. For the workshop, the self-care activity provided a crucial outcome for each of the participants. The participants designed a self-care plan in which they each chose three specific activities to initiate through these coping strategies, and for each of them the aim was to “practice” and develop a sense of control in dealing with the stressors and strains of teaching.

### Metaphor Activity:

The metaphor activity was the culminating activity during which students combined all of the examined elements of the teaching process: self, environment, student, diversity/bias, and roles. Through this exercise, students could begin the transformational shift of seeing themselves through the “teacher lens”—the roles, responsibilities, and strategies used to be an effective teacher. I adapted this activity from

a teacher training program developed by Chen (2003) who utilized metaphors and developed a classification system to analyze teaching styles.

Mezirow's (1999) ten-step transformational process (Snyder, 2012) provided a framework for reflective writing, discussion, action, and the adoption of the individualized plans. The use of reflective journals—those I called “my voice” writings, served as the most intimate form to elicit the participants' personal experiences, providing “rich data” in which their stories were told with the deepest conviction. One particular prompt asked the participants to provide a drawing and/or written expression of a metaphoric representation of themselves as teachers.

Upon reading the journals and reflecting upon them, I highlighted significant statements, sentences, quotes and illustrations that provided an understanding of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013). I created my own notes, coding and categorizing emerging themes throughout, in order to make connections and draw conclusions from the data. I also continued to remain aware of my own biases and to investigate the data for contradictions. The timeframe for collecting these journals occurred at the end of the practicum experience in December 2015.

Each workshop session targeted an essential idea and followed an agenda through which the objectives were outlined. Appendix D provides the workshop schedule.

### Step Three: Interview

Semi-structured interviews with each participant served as the final step of data collection in this study. In a phenomenological study, in-depth interviews often provide the primary source of information. These individual interviews, lasting 60-90 minutes,

were guided by a list of questions, evolving as the participant described his or her experiences, with “the participant doing most of the talking,” and I as the researcher, “doing most of the listening” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). I designed and utilized an interview protocol, a document indicating details about the date, time, and place of the interview, as well as the guiding questions. A preliminary set of questions for this protocol is included (Appendix F). These questions, developed from the theoretical and empirical findings outlined in the literature review, were first piloted with a group of respondents who shared similar characteristics with the research participants. Pilot studies are identified by Maxwell (2005) as a means to understand the meaning of the phenomena being studied and expanding the researcher’s concepts for his or her own theory. In addition, Yin (2014) asserts that the pilot study provides relevant information about field questions and the logistics of collecting field data. A preliminary practice of research collection also provides for design improvement prior to finalization of the study. Finally, the pilot study provides the researcher with practice in data collection. Yin (2014) also advocates that the pilot study is identified often by convenience such as geographic location, congenial subjects, or accessibility. The participants’ feedback will quickly confirm or challenge the assumptions made while writing the questions and help determine their relevancy and clarity. Using feedback from this group, I revised the questions before interviewing participants (Gay and Airisan, 2012, p. 357). Once the questions were established, I conducted the interviews in various private settings, utilizing an audio recorder. I also recorded through hand-written notes. The length and depth of the interviews provided a rich description in which their experiences were

chronicled. A clear process through which the data was managed is described in the data analysis section.

### Data Analysis

Huberman and Miles (1994) describe data analysis as a custom built, “choreographed” process (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the data collection, analysis and reporting are interrelated, occurring at the same time throughout the research process. Although this chapter provides a strong foundation for the design of this study, an important element of qualitative research is the continual fluctuating process—that is, an emergent design as the study unfolds.

This continual process emphasizes the conscious state—intentionality. For a researcher, intentionality involves developing an acute awareness of his or her own assumptions and biases as part of the analysis process. Through self-reflection, I am committed to monitor these assumptions so that I suspend them— a process coined as the *epoche*, in which all prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas are set aside. This process, also referred to as bracketing, requires “unusual, sustained attention, concentration, and presence” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 88). Bracketing allows for describing the experience in a textural language, that is, examining every statement with equal consideration, and reducing it through horizontalization (p.97).

I employed the process of reduction throughout each part of the research process: the recorded focus group interview, the journals and workshop data, and the audio-recorded interviews. After collecting each piece of data, I used member-checking to clarify it and to ensure the participants’ perspectives were accurately represented in the

results of the study (Creswell, 2013). After gathering information through the workshop data and the interviews, I entered the information, verbatim, into a database, reading it in entirety several times in order to gain a holistic sense of the data (Downey, 2008). After completing multiple readings of each participant's complete response, I deciphered commonalities, key issues, and contradictory issues, recording them through annotations within margin notes (Creswell, 2013). Through my notes, I developed a preliminary set of codes and created a working definition for each code to organize data systematically. Each response was separated into distinct units—each comprising a unit of analysis (Downey, 2008).

One way to ensure accuracy and credibility of this process is to utilize a third party to clarify the analysis. Constat (1992) proposed that a sample of the responses be reviewed by a colleague who has been oriented to the intent of the study—one who is otherwise not involved in it (Downey, 2008). I initiated dialogue with a colleague who agreed to fulfill this role for my study. This procedure is important because it provides a mode of comparison to reveal any inconsistencies that exist within the coding structure. From there, the results were calculated for their inter-rater agreement, utilizing Cohen's Kappa. As outlined by Cockrell et al., (1999), any disparity may be addressed through discussion to reconcile codes or adopt new codes if needed (Downey, 2008). Once the coded data is confirmed to be consistent and accurate, it may then be categorized according to themes that emerge with each category, a process through which many possibilities exist: imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). Themes are broad units of information that form a common idea (Creswell, 2013). Once formed, insight and

intuition allow for interpretation and a connection to the existing body of research.

Through an inductive process, these interpretations unravel a synthesis of experience that creates an “essence of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994). Represented by examples, the results of the study projects the essence of stress and coping as experienced by pre-service teachers and the ways in which teacher self-efficacy served them during their transformation from student to teacher.

### Trustworthiness

Measures of validity in qualitative studies are expressed through using alternative terms and methodologies that apply to naturalistic research (Creswell, 2013, p. 246).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to validity as trustworthiness, utilizing terminology such as credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability and confirm ability—this research study accounts for each of these facets. However, trustworthiness within this study rests upon my ability to capture, describe, and interpret the data so that I may synthesize the essence of this phenomenon.

I established credibility through my position as a researcher. My approach to this study extends from a professional viewpoint—through a genuine interest and concern for the topic and for my participants. Aware of my own position and biases, I controlled for factors that may have distorted my perceptions (Creswell, 2013). Employing the epoche through intentionality, transparency, and critical reflection effectively suspended my biases so that the trustworthiness of my study remained strong (Moustakas, 1994). A further description of my roles is provided through my reflexivity and positionality described in the next section. While I was a cooperating teacher and field supervisor for a

few of my participants, some worked with other cooperating teachers in other schools. Through this construct, power differences existed. Although I held a supervisory role, my contacts with the participants rendered “neutral,” and I conducted the interviews in a conversational style partnership—student to student.

In addition, the study established authenticity because I carried out over an extended timeframe within the natural setting of the school environment. The longevity of the study as well as “layers” of triangulated data yielded rich description to foster an essence that allows for transferability (Creswell, 2013). Connections and/or contradictions to the existing research provided a measure of dependable, confirmed results, as did the utilization of member-checking and conferring with colleagues to confirm the processes. Finally, following a structured protocol throughout each stage of the process served to further promote trustworthiness.

### Chapter Summary

The methodologies described throughout this chapter provided a blueprint for my study—an established pathway for an emerging design. The goal of this phenomenological study was to chronicle the experiences of pre-service teachers as they applied theory to practice. Through a longitudinal model, I hoped to examine and describe how practical exposure to the school culture, as well as an individualized approach to stress management education enabled students to develop human skills and assets and see themselves as well-equipped to meet the demands of the profession. The implications may inform teacher education programs and schools about the importance of

time and curricular resources in the learning to teach, as well as preventative measures for coping with the stressors of the profession.

## CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Introduction

Hearing the voices of pre-service teachers as they describe their transformation from student to teacher functioned as the primary focus of this longitudinal research study. Qualitative measures were used to capture a sense of their preconceptions about the stressors of the profession, coping mechanisms, and supports within the teacher education program—primarily, the supports they perceived as contributing to their teacher self-efficacy throughout the transformative process of learning to teach. The study emphasized stress management and coping, and throughout this process, a stress management workshop was developed and implemented to accompany their practical teaching experiences.

Data collection occurred through several methods. First, a focus group, formed to unveil the preconceptions of students regarding stress and coping, targeted the participants' deepest concerns regarding teaching, and yielded data to inform the development of a stress management curriculum. Presented in a series of workshops throughout the first practicum semester, the workshops served as a mediating support to create awareness about stress and coping and most importantly, a resource to build teacher self-efficacy. The workshop also established a platform for data collection. The final part of the process culminated with individual interviews occurring toward the end of the practical experience. These interviews coincided with the end of the student's

journey of learning to teach through the teacher education program. This chapter highlights the results of the inquiry founded upon the following research questions:

MFQ: How do secondary pre-service teachers describe their experience of the transformation from student to teacher and perceive themselves as ready to cope with the environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors of teaching as they complete the program?

SFQ1: What are the general preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ2: What are the personal preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ3: What are the stressors that secondary pre-service teachers encounter during their practicum teaching experience and the coping strategies they utilize to address them?

SFQ4: What supports and resources do secondary pre-service teachers perceive as instrumental to building strong teacher self- efficacy beliefs?

### Order and Sequencing

Each part of the process shaped the next, following the participants in their journey toward becoming teachers. This chapter will discuss the results of each step of the process. In order to provide a “roadmap” for how the process of the study unfolded, graphic illustrations are provided. The first graphic illustration highlights the order and progression of each step, demonstrating the order of how the results are presented. The

second graphic features the overarching framework of transformation from student to teacher, aligning the steps of the process with the research questions.

Finally, later in this chapter, the conceptual framework is presented once again, illustrating the demands-control-support nucleus and highlighting related themes that emerged in the transformation from student to teacher.



Figure 4.1: Progression of Steps

In addition, the following graphic illustrates the conceptual framework, first emphasizing the overarching idea of transformation from student to teacher. Under this framework, each question corresponds with the steps of the process.

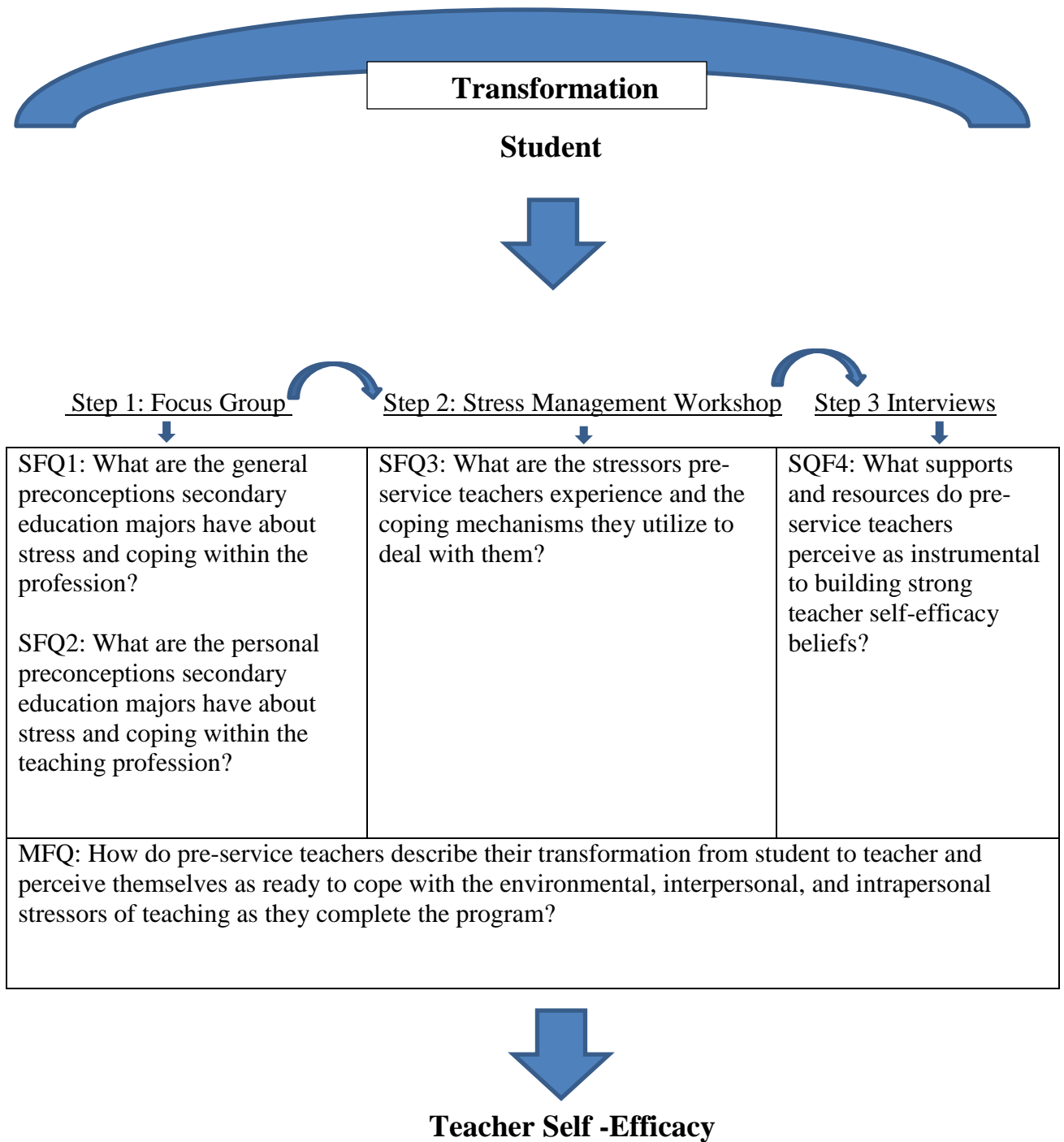


Figure 4:2 Steps of the Process

### Step One: The Focus Group

An essential question in order to understand the transformation that takes place between student and teacher is grounded in the general preconceptions about the profession of teaching. A student's earliest school experiences first shape attitudes about learning, teaching, and school itself. It serves as the basis for first choosing to become a teacher and establishing an identity as one who teaches. The earliest preconceptions surfaced during the initial focus group interview.

Table 4.1 below captures a profile of each individual respondent, identified by student number and the pseudonym. Each participant provided demographic information, indicating information regarding the ideas about the greatest stressor that teachers face.

In addition, each participant referenced his or her greatest personal strength—one that would serve him or her well in the teaching profession. The next column highlights what each participant revealed to be the greatest vulnerability (at the current time), and the last data illustrates how each participant numerically rated his or her level of readiness to begin practicum. This was set on a scale of 1-10, with one being the lowest, and ten being the highest.

Table 4.1: Participant Demographics

Demographics	Anticipated Stressors	Strengths	Vulnerabilities	Readiness
S1:Midnight Black Male, Age 23	Curriculum Constraints	Talking to people	Being so close in age to my students	9
S2: Royal Blue Female, Age 21	Workload	Advisors; organizatio n skills	Disciplining students	6
S3: Splendid Yellow Female, Age 21	Power struggles	Resources; other teachers	My emotions; being accepted	5
S4:Pastel Pink Female, Age 21	Preparing Content	Passion to teach	Feeling accepted by students	4
S5: Baby Blue Female, Age 21	Dealing with Parents	Adaptable	Autonomy to make decisions about curriculum	7

Based on their general and personal perceptions about the profession, as well as their past experiences, the focus group disclosed their concerns and expectations, revealing emerging “tensions” between their purposes for becoming teachers as well as the vulnerabilities they anticipated in doing so. The focus group session not only revealed the participants’ general perceptions and sense of readiness, but also their expressed needs and expectations. The data revealed concerns related to the interpersonal connections with others, including meeting the diverse needs of students, accomplishing task related roles within the environment, and also addressing questions within the intrapersonal dimension: self-competence and purpose. In order to address the overarching question, the data was transcribed, coded, condensed, and applied to the three categories of stressors, outlined by Swick (1980): Interpersonal, Environmental, and Intrapersonal.

## The Interpersonal Dimension

### Helping People

Teaching, largely defined as a “helping profession,” is founded upon forging deep interpersonal connections. The participants within the focus group unanimously voiced these interpersonal connections to be the greatest “appeal” of the teaching profession, anticipating they would draw the greatest satisfaction from a profession offering the opportunity to interact with other people and to impact lives. Members of the focus group each expressed their personal reasons for becoming teachers, reflecting upon their own experiences in relating to others, both positive and negative. Three reported having highly positive experiences, loving school, and building close connections with their teachers and peers. However, two of the students asserted they intensely disliked school, claiming poor teachers, strained relationships, and irrelevant curriculum to be primary reasons. These participants reported being intrigued with “students like them” and believed that they may do better to help students who do not want to be in school.

Regardless of whether high school was an overall positive experience or not, all five participants cited “helping others” to be the primary reason for becoming teachers, each stating they are “interested in people in general.” Baby Blue asserted that she loves to be around people in all of their complexities, claiming they help her to be “more open-minded and see new perspectives.” She believed that teaching would provide her a chance to experience the “really intense feelings” that people have, and that because of this, teaching would never be a boring job. “People,” she affirmed, “make the job exciting.” Splendid echoed this by stating, “You never know when you are going to have

an impact on someone in a big way. Teaching is a chance to do that for someone—maybe it is to help a kid just pass high school or to have the “aha” moment where he or she decides to go to college. Teaching is a way for me to give back.”

Midnight stated he feels best about himself when helping others. He claimed, “I think it will be exciting to see growth and inspiration and to know I was a part of that. I am hoping to make a difference.” However, despite recognizing these appeals, the focus group also acknowledged that growth and inspiration do not just happen—that learning can be difficult. At times, it is the product of conflict, struggle, and negotiation.

### Power Struggles

Although the focus group stated that the interpersonal dimension of teaching to be the source of greatest satisfaction within the profession, their most pressing concerns were rooted within interacting with others: students, parents, and peers in the school environment. They were also concerned about receiving criticism from the public.

The group pointed out power struggles within the classroom as a potential concern. They voiced anxiety about assuming the authority of teacher with students so close to them in age. Splendid claimed herself to be “an emotional person” and wondered whether students would “capitalize” on that and “walk all over [her] if [she showed] a moment of weakness.” Other uncertainties arose about knowing when to discipline students. Royal raised a question about disciplining students over cell phone use or talking during class. In interacting with students one on one, a consensus among participants expressed concerns about how to have a close interpersonal connection with students while maintaining a position of authority and not becoming a friend.

Beyond one-on-one student interactions and classroom interactions, the participants also cited dealings with students' parents to be of even greater concern. Baby shared a story about a fellow pre-service teacher questioned by a parent: "What qualifies you to teach my daughter?" She went on to share that "having to defend yourself like that in front of a parent would be very threatening to me personally." When asked what she feels most uncomfortable about upon entering her practicum as a pre-service teacher, she stated "getting parents to like and respect me."

### Respect

Respect for teachers, in general, raised some apprehension for the pre-service teachers and they envisioned this to be the greatest stressor that teachers face. Splendid quoted there to be "such a stigma around education," barring teachers from receiving credit for the work they do, as reflected in the low pay and societal views regarding the importance of the work. They all agreed that people in general seem to view teaching as a "fallback" job—that teachers become teachers because they cannot do anything else. They also believed that many people are not cognizant of "how much teachers help students" or "how hard they work," and this makes it difficult for them to treat teachers with the "respect they deserve." However, while the group acknowledged the negative stigma associated with teaching, they also anticipated that the interpersonal relationships formed within teaching would bring the greatest satisfaction within the profession, making it "worth it,"—in a sense overriding the negative stigma and the low pay.

## The Environmental Dimension

### Curricular Content

The focus group expressed concern about the environmental factors inherent within the system: meeting curriculum requirements amidst time constraints and assessing student learning measured through standardized testing. The focus group discussed their apprehension about the curriculum: “what they would be required to teach.” Although they stated they were aware these requirements would vary from school to school, each of them admitted feeling some uneasiness about embracing specific requirements. Pastel stated, “I’m feeling inspired by what I want to teach, but feeling a little worried about just being handed books and told to teach curriculum that may not be very engaging for the students.”

### Preparation and Planning

Another concern revolving around curriculum included preparation and planning. Pastel conveyed her nervousness about “trying to master the content while learning how to teach it at the same time.” In addition to planning and executing the curriculum, the pre-service teachers felt that meeting all of the common core requirements seemed to be a daunting task. They expressed some uncertainty about how to carry out all of the standards and how to make sure students are ready for the standardized tests. Baby aired some angst as she expressed, “student’s grades could be linked to my value as a teacher, and that my salary could depend upon that.”

## Resources

On the contrary, despite dealing with these environmental issues, the group also identified the “environmental” resources that could help them address their concerns. Both Royal and Splendid recognized their fellow teachers and their advisors to be assets in times of need. They found that collaboration with others may help a person learn different approaches of overcoming problems that emerge on a day-to-day basis, and this can happen in many ways. For example, Baby regarded conferences as a way to collaborate with others and to learn more about the school environment. Another consideration, according to Midnight, was the time spent in the school environment providing him “lessons in professionalism.” He claimed this time helped with things like “getting used to wearing slacks and a dress shirt, and going to work Monday through Friday, 8:00-5:00.” The participants expressed that, “the more time they [spent] in the school environment, the more comfortable they [felt].” According to Royal, “You can never have enough time,” recognizing there are multiple layers of “everything we have to learn” (Focus Group Interview).

The participants acknowledged an acute awareness that the school environment can be a stressful one, arising primarily from the day-to-day concerns such as using time effectively, implementing common core curriculum, and meeting standards assessed through state mandated testing.

## The Intrapersonal Dimension

### Teacher Self-Efficacy

The focus group members showed varied levels of experience prior to practicum and almost all agreed it proved beneficial toward preparation. They claimed to need the extra time in schools, finding it valuable, but with all of the other requirements, “it could be more helpful if the teacher education program acknowledged the extra effort and time” (Splendid, Focus Group Interview). Others stated that the extra experience provided a lesson in professionalism and opened their eyes about “how much goes into the job.” However, despite these experiences, the participants expressed strong concerns with self throughout the focus group interview—questions stemming from the centralized fear: Am I adequate?

From this central question emerged many others, such as “How will I make decisions about curriculum? How will I manage my emotions when dealing with difficult students or situations? Will the students accept me? Will the parents see me as qualified to teach their students? Will my cooperating teacher trust me? Will I be able to plan and deliver effective lessons? Am I even cut out to do this job?”

### Vulnerabilities

Vulnerabilities about fulfilling roles, decision making and forming appropriate interpersonal relationships with students dominated the focus group. Four of the five focus group members expressed feeling vulnerable due to the relatively young age differential, anticipating challenges with high school students accepting them as teachers.

One member thought she would have difficulty managing emotions when difficulties arose, and another member showed concern about making curricular decisions. All five members anticipated distress about handling these difficulties, about managing time, and finding work/life balance. Most, though not all, were also concerned about helping students with learning difficulties and managing the day-to day-events.

#### Strengths:

Acknowledging their personal vulnerabilities helped pre-service teachers tap into their strengths. Each of the focus group members reported seeing him or herself as possessing a defining strength that would help them to become an effective teacher. Midnight cited his greatest strength as being able to talk to people effectively, especially students in high school. In addition to people skills, Pastel referred to organization while Royal said she relied on her adaptability. Finally, Splendid and Pastel each stated their enthusiasm and passion for their subject to be an important element.

#### Coping Mechanisms:

I asked the participants about the coping measures they anticipated using in order to manage the stressors associated with teaching. The focus group largely described palliative methods, or ways of coping through mindset, such as regular exercise, journaling, talking to family and friends, and spending time outdoors. When asked what resources would help students prepare for practicum and to become teachers, the focus group designated the importance of establishing a community in which they could support one another and receive guidance from mentors. They emphasized close

connections and opportunities for collaboration and encouragement. One individual suggested that attending conferences and professional development experiences helped provide further preparation for teaching, thus enhancing the ability to cope with inadequacies.

Overall, focus group results revealed issues spanning over the interpersonal, environmental, and intrapersonal dimensions, acknowledging “tension” within each. The members unanimously and enthusiastically believed an added measure of support could potentially alleviate some of the strains they anticipated. As the members were on board to participate in a stress management workshop, their voiced apprehensions “kindled” the content to be addressed in the workshop sessions—they would take steps to address the anticipated interpersonal, environmental, and intrapersonal demands as well as those they experienced during their practicum experience. The results of the study, coupled with a teacher training workshop model previously used with preschool teachers, provided a basis for the content of the workshop by identifying five key dimensions: self, environment, student, diversity, and roles/strategies (Carter and Curtis, 1994). The following table correlates the results of the focus group with the interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental dimensions, providing a structure for the stress management workshop to be developed.

Table 4.2 Focus Group Results

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Tensions</u>	<u>Anticipated Stressors</u>	<u>Anticipated Coping</u>
Intrapersonal	Vulnerabilities Versus Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing Emotions</li> <li>• Making Decisions</li> <li>• Role Ambiguity</li> <li>• Role Overload</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise, Journaling</li> <li>• Talking to others</li> <li>• Learn about Stress &amp; Coping</li> <li>• Self-Reflection</li> </ul>
Environmental	Curriculum Planning Versus Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum Assessment</li> <li>• Time Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time and Experience</li> <li>• Utilizing Resources</li> <li>• Building Relationships</li> </ul>
Interpersonal	Helping Others Versus Power Struggles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance/Respect</li> <li>• Power Struggles</li> <li>• Understanding and teaching students different than me</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Building Relationships</li> <li>• Self-Reflection</li> </ul>

### Supports and Resources

Regarding the need for supportive measures and resources, the results of the focus group indicated an interest in additional measures of support throughout practicum. The consensus was that these students were open to additional opportunities to gain skills, particularly through stress management training and guidance. They thought this opportunity could provide an important resource for pre-service teachers as they complete their practicum experience, begin student teaching, and prepare to enter the profession of teaching.

The participants of the focus group were particularly in favor of developing a support system among peers and networking among prospective mentor teachers who may serve as long-term supporters. They were also highly aware of managing the day-to-day dynamics of teaching and were interested in developing time management skills. Another emerging theme captured a sense of decision-making about curricular content, delivery, and student discipline. These students largely valued the practical experience—time spent in the classroom to observe and to interact with more experienced teachers, asking questions and adapting to the environment. In addition, the participants were adamant that stress management training would likely offer enhanced preparation for their practical learning experiences. All five expressed interest and enthusiasm to participate in the second part of the study: the stress management sessions. They revealed a strong belief that such experiences build their confidence, competencies, and equip them for the profession of teaching.

In addition, all of the participants believed that stress management education would help them in their practicum placements as well as become teachers. They wanted to know about stress and the science behind it; however, they expressed a particular interest in “teacher stress.” In addition, the focus group thought that the stress workshop, if presented in mini-sessions, should be a continual process that afforded them the ability to share their personal stressors, collaborate with one another, and work through issues. If presented as part of the curriculum, they thought it possible to pair it with another class, such as the classroom management course. All students in the group expressed the

opinion that stress management could be a beneficial component of the teaching program and that they should be able to earn credit for it.

While research studies have concluded that interventions may help to mitigate stress in general, it is imperative to assess stress before actions to resolve it (Hansen and Sullivan, 2003). The results gleaned from the focus group served as an assessment to help inform the design of the stress management sessions. The overall goal of the sessions was to create a “mediating support program” that would serve the expressed needs of the participants regarding stress and coping, enhancing the intrapersonal dimension to cultivate a sense of personal power through teacher self-efficacy. According to Bandura, sources of self-efficacy occur through four processes: mastery experience, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological cues (1986). In designing the workshop, I utilized these sources, coupling them with the anticipated and actual stressors and coping mechanisms in order to serve the pre-service teachers.

### Step Two: The Development of the Stress Management Workshop

The qualitative design of the study allows for an emerging design—that which addresses the central questions of the research study (Creswell, 2007). The focus group session revealed the general and personal perceptions of pre-service teachers toward the teaching profession, their experiences and sense of readiness, and their expressed needs and expectations. The results of this session shaped the next step of the study—to create a platform designed to address the perceptions, to enhance their sense of readiness or teacher self-efficacy, and also to aid in meeting their needs and expectations.

Klatt (1999) describes nine elements of planning needed to conduct a successful workshop. After assessing needs, an agenda and purpose is established and outcomes defined. From there, the content and process determine the design and the capability. Finally, feedback provides a way to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop. The goal of the stress management workshop designed for this study was provide social support, to create awareness about stress and coping, to create an individualized self-care plan, and to help develop teacher self-efficacy in the transformation from student to teacher. Participant feedback was a critical component of determining the effectiveness of the workshop.

Launched through the results of the focus group, the curriculum was adapted from the Five Examinations framework (Carter & Curtis, 1994), originally used in the preparation of early childhood educators. Using this framework as a reference, I utilized the following elements viewed from a stress management orientation: Self, Environment, Student, Diversity, and Roles/Strategies. To view the elements more holistically, I designed the curriculum for participants to examine “self,” adopting the roles and strategies of teacher in order to address the learning needs of students in their diversity—unfolding under the umbrella of the school environment: first, the classroom and then, the larger context of school.

An examination of these individual elements helped the participants first view these factors in isolation in order to understand how they interact and affect one another. For example, we first examined “self” within the learner paradigm—this involved a snapshot of the adolescent student profiles and interacting with students of varied

learning styles, aptitudes, and attitudes. This examination captured a sense of attitudes toward different students, bias, and approaches to dealing with certain situations. All of these factors culminated within the new tasks and roles emphasized through the transformation of becoming a teacher— seeing self through the teacher lens.

Various examples of participant work products are included in the next section, utilized to illustrate the participants' insights, reflections, and perceived transformation.

### Step Three: Transformational Case Profiles

Weiss (1994) describes the interview process in his publication, *Learning from Strangers*. Based on a series of semi-structured questions, the interview protocol for this study aligned with the main-focus question and sub-focus questions. The participants each took part in a one-on one personal interview during the semester following their practicum, during the final stretch of their student teaching tenure. During this time, the participants revealed experiences that marked their transformation from student to teacher: the reframing of their perspectives, their sense of teacher self-efficacy and readiness to enter the profession, as well as the resources and supports that contributed to such. The individual transformational case profiles provide a detailed description of these experiences, and the emerging themes are synthesized at the end of this chapter.

The following section offers in in-depth description of each of the participants, highlighting his or her transformation throughout learning to teach: from student to teacher. It highlights each participants' journey, beginning with the student profile, the teacher preparation profile that describes “disorienting dilemmas” and the reframing of

perspective. Each profile also captures the participants' perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and readiness to enter the profession, as well as experiences that shaped their teacher self-efficacy. This process may help illustrate the changing perception of self as each participant transformed from student to teacher, addressing the following research question: How do pre-service teachers describe the experience of their transformation from student to teacher and perceive themselves as ready to cope with the environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors of teaching as they complete the program? Each section highlights work-product from the stress management workshop and culminates with the participant's metaphor for teaching.

### Midnight Black

#### Student Profile:

As a high school student, Midnight described himself as a bookworm who took AP classes in high school, attaining 3.6 GPA. He was a captain of the football team and participated in other sports, while also maintaining a job. However, Midnight stated that he hated school: "What defines me most as a student is that I learned almost nothing important in school" (Workshop Data). Attributing his dislike of school to poor teachers, those he claimed to be condescending and patronizing, Midnight decided to become a teacher believing he can do better. He cited his most favorable quality as the ability to relate well to most students, especially those who dislike school. He stated, "I care about students and I think I can reach those who dislike school, because I was one of them."

The following figure represents Midnight’s “student lens—it is the result of the first activity during session one of the workshop. Each window represents a related mini-prompt:

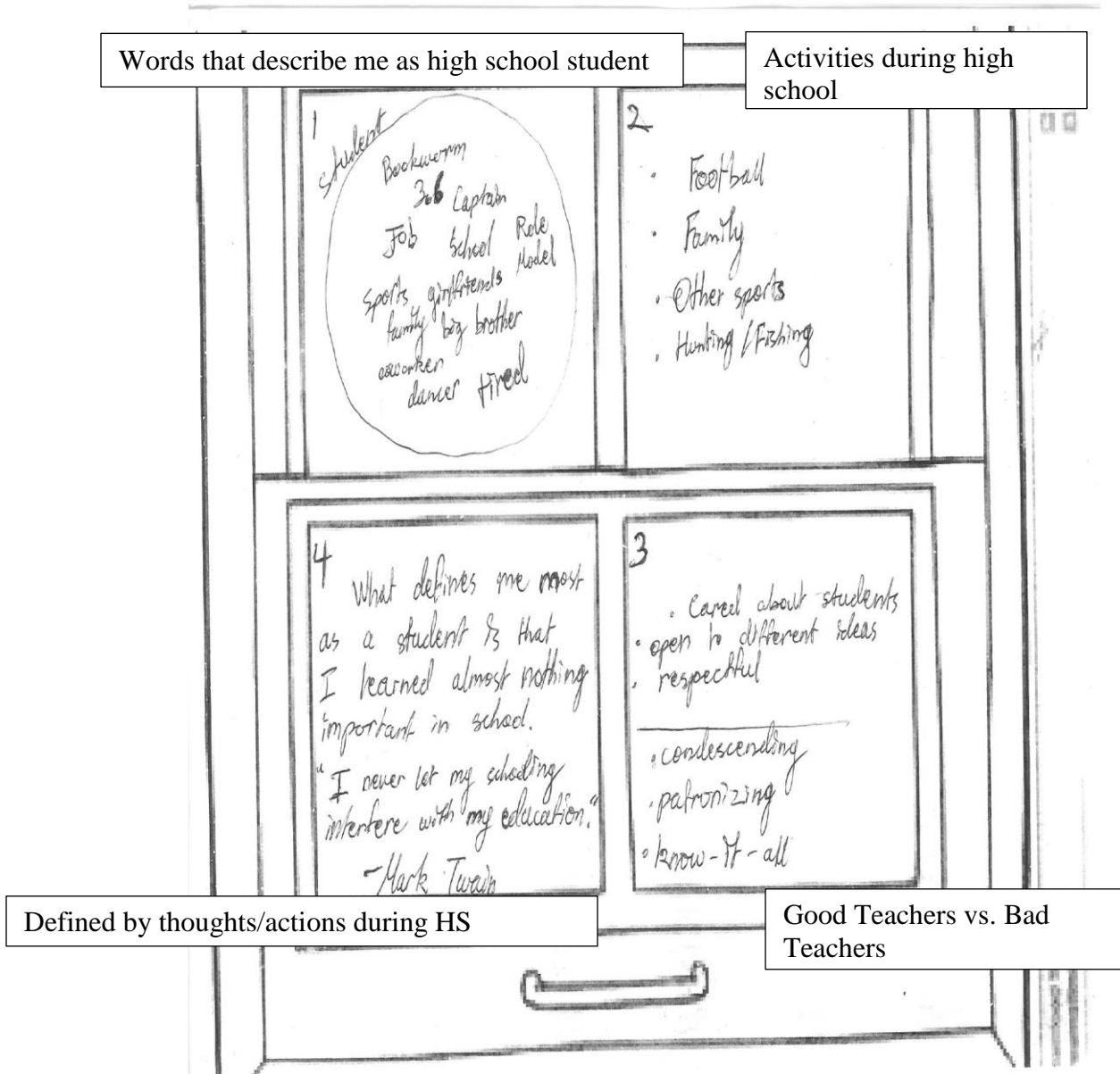


Figure 4.3 Midnight’s Window Activity

Teacher Preparation Profile

Working various jobs since sixteen years of age, Midnight asserted himself to be a hard-working, well-rounded individual who is well suited to enter the profession of teaching. He worked as a professional writing tutor, and spent over 100 hours in his practicum placement: AP English class and Junior English at medium sized high school. In addition, Midnight followed up with his student teaching experience in the same classroom under the same teacher, citing it as extremely beneficial: “It’s been so huge. Being with my [CT] has been perfect. We have gotten to know one another better, and I have been able to get to know the students better. It has really solidified how I want my classroom to be.” From this experience, Midnight expressed interest in implementing discussion techniques such as the Harkness, as well as utilizing movies as text. Coming from a large high school of over 4000 students, Midnight believed one of his strengths to be his ability to interact with others and to relate to students who may dislike school. He affirmed, “I have a really good rapport with students. If you can have way more positive interactions with students, when it comes time to have that negative interaction, it goes much smoother. I come at it from a place of mutual respect.” In addition to this interpersonal element, Midnight discussed his ability to manage the workload of an English teacher:

The main thing is being self-aware enough to know what you need, and I know for myself that I need to leave my work here at the end of the school day. I am big on being fully engaged at school. I know that when I am at school, I am focused on school, and when I leave for the day, I am focused on home. I feel like I have gotten really good at time management. I want to be the best teacher I can be when I

am at school, but when I go home, I want to be the best family man, husband, and hopefully a father someday.

Midnight also highlighted a learned resourcefulness, his perceptions of intrapersonal strength. Through his pre-service teaching experience, Midnight claimed that “there is patience in me that I never knew I had—I knew I had the strength, but never knew I had the patience. I never thought of patience as something you can practice and develop like a muscle.”

The practice of patience served Midnight well as he discussed a specific disorienting dilemma he encountered:

Wow, I really grew a lot. We have a student I will call “Ajax.” He is a full blown rage issues kind of a kid—one who will throw desks. He’s a big kid, my size, but you have to be really careful with him because he has the mind of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader. Last week, the kids were squirrely on a day I was being observed. Bottom line, CT isn’t there, this kid is just sitting there, and it’s always a struggle to get him to work, even to take out a piece of paper. I walk over and try to get him to work, and he has no paper, so I get him some paper. Then all of the sudden he bursts out with [these profanities, in this outrage that he forgot a pencil]. He throws tantrums, and I’m just saying, he’s the kind of kid who will flip desks, so I’m just “Oh Lord, please help me.” I didn’t react. I just got the kid a pencil and he said thanks, took it, and started writing. I said, it’s okay. It was a situation that could have can rapidly escalated to a dangerous [level]. It could not have gone much better, because I eliminated a potentially dangerous situation...in about 20 seconds. That was a good confidence booster for me.

Reflecting upon this mastery experience Midnight claimed he learned from this incident that he is capable of handling unpredictable situations in the classroom.

Another interpersonal situation that placed Midnight in a disorienting dilemma may not have been so readily resolved:

There was this one thing, actually pretty weird. I have a kid in class who does not really like me very much...I don't really know why. He just doesn't like me. One day his mother came in about some other issue, and we talked. She said "We've heard all about you. I told my son, you should just give him a chance, he doesn't seem like that bad of a guy." Then I found out he told his mom I said he was annoying. I've never had any problems with the kid. He just makes up this bold-faced lie to his mother.

When asked if this experience changed how he perceived himself as a teacher, Midnight responded, "Yes, I couldn't figure out where this kid was coming from. I think most of my students like me just fine, but for some reason, this kid just doesn't. It was disturbing to me, because they can make up anything they want. Midnight went on to express:

It made me feel poorly. As a person and a man, I am really big on honesty. I would be the first one to admit if I had called the kid annoying, but I didn't. I wanted to confront the situation with the mother, but I figured it was not the time or the place. It was so freaky for me. I always knew I [was] susceptible to what my students will say about me, especially my female students, but this really hit home.

Midnight described the ways in which he attempted to resolve the issue, stating that he talked to his CT about it for about a half an hour, and later his girlfriend. "My CT said that you're going to have negative interactions with students, that's all there is to it. When you have one though, [also] think about the four positive interactions you had with students that day." Midnight acknowledged the reframing of perspective—"there's nothing I can do to change this kid, so I know I have to change my mindset. I recognize when I have done everything I can do. At the end of the day, I am only half of the equation. It's a mindset thing for sure" (Personal Interview).

### Perceived Teacher Self-Efficacy Outcomes

Midnight described himself as “pretty darn ready” to enter the profession, expressing absolute enthusiasm and commitment to teaching. He described himself as ready to persist through the challenges of teaching, and to establish courses of action to solve problems as they arise. Goal-oriented, and eager to begin his career, Midnight referred to several elements that contributed to this sense of readiness:

I would say opportunities and the experiences I’ve had volunteering and working with students gave me confidence in the sense of doing things I did not have much experience with, like editing essays. That’s one thing we did not spend time doing, but I did it working as the afterschool tutor. It was a big confidence builder because it would help students get good grades—kids would come back and say, hey, look, I got a B on this, and then thank me for my help.

Through connecting to his mentor teachers, student, and others in the school environment, Midnight believed that his practical experience had prepared him as well as it possibly could. He believed himself to be ready to start his first job as he stated, “ I have become a professional.” (Interview).

### Perceived Supports and Resources:

Midnight also described the importance of networking and establishing community through mentor relationships and peer collaboration. Midnight indicated three professors who served as role-models, each [bringing] a lot to the table, each something different, but something important:

“Professor P—I have so much respect for him as a man and a teacher. He listens to his students, and doesn’t make

judgments. He showed me how important it is to listen and hear what students have to say. Professor N told stories that showed the importance of being prepared for anything, and he also fostered this idea of mutual respect. I learned about using homework as a contract from him. Dr. A...she had a love of fostering discussion and was big on being honest with your students. She went above and beyond to show students how to create their own knowledge.

These experiences constitute Bandura's (1997) model of vicarious experience, learning through the experiences of others, as well as social persuasion—a sense of connection established through discourse. Midnight also described the peer-collaboration established through his participation in the stress-management sessions:

I think the biggest things those sessions did was gave a sense of community, and helped me to know for sure that I am not alone in this. I am big on talking things out and we talked a lot. I got to hear how others feel, and it helped me to feel like I am not the only one having feelings about things. I didn't feel like I had to ask what is wrong with me, when it seemed like everyone else was not struggling with things as much as I was. It was almost like a therapy group that was giving me practice to think about how I felt and then talk about it, which was huge. Because all we ever do it go to classes, where they talk at you, and talk to you, but very rarely, if ever, do they ask: how do you feel about this? No one ever stops to ask, is this useful? As students, having some power, having some respect where your opinion is valued, I think the sessions helped with that.

Midnight discussed the sessions as being “really student-oriented, helping students with their attitude and with their health—their emotional and social well-being.” Of all the workshop activities, he stated the metaphor activity to be the most beneficial one. It helped “give me meaning of my core beliefs as a teacher and helped me to see all the parts of being a teacher.”

To illustrate his overall sense of coping with occupational stress and readiness to assume the roles and responsibilities as teacher, Midnight developed his metaphor as such:

I am a bridge builder. My students and I build a bridge of knowledge together. Once we have built the bridge, I invite them to gladly cross over, and burn it. And build new ones. Some bridges they will keep forever. Others they won't. But they will always have the chance to further their knowledge. And with these bridges they can walk all around the world.

In his writing, Midnight also referred to "What Teachers Make," by Taylor Mali, an anecdote about teachers making a difference.

Teaching is about making a difference, and I think I am pretty ready. You can only learn so much from student teaching, and I have learned a lot. My deficit is that I am young and there are just some things I have not experienced yet. I overcome it by saying, yeah, I'm inexperienced, but I'm going to learn, and I am confident enough to start that process.

Midnight's ultimate goal is to enter a profession he loves and to make a difference.

### Baby Blue

#### Student Profile:

When describing what kind of student she was, Baby drew an angry face next to an apple. She hated school, and in fact, at one point she tried to get her parents to let her drop out. It was clear that she often was disengaged; however, English class was the exception. Despite this negative disposition, she wanted to do well and completed her work proficiently. She was an honors/AP student and achieved a high GPA. Baby's primary influences included good English teachers, involvement with extracurricular

activities, love of travel, and her family—especially her brother. She indicated that she also really wanted to do well in life and she understood that she needed school to have options.

Teacher Preparation Profile:

The best teachers, in Baby's experience, embrace creativity and may not readily accept the way things are typically done in school. They may question or challenge the school's curriculum. Such teachers foster a love of reading and intrinsically care about their students. Thinking of these types of teachers, Baby's choice to become an English teacher was rooted in her care and concern for students. She stated, "I am really intrigued with students who really dislike school, and I would like to work with them to see if I could help them." While Baby stated she is interested in working with "all of [her cooperating teacher's] students, she noted a strong inclination for students who have obstacles in their lives: "I want to know how to make school useful for them."

Baby claimed that as a college student she has changed: "Now, I feel like I am a much more understanding person than I was as a high school student." Baby believed this change occurred because of her practical experience in the high school classroom as well as her additional work experience mentoring students during the summer. Baby also worked with college age students, serving as a writing tutor. She believed that all of these experiences helped her to transform and grow.

However, Baby's experience had not been without challenges, and even though she served both her practicum and student teaching experience under the same

cooperating teacher, she claimed that the two experiences of her first practicum and then student teaching had been very different. She explained:

Well, I, have kind of a hard run in college, having to graduate in four years and then had to take twenty-one credits at a time, and work. I was busy all of the time, and I thought that when I get to student teaching, it will be easier, an eight to five schedule, but what I've learned about that, is that you can do that sometimes, but teaching—it's not like other jobs, you take your work home with you, you think about it constantly, when you are at home, when you go to bed at night, it's always with you. You're constantly thinking, what's the plan for tomorrow, what do I need to get ready?

Baby affirmed that this “constant” presence caused her anxiety. Regarded as role overload, she dedicated a daunting number of hours to her student teaching assignment, extending beyond required hours to offer students detailed feedback and one-on-one help with assignments and mentoring. Despite preparation to be one of her coping strategies, she found herself stressed by needing to “prepare” the content she would be teaching, feeling as though she did not know her content very well:

You take a lot of lit classes, but it's so funny because there was nothing you would actually teach to high-schoolers... like Faulkner, the literature canon is not the high school canon. Analyzing literature is a solitary act... It would be more valuable to have the high school canon. Lit professors do not have an understanding of the English Education department, and they do not understand that teaching literature to high schoolers is more about having a conversation...

Although only four years older than the senior students she was teaching, Baby also described the assumptions she had regarding students. She explains,

... I thought that if I told students to do certain things, they would do them. I have found it is harder for me to teach actual content because the students won't do the tasks I tell

them to do. If a teacher told me to do a task, I did it, but I am finding students won't do the work. I gave an assignment and I planned to use the data for my TWS. I could not get the students to do the assignment. It was frustrating because I needed to collect data for my formative assessments, and only four students actually answered the questions. It annoyed me. Apathy was not my personal experience in high school, so I don't really understand it. It is a reflection on me if students do not do their work—and they stress this at the U, that if your students are not engaged, it is your fault.

In order to reconcile the frustration that Baby felt in this situation, she sought advice from her cooperating teacher, and through her conversation with him, she gained a new perspective.

But, I talked to my CT about that and he says, no, part of it has to be on the student. It is on your students as well...they are seventeen and eighteen, and many are going to school next year. They are going to find out that not everything is going to entertain them.

Baby recognized a disparity to exist between her theoretical experience and her concrete experience, finding it caused a disorienting dilemma—one not easily resolved. The tensions she experienced created role-ambiguity, as she negotiated with others in the environment:

In a broad sense, [working] with my CT a lot of the time, I am type A, and I believe in planning ahead of time, and having a CT who doesn't do that has been hard. Trying to be accommodating all the time for students causes a lot of stress. Keeping track of all that accounting—the staying organized thing is harder.

As the teacher and mentor working with students in the classroom, Baby also expressed frustration in dealing with apathetic students: “I am expected to do so much extra for students—and especially some students, who won't do anything for themselves.

I find it exhausting at times.” Yet, Baby continuously worked beyond the basic requirement, asserting, “I am loyal, invested, hard-working, and I never do the bare minimum, whether on major or minor tasks” (Personal Interview).

Her students witnessed these qualities in her, and provided feedback to her, which in turn, provided Baby a strong sense of competency. She declared, “They tell me that I am going to be a great teacher someday, because I get them.” All of these interpersonal experiences have helped Baby feel as though she now understands the roles and responsibilities that a teacher assumes.

The following figure provides an example of writing prompts used during session two of the writing workshop. These examples expressed Baby’s frustration at the time she was experiencing some of the issues described in her disorienting dilemmas. The first set of prompts illustrates how she responded to stress generally; the second set of prompts, on how she potentially could cope with the specific stressors she encountered. As Baby shared, these writing activities helped her to think about her experiences, write about them, and to engage in discussion with others’ about them—thus, providing a platform of support.

15 minute increments  
of worry time!

to specific elements within the environment  
and specific characteristics of the student...

↓ **Writing Prompts:**

Think about your experiences in your practicum placement over the last few of weeks...apply these experiences to the following questions ☺

1) Ways stress has been affecting me (related to the roles or responsibilities associated with practice teaching)

- ~~to be honest from friends~~
- existential crisis - am I even meant to do this?
- does my CT trust me?
- exhausted all the time - burnt out of school
- thinking about future too much:
  - I want to move back to Boston. how will that work?
  - Backups for teaching.

2) Ways I have found myself coping with these stressors

- I've watched a lot of "sex and the city"
- ~~eat~~ <sup>Eat</sup> unhealthy foods / comfort foods
- I would say that I'm not coping in a healthy way b/c:
  - obsessive over school. I have none of my own hobbies anymore.
  - obsessively planning every second of every day to ensure high productivity.
  - I call my parents, who are really encouraging.
  - Keep my mind on the future when this will

Applying  
meditation  
in the workplace

Figure 4.4: Baby's "My Voice" Writing Part 1

3) I typically see the cup...(half full or half empty)?

I try to see it half full. Sometimes it's really hard for me to not be overwhelmed by stress and feel slightly hopeless. However, I bounce back from stress pretty quick.

4) Stress affects me...

**In the mind**

- Feeling anxious, overwhelmed, irritable, angry, upset, sad/depressed, "jumpy"/hyper vigilant, fearful
- Having nightmares, obsessive thinking, emotional or angry outbursts
- Noting poor concentration/memory, poor problem solving or decision making, etc.

**In behavior**

- Withdrawing from co-workers, difficulty taking breaks/resting, talking too much
- Angry outbursts (with co-workers or patients), loss or increase of appetite, jumping from one activity to another (unfocused)
- Increased alcohol consumption or smoking, change in normal communications, etc.

**In the body**

- Fatigue, headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, muscle tightness (neck, shoulders, jaw)
- Sweating, shallow breathing, rapid heart rate, teeth grinding, etc.

**Spiritually**

- Feelings of loss or direction and purpose, emptiness
- Feeling punished, apathy, crisis of faith, etc.

Knowing yourself + knowing how you need to deal w/ stress.

**In the workplace**

- Low morale, apathy, silence, impaired communication, isolation, lack of teamwork and team spirit
- Low productivity, aggressive or confrontational behavior, high rates of absenteeism due to stress and illness, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.

Do you have a specific example?

more productive.  
During my summer job working on the Blackfeet Rez, there was a coworker on my six-person team that insulted me and made me feel patronized. I completely interpreted from the entire team and would only do

Don't always put up with burnout

no

yes

yes

Figure 4.5: Baby's My Voice Writing Part 2

### Perceived Teacher Self-Efficacy Outcomes

When describing her sense of readiness to enter the profession, Baby confidently identified key attributes that indicate strong teacher self-efficacy. She described task-related roles, those often considered to be environmental challenges, such as being able to speak in front of the class and to provide detailed feedback to students. Because she has a grasp of these task related roles, Baby asserted, “I can defend myself in a classroom.”

Baby’s assertion shows the reframing of perspective, as compared to her expression of vulnerability during the focus group session several months earlier. She previously indicated, “I would not know what to say to a parent who challenged me with the question, ‘what qualifies you to teach my child?’” She felt anxiety about how she would be able to defend herself in this kind of situation.

Directly stating that she now sees herself as being able to “defend” herself in a classroom, Baby also expressed a sense of personal power through a learned resourcefulness:

[I] learned to balance being the teacher with being more of a friend. I am not totally authoritative with the students. I help students to meet the standards. I see myself as more of a mentor, and this [role] has lead me to consider whether I want to just be a mentor or if I want to teach.

Baby also claimed a strong sense of empathy and patience, which she has developed over time, stating it to be more “than I would have expected.” In addition, the greatest intrapersonal challenge for her personally has been being a little more relaxed, and “willing to let things go.” She refers to this new mindset as making her “feel healthier, to have more confidence” in herself. Part of this confidence comes from seeing herself as

one who works to reach her students and help maximize their learning and potential.

Baby described herself through this metaphor:

As make-up artists, when applying cosmetics to a face, we enhance natural beauty. We add things that they, the students, may already know. The process goes differently every day. All faces are different; for example, the eye shape requires different shading and bone structure requires different contouring.

### Perceived Supports and Resources

Baby rendered her growth over time to several experiences and connections she had within the teacher education program as well as other opportunities. “Good mentors helped me to develop a persona,” she affirmed, describing a strong sense of professionalism that came from certain professors who served as strong role-models. Also, Baby attended and presented research at the National Conference for English Teachers during her senior year within the English Education program, referring to the experience as “something everyone should be encouraged to do.”

Baby also talked about her related work-experience as a college-level writing tutor giving her hands on experience dealing with writings and papers. She commented, “I ended up motivating some students who were resistant and that made me feel more capable.”

In addition, participating in the stress management workshop served Baby by instilling a sense of awareness and helping her to “see how others were struggling.” She stated, “it helped me [realize] how important coping strategies are.” Baby proceeded,

“It should be an option, but required, no. I think it should be highly encouraged, though, and available to all programs. I

also think it should be continued through student teaching and you should get one credit pass/fail. ...the stressors in college are different than in the profession, but I don't think that matters. It just helps knowing who you are and finding your own way to deal with things.

### Ruby Red

#### Student Profile:

Ruby alternated between high schools in different towns, and attended both of the high schools in which she completed her practicum and student teaching assignments. Ruby described herself as a conflicted student—one who struggled with many obstacles outside of school. Even though she completed all of her assignments and earned all A's, Ruby missed school frequently. She often questioned authority—something her mother often encouraged—and got suspended four times in high school. She often went to class stoned, relating her actions to a hard home-life: “I came from a low SES family with two alcoholic parents who were never home, or were drunk, so I alternated between rebelling, and trying to be perfect. Now I mostly just strive for perfection.”

#### Teacher Preparation Profile:

After graduation from high school in 2004, Ruby started college to obtain a sociology degree with the vision of helping youth in the justice system. She withdrew in 2006, and moved to Vicenza, Italy, where she worked for the Department of Defense for three years. Once she moved back to the States, Ruby re-enrolled in school with a fresh goal in mind: to become an English teacher. However, despite being a non-traditional

student, having gained some life experience, Ruby discussed her preconceptions about teaching:

So I think I definitely thought, I didn't know it was as complex as it was for sure. I was thinking of it for sure as a student, I had known I wanted to become a teacher for a while, I thought, I can do this, be a teacher. And I always liked school, it came easy for me. I just picked English because it was the easiest subject for me, and that is literally all the thought I put into it. But I didn't know it was as complex and nuanced as it was. And I had never thought of the interpersonal and the sociological aspects of it, how you would have to make decisions around all of that and manage that. I just thought that you would have this space, people would sit in desks, you would stand in front of the room, dress in teacher clothes, and talk about literature all day. That's what I thought (chuckles).

Ruby further described herself experiencing a transformational orientation regarding the complex, socio-political framework of school systems and the students they serve, or more importantly, may not serve. These experiences helped to solidify her beliefs about education, and her purposes for becoming a teacher.

Yeah, so, I was really surprised with a lot of things, and it worked in conjunction with classes at [the University] and professors I had, to where I was really able to sink into concepts and think about questions like, who does schooling serve, and who is schooling for, and it really spoke to these weaknesses that I perceived I had before I came into teaching, I was surprised that this really exists, and that I would encounter it, and then in my student teaching experience, sinking into the alternative school, that it exists to help those students that do not learn like me or may not like school, and I never anticipated that I would be interested in anything other than mainstream education, but now I have discovered, that I like it even more than mainstream education. This is my thing now that I want to do. That was a huge surprise, my orientation has totally changed. I want to know how we can serve everybody, not just those who like to learn.

Ruby's transformed orientation occurred gradually, shaped through her own personal experiences in the educational program and readings about teachers fostering social justice orientations into their approaches. "People are doing this," she asserted, and while she claimed "having these ideas in my head was at first stressful," she shared the disorienting dilemma that challenged her, bringing inspiration:

... I was really able to do this with an intro to Shakespeare lesson by bringing in key questions to reorient [students] in a different way. Questions like, why are we reading Shakespeare? Why not somebody else from this time period? Well, he's this white guy... Asking questions helped me weave in a couple of threads and helped build my competency. I saw that I can do this, and students will respond. ...It turns out there is a place for it.

#### Perceived Teacher Self- Efficacy Outcomes

Ruby declared her greatest asset to be her "ontology"— all of those past experiences and ideals that make her who she is. In addition, she described her sense of teacher self-efficacy as rooted within her ability to "see the big picture," and to "zoom in and out of this bigger picture into the classroom," bringing more relevance to student's lives. Being able to do this has fostered a strong sense of purpose and vision for her to become "the teacher she wants to be," and intensified both her enthusiasm and commitment to teaching. She emphasized that her growth and transformation throughout her practical experience, particularly student teaching, "felt great, like possibility, like hope."

This in turn helped her set goals of possibly moving out of the state to experience more diversity and opportunity in varied learning environments. She maintained, "I want

to be on the ground where the students are, and experience gender and social issues manifesting themselves in a classroom” (Personal Interview).

### Perceived Supports and Resources

In describing the teacher education program’s effect on helping her to develop teacher self-efficacy, Ruby attributed her perceived capabilities not to the content of the courses, but rather the professors who taught them, especially those who “integrated their own experiences” and inspired authentic teaching. Those mentors whose methods “aligned with her outlook of pedagogy” further built a sense of teacher self-efficacy. In addition, Ruby described her opportunity to attend a National Conference to present her research as “totally transformative,” claiming that, “all undergrads should have to do this research.” Ruby asserted this experience to be “more meaningful than education department classes—on the ground far more valuable.”

Participating in the stress management sessions helped Ruby to think about what initiatives may relieve stress and to initiate self-care. She described it as providing “a space that created stress-relief—we laughed, we talked.” Then, after the sessions, Ruby stated she was still mindful about how to move forward in her own self-care, sharing that she now listens to an audio-book: “The Power of Now” for fifteen or twenty minutes each day. Before the stress management workshop, Ruby illustrated, “I was operating out of a lot of repair, but now I deal with it comprehensively instead of in a retroactive panicked kind of way” (Personal Interview).

Ruby voiced the need for a new approach within the teacher education program, outlining strong recommendations for a more dialogic approach to instruction. She stated,

“[the program] needs feedback from people. I never felt like I was being invited into this conversation about education, yet I’m trying to become an educator.” Relating her thoughts further, Ruby described the practicum seminar and practicum field placement as conflicting experiences. She stated,

“It’s like this— very one-sided with them in seminar telling us how it was going to be in the classroom setting. The seminar was trying to be prescriptive and describe what the classroom was going to be, but that is not what we were necessarily experiencing. It should be the other way around—we should be describing what it is like in the classroom, but we don’t have the option to come back in and give feedback about what we are really experiencing.”

As a teacher, Ruby shared that she hopes to inspire change—both within the lives of individuals but also within the systemic structure of school. Although she was interested in working with all students, she expressed most interest in working with those who are self-proclaimed "haters of canned curriculum," of vocational tracks, from working class families—going into working class careers—students who are often labeled as at risk. She described herself looking forward to completing school, and working as a teacher with the passion, indifference, and the resistance that students often bring to a classroom.

### Royal Blue

#### Student Profile:

From a medium sized high school of approximately 700, Royal reported herself, for the most part, to be a good student while attending high school—one who earned all A’s; however, she often skipped class and lied to her teachers. Her parents, older brother

and coaches influenced her to do well in school, as did those few good teachers who cared about her. Good teachers, according to Royal, are relatable, passionate, funny and “in the know.” Looking back on high school, she regrets skipping class so much, and asserts herself to be now more empathetic, smarter, stronger, and much more respectful of teachers.

#### Teacher Preparation Profile:

Royal’s pre-teaching experiences included mentoring and tutoring within a writing workshop. Organizational skills and seeking help from her advisors were her self-proclaimed strengths, while she felt vulnerable at the thought of disciplining students. Her practicum experience afforded her the opportunity to work in an on-line credit recovery class with 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders.

At the beginning of her experience, Royal anticipated that teaching would be “a lot of work.” However, she found there not to be as much pressure on the teacher as she previously thought, noting that if a student does not learn, it is not all the teacher’s fault. She observed this with the on-line program, claiming that students were usually not committed to working hard—through this she realized that the credit recovery program does not work. She stated, “the work is not high stakes for students—they just have to re-do it if they fail” (Interview). Also minoring in business, Royal’s greatest vulnerability was feeling as though she was not strong with teaching content, and attributed this to not concentrating solely on her English major. Other vulnerabilities were feeling underprepared in common core and teaching grammar.

In her future, Royal expressed interest in working with lower SES students and those who struggle in school. Not slated to complete her student teaching until fall 2016, she claimed she would continue to look for opportunities to help her build confidence and prepare her for the profession until that time.

From early in the workshop, Royal expressed disillusionment with the CT not showing up on the first day or being there, hardly ever. At first, this presented a certain level of distress for her; however, she soon assumed a mentor role working with students in the on-line credit recovery class. Although working in this capacity presented its own set of challenges as compared to teaching in a traditional classroom setting, Royal gained ground through establishing relationships with the students, and gaining a sense of independence— that which afforded her a stronger sense of confidence.

The following figure provides an example of the disorienting dilemma and the steps taken in order to resolve it. In this way, Royal was able to identify the issue, and think about her feelings regarding the situation, as well as the ways she reacted to it. Royal thought that examining her feelings helped her to have a better understanding of her own personal reactions and to learn from them. Consequently, this process enabled Royal to think about possible courses of action she may have taken instead, and decisions on how she could deal with it next time.

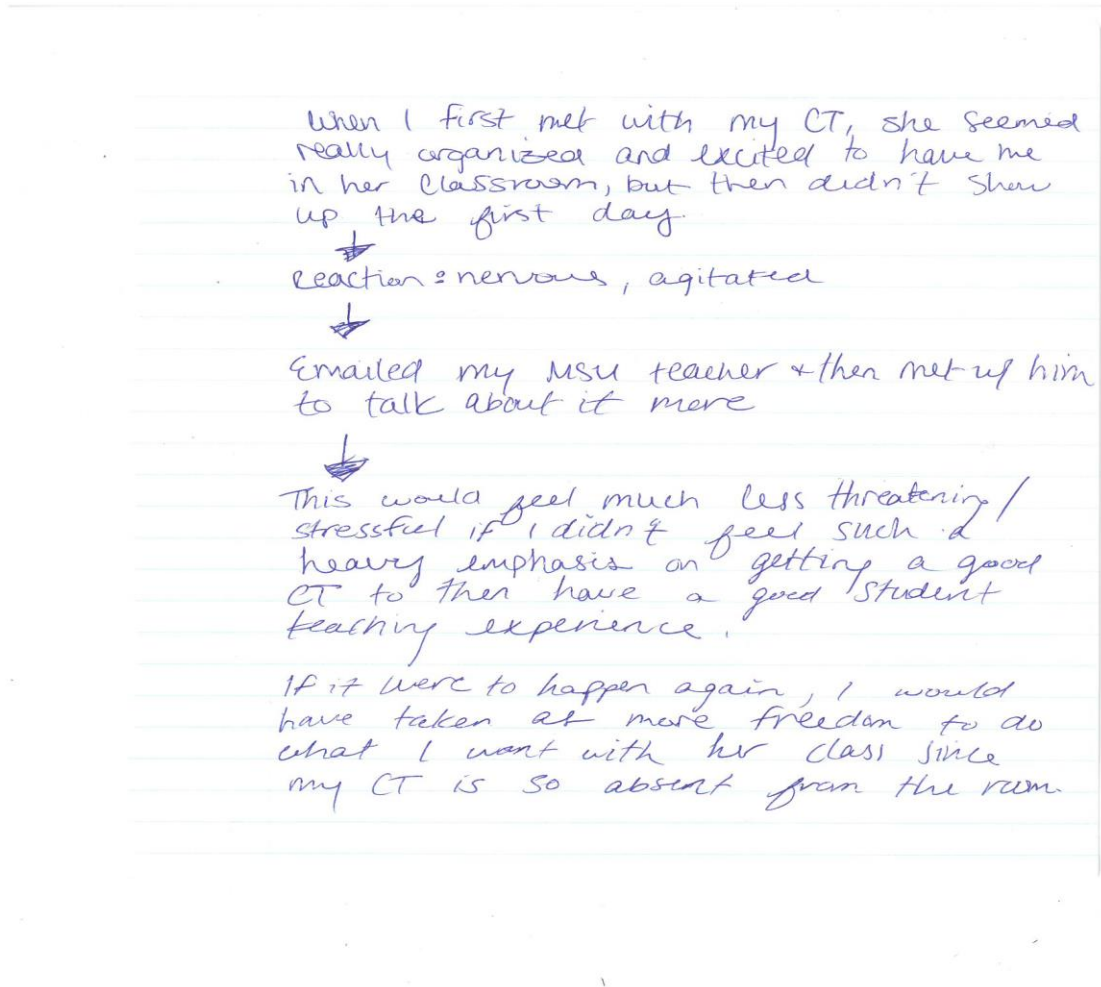


Figure 4.6: Royal's Disorienting Dilemma

One challenge Royal encountered were personal questions from students—those only three years younger. She remarked, “Some of the students crossing the line, asking personal questions, but not in a disrespectful way. Still, I really did not know what to do about it.” Royal assumed a passive coping mechanism by avoiding the situation.

In a separate incident, Royal discussed that a female student confided in her that another student had slapped her across the face:

Her cheek was red and she was very upset. She told me what happened, but then she asked me not to tell anyone. It came down to a trust thing. I decided not to tell the teacher. Thinking about it now though, I realize it was a gray area. I knew it was then too, and I worried about it, but I just didn't want to break that trust. After about a week, I didn't worry about it too much anymore.

Although both of these incidents may indicate passive coping or avoidance of the issues, Royal shared instances in which she addressed situations more directly.

### Perceived Teacher Self-Efficacy Outcomes

In the credit recovery class, Royal took on a mentor role, in which she built competency and became very comfortable. Within this unique learning environment, she recognized she gained some autonomy and developed management skills: "It became second nature to tell them [the students] what to do, and when they listened to me, it built my confidence." She elaborated on the experience stating that she feeling respected by students. "I discovered that I really enjoy that age group and getting to know people. I also learned that I am good at thinking on my feet and going with the flow. I was determined to stick to my guns, and if I adopted a mindset about something, and I wanted it to happen, then it usually happened."

She described herself by the following metaphor:

I am a lioness and they [students] are my pride. When we go hunting (learn new curriculum), I will protect them from bigger animals (potential ways to fail), but also allow them to explore on their own, and maybe embrace a failure every once in a while. When they learn all that I have to offer (graduation), they will leave the pack and become their own leader of a new pride (ownership of they want to do).

While the practicum experience built up confidence, Royal explained that without a student teaching placement the consecutive semester, she felt like she was “at a standstill.” She expounded that the “practicum experience built up confidence, but now I’m not using skills or taking any teaching classes, and there is a gap.” Royal also attributed this to affecting her enthusiasm and commitment to teaching: “I do not know if I want to teach; I want to see what else there may be.”

Royal took advantage of opportunities through the program to jump in and to serve as a writing tutor. In addition to these hands on experiences, Royal described vicarious experiences through talking to and observing others: “I had a lot of support through my peers—we are pretty close in this program. My university supervisor and cooperating teacher were very good as well. I only taught two lessons, and one lesson was a complete flop, but they both helped me learn how to adapt.” (Interview).

Royal added that the stress management workshop helped her establish goals, to take time to think about them, write them, and to share experiences. “It gave me initiative to make goals on my own.”

The following figure illustrates the self-care plan Royal created during the last workshop Session. It features running, yoga, and laughing. The rainbow she drew as an extra indicates having a positive outlook.

**Self-Care Prescription: Individualized Plan for Self-Care**

**Instructions: Write down at least two activities you would like to integrate into your day to support self-care and stress management. Be specific.**

**Example: Deep Breathing two times a day at 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

Activity 1: Running  
once/day, every other day  
*(List specific activity and frequency)*

Activity 2: Laughing  
As many times a day as I want!  
*(List specific activity and frequency)*

Activity 3: Yoga  
once a week  
*(List specific activity and frequency)*

**ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS:**

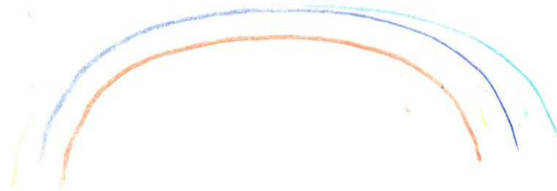


Figure 4.7: Royal's Individualized Self Care Plan

Royal highlighted the strategies she adopted for coping: "I entered the no judgement zone." Comfortable with talking to individuals outside of her peers and

colleagues, Royal often confided in her boss, who gave “good advice from a parent’s point of view.”

#### Perceived Supports and Resources

Royal identified the workshop as a resource during her pre-teacher training. She stated, “The workshop had a professional feel—meeting once a week allowed time and space to break down “what just happened” and gave students time to “talk” about it. Royal stated the workshop sessions should take the place of the practicum class and coincide with the practicum field experience. In addition, the teacher education program should initiate practicum “sooner rather than later” and maybe require two practicums.

In this program, Royal asserted, “students must fight for their voices.”

#### Pastel Pink

##### Student Profile:

Pastel’s earliest schooling began at a private, religious school in Africa—an experience which cultivated a genuine love for learning and for school. In high school, she thought that teaching would be a perfect career because of her passion and her ability to relate to students. Seeing herself as an organized and prepared student, she excelled in school, meeting the highest academic standards. Influences included her English teachers and music teachers, church mentors, tennis and volleyball coaches.

##### Teacher Preparation Profile:

Pastel exhibited a true enthusiasm and passion for teaching and expressed a “love” for the classroom, finding it enjoyable rather than stressful. Describing herself as

organized and prepared, Pastel believed that the best teachers are involved and caring. Bringing a variety of pre-teaching experience as a camp counselor, a mentor, and writing workshop tutor, Pastel extended herself beyond in her pre-service preparation, looking for every opportunity to spend time in the classroom and to establish a true connection with her students. Paired with another practicum student in her first placement, Pastel gained experience team-teaching. She planned to complete her student teaching assignment under the same cooperating teacher, working with non-college bound seniors and Pre-AP sophomores.

**↓ Writing Prompts:**

Think about your experiences in your practicum placement over the last few of weeks...apply these experiences to the following questions ☺

- 1) What has made you smile?  
The student! Their positive feedback to me. The high energy that some days/classes have.
- 2) How have you become more like a teacher than a student in these past 10 weeks?  
Through getting into the role of the job. Understanding how to use my time effectively when lesson planning and instructing.  
Just being in the front of the class teaching makes me feel like a teacher!
- 3) Describe any particular ways this workshop has helped you so far in this journey.  
This workshop has been so helpful in my current situation. Practicum (the class, not placement) has been stressful, but this workshop time has been a place to vent, talk things through, and come up w/ solutions to be less stressful.

Figure 4.8: Pastel's Writing Prompt

When describing her preconceived conceptions about the profession, Pastel stated “I thought it was easier, that each school followed the same guidelines, a set curriculum, kind of in my mind, all schools were the same. She further discussed how she was not feeling vulnerable in any capacity because she had until that time felt totally at ease as a student in a classroom. Believing that most schools and classrooms were the same, Pastel shared that she had more on her mind while in the classroom, citing her biggest concern to be the planning aspect. “I was nervous about that—I was not warned about that.” Once she gained more experience in the classroom, she felt that classroom management presented the greatest challenge for her personally, admitting that she at times felt ill-equipped, not prepared and naïve—sometimes causing her to feel stressed.

Pastel shared one of her disorienting dilemmas as the result of “a planned lesson that did not go very well.” She described the students as talking with one another, not really listening or engaging in the lesson she was trying to teach. “It made me feel really stressed” (Personal Interview).

Feeling flustered and somewhat panicked, Pastel froze, not really knowing what to do. She contended, “I did not really have a backup strategy, and no classroom management experience because it had never happened before. I didn’t want to be harsh and raise my voice.” Pastel acknowledged that the situation posed a power struggle between her and the students. During this incident, Pastel noted that she tried to talk over the students, however, to no avail. Once aware she would not be able to rein them into the lesson, she exhibited physiological signs of distress: she felt her face turn flush and her movements stiffen, marked by pacing a small area and nervous hand gestures. She

admitted that she felt agitated. Never feeling like she fully closed the lesson or resolved the issues with the students, Pastel described leaving the situation unresolved herself: “I reflected on it all the way home, then met my boyfriend for lunch, shared, vented, talked it out. I talked about it with my mom too, but it wasn’t right away.”

Pastel adopted a passive coping mechanism in this situation because she did not take measures to change the situation or the environment. However, the incident did make her reflect on how she might handle it differently. “I need some strategies for classroom management. The program offered a classroom management class, but I did not take that class because it was an elective, and it was scheduled at a really inconvenient time of the day for me.” Nonetheless, she regretted the choice not to take the class, not realizing how important it would be.

She acknowledged the difficulty between assuming the role of authority while trying to establish interpersonal connections with students. The classroom management issue intertwined with Pastel’s new role of “authority,” not friend—a boundary blurred further due her relative age: twenty-one. She shared, “I only really know how to relate to people this close in age as friends, not as a teacher— I don’t have a ton of experience.” However, Pastel cited her ability to connect to others as a personal strength, and asserted that she is comfortable talking to students one-on-one in order to get to build relationships. Establishing this kind of rapport helped her feel as though the students respect her and that she wants to be a teacher because of it.

In addition, Pastel expressed she was comfortable addressing the entire class, especially when she feels prepared and that she knows what she is talking about. On the

other hand, assuming the role of the knowledge source presents a stressful situation for Pastel as she pointed out: “Being put on the spot is a new role for me because I am the one always asking questions, rather than having to know the answers. However, she contended it to be “easier for me to see strategies to fix that. I feel like, I always have to be super prepared. Not just glance at it, but needing to know it.” Relating preparation to be her primary coping strategy, Pastel conceded that, “it gives me a sense of control—it makes me feel comfortable.” She also claimed the better she knows her students, the more comfortable she is telling them “I don’t know.” Through these experiences, Pastel claimed to have “lost” some of her anxiety, claiming time to be her best resource. She emphasized, “the more time I have spent in the classroom, the more comfortable I am there” (Personal Interview).

#### Perceived Teacher Self-Efficacy Outcomes

Pastel’s experience—having extended time in the classroom—helped her to forge stronger relationships with students and to see her own place in the classroom “shift” from student to teacher. This time also helped her to become highly self-reflective, becoming more aware of her strengths, interpersonal skills and preparation. She also became aware of areas to improve, primarily setting boundaries with students and learning how to be more adaptable and flexible.

Pastel identified a metaphor in which she assigned the teacher a role of “composer.” However, it is interesting to note that she did not assume this teacher role herself as indicated by referring to it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person rather than the 1<sup>st</sup> person:

Teacher is a composer. Students are the instruments. No two pieces of music are created or sound the same—just like how each different class will be. In a piece of music all the instruments are different—just like the different students that make up your class. Composing is a process just like creating specific units and differentiating for different classes and students is a process. The teacher/composer sets the stage for the class/sound, but the students/instruments bring it to life.

#### Perceived Supports and Resources:

Pastel expressed confidence in her teaching philosophy, stating, “Some teachers validated me and encouraged me, while some challenged me.” Seeing herself functioning under multiple roles such as tutor, facilitator, role-model observer, she conveyed that “being in the classroom,” both within practicum and through her own initiatives, brought about the biggest change to make her feel like a teacher. She stressed, “It is because of who I have been working with, and the students in that classroom allowed me to do things” (Personal Interview).

Pastel verbalized that the act of observing others “in real life” helped build confidence and provided strategies to deal with things that we don’t talk about in our classes. One class that Pastel quoted as “influential” was her assessment and curriculum course, citing it to be “really because of who the professor was. She gave me so many tools, showed me resources and made being a teacher feasible.”

Regarding the stress management workshop, Pastel imparted that the sessions created for her “an awareness about the logistics of teaching, the curriculum and time management.” The sessions also helped her to develop an individualized plan in which

she set a goal to “run two or three times a week” and she declared, “I have actually done that.”

The following figure illustrates Pastel’s self-care plan which she identified three various ways to manage the stressors she face

**Self-Care Prescription: Individualized Plan for Self-Care**  
**Instructions: Write down at least two activities you would like to integrate into your day to support self-care and stress management. Be specific.**

**Example: Deep Breathing two times a day at 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

Activity 1: <u>Run - track in MSU gym</u> <u>three times a week (typically mornings)</u> <i>(List specific activity and frequency)</i>
Activity 2: <u>Cooking Dinner (healthy)</u> <u>four times a week (at least)</u> <i>(List specific activity and frequency)</i>
Activity 3: <u>Connect with Others (colleagues) for coffee,</u> <u>one - two times a month etc.</u> <i>(List specific activity and frequency)</i>

**ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS:**

Figure 4. 9: Pastel’s Self Care Plan

Commenting on the structure of the sessions, Pastel affirmed, “I think it was good it was paired with practicum. With eight people, it had a small feel, but maybe with five we could have gone even deeper. Pastel commented on the role-play activities, finding them most beneficial “to show different ways of reacting.” She commented on liking the scenario involving upset parents. She also enjoyed the pair-share activities, talking things out with just one person.

Pastel suggested that the workshop should be “more than an option” for elementary and secondary teaching majors. She expanded her position by stating that “[none of our] classes talked about the divide between being a student and being a teacher, and in a lot of ways, we are just thrown into the job without that clear perspective or reality. I think it could be effectively implemented maybe with the capstone unit” (Interview).

### Salmon Orange

#### Student Profile

Salmon stated that she always excelled in school, graduating at the top of her class of 600 with a 4.2 GPA. Despite taking the most challenging advanced and AP courses, Salmon declared that she had always learned with ease. Earning many prestigious awards, such as presidential scholar, Salmon described herself as being hardworking and involved, yet relatively friendless. Influenced by her parents’ expectations and legacy, as well as her own interests to go to college, Salmon’s desire to teach English stemmed from her passion for learning. Her fondest memories as a student resulted from her creative writing class in which she was inspired by challenged by her teacher.

#### Teacher Preparation Profile

Salmon’s interests include enjoying the great outdoors—an interest that has established a foundation for teaching. She experienced teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at her learning center, coached climbing, and educational outreach for the forest service about

bear safety. She stated that this experience has taught her “to [field] questions” she had no idea how to answer, and “[to engage] minds” that don’t initially see the purpose of the material being presented. Salmon went on, claiming, “these positions have also given me the chance to see eyes light up at unexpected and compelling information, to feel the excitement as someone learns or tries something new, to hear the way a voice changes as [her or she] ask questions to dig deeper into something they really want to know about” (Personal Interview). As a result, Salmon looked forward to entering the profession, once complete with her practice teaching assignments—working with both advanced sophomores, and student teaching, working with 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

Regarding the teaching profession, Salmon’s earliest appraisal lead her to the conclusion that teachers are their own bosses, possessing agency, and that the profession offers the opportunity to impact people. In particular, Salmon stated her greatest strength to be the academic element of teaching, primarily her content knowledge of the English language, literature, and writing. She elaborated, “I draw strength in content knowledge, professional writing, reading, and feel most vulnerable interacting with students not like me.” She admitted that she is generally not a people person—“a no B.S. kind of person” who knew she must be ready to interact with students, to “keep her sanity and enjoy teaching” (Personal Interview).

However, she discovered throughout her second practicum experience (student teaching) that she was surprised how much she actually enjoyed the students. She explained, “while bigger schools have higher standards, smaller schools allow you to get to know students better, and the cool part is getting to know the kids and adapt instruction

to that person.” Student teaching at a smaller school provided a diverse experience for her—a school half the size of her first practicum experience. While her smallest class size was nine, versus the largest of twenty-six, Salmon also found one of her strengths to be managing the classroom and preventing conflict. An area of growth, she claimed, is “reflection about my own actions” and thinking about “what could potentially upset someone and what it is going on in others’ heads.”

Specific challenging incidents have prompted Salmon to engage in this type of critical reflection. She discussed an incident in which she assigned a narrative style lesson to kids who normally never turn in any work, and they did very well. Encouraged by this outcome, Salmon planned a follow-up lesson in which she used Pixton—a lesson that she anticipated students would enjoy. Instead, the opposite happened. She remarked, “The students did not buy into the lesson. I was so astonished that they were complaining so much.” Salmon explained that it felt disconcerting, and she struggled on how to manage the situation. Instead of becoming defensive as she may have before, she talked with the students about why they were not working on the assignment. After listening to their point of view, she challenged them to see it in a new way, and then “many more of them started working.” Salvaging the lesson, Salmon reflected upon the situation, feeling like it was a successful outcome—one that built her confidence on how to engage students. She elaborated, “There have been moments when I have doubted that this is the profession for me. It is a challenge to engage the students and to teach them to the standards at the same time. I have definitely felt anxiety about that, but I am learning how to handle it” (Personal Interview).

### Perceptions of Teacher Self-Efficacy Outcomes

Salmon acknowledged her growth through developing the ability to take the “day by day planned out as it comes.” She described it as “flexibility—a new mindset.” Elaborating further, she characterized it as “a teacher mindset,” conveying that “everything goes back to teaching. Whatever I am seeing in my own life is what I am trying to bring in to the classroom.” Getting to know students and relating to them has helped her gain confidence in people skills and classroom management. She reflected upon the positive relationships she has fostered through her practical experience:

I feel respected. My CT is really well-liked and the students were wary of me at first, but now they see I am here for them. I take an interest in them. I interact with other teachers in the school. I have had the chance to get out and observe other teachers, and come out of it with some sort of ideas and with more tools. Some of the teachers even took ideas from me and implemented my lessons into their lessons. That was a big boost of confidence.

Describing attributes of teacher self-efficacy such as persistence and resilience, Salmon represented growth from the beginning of her student teaching semester. “At the beginning of the semester, I would have been really quite low with these, and I am still struggling in some areas.” Salmon’s awareness of growth and change is reflected through her metaphor for teaching:

I am the creek and my students are the fish. Ultimately, they will leave my waters for bigger ones, but while they are here my shores and rapids will shape them. Every day, I too, change as my flows change, and my rocks move around and my soils drift and move.

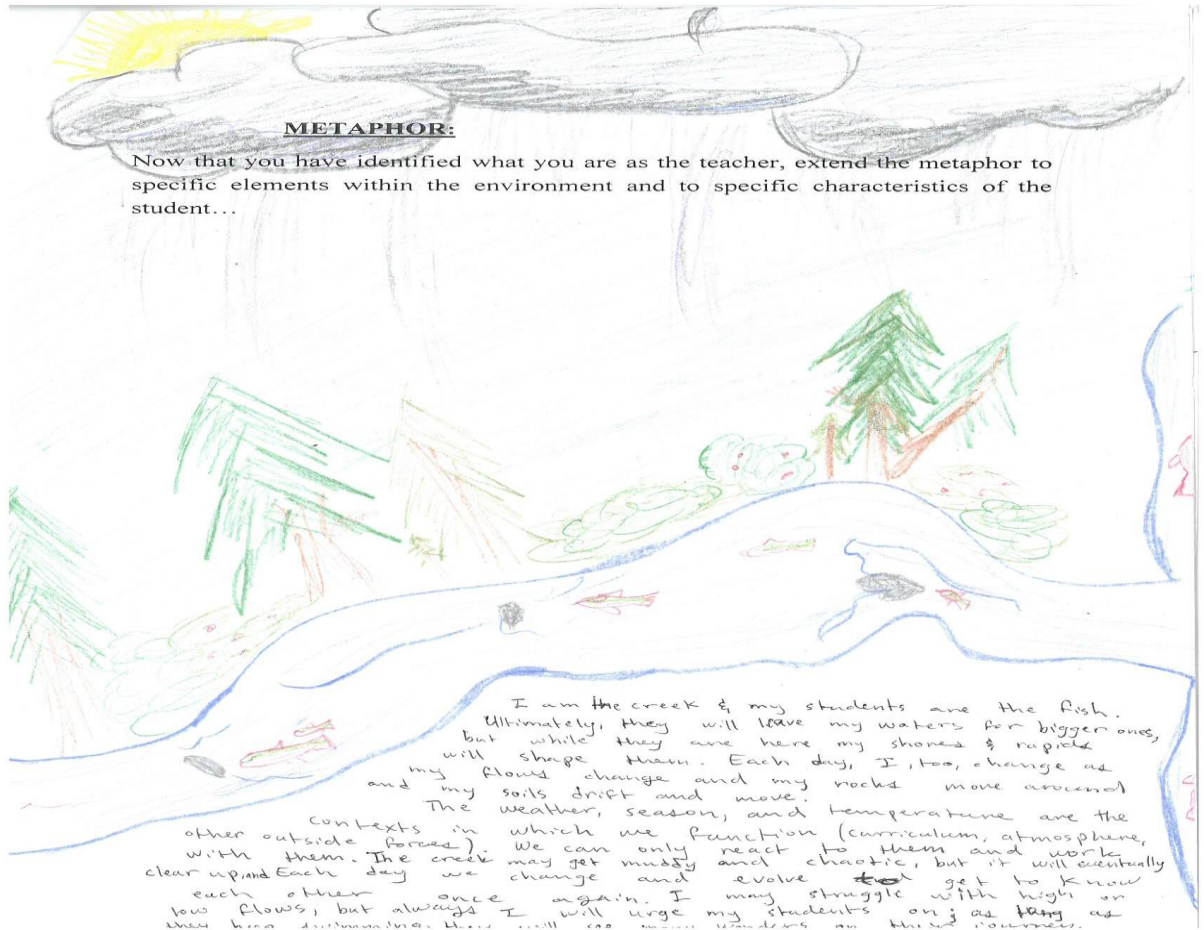


Figure 4.10: Salmon's Teaching Metaphor

Salmon referred to beneficial aspects within the Teacher Education Program: content methods courses that address critical thinking and theoretical insights about how to cultivate learning in the classroom. Other measures of support, according to Salmon, included having opportunities to practice in front of a classroom throughout the practicum experience, journaling, and forming peer relationships. She cited the stress management workshop as “a good way to decompress...productive, an enrichment to our practical experience.” Referring to the content of the workshop, Salmon stated, “I was

very unaware of many things we talked about, and the meetings brought to light why it is important to have goals” (Personal Interview).

Salmon’s specific recommendations for teacher preparation included “meetings like the workshop, with an informal feel where we can talk about the realities of teaching.” She also listed the importance of more time spent observing in classrooms, preferably for credit.

### Splendid Yellow

#### Student Profile:

Splendid, age twenty-one, grew up in a rural community—a high school of only thirty students and a 100% graduation rate. She described her high school environment one having a high level of mutual respect—the teacher to student ratio was very strong. An honor student, she describes herself as the teacher’s pet: involved, motivated, grade-driven, and competitive. However, while a student, Splendid claimed to have possessed a somewhat obstinate disposition: “I had a dual personality--at times I could be manipulative. I knew how to work the system.” Overall, however, she loved school and learning. Coming from a “tight-knit community” that revolved around the school, she asserted, “I had a lot of positive influences: my brother, parents and friends—the entire community, really.” (Workshop Data). Inspired by all of her teachers who were positive role models, Splendid won several academic and community awards, and became a part of the university’s honors college.

Teacher Preparation Profile:

Splendid stated that she entered the teacher preparation program uncertain about whether or not she really wanted to be a teacher, claiming to have doubts at times. Viewing teaching as the chance to be there for someone, and to influence lives, she asserted, “[Teaching] is really important.” However, on the downside, Splendid acknowledged the stigma around education, one that is hard to break: “People think, “You’re a teacher because you cannot do anything else.” Hoping eventually to become a professor of literature, Splendid’s practicum experience aligned with her background and special interests—she received placement in an AP class European History/Honors English II for both her practicum hours and student teaching assignment. She indicated this to be a highly beneficial experience, especially when it came to building relationships with her cooperating teacher and students. She stated, “By the time I am finished student teaching, I will have had many of my students for an entire year.” Splendid recognized how important this is in “thinking of yourself as a capable teacher.”

She described the specific struggles she encountered throughout her practical experience—those that shaped positive thinking, persistence, and resiliency. One such dilemma came through overhearing a student criticize her about a paper she had graded:

A group of students were talking in the room during lunch—they did not know I was in there. One particular student made some derogatory remarks about a grade he received on an assignment. These comments were about me, and once he discovered I was in the room, it got really uncomfortable. I was really surprised because this student always does really well on assignments and always has a very high grade in the class. It made me feel like I did not do a good job of grading and that this student did not like me—it crushed me. But then I talked to my dad, and he reminded me that I am educated

in this stuff, and even if I don't know how to do it perfectly, I still have been trained to do it. That helped me not be so hard on myself. I did not confront the situation with the student, but now I wish that I had. Instead, I just became more determined to overcome the situation and to reach out to him. After a while, I felt like I had built some good rapport with [the student].

Splendid described another situation in which she “flopped a lesson—badly.” She claimed it was not due to lack of preparation, but instead, to being overly prepared. “I had pulled information from multiple sources, and when the students asked questions, I probably confused them with too much information—some that seemed to contradict itself” (Interview). After the lesson, both she and her CT framed the lesson “a disaster,” and she said there were tears: “I did not know how I would get back up and face the class of students, or any class of students, for that matter. But the next day, my CT told me I was going to teach a lesson” (Personal Interview).

Claiming she was startled and angry at first, she complied, later realizing that “he knew what I needed in that moment.” She described her cooperating teacher as the ultimate “role-model,” a teacher to whom she aspires to be. She credited him with “building her up, never ceasing to praise where praise is due” yet being one to “helpfully criticize” in a positive way.

#### Perceptions of Teacher Self-Efficacy Outcomes:

Describing two disorienting dilemmas, Splendid recognized the persistence and resiliency she demonstrated in order to constructively deal with the situations. Reflecting upon her prior patterns of coping, she asserted, “determination is uncharacteristic of me—I usually take a passive avoidance approach and shut down. I have learned to cope

by focusing on what I can fix and I am learning to manage my emotions.” This statement showed Splendid’s transformation because during the focus group session several months earlier, Splendid stated she felt most vulnerable with students who would “walk all over her emotions” (Focus Group Interview).

Understanding her roles within the classroom, Splendid used her metaphor to assert her place as a teacher:

I am a teacher, but I am also Painted Rocks Dam. I am the entity that facilitates knowledge in the learning environment and my students are the fish that swim in the lake that is dammed. They explore the waters of knowledge both with each other and individually. The students are free to explore the waters of knowledge with me there to control the flow of learning.

When the students have outgrown the knowledge that I can give them, I release them over the spillway into the flow of new possibilities and learning experience that is the river below. From my high vantage point, I can watch their journey as they travel down the river of learning.

The plants and bugs and other life forms that remain are memories and expectations for future students that the previous ones have left behind.

Eventually, a new school of fish will fill Painted Rocks Lake and swim through the lake of knowledge and exhaust the learning that I—the dam—has to offer. Like those before them, when they are ready, I will release them over the spillway and send them on their way, down the river of further learning.

#### Perceived Supports and Resources:

Splendid referred to the stress management workshop as an instrumental part of developing these coping skills. She claimed, “As a high stress person, this workshop was

really important for me. When I have high stress days, I experience weird physiological like losing my taste buds” (Personal Interview).

Splendid went on to describe the class as “therapeutic.” She referred to setting goals and making them “quantifiable” as an invaluable experience. Some of the takeaways for her personally were specific strategies such as deep-breathing techniques, the strategy of useless worry (making an appointment with herself to worry) and eliminating physical stressors, such as deleting emails. She said that overall, “just being able to acknowledge where stress is coming from” helps keep it in check.

Referring to the perils of unmitigated stress, Splendid related her own experiences to how it affects others around her: “On days I am more stressed, I feel like I am doing a disservice to my students because I am not able to be entirely with them. There is a massive part of me residing within my own space of worry, and that is totally unfair to them because I am not giving them my all” (Personal Interview). In addition, Splendid commented on the importance of knowing how stress affects people in general, and that stress education provides insight for teachers to understand how stress may affect their students: “We currently have four students on suicide watch, two on bedrest. Stress affects people differently, but the scope of these issues are undebatable.”

Splendid indicated that the stress management workshop would effectively complement an existing elective course: Managing the Learning Environment. She adamantly believed that “this should be a required class for all secondary education majors” because it covered scenarios, school law, legal issues, and professional issues—all which may be triggers for stress. Her further recommendations included a class to

teach the pre-service teachers how to organize and plan the semester, particularly the “overlap” between units. Finally, Splendid emphasized a need to bridge what she referred to as a “disconnect between the university and the student teaching experience and an inauthentic evaluation through the teacher work sample. She added, “The teacher education program must aid students rather than burden them, provide consistent feedback, and develop more personable relationships with students.”

Although Splendid admitted herself to be nervous about removing the strong presence of her cooperating teacher from the room, she highlighted the support she had received from him as well as from her university supervisor. While her peers served as “close outlets,” she also called home frequently—her father instilled confidence that she is “educated as the teacher and well qualified to teach the class” Most rewarding for her however, was the discovery that she really does want to teach, maybe even in a new state, to experience more diversity.

### Emerald Green

#### Student Profile:

Emerald described herself as an active student who was usually in trouble for moving and talking. She disclosed that she went “above and beyond” with projects and that most teacher liked her. Driven by family pressures to be smart and talented, and “[her] own need to be validated,” Emerald described herself as caring about her reputation, abiding by authority, and striving for excellence. As a college student, Emerald adopted a view of learning as “the art of living,” embracing the notion of

learning as practical in the life-associated sense. It is essentially “becoming your own teacher.”

Teacher Preparation Profile:

In her early impressions of the teaching profession as a whole, Emerald described teaching as a broad profession with “high stress.” However, in her view, there was none better than to work with people and foster a positive impact. Defining her own purpose for teaching as wanting to make these impacts, and in turn, be impacted by others—a continuous cycle of positive experiences and learning that emphasizes an exchange of interaction between student and teacher. Completing practicum program in the spring of 2015, Emerald described it as a great experience in general: “The cooperating teacher I worked with was very composed, extremely calm—very good for me because I’m a high energy person. It absolutely helped me a ton. I remember being very jittery at first, always asking questions.

The student teaching placement did not go so smoothly however; two weeks in it became clear it was not a good fit. Emerald described an incident with the student teaching mentor regarding particular writing approach:

She asked me what I knew about it, and told me I needed more fundamental knowledge. She said, if a parent comes in and asks you, they will expect you to know. I am not sure, but now looking back, I think she wanted me to do some research on it. She did not say that though. There was just a miscommunication—a gap in our understanding. All of the sudden, without correcting the misunderstanding, she decided that I should not return the next day (Personal Interview).

At first, Emerald described herself as taken back and shocked, but after seeking out social support from family (her dad) and also by her peers, she refocused and looked at the dilemma as an opportunity to go out and observe various teachers in their unique teaching styles. She stated, “It has actually been a positive thing, because it has afforded me more practice time and I feel I have really grown with it.” Scheduled to student teach in the upcoming semester, Emerald felt more ready than ever. What could have been a shattering, career-changing experience has in fact provided more momentum in moving forward for her: “Coming from the coaching world, I have learned not to be intimidated. I am aware of my weaknesses and committed to improving upon them.

#### Perceived Teacher Self-Efficacy Outcomes:

As she described her transformation from student to teacher, Emerald embraced a “holistic” ideology, expressing that teaching and learning are really one in the same. All of her life experiences shaped her to this moment in time—toward becoming a teacher. Dealing with adversity throughout her life, she felt life had tested her on various levels. Many of these experiences had taken place in the coaching world, which she described as “teaching on steroids.” One change she noted was losing “the need for validation from others.” She believed herself to have become more in touch with her authentic self—not afraid to speak her beliefs. Through these experiences, Emerald described herself as changing in the emotional aspect—not expecting herself to be perfect, but possessing the ability to see herself in the endless process of continually “growing.” She explained that from her perspective, being a teacher equates being a leader, and leaders have confidence. Stating confidence to be found in humility rather than authority, Emerald acknowledged

her own leadership to be expressed with a softer approach than she ever thought: “It is about managing spaces, modeling, and serving” (Personal Interview).

Having well defined goals, enthusiasm, and commitment to the profession, she described herself as “unshakable” and “tough”—ready to enter the profession.

Supports and Resources:

In expressing the supports and resources she leaned upon, Emerald acknowledged her exposure to diverse environments, observation, and her own introspection. Seeking and taking advantage of multiple opportunities fostered a continuous quest for growth and wellbeing. Emerald also surrounded herself with positive individuals, those who provided encouragement and support. Being involved with the stress management workshop was a way for her to “connect with her peers in a meaningful way” (Personal Interview).

Emerald described herself in the excerpt below accompanied by the following illustration:

My metaphor: A painter. Specifics: Teaching is not “paint by number.” As artists we design our impact and teaching everything is selection and arrangement of materials. You start with a vision, but the exact picture paints itself during the creative process. Teaching is a process. Elements: Students are the colors. Their ideas and unique personalities and experiencers are the textured strokes (there are many different ones).

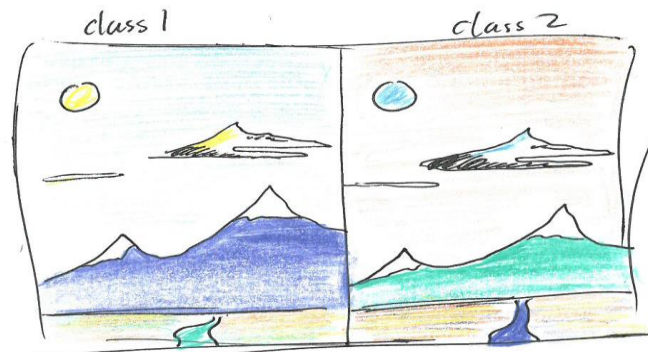
**METAPHOR:**

Now that you have identified what you are as the teacher, extend the metaphor to specific elements within the environment and to specific characteristics of the student...

My metaphor: A painter.

Specifics: Teaching is not "paint-by-number." As artists we design our impact and teaching ~ everything is selection and arrangement of materials. You start with a vision, but the exact picture paints itself during the creative process. Teaching is a process.

Elements: Students are the colors. Their ideas and unique personalities and experiences are the textured strokes (there are many different ones).



Idea: Mountain Scene

Figure 4.11: Emerald's Teaching Metaphor

### III. Cross-Case Analysis of Transformational Case Profiles

Data was collected from the participants throughout the span of this longitudinal study to capture a sense of the transformation from student to teacher. The data was

examined through a cross case analysis, through which Yin asserts is valuable when there exists a need to understand a complex social phenomenon. Case study analysis captures a sense of holistic and meaningful characteristics regarding individual cycles or processes—in this study, the transformation from student to teacher (Yin, 2014). From this analysis, four overarching themes emerged from the transformational case profiles. These profiles consisted of four distinct categories: student profiles, teacher education profiles, perceived teacher self-efficacy outcomes, and perceived supports. The themes were identified as a result of the transformational case profiles; however, data collected in the focus group and in the workshop informed these transformational case profiles. Therefore, they are a synthesis of the entire study.

The first step of the study, the focus group, highlighted the participants' anticipated perceptions about the profession itself, as viewed from the student lens. It helped to answer the first two sub-focus questions:

- What are the general anticipated stressors that secondary pre-service teachers have about the teaching profession?
- What are the personal anticipated stressors that secondary pre-service teachers have about the teaching profession?

The focus group also created a platform through which a stress management and coping curriculum could be developed. The second step, the workshop, provided a stress management and coping mediating support resource that paralleled the participants' first practicum experience. Through various activities, such as journal writing, drawing, role-play, and sharing, the workshop surveyed elements of self, environment, students,

diversity, and overall roles in order to create self-awareness and critical reflection among participants. These activities helped to incite the sources of teacher self-efficacy and fashion opportunities for growth and transformation. In doing so, the workshop activities yielded data through written response to address the following research question: What are the stressors secondary pre-service teachers experience in their practicum experience and the coping mechanisms they used in order to address them?

The final step, semi-structured interviews with each of the participants, revealed the strains they experienced and their perceptions of the professional demands within teaching. The interviews also captured a sense of the participants' perceptions of their own teacher self-efficacy as well as the supports and resources they perceived as instrumental in developing this teacher self-efficacy and a readiness to enter the profession.

Through these steps, a cross-case analysis of the transformation profiles revealed four overarching themes: trust and affirmation, connection, purpose, and balance. In order to ensure dependability of these results, I utilized Cohen's Kappa Statistical Analysis to interpret the data. A third party, one who was familiar with but not involved in the study read the data and constructed a list of themes. The themes were compared to that of the results of the study, yielding a result of 100% accuracy.

The following section illustrates how these four themes trans-sect each part of the paradigm (demands, coping, and support). They transect because a "lack" of these tenets caused disorienting dilemmas. Gaining them provided a means of control that fostered

coping and teacher self-efficacy. However, these themes are not automatic—they are shaped through specific supports and resources.

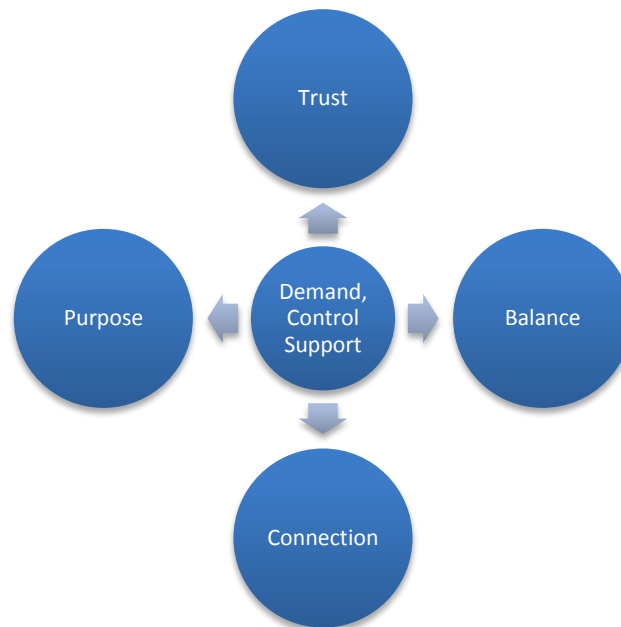


Figure 4.12: Emerging themes

#### Theme One: Trust and Affirmation

Within the secondary school environment, teachers generally work with over one hundred students each day within their classrooms. Being the “one” that students look to as the source of knowledge, the facilitator, the manager, the inspiration—can be daunting, especially for pre-service teachers. Entering this scenario for the first time, they proved to be conscientious about how others perceive them as they assume this new role of teacher. Interpersonal and environmental demands often may contribute to intrapersonal perspectives about their own ability to fulfill the roles.

Initially, practicum students showed concern about the cooperating teacher with whom they would be placed. One activity in the practicum methods course prompted students to role-play the scenario of meeting the CT for the first time, emphasizing measures of professionalism. Salmon stated, “It’s awkward because you are entering [the CT’s] territory and you don’t want overstep your bounds.” Royal discussed that she experienced some anxiety about meeting the cooperating teacher for the first time, “realizing how dependent” she was upon her CT in order to have a good practicum experience. She elaborated, “At first she seemed organized and excited, but then she did not show up on the first day.”

Not only needing to know that the CT would be there physically, the practicum students expressed also needing to know that the CT would be there when things do not go well and the expectations placed upon them. Splendid explained “[I need] to have a place where I can mess up and learn from it without having any consequences, stating that “I want to do more and more in the classroom, and when I do something wrong, I “[need] to know that my CT still trusts me.” Knowing that they had gained this trust came through the affirmations of others.

Other teachers, including guest teachers, also made an impact on the practicum students. Baby related an incident in which she felt like the substitute teacher (an experienced teacher) in her CT’s classroom did not trust her. Baby explained, “she used a hostile tone with me. It made me feel melancholy. I swallowed it, not showing how upset I was.”

Equally so, the pre-service teachers strived to gain student trust, looking for student feedback in every facet of task-related roles. To illustrate an example of lesson planning, Baby stated, “There were a few kids today that felt like my lesson was difficult; therefore they rejected it. What I thought was going to be a fun, progressive, engaging lesson simply was not for some students. Overall, I thought I had let them down.” She viewed evidence of her effectiveness through student engagement and motivation.

Even though she acknowledged her role as a novice at grading students writing, Splendid described how she felt a major responsibility to “make no mistakes,” and to complete this task related role with complete efficiency and capability. However, she found grading essays to be extremely overwhelming and distressing, claiming she did not “grade their essays correctly, and as a result, “had to apologize to students” (Workshop Data). However, students conveyed trust through positive feedback. Pastel remarked that it made her feel happy when a student pulled her aside to say he was excited she would be there to help teach through December.

Even as practicum students, pre-service teachers expressed concern about gaining trust from students’ parents. Demonstrated through role-play scenarios, the participants modeled ways to deal with difficult parents, regarding students who had cheated on an assignment, were apathetic, or were disrespectful. One particular concern voiced: “what if a parent asks me “what qualifies you to teach my student?”

Similarly, feeling respected by others in the teaching environment seemed to be a major part of trust. The thought of not having this respect seemed to create strain for each

of the participants, but once they felt as though they established a level of respect, it served as a measure of coping. Receiving affirmations from others (Bandura's social persuasion) helped the participants feel respected. The participants first looked for these from the cooperating teachers and university supervisors. For example, Salmon indicated such a moment of affirmation came when she "made it" through her first observed lesson (mastery experience) and received good feedback from the university supervisor and cooperating teacher.

In the same way, student affirmations served as a powerful source for conveying respect. Royal discussed a student who had been absent a lot or acting out eventually "confided in her." She shared that she felt a sense of achievement: "After talking, we worked on an assignment together and he was much more engaged. It felt like victory." Emerald felt to be respected "as one looking to become a teacher" when she asked random teachers to allow her to visit and observe their classes. It made her feel the support of other teachers.

Baby also felt valued as she reflected, "...at the beginning of my lesson I told a story about something that had actually happened to me. Students actively engaged in what I had to say. It felt really good." Ruby targeted lesson plan development and delivery for her observation. She remarked, "I had a gnarly cold and my voice was shot. I coughed a lot. It turned out awesome. I received positive feedback that I had done a good job."

In addition, participants felt that creating an atmosphere of mutual respect was important. For instance, Midnight discussed his positive treatment of students as fostering

this “mutual respect” which in turn helped him connect to students. He stated, when something goes wrong, I know I have already built a solid foundation with students.” Similarly, Salmon touched upon the confidence she felt when other teachers gained knowledge from her lesson plans and instruction, creating a sense of mutuality. Pastel felt as though her student-centered approach to instruction cultivated student respect for her, consequently helping her to be more enthusiastic and committed to the profession—as she stated, “making me want to be a teacher.”

The affirmations of others provided a basis upon building a self-trust for the participants. Learning to trust self is an essential part of developing control and fostering teacher self-efficacy outcomes. For the participants in this study it emerged through adopting new perspectives and mindsets and making decisions in the teaching environment. Many times this occurred through mastery experiences as well as social persuasion and affirmations of others—those involved in the learning to teach process. Splendid shared that “After making mistakes, I became afraid to do things because I didn’t want to do it incorrectly.” She conveyed that she later learned to trust herself within these roles, knowing that her CT did not give up on her. Learning how to rationalize issues through logic rather than reacting to them according to emotion helped her feel more in control of situations. For her, that has meant finding proactive ways to deal with stress rather than reactive ways. One proactive way is through mindfulness: taking one whole hour each day for what she refers to as “me-time—just to be completely entirely present with myself.”

Comparably, Salmon expressed the importance of critical reflection in learning to trust herself. This process involved considering the scope of situations, thinking outside of the problem, and looking at it from more than one perspective. Salmon made an important discovery midway through student teaching: “I am really good at classroom management,” contrary to what she previously believed. “The thing I was most afraid of is actually my strength.” Knowing she has classroom management skills, particularly the ability to relate to her students, she learned to feel more comfortable with the many roles she must fulfill as teacher.

Discovering personal qualities and attributes helped participants gain trust within themselves and their abilities. Midnight discussed that he was surprised at how much patience he had with students and that it made him feel better equipped to handle situations effectively. Part of this patience, according to him, is cultivated through an accepting mindset. He characterized this outlook as “knowing what you can control and what you can’t.” Baby learned to tap into her own personal power, seeing herself as proficient and adept in her roles. While at the beginning of her practicum, she felt intimidated by others, she claimed she was now able to “defend herself” when questioned by others, claiming herself to “conscientious, committed and capable.”

In Emerald’s experience, self-trust developed through leaning on her own abilities and believing in herself, even though her cooperating teacher dismissed her during the first week of student teaching. Making a conscious decision about whether the situation would defeat her, Emerald embraced her own mental toughness and resiliency. She expressed, “it made me come back even stronger and more determined to succeed.”

Similarly, Ruby reflected upon her own journey as a student and as an individual, contending her past experience to be her greatest asset. Expressing a distrust of the educational system, she explained that her teacher self-efficacy emerged through defining her own values and approaches—those she will continue to gauge as she begins her career. On the contrary, Pastel expressed a high regard for educational system, and for her personally, teacher self-efficacy developed through spending as much time as possible within it. She placed a high value on experience and preparation, noting that learning to trust herself within the roles of teacher was occurring as a gradual process of growth and transformation.

The theme of trust and affirmation emerged within the demand/control/support model. First, the participants identified various situations in which trust and affirmation were lacking—thus, creating distress for them. Conversely, the participants claimed a sense of control when others affirmed them, showing trust in their abilities to carry out the roles of teaching. The supports that provided affirmation and trust revolved around time spent in the school environment—time to make connections with students and others, time to make decisions and to have repeated mastery experiences, and time to be influenced through social persuasion.

### Theme Two: Connection

The theme of establishing connections with others emerged within the results of this study. The profession encompassing “teaching people, not subjects,” involves the ability to connect with many others, perhaps on unprecedented levels compared to that which other professions encounter.

The participants expressed their experiences as students involved learning in a community oriented environment with teachers who cared. Splendid noted that a good teacher was one who cared about students outside of the classroom—one who was always available, whenever students needed them. As she stepped into her teacher role, however, she related the challenge behind becoming this caring professional. She found it difficult to reach out to students experiencing things of which she had no prior knowledge, such as those coming from single parent homes. She asked, “How can I both relate and be sympathetic in a genuine way?”

Striking this balance created a struggle for almost all of the participants as they considered “how they related to students.” Relatively close to their students in age, particularly those who worked with older high school students, such as seniors, at times found it difficult to establish authority and to “build relationships” while maintaining this authority. At times, the participants found themselves struggling to have a connection with their students without becoming their friends. Baby found herself feeling like more of a mentor, while Midnight felt as though he slipped into a father role at times. Royal discussed how her relationships with students caused stress because the students addressed her as a peer rather than the teacher in the classroom. Pastel also stated it was difficult for her to assume her role as teacher because she found herself falling into patterns of “being a friend first, followed by trying to be teacher...you can’t have it both ways.” All of the participants met daily challenges in defining their roles as teachers and establishing boundaries with students.

For the first time in the teacher role, the participants also found it difficult to relate to students they each largely described as “not like me.” This major realization for participants emerged as they, for the first time, engaged with students of various dispositions and aptitudes presented a perplexing strain upon them in the classroom. As one participant stated, “My school had a 100% graduation rate and strong family support. The classes were small and there were no cliques. Working with students who are like me is easy, because they love school and they love learning. I can relate to them.” Salmon expressed in a workshop journal writing, “I am scared to work with kids from a completely different background than me, because I worry that I may not know how to best connect with and teach them. I just hope that in the moment, I can give them what they need” (Salmon’s Workshop Journal Entry).

On the other hand, the participants expressed a dilemma in working with those students who struggle by refusing to try or have learning difficulties. Splendid noted, “Sometimes it is hard for me to understand when a student just can’t get it because learning always came so easy for me. These gaps are difficult to deal with, especially when I am trying so hard to motivate them and engage students who will not try or who do not care about their education” ( Personal Interview). Reaching all students in a classroom environment may prove challenging because not only are students in a different place, but often times teachers may not have an understanding of the experiences they’ve had or the struggles they face. This is where establishing a connection through communication becomes critical—having the opportunity to first

know students, building relationships with them, and speaking to them about their learning and how to best help them in that process.

The findings suggest that coping with the strains of connectedness requires measures of understanding. The first, may be to understand the dispositions of those in the learning environment—the adolescent. In a writing prompt describing the typical adolescent, the participants described them as unique, individual and complex, needing to be treated with a level of autonomy and respect (Baby's Workshop Journal Entry).

They described students with whom they were most interested in working. While all qualified they were genuinely interested in working with all students, they were leery of those whose personalities clash with theirs, and frustrated with apathetic students who do not have any motivation or drive.

For each of the participants, understanding and defining roles as teacher became an important aspect. Mentor teachers and university supervisors helped to shape this understanding through maintaining a connectedness, first serving as role models to exemplify vicarious experiences, and by providing direct guidance through social persuasion. This resource seemed to provide a strong tool for social problem solving, embracing measures for coping. Taking these specific actions based on a novel understanding provided a strong sense of control for the participants, thus, creating teacher self-efficacy. For example, Royal, perceived herself as developing teacher-self efficacy because she defined her role to keep students on task and “hold the student responsible for what he should be doing.”

Quite often, all of the participants consulted those outside of the teaching environment such as family, friends and peers with whom they regularly would communicate. The participants often cited that loved ones were effective resources for support because of their close relationship and the ability to listen objectively by being “outside of the situation.” They also reported having established close connections with some of their university professors as providing an “enduring” support—one that they could rely upon whenever needed for a myriad of reasons.

Overall, the participants cited their greatest resource to be one another. Establishing a learning community within the program provided a sense of belonging and comradery. While this community established a connection among the English education majors through methods courses, all agreed that the stress management workshop offered even stronger sense of community and connectedness throughout the practicum experience. Midnight discussed the workshop as providing a sense of community, understanding that others struggled with the very same things he struggled with. Others looked forward to meeting: sharing, laughing, and addressing issues that they faced.

The theme of connection spanned across the demand/control/support model. A lack of connection with others caused the participants to feel distressed; however, thriving connections provided a strong perception of teacher self-efficacy. The supports that fostered connectedness included mentor role-models, learning communities, and the development of personal attributes rooted in strong interpersonal skills.

### Theme Three: Purpose

When first establishing their own purposes for becoming teachers, the participants shared a common ground in which they chose the profession in order to “help others” or “impact lives.” One theme that emerged through this study however, suggested that what seemed to be a simplistic notion—“helping others,” entailed much more complexity than they initially realized. These deepened understandings facilitated a more pointed intrapersonal conception: “What are the things that I have to do and why am I doing them?” One’s purpose as a teacher is rooted within the roles that one must embrace in order to fulfill it.

Perhaps teaching is the only profession in which a role-reversal occurs as one transforms from a student to become a teacher. The practicum and student teaching role requires that the teacher candidate occupy the space of both, at times feeling as though the two worlds collide. Midnight shared, “It is difficult filling the awkward space of being both student and teacher—to be patronized and yet expected to act as a professional adult. As a pre-service teacher Salmon acknowledged the difficulty of teaching in another teacher’s classroom, claiming, “I am not certain about the boundaries within the classroom environment. Should I step in and discipline an off task student or does that responsibility lie upon the teacher of the classroom? She stated that this really made her feel confused and at times uncomfortable. Other cited gaps within the teacher education program, particularly seemingly conflicting instruction in their university program. Ruby asserted, “I am watching it with a critical eye” (Personal Interview).

Perhaps the workshop's metaphor activity most readily targeted the complexity of these teacher roles, exemplifying them through their interaction as part of a process. Specifically, the participants described their roles as bridge builder, make-up consultant, Painted Rocks dam, artist, lioness, river and composer. These descriptions captured the task-related roles, revealing their primary purposes as teachers: to facilitate knowledge to create learning outcomes.

In order to fulfill the purpose of facilitating knowledge and learning outcomes, the pre-service teachers faced demands involving curriculum. Participants expressed concern about what they would be required to teach versus what they had a passion to teach. Ironically, most of the participants believed that they possessed expertise with their content area, claiming this to be a strength; however, they stated that this expertise did not necessarily align with the high school course curriculum. Pastel declared she felt as though she would still be learning content while learning to teach because she had not been exposed to the content that "schools are requiring within their curriculum" (Interview). She further articulated, "I know what I want to teach, but that does not mean I will automatically be able to teach it." In addition, assessing learning of this curriculum posed a threat to the participants, particularly how standardized testing would affect them, and knowing how to implement and assess curriculum according to the common core.

Related to curricular concerns was managing time—within a class period, a school day, a school week, a unit, the quarter, and the semester. Although the participants stated college classes prepared them for lesson planning, Splendid indicated that she felt

ill-equipped to plan for units of study that overlap. She asked, “How do you design units and plan for projects when there are other parts of your ongoing curriculum, such as vocabulary and writing instruction? Reflecting upon her courses, she stated that no class offered instruction on how to plan for the larger picture. Similarly, Pastel expressed frustration with planning according to a block schedule. “Sometimes I just didn’t know how long an activity would take or be able to predict student absences or other interruptions. Mostly though, I was nervous about filling the time for a 95-minute lesson in the block schedule” (Personal Interview).

Role ambiguity also fostered new perspectives and approaches to instruction. In sharing what they learned, Emerald shared that she discovered how “important discussion is to the learning process—that learners must have power and that happens best in learning partnerships.” Splendid offered new insights about reading aloud to students. She stated, “At first I thought this practice minimized their intelligence; however, then I realized students were more engaged through this process. Baby shared “I used to think there were fixed ways to do things, but I am now realizing there are many ways pertinent to the teacher’s personality, style, and also to the particular group of students.” Salmon learned to relinquish some control and to let go. She stated, “I have learned that instead of controlling everything that occurs in a classroom, I will need to learn to choose my battles. This may involve ignoring some behaviors, including those that are at times disruptive.”

Other stressors mounted from a heavy workload. Splendid remarked, “I felt inefficient at grading student essays accurately and efficiently.” Baby shared how much

time she spent providing feedback on students' essays, feeling an insurmountable duty to do so, but not knowing for sure how much the feedback was truly serving her students. "I am not even sure if they read all of my comments." The participants related this directly to the amount of time they spent at school. Baby stated, "I am here until at least five or five-thirty every night. When I go home, I worry about what I did not get done, and whether or not my plans are ready for tomorrow." Midnight, on the other hand, stated one of his coping strategies was to work when at work, and to leave work there.

Acknowledging the capacity of role-overload, he stated, "I am making a conscious decision to create a balance between my personal and professional life now while I am student-teaching, in hopes that I can do the same when I have a classroom of my own."

Clarifying one's purpose as a teacher promotes a sense of teacher self-efficacy. Defining their own purposes for teaching served as a coping strategy and created teacher self-efficacy for each of the participants. Each of the participants found themselves functioning under many roles. Pastel described herself as teacher, facilitator, mentor, coach, and disciplinarian. Baby found herself serving as a mentor to students. Each also shared about their professional interests and specialties. For example, Midnight expressed interest in adopting the Harkness method of discussion in his classroom. Emerald showed interest in creating positivity programs. Royal stated she was interested in working with low SES students, while Ruby hoped to impact those students who are the "so-called self-proclaimed haters of school" (Personal Interview). Ruby sees her future role as creating and expanding social justice within the educational system.

Regardless of the varied interests, the participants stressed the importance of eliminating stress so that they could give their students their all. Splendid claimed, “When I am stressed I am unable to give my students my all— and they deserve all of me.” Supports and resources in order to carry out purpose include developing coping strategies and a sense of well-being.

The demand/control/support model related to the theme of purpose. The participants, when uncertain of their purposes reported to lack confidence and to feel stressed. On the other hand, the participants gained a sense of control when they identified their reasons for teaching, cultivated interests, or adopted particular techniques. Critical reflection through writing and discussion helped to uncover one’s purpose for teaching.

#### Theme Four: Balance

A fourth theme, balance, surfaced within the results of this study. As a pre-service teacher, students found it challenging to juggle their personal lives with school and the demands of teaching. This disequilibrium created stressors for each of them, that manifested itself in various ways, and each reacted in their individual ways. The goal of the stress management workshop was to create self-awareness for each individual and throughout the course of the study, participants self-reflected on the ways stress manifested affecting them throughout the process. From the participants’ responses in the stress management workshop and the interview, stress affected them in the following ways:

- Physical manifestations included sweating, rapid heartbeat, fatigue, insomnia, tight muscles, aches and pains.
- Mental/Emotional strains included obsessive thinking, feeling overwhelmed, irritable, unfocused, or unproductive.
- Behavioral strains became apparent through outbursts, hyperactivity, withdrawal, isolation, increased alcohol consumption.
- A spiritual quest led to feeling an existential crisis, uncertainties about purpose and direction.

The stress management workshop promoted coping strategies in one of the final activities in which each of the participants adopted self-care plans. The participants initiated the plans by setting at least two specific, measurable goals.

Although not prompted to do so, each of the participants initiated a program for physical release. Their plans included exercise, primarily running and yoga, as well as relaxation techniques such as meditative breathing exercises and massage therapy. Spiritual meditation and prayer was cited as a specific goal.

The participants included other enjoyable activities such as engaging in social activities with peers on a regular basis. This included humor and laughing—an unlimited amount. Participants unanimously found a mental/emotional release in “talking it out” with others, particularly friends and family—those who could identify with the situation but remain somewhat objective. Connecting with others, though not easily quantifiably measured, was expressed as an important goal.

Embracing hobbies like hunting, playing the guitar, and simply taking one hour each day for “me-time—doing whatever I want” topped the list. They also found solace in what they described as mindless activities, such as watching specific shows like “Sex in the City” or playing video games.

Setting goals, both personal and professional, helped the participants to feel more efficient and productive. Prioritizing fostered a sense of control among them, creating greater self-efficacy in their roles as teacher. Listed below are two of each of participant’s goals—some listed three or more on their self-care plans.

Table 4.3 Self-Care Plans

Participant	Goal	Specifics
Midnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meditating</li> <li>• Outdoor Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 minutes each day</li> <li>• Once each week</li> </ul>
Splendid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Me-time”</li> <li>• Prayer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One hour/day</li> <li>• 15 minutes each day</li> </ul>
Pastel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking dinner(healthy)</li> <li>• Connect with others (colleagues)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four times a week (at least)</li> <li>• One or two times per month</li> </ul>
Royal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running</li> <li>• Laughing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every other day</li> <li>• As much as I want</li> </ul>
Ruby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Non-teaching friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 x weekly</li> <li>• Meet weekly 30m</li> </ul>
Salmon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yoga</li> <li>• Be with friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two times per week (1-2 hours/time)</li> <li>• One night per week</li> </ul>
Emerald	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Connect with people I love/enjoy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 min 4-5 days per week</li> <li>• 3 times each week</li> </ul>
Baby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play my guitar</li> <li>• Time with friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every night</li> <li>• Each week</li> </ul>

### Diverse Experiences

Extended time spent in varied situations with different people, including mentors and student groups, helped the participants achieve balance. According to the participants, “hands on learning” proved to be the most valuable part of their experience. They felt more comfortable as they gained more experience in school settings and forged stronger relationships. These experiences provided them with an opportunity to network and to make them feel as though they were more like teachers than students.

### Curriculum

The participants expressed a need for the secondary program’s course content to address issues and provide support. They believed that a classroom management course for secondary majors should be required as well as an assessment class. Optional programs such as stress management and learning communities could be aligned with required courses to offer additional support. Finally, the participants asserted that their methods courses helped to create the most balance for them in terms of preparing to teach in the classroom. However, they felt that the University/School/Student network could be strengthened in order to align experience. Such alignments would be created through opened communication between schools, university and student. For example, the English curriculum in teaching program could align with high school canon. In addition, stronger alignment within the practicum class and the practicum experience would cultivate a stronger connection for students, and serve as a platform for “student voice” within the program.

The theme of balance was apparent within the demand/control/support model. Participants claimed that a lack of balance, whether between balancing roles within the job, or between their professional and personal lives, caused distress. They gained balance by learning to prioritize, manage time, and to set goals. Supports for gaining control included developing individualized self-care plans.

### Results Summary

Chapter four reports the findings of this phenomenological study on the transformation from student to teacher. A focus group revealed the participants' initial perceptions about the teaching profession, the stressors and coping associated with it, and the supports and resources. The results of the focus group provided a backdrop to adopt and initiate a stress management curriculum delivered through a workshop. Through this workshop, participants explored the concepts of stress and coping as it pertains to teaching and reflected upon its application to their practicum experiences. Personal interviews highlighted perceptions of confidence and growth to capture the essence of the transformation in case study profiles. Overall, the results section presented a step-by-step view of the experiences and transformation of the participants through their journey of learning to teach.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Introduction

Britzman (2003) characterizes learning to teach as a developmental journey—a struggle for voice (Bloomfield 2010). The purpose of this study was to hear the voices of pre-service teachers as they experienced the phenomenon of transformation from student to teacher. It aimed to identify their general and personal perceptions, to reveal their stressors and coping strategies, and to capture the richness of their transformation as they embraced needed supports and resources. The development and implementation of a stress management workshop served a dual purpose by providing a platform for data collection and a support for building coping skills and teacher self-efficacy.

The first chapter introduced occupational stress as it relates to the teaching profession and established the background for conducting this investigation among pre-service teachers. Chapter two presented three major theories that provided a basis for the conceptual framework. Chapter three described each step of the process and provided a justification for the methodology. The fourth chapter outlined the results from each step of the process and condensed the findings into four overarching themes.

This chapter will elaborate on the findings described in chapter four, connecting them back to the overarching research question:

MFQ1: How do secondary pre-service teachers describe the experience of their transformation from student to teacher and perceive themselves as ready to cope with the

environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors of teaching as they complete the program?

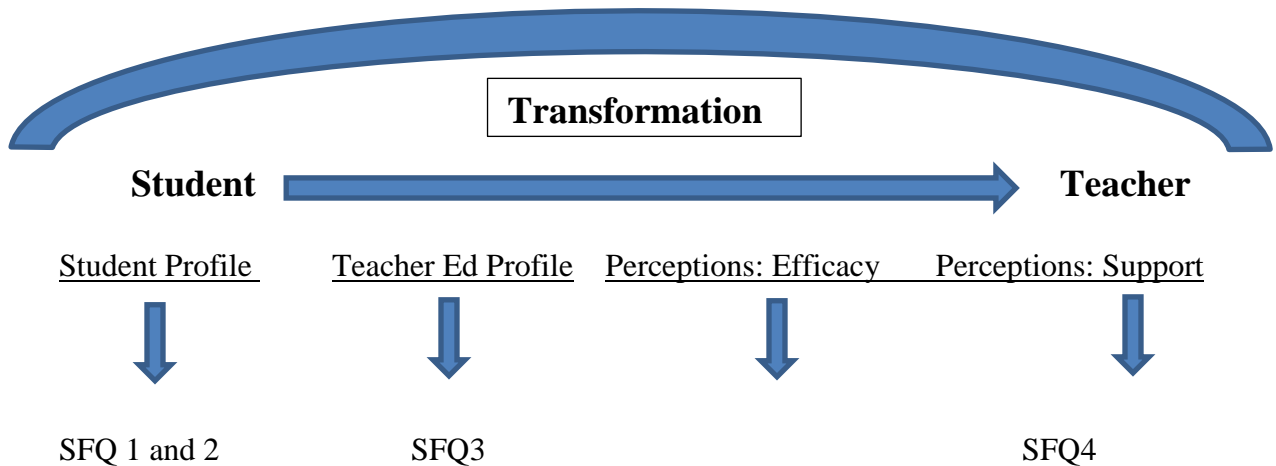


Figure 5.1 Cross Case Analysis of Transformation

Four sub-questions guided the transformation:

Four sub-questions guided the stages of the transformation:

SFQ1: What are the general preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ2: What are the personal preconceptions secondary pre-service teachers have about stress and coping within the teaching profession?

SFQ3: What are the stressors that secondary pre-service teachers encounter during their practicum teaching experiences and the coping strategies they utilize to address them?

SFQ4: What supports and resources do pre-service teachers perceive as instrumental to building strong teacher self- efficacy beliefs?

In order to provide insight into the transformation that occurred, each of the sub-focus questions are addressed within the framework of the emerging themes: trust, connection, purpose, and balance. First, an overview of the transformational learning theory establishes a foundation.

### The Transformation: Becoming to Being

Understanding the demands of the teaching profession is an essential element to this study. “Being” a teacher means that one must assume complex roles in a variety of domains, marking it as a highly stressful occupation. These complex roles exist over three domains: the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and environmental, which harbor potential workplace issues including behavior management, a heavy workload, a lack of administrative support, and external regulations imposed upon them. Also, increased accountability has become a major stressor for teachers, especially under a highly stigmatized, undervalued profession. In addition, teachers may face difficulties meeting these demands, feeling as though they lack the resources or ability to overcome them. As a result, many teachers leave the profession early or face issues of burnout—all of which affect student learning and the overall quality of our educational system.

“Becoming” one who is capable of meeting these demands marks an extraordinary journey of learning, thriving, and giving. Those learning to teach transform from student to teacher, not only acquiring new roles in highly complex environments that fall under high accountability and demand; they in fact must negotiate a complete role reversal. While assuming these new roles, teacher candidates face additional

challenges rooted in their lack of experience and conflicting perceptions. Such a transformation requires not only an understanding of the complexities and demands, but also the perception of self as capable of meeting them. Pre-service teachers must be ready to enter the profession.

### Transformational Learning Theory

Transformational learning theory provided a basis for understanding the needs of these particular individuals as they assumed new roles and for shaping the individual's perception of self within these roles (Mezirow, 1999). Through Mezirow's theory, consisting of ten phases from the disorienting dilemma to building self-confidence and competence, transformation takes place in the reframing of perspective as those learning to teach began to see themselves as classroom teachers (Snyder, 2012). The reframing that occurs while learning to teach has to do with the transition from being taught to teaching—essentially a role adjustment (Briggs, 1991). Furthermore, this adjustment occurs on a multi-faceted level: first, on the institutional level in which pre-service teachers “find their place” as a teacher in the school environment, and then on a more personal level, highlighting the ways in which they respond emotionally to the experience (Smith, 2000).

### Synthesis of Findings

Perhaps the most important finding in this study is the unique journey that each participant experienced throughout this phenomenological study. Such experiences reveal the complexity of the stressors each encountered, the ways in which each gained control

through coping and teaching efficacy, as well as the supports and resources they embraced to do so. For the participants in this study, four themes emerged as instrumental to this process: building trust, making connections with others, clarifying purpose, and striving for balance. These themes emerged as the result of enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological cues (Bandura, 1986). The following section will explain first, how their general and personal preconceptions paralleled the emerging themes, and then how each of the themes spanned the occupational stress paradigm of demand, control, and support to highlight transformation and raise teacher self-efficacy among the participants.

#### Transformation through Trust and Affirmation

The themes of trust and affirmation emerged within this study as a powerful force affecting the developing teacher. One deemed “trustworthy” by others is dependable and consistent, defined by Gold and Roth (1993) as “dependably real” (p. 122). For one who is learning to teach, trust occurs as one acclimates to the role as teacher and becomes “free from the fear of ridicule” (p. 122). Trust perpetuates itself through affirmation characterized by honesty and acceptance.

Early on, the sample of this study experienced demands surrounding issues of trust on the interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental levels. Surprisingly, these demands did not differ from those they had anticipated in the focus group.

Personal preconceptions suggested that the pre-service teachers lacked trust and confidence in their own abilities—in fact, they expressed that overall “a lack of confidence” in their abilities concerned them most. On a deeper level, some still

possessed personal doubts about being “cut out” for the profession to indicate uncertainty and a lack of trust in themselves as teachers.

Aware of their own lack of experience, the participants reported feeling at times, inadequate and self-conscious about whether others “trusted” them to carry out the duties in the classroom. For example, Baby discussed “swallowing” her hurt when she felt undermined by a substitute teacher. Splendid reported “crying for at least twenty minutes” in the rest room when students, confused by her instruction, questioned her knowledge on the content. Midnight, when falsely accused by a parent for calling her kid “annoying”—felt helpless. In addition, being observed and evaluated brought about distress for the participants in this study, paralleling another study in which 74% of the sample reported feeling distressed about observation and evaluation by others (Malik & Ajmal, 2010, p. 74). Through experiencing conflicting tensions about how others perceived them, the participants found themselves “second guessing” decisions, feeling a lack of expertise, and experiencing negative emotions such as guilt or shame—all stemming from a lack of trust and serving to diminish their teacher self-efficacy.

In the personal interviews conducted near the end of their second practicum, the participants reflected upon their transformation from student to teacher. Transformation occurred first, in building trusting relationships, through social problem solving, and through learning to trust themselves as they made decisions in their new roles as teachers. Pastel described the time she spent gaining experience in school through observing, tutoring and mentoring as the single most important factor as building her confidence toward becoming a teacher. This time afforded the opportunity for social problem

solving, defined by Lewis, Roache, and Romi (2011) as a collaborative measure to initiate change. The participants in this study engaged in this coping strategy by reaching out to others involved in the learning process. Through proactive measures, such as asking for help or clarification, they began to confront issues with the problem-focused approach (Cohen 1987). This proactive measure constitutes self-disclosure, which Gold and Roth identify as a specific skill necessary for a pre-service teacher to develop trust (1993). Receiving feedback and guidance from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor deemed a significant effect for the participants in this study. This equates to a process of socialization, modeling, and evaluating, shared by experienced teachers and mentors that, according to Walkington (2005), serves as an essential part of the social problem-solving process. In this study, it proved to help the participants to adopt new mindsets and perspectives or to try new approaches. Social problem solving aligns with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy construct, social persuasion, as a method for assuring individuals of adequate progress, subsequently providing them with a teacher efficacy resource. In the present study, interactions such as these forged trusting relationships modeled within a safe environment, serving to socialize pre-service teachers in their roles (Snyder, 2012).

Tait (2008) addressed the importance of developing skills that will inspire trust for pre-service teachers as they prepare to enter the profession:

Learning to build trusting, functional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators, as well as lead, communicate with, and influence learners in the social context of the classroom are key aspects in the profession (p. 59)

Building these relationships depends upon recognizing and relying on intrapersonal skills characterized by personal strengths and qualities.

Gold and Roth (1993) contend that trust is cultivated as pre-service teachers make themselves available, open-minded and genuine. Through engaging in these types of interactions with students, the pre-service teachers in this study built sentiments of trust and promoted teacher self-efficacy in the interpersonal dimension—again, through social persuasion. Gold and Roth (1993) further identify the specific skills of cultivating trust: self-disclosure, availability, open-mindedness, perception checking, paraphrasing and listening. Other skills, such as prioritizing, making decisions, and exercising time management helped the pre-service teachers establish their trust in their roles and responsibilities as teachers. Repeated mastery experiences helped shape their teacher efficacy as they made decisions that resulted in positive outcomes (Bandura, 1977).

This occurred for Royal as she took the initiative to exert authority in the classroom. Royal developed confidence in herself as she became more autonomous in her roles through both her practicum and student teaching. At first, she felt as though she did not have much guidance from her cooperating teacher; however, looking back at it, she realized she gained more independence and autonomy earlier than others who were serving practicum. Having this autonomy shaped management skills and through repeated mastery experiences in dealing with students, she found herself “in command.” With a new confidence, she voiced the progress she made: “I learned to trust myself in making decisions in the classroom and by sticking to my guns.” Royal built teacher self-

efficacy through effective decision-making, which in turn created empowerment and self-perceptions of competency.

Another element in Bandura's efficacy theory, physiological responses, highlights ways in which people manage their internal responses to various situations. Participants in this present study reported taking more proactive approaches based on logic rather than reactive approaches based on emotion. In a study examining pre-service teachers, Tait (2008) referred to this type of change as occurring through "self-reflection [while learning] to cope with stress [and] manage emotions..." (p. 59). Through such practices, the participants learned that they are capable of coping when things do not go well in the classroom. In doing so, they discovered personal strengths they did not know they possessed. For example, one individual discussed having patience, while another referred to developing strong interpersonal skills when communicating directly with students. Others discussed the ability to rebound from setbacks and to take charge in the learning environment. All of these internal mechanisms provided coping strategies, that once participants became aware, served them as a source of personal power—in essence, learned resourcefulness that shaped their perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and trust in themselves.

### Transformation through Connection

The ability to establish and build close connections with others is a core aspect of teaching and learning. In addition, connection serves as an important coping strategy because social support is the most effective resource for pre-service teachers as they learn to teach (Harvey-Murray et al., 2000). In this, connections with others may help create

communities of learners in which individuals impact one another through a collaborative social dynamic.

The theme of connection emerged through the focus group interview to indicate that the participants held views shaped according to their earliest school experiences. Believing teaching to be a job where one has the chance to make a positive difference in people's lives, the participants discussed the impact that their teachers had upon them, for better or worse. In this study, three of the focus group participants reported "loving school" while two of them "hated it"— feelings attributed largely to their relationships with teachers. Similarly, one study showed that 84% of pre-service teachers were inspired by a "good teacher," yet 57% claimed wanting to teach those "better" than what their teachers did (Malderez, Hobson, Tracy & Kerr, 2007, p. 226). Through these experiences, the participants' perceptions of a competent teacher (the good teacher) versus an incompetent teacher (the bad teacher) emerged as they described the connections teachers make with others. They believed that those interested in teaching needed to be passionate about helping others because either way, teachers influence students. Through this description, the group characterized teaching as an "exciting, never boring" profession because teachers work with people.

The role reversal pre-service teachers undergo first requires that they adopt a shift in their mindset from that of the student to the teacher. As they learn to connect to others as teacher rather than student, assuming the authority may present a challenge, as it did for the participants in this study. The greatest stressor for them, however, was in not knowing how to cope with these issues. Lacking the coping strategies to make such a role

adjustment is a common stressor for pre-service teachers as indicated through earlier research studies (Malik & Ajmal, 2010). These results align with empirical findings indicating that pre-service teachers are prone to stress in relating to others.

Misconceptions, coupled with a lack of adaptive coping strategies to adjust roles in varied situations compounds the distressful situations for pre-service teachers (Abebe & Shaughnessy, 1997; Beach & Pearson, 1998; Hopkins, Hoffman, & Moss, 1997).

Cultivating personal connections to others provides a powerful resource for building teacher self-efficacy. Defining their roles in relating to others aligns with Mezirow's (1999) theory, and once the pre-service teachers in this study did so, they established boundaries and asserted themselves to be the teacher in the classroom. In order to adopt adaptive strategies to make strong connections with their students, the pre-service teachers took the initiative to heighten their communication by prioritizing one-on-one interactions, providing specific feedback, and creating an environment of mutual respect. The participants also adjusted their roles by clarifying their level of responsibility in learning outcomes. Doing so allowed them to address dilemmas of role ambiguity.

Participants in this study made connections to their mentors and cooperating teachers who had "modeled" adaptive strategies, and this served to set the stage for how the participants would in turn, relate to their students. Midnight described his transformation taking place through receiving validation from his mentor teachers—both his cooperating teacher, under whom he served both practicum and student teaching. By having these role models, Midnight said, "I grew a lot—and this helped solidify my practice."

Taking on various roles, for example, the role of a tutor, mentor, observer, counselor, facilitator, and as Midnight expressed, a “father figure,” helped the participants to adopt their own authentic and genuine approaches. The participants shared how making connections helped them forge a strong sense of teacher self- efficacy. This occurred in two ways: first, through social persuasion, in which “an exchange with others” had a favorable outcome. The second way connection occurred was through vicarious experiences, in which “modeling” worked inversely to solidify one’s unique identity. The transformation related to vicarious experience does not always occur in a linear fashion. However, it does suggest that Bandura’s processes worked simultaneously to cultivate teacher self-efficacy and transformation.

#### Transformation through Purpose

Knowing one’s purpose in any venture lays the foundation for motivation, commitment and success. In learning to teach, this involves knowing on two levels; first, establishing a philosophy that anchors one’s approach—knowing “what” one has to do and “why” he or she is doing it. The second is finding one’s identity as he or she embraces the roles and responsibilities of teaching—the “how” of fulfilling them. Purpose becomes a culmination of character, insight, task, and craft toward achieving positive outcomes ultimately visible in student learning.

Purpose emerged as a theme in the focus group as all five emphatically expressed their reasons for becoming teachers: to help others. However, throughout their transformation they began to realize that they had underestimated the complexity of doing so.

Throughout their practical experiences, the teacher candidates experienced conflict arising from the “gap,” as Ruby stated, between what they were doing in the class versus what they were doing as teachers in the classroom. Ruby described herself making a dramatic transformation throughout her journey of learning to teach. She emphasized that her greatest stressor throughout this journey resulted from what she defined as a “discrepancy between university and school” (Personal Interview). Through placements in two different settings, Ruby found herself immersed within two different worlds—an alternative school versus a more traditional type setting. These diverse experiences gave her a new understanding and promoted questions about the structure of schools. For example, she raised questions about who it is that school serves.

Ruby’s transformation occurred as she became aware of her own ability to “see the big picture” and adopted a path toward bringing “relevance to students’ lives.” She claimed her own sense of purpose took root within this chosen path and through it she developed teacher efficacy—a can do attitude to inspire change. She asserted, “I never realized I would embrace anything other than mainstream education but, my orientation has totally become about social justice—I see what education can be, and it feels like hope.”

All eight of the participants shared the same experience, citing a divide between their seminar class and their practicum experience. In the same way, they reported their final student work product, the teacher work sample, to create stress, feeling as though it “contradicted” some of the work they were doing in the classroom. Conflicts between preconceptions and the realities of teaching caused stress. Again, the results of this study

coincide with findings from previous research to indicate that individuals experience gaps between their preconceptions and the realities—those that are represented by the theoretical aspects of learning to teach versus the practical application of doing so (Turner, Zanker, & Braine, 2010).

The teacher candidates also experienced conflict between their personal beliefs about teaching and learning versus those exposed by the teacher education program (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010). Pastel described having this experience with a university mentor, explaining it to cause her distress. Similarly, Baby claimed her teaching style to be the total opposite of her cooperating teacher, causing her confusion, frustration and anxiety. These sources of disequilibrium in which personal beliefs clash with roles that supervisors expect them to assume created stressors for the pre-service teachers in this study.

Experiencing firsthand teaching as a stigmatized profession, the teacher candidates admitted questioning from others about “why” they were becoming teachers, raised largely from the college peers who were pursuing other professions. These situations prompted critical self-reflection and initiatives to define their purposes for teaching. Taking measures to cope with the negativity toward teaching as a profession helped clarify and justify their individual purposes for teaching and this in turn shaped teacher efficacy.

A sense of competency is achieved as pre-service teachers clarify their personal beliefs about their own abilities and purposes for teaching (Turner, Zanker & Braine, 2010). Defining their own purposes for teaching not only helped the participants in this

study grow, it also provided direction for them to pursue special interests within the profession—clarifying their roles and responsibilities and shaping their identities.

### Transformation through Balance

Perhaps the greatest occupational stressor experienced by workers is achieving balance between their work lives and their personal lives: work-life balance. The focus group anticipated this to be a stressor associated with the profession. However, once they experienced it for the first time as student teachers, the concept took on a new meaning.

The reality of this, discovered by the participants of this study, became apparent through what Beehr and Glazer (2005) described as role overload—for example, finding time to plan effective lessons and to grade student writing effectively. These environmental demands, experienced by the pre-service teachers in this study included planning and assessment. Most of participants described themselves as working beyond their required hours while student teaching, and some admitted that they continued to think about school after going home for the night. On the other hand, one participant in this study was able to establish a clear boundary where schoolwork did not infringe on after hours at home. Establishing this “defined work pattern” helped keep things in perspective and avoid role overload that could easily cause distress.

Imbalance in any aspect of life creates stress—that which manifests itself in various ways. Awareness of the ways it affected each of the participants and the measures they took to manage it helped them to achieve a more balanced state of mind. During a workshop activity, the participants acknowledged the ways they were experiencing stress in each of the following domains: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Physical manifestations that the participants generally experienced included heart palpitations, sweating, nausea, tight muscles, sleep disturbances and fatigue. Splendid also reported losing her taste buds when she felt stressed. The participants stated these physical effects caused them to “shake” while standing in front of the class, their faces “turning red,” as they began to “stutter” while talking.

Emotional manifestations included feelings of shame, guilt and apprehension. Indecisiveness and lack of focus were signs of mental stress, along with feeling overwhelmed, irritable or angry. Outbursts of tears and venting to loved ones usually accompanied these feelings. Behaviors that resulted were often characterized by withdrawing, jumping from one activity to another, loss or increase of appetite, or increased alcohol consumption. Spiritual dilemmas occurred when the participants questioned their overall purpose, as one participant stated, in the face of experiencing an “existential crisis.” The participants in this study experienced a host of disorienting dilemmas, all of which resulted in disequilibrium.

After participating in the stress management workshop, the participants of this study shared a renewed understanding that stress itself is an important part of creating balance and that their own dilemmas were a necessary challenge to motivate and to nurture growth. Baby stated, “The stress management workshop instilled a sense of awareness, helping me to realize how important coping strategies are. It helps knowing who you are and finding your own way to deal with things.” Ruby described herself “[learning] how to move forward in [her] own self-care—I was operating out of a lot of

repair but now I deal with it more comprehensively rather than in a panicked sort of way” (Personal Interview).

These outcomes, characterized as moments of victory, proved to produce eustress, building their sense of competency and confidence. These moments marked stressful situations that became a potential for individuals to adapt to changing circumstances, transform and to “live well” in a balanced way (Quick et al., 1997). Learning to balance their professional and personal selves merged through accepting their roles as teachers and bringing their authentic selves to the classroom.

### Supports and Resources

As the participants voiced their experiences, it became apparent that a lack of trust and affirmation, connection, purpose, and balance caused their disorienting dilemmas leading to the stressors they faced as pre-service teachers. Consequently, measures to build trust, cultivate connections, clarify purpose, and achieve balance served as coping mechanisms that fostered teacher self-efficacy, achieved through mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological cues (Bandura, 1986). Furthermore, these tenets served as mediators of transformation—through trust and affirmation, connection, purpose, and balance, the participants of this study gained the perception of confidence that moved each from student to teacher.

In addition, the findings also identified four necessary elements to provide support and resources to ensure transformation: time, social support, critical reflection, and an

individualized plan for self-care. The following section highlights the importance of each of these supports and resources in learning to teach.

### Time

Time emerged as a principal resource in building teacher self-efficacy. Time in the school environment allowed opportunities for exposure to diverse settings, those that provided for vicarious experience and modeling. In such an environment, especially when afforded autonomy, the pre-service teachers may make mistakes, learn and grow under the guidance of a mentor—all cultivating mastery experiences. The teacher candidates learned through making basic decisions within certain domains, gradually assuming the roles and responsibilities, and discovering the realities of teaching. Through connecting with others, teacher candidates may begin to find their place in school, and cultivate a trust of themselves to serve within the roles as teachers.

Pre-Practicum Experiences: Before beginning their practical teaching experiences, the participants of this study reported having varied experiences described as “time” spent in the school environment. Regardless of these varied degrees and types of early experiences, all eight stated they were instrumental to developing their teacher self-efficacy and readiness to teach. In a study involving secondary science education majors, Watson, Miller and Patty (2009) established that early opportunities provided “confidence” and affirmed their choices to pursue teaching as a career.

Prior to entering the initial practicum experience, three of the participants reported regularly serving hours through writing workshops, tutoring, or mentoring students.

Three others reported spending time in other capacities, such as coaching, or teaching in different environments—that which they labeled as time spent in diverse settings.

This time, as Walkington (2005) states, “provides opportunities that can occur nowhere else ... the university classroom cannot simulate the spontaneity of the classroom or the nuances of the workplace” (p. 54).

Those who reported having significant additional time or “earlier experiences” in the school environment prior to practicum expressed the highest satisfaction with their practicum experience and the highest level of readiness to enter the profession at the end of student teaching. In doing so, those students who had this prior experience were able to make clearer connections between their theoretical training and their practical experiences (Malderez, Hobson, Tracy & Kerr, 2007).

1<sup>st</sup> Practicum Experience: Required time spent in the school environment, well established within the teacher education curriculum, begins with a sixty-hour practicum during which the pre-service teachers largely observe the school environment and begin to interact with the students. During this time, pre-service teachers “get their feet wet”—for most, it is their first time in the school environment other than as a student.

Throughout the initial practicum period, the participants of this study engaged in what they described as ice-breaking activities, largely vicarious experiences through observation (Bandura, 1997). Their reports of the experience varied, however. Although this time is intended for vicarious experiences to occur, the participants in this study who indicated they were afforded more autonomy to be involved through various activities, such as lesson planning, instruction, and connecting with students, felt as though the time

spent to be more productive. While vicarious experiences play an important role, they become more powerful when coupled with mastery experiences (Pajares, 1997).

2<sup>nd</sup> Practicum (Student-Teaching) Experience: Each of the participants in this study reported their second practical experience to be less stressful than the first. This result is understandable, as the first practicum experience paves the way for the second experience, student teaching, during which the pre-service teachers typically become “fully submerged” into the day-to-day experience of teaching. In addition to observed evaluations by the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor, the student teacher also completes a teacher work sample consisting of several key elements in order to illustrate the experience. Extending over two semesters, or a full year, most often served consecutively, the time spent within the classroom provides an opportunity for theory to be placed into practice. Pre-service teachers find this practical experience to be the most significant element of their teacher training.

Change over Time: All of the participants reported much higher confidence level after completing the second tenure, student teaching. They attributed a higher level of confidence to having served in the school environment, feeling as though this time equipped them for the more involved role associated with the student teaching tenure.

Similarly, Murray-Harvey’s et al., (2000) Australian study comparing the stress of the first practicum to the second, revealed a significant finding of reduction in stress from the first to the second practicum. In this study, seeking and receiving support from a mentor teacher was determined to be the most useful coping strategy, suggesting that time spent in one particular setting cultivates connection that provided additional support.

In addition, a significant finding of reduction in stress from the first practicum to the second suggested that stress would be minimized over time as the practicing teacher gained experience. A study conducted by Sumison and Thomas (1995) also indicated less stress in the second practicum, partly attributed to experience gained during the first practicum, and also in part due to participating in a stress management program (as cited in Murray-Harvey et al., (2000).

Additionally, Murray-Harvey's (2000) study indicated that students show a marked change from their first practicum to their second as they were more concerned with preparation than school evaluation during their student teaching placement. These findings suggest that pre-service teachers operated more from a teacher's standpoint than that of a student as they gained experience over time. During student teaching, preparation for the program emerged as the top concern—not content or methodology, but rather balancing personal commitments, coping with workload, managing time, and expectations about others' evaluation of their competence. This study suggested that teaching experience might itself be a strategy to cope with stress.

To parallel these findings, a 2008 study conducted by Arnett and Freeburg established that pre-service teachers insisted field experiences to be the most valuable aspect in their teacher preparation program, providing an extended amount of time to clarify beliefs about schools and teaching. However, the time for this experience is “relatively brief, a sharp learning curve for pre-service teachers to learn about teaching, and especially about themselves as teachers” (Kosa, 1990, p.154). As a result, some have

advocated for more continuity within the practical teaching experiences, as indicated in the next section.

Extended Time: The results of this study indicated that extended time spent in the same teaching environment cultivates opportunities for trust and affirmation. Four of the eight participants reported completing their student teaching with the same cooperating teacher. Additionally, the three participants who continued on to student teach with the same teacher with whom they served practicum, felt as though they built more trust with the cooperating teacher and the students. Overall, they reported to have a smoother transition into student teaching, feeling a sense of relief that they were familiar with the school environment, the cooperating teacher, and the students. This extended time provided a measure of support that fostered trust and gave each of them more confidence in their abilities, especially since they believed to have established a solid rapport. This rapport has an effect on the pre-service teacher's capacity for growth as established by Johnston (2010). Consequently, Freeman (2009) contends that teacher candidates be placed intentionally throughout practical experience. While some would argue that serving within two varied environments offers a more diverse experience, establishing this rapport in a safe environment builds trust and increases teacher self-efficacy.

The results of this study indicate that not only do pre-service teachers value time spent in the authentic environment of school, but also early and extended experiences in schools further prepare them for the realities of the profession and have a greater positive effect on their teacher self-efficacy through building trust (Watson, Miller, & Patty, 2009). Early experiences of time spent volunteering, taking part in writing workshops and

tutoring provided a strong sense of readiness for the profession. In addition, extended time such as serving both practicum and student teaching in the same environment also provided an extra measure of support.

Social Support:

While time and authentic experiences provided a platform for teachers to develop confidence in school settings, the social support they receive has the greatest impact (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000). The participants discussed that they gained confidence through their cooperating teachers' support, knowing they could make mistakes in a safe environment. Snyder (2012) contends that the greatest resource for pre-service teachers is teacher educators who are "thoughtful, present, and purposeful" and that pre-service teachers are exposed to settings that provide "solid foundations" (p. 50). Opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice in safe, mentored environments allows new ideas to be tested and validated. Without validation, transformation will not take place.

In this, the school environment itself serves as the model through which teacher self-efficacy is cultivated and a network is established.

University/School/Student Networks: Collegial relationships and supports provide a university/school network vital to a pre-service teacher's success. Snyder's (2012) findings also indicated that these relationships and supports align with Mezirow's (1999) ninth phase which help build confidence and competence in new roles and relationships. Throughout this study, connection occurred on several levels, both formal and informal, to help the participants develop teacher self- efficacy.

The participants each experienced connections through various types of learning networks. Collaborative work established through the university and cooperating teachers serves a powerful resource for teacher candidates (Chalies, Escalie, Bertone, & Clarke, 2011). Through these collaborative networks, several of the participants served as mentors or tutors through university/school networking or through collaborative projects. Serving in these roles helped strengthen the ability to connect with students, fostering learning outcomes. In addition, one of the participants worked with a university supervisor on research projects involving high school students. In one case, a professor/student research cohort arranged to interview several high school students through a cooperating teacher. Another project involved a network between university and school to offer extended time in schools to pre-service teachers—time prior to practicum for observation and diverse experiences in the school environment. Similarly, several of the participants took advantage of writing workshop opportunities, while others served as volunteer tutors in the school setting. Through these experiences, alignment and the modeling of mentors provided vicarious experiences for students. The participants found this mentorship to be an essential part of learning to teach, helping each of them to develop a “persona” and establish a sense of professionalism.” Freeman (2009) asserts that university/school partnerships are key in a pre-service teacher’s development.

Learning Communities: Structured networks may be referred to as learning communities, in which structured opportunities are fashioned for specific outcomes. The stress management workshop created for this study provided a structured learning community through which the participants could learn about stress and coping, reflect

upon their experiences as they served their first practicum, and share with one another. Finding a sense of community within the workshop, the participants claimed it was a place to think about things and talk with others—it helped them to know they were not alone in facing their challenges. Through this experience, the participants offered a major insight, expressing their greatest resource to be “one another.”

To support the idea of learning communities, Malik and Ajmal (2010) found that pre-service teachers could benefit from connections that included more guidance before the start of teaching practice and more coordination between the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. In addition, they asserted that schools should adopt “internships” rather than student teaching for pre-service teachers, suggesting that the experience be extended over more time. The power of such connections through learning communities serve individuals as they negotiate their roles and establish a strong sense of purpose.

Social support through networks and learning communities within the school environment builds trust and in turn, cultivates teacher self-efficacy. Snyder (2012) reported a study by Chen showing that support and self-efficacy had both “direct and indirect predictive effects of various coping strategies” (p. 49). In addition, those with higher support and self-efficacy tended to adopt “adaptive” stress through proactive ways to manage it. Furthermore, social support was found to be the most significant factor in developing coping strategies. Teacher education programs must intentionally create opportunities for students to have meaningful connections, develop trusting relationships, and to experience modeling in that safe environment (Snyder, 2012).

### Critical Reflection:

The results of this study indicated that opportunities for critical reflection provided an important resource and support to build teacher self-efficacy. The participants referred to “aha” moments—those that would bring satisfaction, knowing their efforts had positive outcomes for students. These moments, linked to their mastery experiences, provided momentum to the pre-service teachers as they clarified their reasons for teaching.

Reflective Writing: Snyder (2012) asserted reflective writing and discourse to be an essential part of the transformative process, helping pre-service teacher to “take risks” in their learning and search for understanding (p. 49). The stress management workshop provided opportunities for critical reflection and called for action based upon that reflection. Activities designed to uncover disorienting dilemmas prompted reflection about specific situations central to each participants’ experiences. In this study, writing prompts labeled as “My Voice Writings” compelled them to identify situations and express their feelings regarding them. Lewis, Roache and Romi (2011) discussed the importance for pre-service teachers to reflect on the ways in which they coped with these situations. In addition, discussion with others prompted further reflection and social problem solving, that which encouraged action.

Other researchers have affirmed the value of utilizing journals to promote critical reflection. Uline, Wilson, & Cordry (2004) conducted a study in which pre-service teachers recorded their most significant experiences throughout extended clinical experiences in order to examine themselves through critical reflection. Mezirow (1999)

describes the importance of such strategies in the reframing of perspective, in which the “learner become autonomous, critically reflective of his or her own judgements, able to engage discourse to validate these judgments” (Snyder, 2012, p. 49). Such efforts uncover personal beliefs and establish a sense of equilibrium through which one defines his or her purposes for teaching.

While the workshop promoted critical self-reflection through my voice writings, role-play and peer sharing, one particular activity targeted the individual sense of purpose for teaching: the metaphor activity. The metaphor activity was the culminating activity in the workshop, described by one participant as the best activity of the workshop, claiming it to have provided meaning for the core beliefs of becoming a teacher and seeing it in its complexity. Through this exercise, the participants revealed perceptions of their roles, those that cultivated and marked progress for students, affecting learning outcomes.

The metaphors allowed the participants to scrutinize their place within the school environment, the tasks they would execute, and the outcomes they would expect. All indicated that the outcome would be favorable, however, not all focused readily on student outcomes. Within this exercise, critical reflection served to reconcile the complexity of the profession for each of the participants, conveying the central focus for each of them, a key indicator of their sense of readiness to enter the profession.

Self-Care: Strategies to improve upon the ability to cope with stressors should include self-managing strategies as well as specific strategies (Lewis, Roache and Romi, 2011). The first step to develop these strategies is to create an awareness for the importance of caring for self. Recognizing sources of stress and ways to manage it is an important

aspect of maintaining self-care. Initiating a self-care plan includes setting goals based on individualized needs and priorities.

The framework for these initiatives have typically included activities such as exercise, relaxation, social support (Chan, 2002). The measures of well-being the participants in this present study took to address their stressors included physical release through exercise, primarily yoga and running. Other physical activity, such as “cleaning,” provided physical release. They also found that deep breathing techniques helped them to relax. One participant reported that having a full body massage once a month served her well. Others adopted a regular schedule of meditation exercises, and one stated that she found comfort in scheduling prayer for fifteen minutes each night.

In addition, the participants found that adequate preparation for teaching helped reduce their anxieties. This included steps toward managing their time and adopting strategies to do so. For instance, they learned to plan specific time— time to care for themselves. One participant declared a specific need to have one hour every day to herself, to do whatever she wanted. Another established a boundary by making sure the job would “remain at school” so that he could have his evenings free to spend with family or outdoors.

Self-care, critical reflection, social support, and time are represented as the necessary supports and resources to foster trust, connection, purpose, and balance. These tenets serve to build teacher self-efficacy and to help pre-service teachers negotiate the interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental stressors associated with the demands of teaching. In this, these tenets become vehicles for transformation—moving from student

to teacher. The following diagram illustrates the expanded concepts and the complexity of the process.

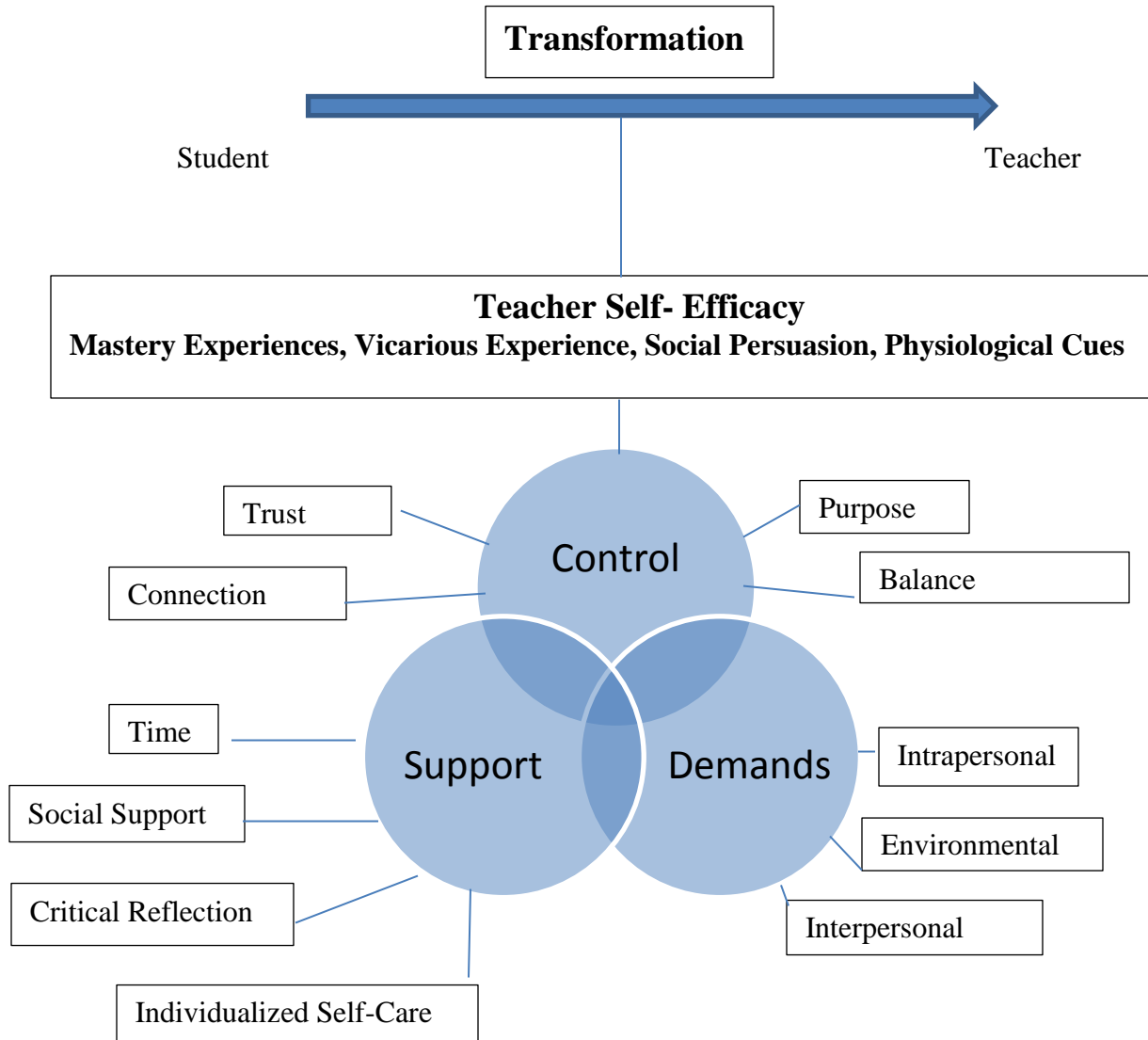


Figure 5.2: Expanded Conceptual Framework

### Limitations

Several limitations may exist within this study: the personal nature of the topic conveyed solely through self-report measures, the timeframe of the study, generalities surrounding teacher efficacy and the sample themselves.

The first limitation associated with the personal nature of the topic— stress and coping, raised the possibility that individuals could be hesitant to disclose their vulnerabilities or be reluctant to participate at all. The study depended solely upon self-report measures, exposing only the participants' perceptions, and did not seek the interpretations of any other individuals who observed or were involved with the transformation, such as university supervisors, cooperating teachers, administration, peers, or students. Additionally, the timeframe over which this study was conducted may have posed a limitation. The transformation that in actuality began long before the participants in this study were accessed, may have been more thoroughly examined over a longer period of time.

Another limitation may have included generalities surrounding the concept of teacher self-efficacy. This study assumes only a part of the issue surrounding teacher self-efficacy. As the concept of teacher self-efficacy is domain specific, and an individual may vary greatly from one task-related role to the next, one's teacher self-efficacy may be difficult to define and measure. The participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy, although categorized according to demands identified by Swick (1980), were not reported in domain specific terms. In addition, a limitation may be that the study did not account for each individual's general self-efficacy or pre-disposition to stress itself. Taking part in

the workshop, the participants reported according to their experience having done so—no comparison exists as to what their experience would be had they not had this opportunity.

Finally, the sample itself may have been considered a limitation as it was purposive, selected out of convenience and the expressed desire of those willing to participate in it. Although phenomenological studies consist of individuals who share similar characteristics, the intended sample for this study encompassed secondary education majors of varied subjects. The fact that all members of the sample were English majors may present a limitation—the study did not account for the unique stressors that English pre-service teachers face. Likewise, the sample consisted of only one male and seven females, two considered nontraditional students. This may have posed a limitation for transferability to other secondary education majors.

### Implications for Practice

This phenomenological study captured the voices of eight pre-service teachers as they fulfilled the journey from student to teacher—in what Britzman (2003) describes as a complex, skilled process, “a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny and what one is doing and who one can become” (p. 31). For each, it held unique experiences that challenged them, testing them on many levels, ultimately molding the teacher they were to become. A description of the stressors and coping surrounding their experiences revealed the complexities associated with learning to teach. The results of this study hold several important implications.

First, as the study illustrated, those learning to teach must negotiate and adapt through a role reversal from student to teacher. It is important that they possess an “optimistic belief” in their competence to deal with the daily challenges and “to engage in constructive ways of coping” (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008, p. 55). The degree to which those learning to teach see themselves as competent, believing they “can” effectively carry out the roles of teacher, may suggest how motivated, committed and successful they will become. If the perception of competence, or teacher self-efficacy, is instrumental to the process of teaching and the effort and persistence a teacher expends generates successful outcomes, then we may regard perceptions of competence as a key skill in learning to teach. If so, teacher education programs should focus on building perceptions of teacher self-efficacy among teacher candidates (Pajares, 1997).

The results identified the ways in which teacher candidates may become efficacious as they transform from student to teacher through the tenets of trust and affirmation, connection, purpose, and balance. Furthermore, the findings suggested four broad categories in which these precepts may be cultivated: time, social support, critical reflection, and self-care. Through understanding the phenomenology of this transformation, teacher programs must consider ways to implement them in order to improve teacher preparation and teacher wellbeing, resulting in greater outcomes in student learning and our overall educational system.

All of those involved in the learning to teach process have a stake in creating a platform through which these precepts develop, and that pre-service teachers become efficacious and committed to the profession (Gold and Roth, 1999). Consideration must

occur on several levels: the institutional, curricular, relational, and individual, in order to ensure that pre-service teachers effectively link theory to practice as they transform from student to teacher (Stokking, Leenders, Jong & Tartwijk, 2003).

Components of the curriculum must connect to the overall program philosophy and address all aspects of the individual's make-up. Given the multi-level approach, Walkington (2005) asserts that the ultimate responsibility for adequately preparing teachers lies within the university program as they foster the relational level and the curricular level for the individual.

#### Implications at the Institutional Level

In order to address the needs of pre-service teachers in preparing them for the profession, programs must first understand the nature of the teaching profession—the concept of the “being” versus the “becoming” (Britzman, 2003).

The initial question that programs must ask themselves center upon the results they strive to attain. What knowledge, qualities, and skills do programs desire for their teacher candidates to possess? This question surrounds the philosophy of the program, and the ways in which it meets the objectives outlined within this belief system. In order to confront these objectives, teaching programs must first embrace the expectations and demands placed upon the profession itself. Preparation to meet these expectations and the demands extend to the personal and contextual challenges teachers face, thus preparing them not only through content and pedagogy, but also with a psychological readiness that will ultimately lead to satisfaction marked by motivation, persistence, and

productivity. All of these factors lead to professional development and the retention of teachers—essentially, to the quality of our educational system.

Pre-Service Teacher Preconceptions: Teacher education programs must consider the transformation that students negotiate to “become” teachers—first, understanding initial student belief systems underlying their views of schooling. Bloomfield (2010) discusses the influence of school and learning upon teacher candidates, shaped primarily through the relationships they forged. These underlying perceptions, in turn, established a foundation for teacher competency and planting seeds toward their general and personal views of the profession.

Pre-Service Teacher Needs: Programs must also seek to identify the concerns and needs of their learners and proactively address them. Pre-service teachers are prone to stress. In addition to experiencing some of the stress teachers themselves face characterized by working relationships and working conditions, pre-service teachers’ stress often compounds by a lack of experience, conflicting perceptions, or inadequate coping strategies to deal with the stressors they encounter during their transformation (Abebe & Shaughnessy, 1997, Beach & Pearson, 1998, Hopkins, Hoffman, & Moss, 1997).

In doing so, they embrace a holistic approach in which they consider all dimensions of the individual’s growth and development. Gold and Roth (1993) assert that it is “imperative that a comprehensive program be designed to provide the necessary skills and support to enable teacher to survive and grow throughout their careers...the total professional health of the teacher must be addressed” (p. 49). Throughout this

phenomenological study, the participants revealed their concerns and needs as they shared their disorienting dilemmas— concerns regarding the stressors they faced and the ways in which they learned adaptive coping through teacher self-efficacy. The results of this study revealed that cultivating teacher self-efficacy and well-being was an essential part of preparation for entering the stressful occupation of teaching.

The implication suggested through this study is that teacher education programs adopt a holistic approach to attend to the needs of pre-service teachers, and cultivate key elements to develop teacher self-efficacy: trust and affirmation, connection, purpose, and balance. To foster these elements, programs could develop intentional supports to help pre-service teachers develop teacher self-efficacy through time, learning communities, critical reflection, and self-care. Coupled with knowledge about stress and coping, teacher self-efficacy becomes an essential component within the teacher education program—in essence, a “job-specific disposition” required of one who is to teach (Spector, 2000, p.156). Through knowing their learners’ needs and concerns, programs may cultivate resources through the relational and curricular level to maximize teacher preparation.

Relational Level: Establishing strong community partnerships between the university and schools in order to provide aligned support systems for pre-service teachers provide a platform for diverse experiences and a foundation for enduring relationships. In this relational model, teacher education programs may collaborate to create authentic experiences through teamwork and active participation (Jesus and Conboy, 2001).

University and school networking is an important concept in providing the needed resources and supports for effective teacher education. Tait (2008) contended that an emphasis be place on the collegial nature of teaching encouraging opportunities to “forge personal and professional relationships” (p. 59). Creating such networks fosters professional development for the teacher candidate. Sharing a vision for teacher preparation in which universities and schools collaborate strengthens the overall program.

In addition, strong relationships with effective mentors plays a key role in developing teacher self-efficacy. The support received from mentors—university supervisors and cooperating teachers proves to be the most significant coping mechanism for pre-service teachers who are experiencing stress (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000, Maldarez et al., 2007, Snyder, 2012). These connections develop a stage for vicarious experience and social persuasion, two sources of teacher self-efficacy. According to findings by Malik and Ajmal (2010), effective mentorships may greatly reduce the stress that pre-service teachers experience during student teaching. They suggest that mentorships may afford pre-service teachers more guidance before practice teaching, and that practice teaching take place in assigned schools through internships. Based on these findings, programs should opt for practical experience to be extended with cooperating teachers who serve as partners with the university—those who are invested in the process. Freeman (2009) asserts that these pairings be intentional—those with individuals who encourage the autonomy for their teacher candidates to make decisions and to experience teaching in an authentic way. Extended over time, such models illustrate internships—a model that has implications beyond what student teaching offers.

Teaching programs may also offer a significant support system through designing structured learning communities for students. He and Cooper (2011) indicated that pre-service teachers need structured opportunities to make connections, and suggested that they adopt learning communities for support. These learning communities present opportunities for “peer-modeling,” which can be a powerful influence on developing self-perceptions of competence (Schunk, 1983, Pajares, 1997). Developing relationships among pre-service teachers may also help emphasize the importance of valuing difference and diversity—key skills teachers must acquire prior to entering the profession (McCallum & Price, 2010).

Curricular Level: Next, consideration for curricular resources is an important factor. This includes the content, resources and timing (Stokking, Leenders, Jong & Tartwijk, 2003). A teacher’s self-efficacy is formed during practice teaching, when theory is first connected to practice. Once it is formed, it is resistant to change (Tait, 2008). This has important implications for teacher programs—to design a curriculum that effectively links theory to practice. Such a curriculum must extend beyond content and pedagogy—it must draw attention to “self.” In addition to content and pedagogy instruction typically associated with learning to teach, curricular connections drawing attention to “self” amidst the environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions provides a holistic approach for the teacher candidate.

A holistic curriculum may be implemented through programs that emphasize wellbeing. One study, by McCallum and Price (2010) referred to “whole person learning” consisting of five dimensions: social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual. One

way to address a more holistic approach may be through a workshop that promotes wellbeing in all of these dimensions.

Furthermore, Harris, Halpin and Halpin (1985) contend that teachers should be aware of the negative effects of stress: how it can negatively influence them, their teaching performance, and their students' learning. Strategies for identifying, monitoring, and coping with stress is an essential element for teacher training.

A stress education curriculum that provides students with a general knowledge of stress and coping serves to promote the wellbeing of those who take part in it (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, Woodward, 2006). Resources providing a curriculum would likely include workshops and seminars, some potentially paired with specific classes. For example, a wellness seminar might be required of all university freshman. Stress management education through workshop or seminar could enhance the classroom management course. Such workshops may provide the supports and resources to further teacher self-efficacy through building trust and affirmation, connection, purpose, and balance.

Harris (2011) emphasizes that such a curriculum adopts an individualized approach that encourages attention to self. Through this approach, individuals reflect upon coping strategies and develop a kind of learned resourcefulness—internal mechanisms that center the locus of control and grant adaptive coping (Bond and Bunce, 2000). This approach also emphasizes identifying and learning to develop personal attributes, such as resilience. A teacher training curriculum that develops coping skills

through learned resourcefulness and personal attributes will develop teacher self-efficacy: confidence in what he or she can do.

Stress Management Workshops: It is suggested that university programs take a more preventative measure toward stress and coping. In this capacity, stress management workshops may serve as a curricular resource that builds coping skills through learned resourcefulness and personal attributes, thus cultivating teacher self-efficacy.

One of the main goals of a stress management workshop is to build support systems (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010). The participants in this study established “one another” to be their greatest resource as they followed the agenda of the workshop. Through participating in a structured learning community, the participants shared their experiences, building trust among one another, and trust within themselves. In order to create this trust, Swick and Hanley, (1980) asserted that a workshop should create time for participants to discuss feelings—an important measure of social support.

The time participants spent in the workshop helped to create awareness about stress and coping, and they described the workshop as an enrichment to practical experience. According to Tait (2008), it is through a “dynamic of awareness, time and experience [that] changes in teacher self-efficacy occur” (p. 59). According to the participants in this present study, taking the time to reflect upon the demands and act upon them cultivated awareness about stress and coping.

Through journal writing and various activities, a workshop may also promote critical reflection. Ellsworth (2002) describes reflection as a learned process and contends that “pre-and in-service teachers should be taught to engage in specific reflective

strategies” (p.354). Most significantly, critical reflection not only creates an awareness about stress and coping, also those personal strengths—human assets and learned resourcefulness to carry out problem solving. This personal empowerment may serve to clarify one’s purpose for teaching, and develop teacher self-efficacy. Bandura associated self-reflection with one’s ability to evaluate their experiences and regulate their thought processes (Pajares, 1997).

Swick and Hanley (1980) contend that the most important aspect of a stress management workshop is to recognize stress in order to make it “a meaningful part of the learning” (p. 25). Therefore, workshops should also focus on wellbeing as opposed to stress. Through developing self-care plans focused on coping helps an individual to maintain balance. One training program in Portugal, demonstrated this through focused sessions on measures of coping, leadership, assertiveness training, and personal attributes (Jesus & Conboy, 2001). As a result, the workshop emphasized well-being, creating a positive outlook for teacher candidates as they moved forward.

Those who advocate for stress management training claim that an individualized plan for well-being is the ultimate goal (Rieg, Paquette & Chen, 2010). Such a plan may be accomplished through goal-setting and devising a self-care plan comprised of strategies. General coping strategies may include exercise, meditation, and relaxing, or talking to others. However, the curriculum may also feature “adaptive coping” through ways of handling specific issues associated with the teaching demands.

A curriculum designed around trust and affirmation, connection, purpose and balance, established through time, learning communities, critical reflection, and self-care plans strengthens the individual and cultivates teacher self-efficacy.

The Individual Level: Finally, the individual plays a key role in building his or her own teacher self-efficacy. Wyn (2009) reported the increasing responsibility that individuals have for managing their personal wellbeing at home and at work (as cited in McCallum and Price, 2010). Such responsibility requires an innovative skillset. For the teacher candidate, this skill set derives first from knowledge—knowledge that extends beyond content and pedagogy. They must possess a knowledge of self. Most significantly, the teacher candidate must also possess a belief in his or her capabilities—that he or she is skilled, productive, and enduring. As they are learning to teach, pre-service teachers must draw upon their strengths and learned resourcefulness, seek out opportunities to spend quality time in schools, and engage in critical reflection. Such reflection cultivates trust, clarifies purpose, and allows for balance.

Conway and Clark (2003) contend that the initial focus on self is necessary in the construction of the professional self (Maldarez et al., 2007). In order to become equipped as prospective teachers, pre-service teachers must learn to draw upon the qualities they possess as individuals—those human assets that make up their abilities to cope. They may learn to do so as they take part in programs that adopt an individualized approach, encouraging them to be self-managers and to reach within to access their own personal power and resourcefulness. Support must nurture the “growth and development of the person rather than only giving them strategies on how to meet the immediate needs”

(Gold and Roth, 1993, p. 49). Qualities that individuals may draw upon include time and task management, assertiveness, leadership (Jesus and Conboy, 2001) as well as organization, preparation, and interpersonal skills.

Moreover, pre-service teachers must seek out and capitalize on opportunities to spend time in schools and have diverse experiences. While most of the individuals who participated in this study had either volunteered or worked in situations that provided them these opportunities, they claimed they were not required to do so. They believed this extra time in schools should begin earlier in the program and that students should receive credit for it. Through this, teacher candidates become empowered about what they can do—teacher self-efficacy. Doing so would help to solidify their reasons for becoming teachers, improving their confidence level while increasing motivation and commitment.

In addition to seeking and taking these opportunities, one key component of individual responsibility is to engage in critical reflection. (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2010). Through this, teacher candidates gain an awareness and confidence within the roles they must assume as they become teachers. This sense of readiness, influenced by the individual's perceptions of their ability to control environmental demands placed upon them, is formed during practice teaching, when theory is first connected to practice. (Bandura, 1977, 1992, Henson, 2001, Poulou, 2007, Tait, 2008). Critical reflection allows for goal-setting and for problem solving, key aspects of progress and transformation.

Finally, the individual must initiate steps toward caring for self. This is particularly important of those who serve others in the helping professions, as they are continuously attentive to the needs of others. In order to take these steps, it is crucial for pre-service teachers to gain an awareness about the spectrum of stress and coping and they ways it manifests within the occupation.

In constructing a program to educate about stress and coping and the development of self-care, attention surrounding social, emotional, physical, spiritual elements address the whole person. Wellbeing is systematically developmental, and a multi-level approach through the institutional, the relational, the curricular, and the individual promotes it (McCallum & Price, 2010, Stokking, Leenders, Jong & Tartwijk, 2003).

Teacher knowledge, qualities and skills take shape during the pre-service program. Despite the differences between pre-service and in-service teachers, stress is an inevitable part of the occupation. Preparation for the profession includes knowledge and first-hand experience recognizing the demands as potential stressors, and preparations to cope within them. Teacher-self efficacy may be a “job specific disposition” to increase the probability of motivation, commitment and success (Spector, 2000, p. 156).

In-service teachers have emphasized the importance of being adequately prepared to endure the stressors of the profession, believing this preparation to be a vital part of teacher education (Farber, 1984). As a result, teacher education programs should implement ways to develop the “perception of self-competence as well as the probability of success (Jesus & Conboy, 2001, p. 131). As this study showed, supports and resource

to build these perceptions of competence may be increase through measures of time, social support, critical reflection, and self-care.

### Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study established a foundation for understanding the phenomenon of transformation from student to teacher. In particular, it addressed stress and coping as it relates to pre-service teachers in their transformation and the supports and resources that cultivate teacher self- efficacy. It highlighted the journey of eight participants through their transformation, and the results suggested that additional follow-up studies could further provide insight into the several areas associated with the stress and coping that pre-service teachers experience as well as the supports that may serve them.

A longitudinal study following pre-service teachers into their teaching career would provide an understanding of how a stress management support program during pre-service teaching shapes teacher efficacy and may affect stress and coping for the long term. Studies examining secondary teachers from various domains are warranted. For example, understanding the specialized stressors and coping strategies needed for secondary English teachers as compared to secondary science or math teachers may contribute to knowledge on essential elements in structuring general teacher self-efficacy as well as specified ones. In addition, understanding how stress and coping affects pre-service teachers as compared to in-service teachers would be an important study in order to design programs for well-being.

Future research might focus on holistic programs that promote well-being among university students. In particular, the development, the implementation, and the effectiveness of stress management education, not only for those in pre-service teacher programs, but for students in general, are needed, in order to address the effectiveness of programs in preparing competent, well-adjusted individuals for their professions. An important question about specific activities and characteristics may build on the research findings of this current study.

### Chapter Summary

Chapter five provides a synthesis for this phenomenological study highlighting the journey of eight pre-service teachers as they transform from student to teacher. Outlining the results, from their general and personal preconceptions of the profession to their transformation from student to teacher, the pre-service teachers shared their own accounts of teacher efficacy and readiness to enter the profession.

Although the numerous situations each participant faced posed disorienting dilemmas that caused them concern, they also provided opportunities for growth and transformation—ways in which to make “stress a meaningful part of learning” (Swick & Hanley, 1980, p. 25). Through these experiences, the participants moved from student to teacher with strengthened awareness, critical reflection, and problem solving skills—the self-assuredness of teacher self-efficacy (Mezirow, 1999). The transformation that occurred for the pre-service teachers in this study can be understood through examining the demands they faced—those which became disorienting dilemmas, as well as the

coping strategies (both internal and external) that were utilized, and the supports that enabled them to do so. While teacher preparation programs focus curriculum on content and pedagogy, they traditionally have not embraced a holistic approach to education—that which would educate about stress and coping and promote wellness through developing teacher self-efficacy. Such a curriculum draws attention to self: developing the inner authority to teach—a strong sense of personal power and resourcefulness through teacher self-efficacy, purpose, and identity. This study outlined the process of transformation that occurs while learning to teach and provided insight for teacher education programs to enhance practicum experience through the resources that may foster such development. The framework provided a rationale for the ways to support additional opportunities to promote coping skills and prepare individuals for the teaching profession.

The results of this study provided for me personally an enriched perspective and a new appreciation for the phenomenon of stress and coping associated with the profession, but most importantly, the amazing transformation that pre-service teachers make as they move from student to teacher. The results may serve to inform those associated with the learning to teach process about the importance of nurturing teacher self-efficacy, and arming teachers with coping skills as they embark upon the profession. Through trust and affirmation, connection, purpose and balance, not only may pre-service teachers enter the profession with perceptions of competence, but also the greater likelihood that they will remain in the profession, persistent and passionate for the important work they do. My hope is that pre-service teachers may exemplify a model of wellness for students, and be

a source of inspiration for high achievement and learning outcomes—that they become, the teachers who “can.”

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Request for Designation of Research as Exempt from the**  
**Requirement of Institutional Review Board Review**  
*(06/01/2015)*

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THIS AREA IS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD USE ONLY. DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA.

Confirmation Date:

Application Number:

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

**DATE: July 26, 2015**

**I. INVESTIGATOR:**

Name: Laurie Nelson

Department/Complete Address: 3610 West Broadwater No. 101 Bozeman, Mt. 59718

Telephone: 406-836-9642

E-Mail Address: laurienelson77@gmail.com

DATE TRAINING COMPLETED: February 2012 [Required training: CITI training; see website for link]

Name of Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Arthur Bangert

SIGNATURE (INVESTIGATOR or ADVISOR):



—

\_\_\_\_7-28-15

**II. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:**

Becoming the teacher who “can”: Building teacher self-efficacy and stress management skills during pre-service teaching.

### III. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS (also see section VII).

This qualitative study will investigate the phenomenon of work-related stress and coping mechanisms of practicum students enrolled in the secondary education program at Montana State University. The design and procedure of this longitudinal study will chronicle the transformation from student to teacher as these pre-service teachers advance through their practical experience, emphasizing the development of teacher-self-efficacy through stress management. This will occur through a series of stress management intervention sessions held in conjunction with the practicum experience.

Data sources will consist of both verbal and nonverbal data that is triangulated by various methods and the multiple voices of my participants. They include a focus group interview, data through written and artistic reflections, and observation. In order to capture the “rich description” and perceptions of the participants, the final step includes a semi-structured one-on-one interview protocol. The following timeline highlights each step as it will occur.

#### Proposed Timeline

Step: Method	Proposed Date	Setting	Protocol	Outcome
Step 1: Focus Group	Autumn 2015	High School Conference Room	One hour focus group session  Field notes by 3 <sup>rd</sup> party  Audio Recorded	Data coded, tabulated, and analyzed  Used to inform the workshop
Step 2: Planning and Implementation of Stress Management Intervention (SMI) Sessions	Autumn Semester 2015	High school (in conjunction with practicum experience).	To be determined based on these options: 1) Serve as Field Supervisor/ assistant field supervisor	Analyze, code, and categorize data collected through the journals and through my observations

			2) Offer weekly sessions Use Mezirow's transformational process to guide discussion, activities, role play, and "My Voice" writings and drawings	of the workshop.
Step 3: Observation	Autumn and/or Semester 2015	High School Classroom	Nonparticipant Observer:  Observe each participant teach one class period of 90 minutes  Record field notes	Analyze, code and categorize the data  Make thematic connections between the data
Step 4: Semi-Structured Interviews	Spring Semester 2015	University Campus private setting	60-90 minute sessions  Semi-structured protocol  Audio Recorded	Analyze, code and categorize the data  Make thematic connections between the data

Focus Group Protocol

Research Questions	Focus Group Questions
<p>1) What are the preconceived stressors and coping mechanisms that secondary education majors anticipate during teacher training experiences and as a teacher?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What experiences or opportunities did you have during your prior to your pre-service teaching?</li> <li>• If you had these experiences, what about them were most helpful? Least helpful?</li> <li>• Describe notable details you observed within the high school environment thus far.</li> <li>• Describe your experiences relating to others in the school environment: students, teachers, administrators.</li> <li>• Describe how you perceive yourself in the school environment at this time. What are you particularly comfortable with in your role as a teacher-to-be?</li> <li>• What are you particularly uncomfortable with as a teacher-to-be?</li> <li>• Do you foresee any situations that believe could be stressful to you personally?</li> <li>• If so, what might be some ways you would cope with this stress?</li> <li>• If you had the opportunity to learn more about the stressors associated with teaching and ways to develop coping mechanisms, would you want to take part in it?</li> <li>• If so, what in particular would you want to learn?</li> <li>• Do you have any ideas about how this learning opportunity could best be implemented?</li>   <li>• What do you think the role of K-12 schools should be in preparing pre-service teachers?</li> <li>• Do you believe that the extended time spent in the school environment would be, or if you had an opportunity to experience it, was, highly beneficial to you, somewhat beneficial to you, or simply time that you could have spent in more productive ways?</li> <li>• Did this experience help to shape your self-perception in the role of a teacher?</li> <li>• What in particular did you learn about yourself?</li>   <li>• How could the K-12 school and university improve this experience?</li> <li>• As you prepare to complete your practicum and student teaching experience, what concerns you most?</li> <li>• Is there anything that might help you further prepare for these experiences?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you were responsible for planning and implementing a stress education seminar for pre-service teachers, what would be important topics to include?</li> <li>• What questions would you pose for discussion?</li> </ul>
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### Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
<p>1) What are the preconceived stressors and coping mechanisms that secondary education majors anticipate during teacher training experiences and as a teacher?</p> <p>2) How do pre-service teachers describe their transformation from student to teacher and perceive themselves as ready to cope with the environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors of teaching as they complete the program?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you first anticipate to be the stressors you would experience as you entered your practical teaching experience?</li> <li>• Was anything particularly surprising to you?</li> <li>• How did you see yourself as coping with the perceived stressors associated with teaching?</li>   <li>• Describe yourself before and after. What are the ways that you have changed as a teacher?</li> <li>• What have you gained?</li> <li>• What have you lost?</li> <li>• What do you perceive your greatest capabilities to be as a teacher?</li> <li>• Specifically, what do you do to illustrate these strengths?</li> <li>• What part of the practical experience has been most beneficial to you?</li> <li>• Was there a stressful aspect or event during your practicum or student teaching that caused you to doubt your ability or commitment to become a teacher?</li> <li>• Consider the environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal demands of learning to teach. What aspects of learning to teach have been most demanding for you personally?</li> <li>• What particular goals do you have as you move forward as a teacher?</li>   <li>• What part did the teacher education program play in the shaping of your capabilities?</li> <li>• Did specific kinds of instructional experiences have an impact on how you perceive yourself as a teacher? Please elaborate.</li> <li>• Were there any unplanned experiences during your program that contributed to your how you perceive yourself as a teacher?</li> </ul>

<p>3) What supports within the teacher education program do preservice teachers perceive as instrumental to building strong teacher efficacy beliefs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In what ways did you develop your personal coping mechanisms while you were in the program?</li><li>• Did they help you to feel more competent as a teacher?</li><li>• What kinds of support did you receive during your practical experience that had an influence on your self-perceptions and coping strategies?</li><li>• In particular, did the Stress Management sessions help you build a sense of competency? Why or why not?</li><li>• How did participating in the sessions enhance your abilities to cope with the demands of teaching? In other words, to what degree have you learned to cope with the particular stressors you have encountered?</li><li>• How did participating in the S.M.I sessions help you to set goals? To what extent were you able to fulfill your goals?</li><li>• In your opinion, should the S.M.I sessions be available for all pre-service teachers? Why or why not?</li><li>• If so, what specific experiences or interactions should be central to the program?</li><li>• In what ways did the implementation of the sessions (timing, structure, delivery) enhance the experience for you personally?</li><li>• In what ways could the sessions be improved?</li> <li>• On a scale of 1-10, with 10 as the highest, rate your overall “competency”</li><li>• and readiness to enter the teaching profession.</li><li>• If you could make a recommendation, what could teacher preparation programs do better to positively affect those aspiring to become teachers?</li><li>• Do you have any additional comments you would like to add?</li></ul>
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The results of the study will project the essence of stress and coping as experienced by pre-service teachers.

IV. RISKS AND INCONVENIENCES TO SUBJECTS (also see section VII; **do not answer 'None'**):

V. SUBJECTS:

- A. Expected numbers of subjects: Five to Seven Participants
- B. Will research involve minors (age <18 years)? Yes **No**  
(If 'Yes', please specify and justify.)
- C. Will research involve prisoners? Yes **No**
- D. Will research involve any specific ethnic, racial, religious, etc. groups of people?  
(If 'Yes', please specify and justify.) Yes **No**
- E. Will a consent form be used? (Please use accepted format from our website. Be sure to indicate that participation is voluntary. Provide a stand-alone copy. Do not include the form here.) **Yes**

VI. FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING SURVEYS OR QUESTIONNAIRES:

(Be sure to indicate on each instrument, survey or questionnaire that participation is voluntary.)

- A. Is information being collected about:
 

Sexual behavior?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Criminal behavior?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Alcohol or substance abuse?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Matters affecting employment?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Matters relating to civil litigation?	Yes	<b>No</b>
- B. Will the information obtained be completely anonymous, with no identifying information linked to the responding subjects? **Yes** No
- C. If identifying information will be linked to the responding subjects, how will the subjects be identified? (Please circle or bold your answers)
 

By name	Yes	<b>No</b>
By code	<b>Yes</b>	No
By other identifying information	<b>Yes</b>	No

- D. Does this survey utilize a standardized and/or validated survey tool/questionnaire? **Yes** No

VII. FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED IN A CLASSROOM SETTING:

- A. Will research involve blood draws? (If Yes, please follow protocol listed in the "Guidelines for Describing Risks: blood, etc.", section I-VI.) **No**

VIII. FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING PATIENT INFORMATION, MATERIALS, BLOOD OR TISSUE

SPECIMENS RECEIVED FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS: **Not applicable**

- A. Are these materials linked in any way to the patient (code, identifier, or other link to patient identity)? Yes No

- B. Are you involved in the design of the study for which the materials are being collected? Yes No

- C. Will your name appear on publications resulting from this research? Yes No

- D. Where are the subjects from whom this material is being collected?

- E. Has an IRB at the institution releasing this material reviewed the proposed project? (If "Yes", please provide documentation.) Yes No

- F. Regarding the above materials or data, will you be:
- |                 |     |    |
|-----------------|-----|----|
| Collecting them | Yes | No |
| Receiving them  | Yes | No |
| Sending them    | Yes | No |

- G. Do the materials already exist? Yes No

- H. Are the materials being collected for the purpose of this study? Yes No

- I. Do the materials come from subjects who are:
- |           |     |    |
|-----------|-----|----|
| Minors    | Yes | No |
| Prisoners | Yes | No |



APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B:

Practicum Concerns Focus Group

Dear Participant,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this focus group. Your input and insight are important to the study of Stress Management and Wellness programs and the development of future teachers. The purpose of this focus group is to collect data about the anticipated practicum concerns and coping strategies of secondary education majors preparing to enter their practicum experiences.

Please complete the demographic information below. Following the demographic information, please attend the focus group scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your time and input in making this study possible.

Demographic Information

1. Gender: Male\_\_\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_\_
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Level in School \_\_\_\_\_
4. Estimated time spent in the secondary classroom as a teacher in training trainee\_\_\_\_\_
5. During this time, I have taken part in the following activities (Circle all that apply)  
Observing    Interacting    Tutoring    Assessing    Planning    Co-teaching  
Reflecting    Discussing    Questioning    Surveying

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Subject Consent Form for Participation in Human Research at Montana State University

Becoming the teacher who “can”: Building teacher self-efficacy through a stress management intervention.

Laurie C. Nelson 3610 w Broadwater #101, Bozeman, Montana 59718 406-836-9642

You are being asked to participate in a qualitative research study that examines how pre-service teachers perceive their transformation from student to teacher as they participate in stress management intervention sessions designed to develop teacher self-efficacy and coping strategies. The results from this study may inform teacher education programs about ways to effectively prepare teachers to manage stress within the profession.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in the following:

- 1) A 60 minute focus group interview session
- 2) Stress management sessions, structured in several one hour sessions throughout the practicum.
- 3) Critical reflection through journals noting your stressors and coping techniques throughout the process
- 4) One 50-90 minute non-evaluative observation
- 5) A 60 minute interview regarding your perceptions of your readiness to enter the teaching profession and how your teacher self-efficacy beliefs were developed.

You will be asked about the ways kinds of experiences and interactions you had during your teacher preparation program that most contributed to your ability to produce coping strategies as you enter the teaching profession. The interview will be audio taped and the tape will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher. A

follow-up contact will be made with you after the interview to review the transcriptions for accuracy, and to ask clarifying questions regarding the interpretation of the data from your interview. Only Laurie Nelson, the researcher, will have access to the tapes. Furthermore, the transcriptions will be securely kept in a locked file. Because your identity will be protected by a pseudonym, no risks exist. While your insights will help me better understand how an individual may develop coping strategies through teacher self-efficacy as he or she transforms from student to teacher, it may also provide a benefit to you personally, if you find that participation has helped you gain a sense of teacher self-efficacy that fosters coping skills.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. You may ask questions about the research procedures and/or decline to answer any particular questions that are part of the focus group, stress management sessions or interviews. The interviews, sessions, and observations will be scheduled according to your discretion and at your convenience. In addition, your participation in this study is confidential and I will treat your identity with professional standards of confidentiality. Following our initial conversations, I will identify information about you using a code number and the results from this study will be reported using pseudonyms. If I believe that any information from the interview could result in you being identified, I will decline to disclose that information.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, you can contact Dr. Joanne Erickson (406-994-2290) at Montana State University. Any additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by Chair of the MSU Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Mark Quinn (406-994-5721).

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Participant

Signature\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

Witness

Signature\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator Signature\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

## APPENDIX D

## Focus Group Questions:

- What experiences or opportunities did you have during your prior to your pre-service teaching?
- If you had these experiences, what about them were most helpful? Least helpful?
- Describe notable details you observed within the high school environment thus far.
- Describe your experiences relating to others in the school environment: students, teachers, administrators.
- Describe how you perceive yourself in the school environment at this time. What are you particularly comfortable with in your role as a teacher-to-be?
- What are you particularly uncomfortable with as a teacher-to-be?
- Do you foresee any situations that believe could be stressful to you personally?
- If so, what might be some ways you would cope with this stress?
- If you had the opportunity to learn more about the stressors associated with teaching and ways to develop coping mechanisms, would you want to take part in it?
- If so, what in particular would you want to learn?
- Do you have any ideas about how this learning opportunity could best be implemented?
  
- What do you think the role of K-12 schools should be in preparing pre-service teachers?
- Do you believe that the extended time spent in the school environment would be, or if you had an opportunity to experience it, was, highly beneficial to you, somewhat beneficial to you, or simply time that you could have spent in more productive ways?
- Did this experience help to shape your self-perception in the role of a teacher?
- What in particular did you learn about yourself?
  
- How could the K-12 school and university improve this experience?
- As you prepare to complete your practicum and student teaching experience, what concerns you most?
- Is there anything that might help you further prepare for these experiences?
- If you were responsible for planning and implementing a stress education seminar for pre-service teachers, what would be important topics to include?
- What questions would you pose for discussion?

APPENDIX E

## Appendix E: Stress Management Workshop Curriculum

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## Session 1: Stress Management and Coping Workshop September 30, 2015

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### Workshop Agenda and Protocol

**Overall Design: Five Examinations Framework** (Carter & Curtis, 1994).

- ✚ Self, Environment, Student, Diversity, Roles/Strategies
- ✚ Big Idea: **Examine Self**: What experiences and conditioning do we bring to the teaching situation?
  - ❖ Activities Design:
    - ✓ Dinner
    - ✓ Workshop Overview
      - Conceptual Framework
      - Consent Form
      - Purpose
      - Learning Goals
      - Content and Process
    - ✓ Name it!
    - ✓ Stress Concepts Overview
    - ✓ Student Lens: Window Activity
      - Pair Share
      - Whole Group
- For next session prepare for...
  - ✓ Teacher Roles: Metaphor Activity

### **Overview of Workshop Purpose:**

- ✚ To create an opportunity for social support and a platform for self-discovery among pre-service teachers
- ✚ To provide a toolbox of concepts, methods, and models for understanding occupational stress, facilitating skill development, and building teacher self-efficacy among pre-service teachers
- ✚ To serve as a potential intervention and significant learning experience among pre-service teachers

### **Overview of Workshop Learning Goals:**

- ✚ To outline causes of occupational stress and its impact
- ✚ To explore the environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal demands of the teaching profession
- ✚ To explore coping strategies for occupational demands
- ✚ To provide social support and a platform for self-discovery and practical application
- ✚ To implement a model for transformation and growth during preservice teaching
- ✚ To develop an individualized plan for coping with occupational stressors
- ✚ To build teacher self-efficacy among pre-service teachers

### **Content and Process**

- ✚ “Have” the experience: Misconceptions Uncovered
- ✚ “Reflect” on the experience: Inconsistencies Confronted
- ✚ “Contemplation” of Self: Negotiate Disequilibrium

(Mezirow, 1994).

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## Session 2: Stress Management and Coping Workshop

### October 14, 2015

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#### Workshop Agenda and Protocol

**Overall Design: Five Examinations Framework** (Carter & Curtis, 1994).

- ✚ Self, Environment, Student, Diversity, Roles/Strategies
  
- ✚ Big Idea: **Examine Environment**: What conditions within my practicum teaching environment are revealing discrepancies between my initial perceptions and my actual experiences?
  - ❖ Activities Design:
    - ✓ Dinner
    - ✓ Occupational Stress
      - Defined
        - General Statistics
        - Teaching Statistics
    - ✓ Student Lens:
      - My Voice Writing Prompt(s)
        - Pair Share
        - Whole Group
        - Scenario Role-Play
    - ✓ Teacher Lens: Metaphor Activity

#### ✚ Writing Prompts:

**Think about your experiences in your practicum placement over the last couple of weeks...apply these experiences to the following questions 😊**

- 1) The ideal teaching environment...**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) I used to think...**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) An “aha” moment happened when...**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) I felt anxious about...**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5) Victory was mine when...**

**✚ Scenarios: With a partner, complete role-play scenario(s) for handling the problem in two different ways. Which way seems to be most efficient?**

- 1) The end of the quarter is fast approaching and you are falling behind in your 6<sup>th</sup> period class due to class interruptions, student absences, and the school schedule. You are worried about not completing the established unit, assessing, and meeting the grading deadline. What should you do?**
  
- 2) You have reason to believe that Johnny plagiarized a paper in your class. When you talked to him about it, he denied it, and then made a big scene in front of the entire class, disrupting all of the other students. You decided to call his parents, only to find them hostile and defensive toward you. They are planning to meet with you to discuss the situation further. You are concerned that the meeting may only make the situation worse. What are your options?**
  
- 3) You are feeling overwhelmed. Your students in one class just completed a large project and in your other class, a major paper. Although confident that your lesson plans are solid, you are not sure about the best and most expedient ways to handle this cluster of correcting. To make it worse, you still have not provided feedback or completed grading the assignment from last week! Students are asking when they can expect to get their work back... How might you handle this situation?**

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## Session 3: Stress Management and Coping Workshop

### October 21, 2015

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#### Workshop Agenda and Protocol

**Overall Design: Five Examinations Framework** (Carter & Curtis, 1994).


✚ Self, Environment, Student, Diversity, Roles/Strategies

✚ Big Idea: **Examine Environment**: In what ways am I utilizing eustress (good stress) and dealing with distress (bad stress) within my practicum teaching environment?

❖ Activities Design:

- ✓ Dinner
- ✓ Sharing Experiences of Stress  
(Positive and Negative Stress)
  - Writing Prompts 1&2
  - Pair Share
  - Whole Group
- ✓ Apply: Scenario Role-Play
- ✓ How does stress affect you?
  - My Voice Writing Prompt(s)  
3&4
    - Pair Share
    - Whole Group
- ✓ Teacher Lens: Metaphor Activity
  - Now that you have identified what you are as the teacher,

extend the metaphor to specific elements within the environment...

 **Writing Prompts:**

**Think about your experiences in your practicum placement over the last few of weeks...apply these experiences to the following questions 😊**

**1) An example of positive stress that increased my confidence...**

**2) An example of negative stress that got the best of me...**

### 3) I typically see the cup...(half full or half empty)?

### 4) Stress affects me

#### *In the mind*

- Feeling anxious, overwhelmed, irritable, angry, upset, sad/depressed, “jumpy”/hyper vigilant, fearful
- Having nightmares, obsessive thinking, emotional or angry outbursts
- Noting poor concentration/memory, poor problem solving or decision making, etc.

#### *In behavior*

- Withdrawing from co-workers, difficulty taking breaks/resting, talking too much
- Angry outbursts (with co-workers or patients), loss or increase of appetite, jumping from one activity to another (unfocused)
- Increased alcohol consumption or smoking, change in normal communications, etc.

#### *In the body*

- Fatigue, headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, muscle tightness (neck, shoulders, jaw)
- Sweating, shallow breathing, rapid heart rate, teeth grinding, etc.

#### *Spiritually*

- Feelings of loss or direction and purpose, emptiness
- Feeling punished, apathy, crisis of faith, etc.

#### *In the workplace*

- Low morale, apathy, silence, impaired communication, isolation, lack of teamwork and team spirit
- Low productivity, aggressive or confrontational behavior, high rates of absenteeism due to stress and illness, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.

*Do you have a specific example?*

*Observe* that this exercise show us that there are many ways that stress can affect us in the workplace – and on so many levels!

**✚ Scenarios: With a partner, complete role-play scenario(s) for handling the problem in two different ways: one that produces positive stress and one that produces negative stress. Which way seems to be most efficient?**

- 4) The end of the quarter is fast approaching and you are falling behind in your 6<sup>th</sup> period class due to class interruptions, student absences, and the school schedule. You are worried about not completing the established unit, assessing, and meeting the grading deadline. What should you do?**
  
- 5) You have reason to believe that Johnny plagiarized a paper in your class. When you talked to him about it, he denied it, and then made a big scene in front of the entire class, disrupting all of the other students. You decided to call his parents, only to find them hostile and defensive toward you. They are planning to meet with you to discuss the situation further. You are concerned that the meeting may only make the situation worse. What are your options?**
  
- 6) You are feeling overwhelmed. Your students in one class just completed a large project and in your other class, a major paper. Although confident that your lesson plans are solid, you are not sure about the best and most expedient ways to handle this cluster of correcting. To**

**make it worse, you still have not provided feedback or completed grading the assignment from last week! Students are asking when they can expect to get their work back... How might you handle this situation?**

- 7) One of your students seems to be having a bad day. Refusing to participate in the group activity, you gave her permission to work alone. Even then, she needed to be prompted several times to stay on task. Then, during the middle of class and for no apparent reason she suddenly grabbed her books and stormed out. You tried to catch her as she left the room, but she ignored you, slamming the door behind her. Feeling like you may have triggered her response, you are not sure how to best address the situation. How would you approach this matter?**
- 8) Feel free to construct your own scenario.**

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## Session 4: Stress Management and Coping Workshop

### October 28, 2015

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#### Workshop Agenda and Protocol

**Overall Design: Five Examinations Framework** (Carter & Curtis, 1994).

✚ Self, Environment, Student, Diversity, Roles/Strategies

❖ Big Idea: **Examine the Student:**


**What particular characteristics do adolescent learners exhibit?**

**How might understanding these characteristics help combat distress?**

❖ Activities Design:

- ✓ Dinner
- ✓ Sharing Experiences of Student Interactions
  - Writing Prompts 1&2
  - Pair Share
  - Whole Group
- ✓ Apply: Scenario Role-Play
- ✓ How does stress affect you?
  - My Voice Writing Prompt(s) 3&4
    - Pair Share
    - Whole Group
- ✓ Teacher Lens: Metaphor Activity
  - Now that you have identified what your metaphor for teaching, extend

the metaphor to specific elements  
within the environment and specific  
characteristics of the student...

 **Writing Prompts:**

**Think about your experiences in your practicum placement  
over the last few of weeks...apply these experiences to the  
following questions ☺**

**5) The typical adolescent...**

**6) The student with whom I am most interested in  
working...**

**b) The student with whom I am least interested in  
working...**

**7) I typically see the cup...(half full or half empty)?**

## 8) Stress affects me...

### *In the mind*

- Feeling anxious, overwhelmed, irritable, angry, upset, sad/depressed, “jumpy”/hyper vigilant, fearful
- Having nightmares, obsessive thinking, emotional or angry outbursts
- Noting poor concentration/memory, poor problem solving or decision making, etc.

### *In behavior*

- Withdrawing from co-workers, difficulty taking breaks/resting, talking too much
- Angry outbursts (with co-workers or patients), loss or increase of appetite, jumping from one activity to another (unfocused)
- Increased alcohol consumption or smoking, change in normal communications, etc.

### *In the body*

- Fatigue, headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, muscle tightness (neck, shoulders, jaw)
- Sweating, shallow breathing, rapid heart rate, teeth grinding, etc.

### *Spiritually*


- Feelings of loss or direction and purpose, emptiness
- Feeling punished, apathy, crisis of faith, etc.

### *In the workplace*

- Low morale, apathy, silence, impaired communication, isolation, lack of teamwork and team spirit
- Low productivity, aggressive or confrontational behavior, high rates of absenteeism due to stress and illness, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.

*Do you have a specific example?*

*Observe* that this exercise show us that there are many ways that stress can affect us in the workplace – and on so many levels!

 **Scenarios: With a partner, complete role-play scenario(s) for handling the problem in two different ways: one that produces positive stress and one that produces negative stress. Which way seems to be most efficient?**

- 9) **The end of the quarter is fast approaching and you are falling behind in your 6<sup>th</sup> period class due to class interruptions, student absences, and the school schedule. You are worried about not completing the established unit, assessing, and meeting the grading deadline. What should you do?**
- 10) **You have reason to believe that Johnny plagiarized a paper in your class. When you talked to him about it, he denied it, and then made a big scene in front of the entire class, disrupting all of the other students. You decided to call his parents, only to find them hostile and defensive toward you. They are planning to meet with you to discuss the situation further. You are concerned that the meeting may only make the situation worse. What are your options?**
- 11) **You are feeling overwhelmed. Your students in one class just completed a large project and in your other class, a major paper. Although confident that your lesson plans are solid, you are not sure about the best and most expedient ways to handle this cluster of correcting. To make it worse, you still have not provided feedback or completed grading the assignment from last week! Students are asking when they can expect to get their work back... How might you handle this situation?**
- 12) **One of your students seems to be having a bad day. Refusing to participate in the group activity, you gave her permission to work alone. Even then, she needed to**

**be prompted several times to stay on task. Then, during the middle of class and for no apparent reason she suddenly grabbed her books and stormed out. You tried to catch her as she left the room, but she ignored you, slamming the door behind her. Feeling like you may have triggered her response, you are not sure how to best address the situation. How would you approach this matter?**

- 13) You've had it. Several students in your 7<sup>th</sup> period class are making it difficult to accomplish anything. Just when you think you have resolved one behavior problem, another arises. It is difficult to accomplish any of the learning goals due to extensive absences, tardies, disruptions, and overall disrespect. You realize that you must take action in order to maintain your sanity and to make sure students are meeting the learning objectives. What may be a solution to these problems?**

- 14) Feel free to construct your own scenario.**

### **METAPHOR:**

Now that you have identified what you are as the teacher, extend the metaphor to specific elements within the environment and to specific characteristics of the student...

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## Session 5: Stress Management and Coping Workshop

### November 4, 2015

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#### Workshop Agenda and Protocol

**Overall Design: Five Examinations Framework** (Carter & Curtis, 1994).

✚ Self, Environment, Student, Diversity, Roles/Strategies

- ❖ Big Idea: **Examine Ourselves; Develop Strategies:**
  - How are we, as individuals, prone to stress?**
  - What strategies might we adopt to positively cope with stressors within the profession?**
- ❖ Activities Design:
  - ✓ Dinner
  - ✓ Sharing Experiences: The effects of stress
    - Last Session's Writing Prompts
      - Pair Share
      - Whole Group
  - ✓ Adaptive versus maladaptive coping
  - ✓ Basic Stress Management Techniques
    - Recognize warning signs of excessive stress
    - Reduce stress through self-care
    - Stress Reduction techniques
      - Deep-breathing



### 3) Which of these coping strategies are positive and helpful?

### 4) How might I more effectively cope as I move into my student teaching assignment, and later, my 1<sup>st</sup> teaching position?

#### *In the mind*

- Feeling anxious, overwhelmed, irritable, angry, upset, sad/depressed, “jumpy”/hyper vigilant, fearful
- Having nightmares, obsessive thinking, emotional or angry outbursts
- Noting poor concentration/memory, poor problem solving or decision making, etc.

#### *In behavior*

- Withdrawing from co-workers, difficulty taking breaks/resting, talking too much
- Angry outbursts (with co-workers or patients), loss or increase of appetite, jumping from one activity to another (unfocused)
- Increased alcohol consumption or smoking, change in normal communications, etc.

#### *In the body*

- Fatigue, headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, muscle tightness (neck, shoulders, jaw)
- Sweating, shallow breathing, rapid heart rate, teeth grinding, etc.

#### *Spiritually*

- Feelings of loss or direction and purpose, emptiness
- Feeling punished, apathy, crisis of faith, etc.

#### *In the workplace*

- Low morale, apathy, silence, impaired communication, isolation, lack of teamwork and team spirit
- Low productivity, aggressive or confrontational behavior, high rates of absenteeism due to stress and illness, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.

*Do you have a specific example?*

*Observe* that this exercise show us that there are many ways that stress can affect us in the workplace – and on so many levels!

## Stress Management Strategies

It is helpful for everyone to find ways to integrate stress management techniques into our daily lives. Let's face it – life is stressful, we need to be proactive in order to learn ways to better cope with it at work, at home, and in our communities. With practice, we all can learn how to better spot stressors and stay in control when the pressure builds.

Remember when we talked about the fight or flight response and what happens to our bodies when stress hormones are released? With stress management, we strive to relax and find the opposite physical reaction to fight or flight – decreasing our heart rate, blood pressure, respiration and muscle tension.

Like developing any new skill, it takes time, commitment, self-exploration and experimentation. A central part of stress management is finding ways to **build new habits for yourself**, so that you have practical tools readily available as stressful situations arise.

## Basic Stress Management Techniques

### ✚ Recognize warning signs of excessive stress

#### ✓ *Self-awareness is the foundation of stress management*

Feeling overwhelmed at work or in your personal life is draining and can make you feel irritable, withdrawn and ineffective. Many of us feel stress so often that it begins to feel normal. The first step in better managing your stress is to simply recognize it, so that it does not grow into bigger problems – affecting your physical and emotional health. We can learn simple ways to “check ourselves” for stress.

#### ✓ *Become aware of stress by observing your muscles, insides and your breath*

If you notice muscle tension or other internal signals (such as tightness in your jaw or hands, neck, tightness in your stomach, headache), your body is telling you that you are under excessive stress. Another signal of stress is when you notice that your breathing becomes shallow, or when you “forget” to breathe (versus relaxed deeper belly breathing).

### ✚ Reduce Stress through Self-Care

The better you feel, the better you will be prepared to confront stress without being overwhelmed. This means taking care of your health physically and emotionally. Even small things can help you to have more energy and feel more in control of your situation, both at home and at work.

1. **Exercise**
2. **Socialize and connect with others**
3. **Take Breaks, time away**
4. **Make healthy drink and food choices**
5. **Avoid drinking, smoking, or taking pills to relax**
6. **Practice healthy sleeping habits**
7. **Enjoy cultural, spiritual and social activities**
8. **Look for humor**
9. **Know your limits**
10. **Create a balanced schedule**

**Others?**

#### **Reduce Stress through Stress Reduction Exercises**

- 1) ***Deep Breathing*** Deep breathing is a simple but very effective method of relaxation. It can be used to “take a deep breath” to calm someone down in a crisis, as well as in meditation, prayer or during slow stretching of your muscles. You can use this technique in combination with the other two techniques (progressive muscle relaxation and visualization) to reduce stress.
- 2) ***Progressive Muscle Relaxation:*** Progressive muscular relaxation is useful for relaxing your body when muscles are tense. The idea behind this technique is that you focus slowly on tensing and then relaxing each muscle group. Normally you tense each muscle group for at least five seconds and then relax for 30 (or more) seconds, repeating as needed. This helps you become more aware of physical sensations in your body and is very practical because it can be done anywhere, anytime.
- 3) ***Visualization:*** Visualization, or imagery is a powerful method of stress reduction, and can be combined with other types of physical relaxation such as deep breathing. The general idea behind positive visualization is to use your imagination to create a situation in your mind that is relaxing and calming – like taking a “mini holiday.”

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## Session 6: Stress Management and Coping Workshop

### November 18, 2015

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#### Workshop Agenda and Protocol

**Overall Design: Five Examinations Framework** (Carter & Curtis, 1994).

✚ Self, Environment, Student, Diversity, Roles/Strategies

- ❖ Big Idea: **Examine ourselves in our new roles**
- ❖ How do we see ourselves in light of our new roles?
- ❖ What may be an individualized plan that we may adopt in order to maintain balance within these new roles?
- ❖ Activities Design:
  - ✓ Dinner
  - ✓ Individualized Plan
    - Reduce stress through self-care
    - Stress Reduction techniques
  - ✓ Teacher Lens: Metaphor Activity
    - Now that you have identified what your metaphor for teaching, extend the metaphor to specific elements within the environment and specific characteristics of the student...
    - Closing Demographics and Writing Prompts

**Self-Care Prescription: Individualized Plan for Self-Care**

**Instructions: Write down at least two activities you would like to integrate into your day to support self-care and stress management. Be specific.**

**Example: Deep Breathing two times a day at 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

<p>Activity 1:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><i>(List specific activity and frequency)</i></p> <p>Activity 2:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><i>(List specific activity and frequency)</i></p> <p>Activity 3:</p> <hr/> <hr/>
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**ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS:**



**Demographic Information:****Age:****Gender:****Year in School:****Majors:****Pre-Teaching Experiences or Related Experiences:****Practicum Description:****Student Teaching Description:****Other Work Experience:****Special Awards or Recognition:****Special Professional Interests:****Personal Hobbies and Interests:****Family Status:****Hometown:****Size of high school:****Approximate GPA****Special Honors/Classes/Skills:****Other:**

APPENDIX F

## APPENDIX F: Interview Protocol

Laurie Nelson, Principal Investigator

## Interview Questions

- What were your general perceptions about the profession of teaching prior to your practical experience?
- What did you first anticipate would be your personal vulnerabilities to experiencing stress as you entered your practical teaching experience?
- What did you first anticipate would be your personal strengths to cope with the perceived stressors associated with teaching?
  
- Was anything particularly surprising to you between what you anticipated and what you have actually experienced?
- In particular, what factors, situations, or incidents in your student teaching experience have caused you distress?
- Is there a particular incident that has made you feel most vulnerable?
- How did you feel?
- How did you react?
- How do you find yourself coping with your vulnerabilities?
- How effective are these strategies?
  
- Describe (first name) as student.
- Describe Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ as teacher.
- How do you see yourself changing?
- Taking on new roles?
- Comfort level with new roles?
- What have you lost?
- What have you gained?
- Is there a stressful situation that you overcame and helped build your confidence and or competency?
- If so, how did this feel?
- Is there a strength within you that you never knew you had?
- What do you perceive your greatest capabilities to be as a teacher?

Rate on a scale 1-10: How ready you are to cope with each of the following categories of potential stressors?

- Environmental
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal

- What experiences have most fueled your changes? What particular goals do you have as you move forward as a teacher?
- What experiences and opportunities within the teacher education program has been most beneficial for you personally?
- On a scale of 1-10, with 10 as the highest, rate the yourself in the following
- Pursuit of goals
- Persistence in adversity
- Rebound in temporary setbacks
- Exercising control over events
- Enthusiasm for teaching
- Commitment to teaching

In particular, what qualities or characteristics make you a capable teacher?

- Did specific kinds of theoretical experiences have an impact on how you perceive yourself as a capable teacher? Please elaborate.
- Did specific kinds of practical experiences have an impact on how you perceive yourself as a capable teacher? Please elaborate.
- Were there any unplanned or unexpected experiences during your program that contributed to your how you perceive yourself as a capable teacher?
- What kinds of support did you receive during your practical experience that had an influence on your coping strategies?
- Did participation in the Stress Management sessions help prepare you to deal with stress and enhance your abilities to cope with the demands of teaching? If so, how?
- Did participating in the S.M.I sessions help you to set goals? To what extent were you able to fulfill your goals?
- In what ways did the implementation of the sessions (timing, structure, delivery) enhance the experience for you personally?
- Should such sessions be an option for students, and if so, in what ways could the sessions be effectively implemented?
- From 1-10, rate your overall “competency” and readiness to enter the teaching profession.
- If you could make a recommendation, what could teacher preparation programs do better to positively affect those aspiring to become teachers?
- Do you have any additional comments you would like to add?