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Exploring the Interpersonal Dynamics of the Supervisory Triad of Pre-Service Teacher Education: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis

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EXPLORING THE INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS
OF THE SUPERVISORY TRIAD
OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION:
A QUALITATIVE META-SYNTHESIS

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DEDICATION

To Ansley and Natalie, the reason for everything I do in life, including finishing

this dissertation. I pray you grow up knowing the power of God, the value of

hard work, the importance of education, but most of all the depth of my love for you—

not only because I tell you, but because I show you.

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To God be the glory!

ABSTRACT

Clinical field experience is recognized by many as the most influential and beneficial component of pre-service teacher education (Borko & Mayfield, 1995). At the core of this experience is the supervisory triad, consisting of the pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, and university supervisor. Utilizing positioning theory as its theoretical framework, this qualitative meta-synthesis synthesized eleven pieces of empirical research focused on the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad. The findings of this study reveal three primary factors of influence, four primary patterns of communication, and many modes of positioning of self and others as influential to pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. The implications of these findings are discussed through the lens of positioning theory and in connection to practice in the field.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore how the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad of teacher education influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. This chapter is intended to provide an overview of the current study, including the problem to be explored, the study's overarching purpose, and its significance. This chapter will also provide a synopsis of the current study's theoretical framework, conceptual language, and research design, followed by a brief description of the study's overall organization.

Background of the Problem

Richard Ingersoll (2012) reports that between 40% and 50% of new teachers leave the teaching profession by the end of their fifth year, including 9.5% who leave before the end of their first year on the job (Riggs, 2013). This attrition comes at a high cost—as much as $2.2 billion across the United States annually (Haynes, 2014), but more importantly, the "greening" of the American teaching force (Ingersoll, 2012), resulting in "replacing experienced, effective teachers with […] a stream of inexperienced, first-year teachers" (Zhang & Zeller, 2016, p. 74). While there are many factors that contribute to a teacher's decision to leave the profession, a primary contributor is novice teachers' level of preparation upon entering the field. Research shows that the effects of pre-service teachers' clinical experiences stay with them long after graduation and initial entry into professional practice. Jorissen (2002, as cited by Zhang & Zeller, 2016) notes that the quality and level of preparation provided a pre-service teacher directly influences his or her level of job satisfaction and largely determines whether or not a teacher will remain in the field long-term.

Many in-service teachers cite student teaching as the most influential and beneficial component of their pre-service training (Borko & Mayfield, 1995). Participating in the

practicum allows student teachers to experiment with implementing general, technical, and subject-specific skills toward the greater goal of cohesive, effective instruction. Additionally, it offers the pre-service teacher an opportunity to "negotiate tensions imposed by the juxtaposition of school and university cultures in the context of a practice still in its infancy" (Blanton et al., 2001, p. 177). The student teaching experience affords the pre-service teacher a venue for supported action upon which he or she may reflect—what happened, how it went, and how it might be improved for next time (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010).

Perhaps the most pervasive model implemented in pre-service teacher clinical experience is the supervisory triad model (Allen et al., 2014; Goldhammer, 1969; Yee, 1967). The supervisory triad model of supervision is a traditional one in educator preparation programs, and as the name suggests, involves three key players: the university supervisor; the cooperating teacher, also known as the mentor teacher; and the student teacher. On a cursory level, each of these three individuals has a scripted set of responsibilities associated with his or her role— mentor teachers provide a stable, educative environment in which good practices are modeled for the student teacher; student teachers plan, implement, and reflect on teaching under the mentor's constant guidance; and supervisors serve as liaisons between the university and the goings on of the practicum, providing student teachers with feedback on observed performance. Although the general responsibilities of each member of the triad appear straightforward, the reality of those responsibilities, along with the ways in which members attempt to accomplish them, are in no way standardized (Slick, 1997).

As noted previously, clinical experiences continue to influence teachers' professional practices long after they have transitioned from pre-service teachers to in-service teachers.

However, despite their importance, there is no universal consistency in the implementation of those clinical experiences. As observed by Linda Darling-Hammond (2010), "the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connection to university work" (p. 40). Additionally, Darling-Hammond notes two key reasons why high-quality initial pre-service teacher preparation is critical—it increases the probability that a teacher will remain in the field beyond their first five years of employment, and it also enhances first-year teachers' initial effectiveness in the classroom (2006, 2010). She suggests "requiring in every program a common vision that informs a tightly integrated program of high-quality clinical work married to a supportive learning-focused curriculum" (2010, p. 43) in order to maximize pre-service teachers' initial training, preparing them for competent performance immediately upon entering the teaching workforce.

Statement of the Problem

An ongoing problem with the preparation of PK-12 educators is the lack of consistency with which educator preparation programs produce practitioners ready to immediately perform in the field (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2010; Goodlad, 1999; NCATE, 2010). This is fueled by the shifting requirements and expectations of pre-service teacher preparation programs. Since the mid-1990s, Linda Darling-Hammond has written of the need for intensive, specialized training for future educators, particularly in how to effectively teach students from diverse racial and economic backgrounds (1995; 2005; 2006; 2007). Darling-Hammond identifies ineffective, often disparate legislative policies; a push toward lessening the pedagogical components of teacher preparation programs, such as methods courses and field experiences; and a general public perception that teaching simply requires an individual to be a content expert who

"transmits information from the teacher to the child" (2007, p. 112; 2005; 2011; 2016) as critical shortcomings in producing teachers who are prepared to teach effectively immediately upon entry into the field.

Research notes that one of the key features of a successful educator preparation program is the clinical experience (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2005, 2010). This experience generally consists of "an eight-to-twelve-week bout in the classroom of a teacher chosen as often for reasons of convenience or local politics as for demonstrated experience" (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 19). In order to be optimally educative, Darling-Hammond asserts the clinical experience should be conducted "alongside teachers who can show [pre-service teachers] how to teach in ways that are responsive to learners" (2006, p. 307) for an extended period of time, and should draw connections to university coursework that intentionally links theory to practice in the field (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Currently, the most common method for putting Darling-Hammond's proposal into practice is the implementation of the supervisory triad model.

Through implementation of the supervisory triad model of supervision, interpersonal connections are made among its members; however, the frequency, content, and quality of those connections is quite fluid. This fluidity extends to a number of facets of triadic relationships— the role expectations held by each member (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Slick, 1997, 1998); their sometimes hierarchical nature (Bullough & Draper, 2004); and the coherence, or lack thereof, between clinical experience and university coursework (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner, 2010; Campbell & Dunleavy, 2016), among others. These issues have the potential to negatively impact the pre-service teacher most immediately, as his or her preparation for teaching may be slowed or halted if effective triadic relationships do not exist.

Although the teacher candidate is perhaps most affected by this issue, the remaining members of the triad may be impacted as well in terms of personal and/or professional fulfillment, job satisfaction, and a sense of personal efficacy in passing the torch of teaching to the next generation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad on pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. Positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1999; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) will serve as the backdrop for this study. This theory recognizes communication and dialogue as integral to the construction of one's identity and position within a defined community. As members of the triad communicate with one another, they continuously co-construct and re-construct the positions of themselves as well as each other, along with their personal knowledge and practice of teaching. Exploring how this occurs in terms of the specific patterns of communication within the supervisory triad that influence pre-service teachers' educative experiences along with the internal and external factors that influence the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad is central to the aim of this dissertation. The ultimate goal in investigating these issues is to positively influence practice in the field so that pre-service teachers are better prepared to enter the workforce upon completion of their pre-service training.

As an emerging field of study, a relatively small body of literature regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad exists and includes no studies that explicitly employ the qualitative meta-synthesis methodology. By using qualitative meta-synthesis (e.g. Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007), this study intends to examine the inner workings of the supervisory triad in a novel way. This study does not seek to serve as a summary of existing

qualitative research regarding the supervision of pre-service teachers. Instead, the intent of this study is to frame existing research toward the construction of new knowledge and potentially improved practice in the field through use of qualitative meta-synthesis methodology.

Research Questions

The research question and subquestions guiding this study are as follows:

1. How do the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences?
    a. What factors influence the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad?
    b. What patterns of communication that occur within the triad influence a pre-service teacher's clinical experiences?
    c. How does the positioning of self and/or others by members of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for three primary reasons. First, the new knowledge produced from this work will provide researchers with a firm foundation from which future studies may be inspired. Because relatively little research has been conducted with a focus on exploring the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad (e.g. Blanton et al., 2001; Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Slick, 1997, 1998), this work may well serve as a starting point for future investigation. Additionally, qualitative meta-synthesis methodology was chosen because it best suits the current study's aim of articulating the collective voice of an emerging field of study.

Second, the findings of this work have the potential to assist in guiding and refining future practice in the field. Synthesizing available literature on the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad will provide educator preparation programs with a foundation for making

informed decisions and building on participants' strengths (Bullough & Draper, 2004). Because study of the supervisory triad continues to emerge, there exists a distinct lack of cohesive knowledge across the field. Through the synthesis of this fragmented knowledge, new knowledge will be constructed, providing a bridge from disparate research to cohesive practical application for practitioners in the field.

Finally, the meta-synthesis methodology is much less commonly used in educational research today as compared to other more traditional qualitative methodologies. However, there is growing interest in using the meta-synthesis methodology in education to provide a voice to the collective body of research on a given topic (Erwin, Brotherton, & Summers, 2011). When completed, this study will hopefully serve as a model for future meta-syntheses in education. Slick (1998) notes that "[i]n order for change and reform to occur it will be necessary for teacher education programs to broaden their visions beyond the traditional practices" (p. 833). It is the opinion of the researcher that that "broadening" should extend beyond educator preparation programs to the field of educational research as well.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Language

Positioning theory, described by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) as a "conceptual apparatus that allows for social constructionist theorizing based on a dynamic analysis of conversations and discourses" (p. 2), will underpin the work of this dissertation. Positioning theory was chosen to guide this study on the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad and their influence on a pre-service teacher's clinical experience because of the inherent reliance on both discourse and positioning within the context of supervision. The use of this theory provides a framework that allowed the researcher to "gain insight into how the individuals in the triad [understand] their roles and responsibilities and how they [understand] what it means to be a

'good teacher'" (Bullough & Draper, 204, p. 408). Additionally, this theory provides specific definitions to otherwise generic terms such as *position*, *positioning*, and *social act*, typically defined by individuals' roles and responsibilities as opposed how one thinks and communicates. The focused definitions for these terms provided by positioning theory allowed the researcher to utilize a common conceptual language when synthesizing previously unconnected research.

Positioning theory defines position as "the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 37). In the context of dialogue, where "personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts" (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 16) are constructed and reconstructed, a position serves as "a metaphorical concept through reference to which a person's 'moral' and personal attributes as a speaker are compendiously collected" (p. 17).

Positioning happens through discourse (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 20), and assignment of positions to individuals takes place in numerous ways. As noted in Table 1 below, these include first, second, and third order positioning; performative and accountive positioning; moral and personal positioning; self and other positioning; and tacit and intentional positioning. Positioning theory provides a lens through which the interpersonal dynamics of supervisory triad may be examined in the context of pre-service teacher supervision. Each of the aforementioned modes of positioning could potentially take place within the triad, depending on a number of situation-specific variables. It is presupposed by the researcher that the positioning of self and others by each of the three members of the supervisory triad is at least one factor that influences the educative outcomes of the pre-service teacher's clinical experience. Additionally, the

discursive patterns of communication through which these positions are developed have an

influence on the pre-service teacher's clinical experience as well.

TABLE 1.

Modes of Positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, pp. 20-23)

Modes of Positioning	Definition
First Order	The way persons locate themselves and others within an essentially moral space by using several categories and storylines
Second Order	Occurs when first order positioning is not taken for granted and is questioned or must be negotiated
Third Order	Accountive positioning that occurs outside the original discussion; May involve other persons outside those who took place in the original conversation
Performative	First order positioning taken at face value and is not subject to challenge or revision; Determinate acts have an immediate perlocutionary effect
Accountive	"Talk about talk"; First order positioning is questioned either within the original conversation where positions were assigned, or within another conversation between the original parties about the original conversation
Moral	Positioning based on the role an individual occupies within a given moral order or institutional aspect of social life
Personal	Positioning based on individual attributes and particularities; Negative correlation to moral positioning, in that the more a person's actions cannot be made intelligible by reference to roles, the more prominent personal positioning will be
Self	Positioning of one's self within discursive practice
Other	Positioning of others by an individual through discursive practice
Tacit	Individuals involved in discourse will position themselves or others in an unintentional or unconscious way
Intentional	Intentional positioning of self or others through discourse

Research Design

Creswell (2013) notes that "[q]ualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of

interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the

meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 44). A qualitative approach has been chosen for this study because of the "human problem" being studied. Specifically, the methodology chosen for this study is qualitative meta-synthesis. Aspfors and Fransson (2015) describe meta-synthesis as follows:

> Meta-synthesis aims at a more comprehensive view i.e. "theory development, higher level abstraction, and generalizability in order to make qualitative findings more accessible for application in practice" (Zimmer, 2006, p. 313). It is thus not an ordinary review of the research in the field, but a methodological approach to develop new knowledge based on an interpretive analysis of existing qualitative research findings. Here, the main idea is to bring together findings from primary studies and to use these as data in a "third level" interpretation. As such, meta-synthesis may present condensed knowledge and offer a fuller and/or new understanding of the [topic of research]. (p. 78)

Stake (2010) suggests that a method of inquiry should not be chosen until after specific research questions have been determined. As such, this research methodology was chosen because it best suits the objectives of the study—to produce new knowledge regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad and how they influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences through the collection and synthesis of empirical qualitative research, and to articulate the collective voice of an emerging field of study. Also, the researcher's interest in attempting a methodology not widely used in education is an additional factor in the choice to pursue this line of research.

The current study followed a process outlined by Aspfors and Fransson (2015, p. 80) that involves six distinct steps: (1) getting started—conceiving the synthesis; (2) deciding what is relevant to the initial interest—deciding the target of the study; (3) reading the studies—

appraising included reports; (4) determining how different studies are related—a targeted comparison; (5) translating the studies into one another—forming the qualitative meta-synthesis; and (6) expressing and presenting the meta-synthesis. Data for this qualitative meta-synthesis was derived from secondary qualitative data sources. The sampling bounds for this study include four parameters—conceptual, population, temporal, and access. A systematic approach was implemented for data collection. Once data was collected, directed qualitative content analysis was used in determining relationships among the research included for synthesis in the current study. The final expression of this qualitative meta-synthesis was the completion of the current written study.

Definition of Terms

Burns and Badiali (2016) note a lack of standardized nomenclature within the field of teacher education (p. 157). This multiplicity of terms is particularly evident in the context of this study concerning a number of labels assigned to and utilized within the storyline of pre-service teacher supervision, as follows:

1. *Student teacher*, *pre-service teacher*, *teacher candidate*, or *intern*, all referring to an individual not yet certified to teach who is in the process of completing the requirements of that certification, most commonly through participation in a university-based educator preparation program.

2. *Mentor teacher*, *cooperating teacher*, *in-service teacher*, *practicing teacher*, *site teacher*, or *veteran teacher*, all referring to a certified teacher working in a PK-12 school setting intentionally placed in a position to influence the educative experience of a pre-service teacher, primarily by hosting a pre-service teacher's field experience.

3. *Supervisor*, *site supervisor*, or *university supervisor*, referring to an individual with a history of work and/or graduate-level schooling in the field of education who serves as an extension of an educator preparation program, responsible for supervising and/or evaluating student teachers' performance during field experiences. It should be noted that university *supervisor* is not synonymous with university *faculty*, discussed further within the body of this work.

4. *Practicum*, *internship*, *student teaching*, *clinical experience*, or *field experience*, all referring to a student teacher's supervised work in the field, most commonly in a PK-12 school setting.

In addition to the terminology related to supervision, there is also specific terminology associated with positioning theory. Central to the theory is the assertion that positioning happens largely within the context of discourse (Davies & Harré, 1999), and that "it is within conversations that the social world is created […] and social acts and societal icons are generated and reproduced" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 15). In this context, positioning theory assigns distinct meaning to the following:

1. *Position*, defined as a "complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual are sustained by the cluster" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 1). This definition of position is in contrast with that of role, seen as fixed, whereas position is fluid (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999).

2. *Positioning*, or the "assignment of fluid 'parts' or 'roles' to speakers in the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively

determinate as social acts" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 17); the vehicle by which individuals are "located" within a conversation (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 16)

3. *Storyline*, or the broad plot of a unified sequence of episodes.

4. *Episode*, defined as "any sequence of happenings in which human beings engage which has some principle of unity" (Harré & Secord, 1972, as cited by Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, p. 4), inclusive of participants' "thoughts, feelings, intentions, plans and so on" (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, p. 5).

5. *Social act*, including speech-acts, seen as the "'matter' of social reality" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 15); people are seen as the locations for these acts, as opposed to a location in time and/or space (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999).

Organization of Study

This dissertation will consist of five chapters. Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the study, as well as the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research design, research questions, and definitions of pertinent terms. Chapter 2 provides a justification of the need for the current study as well as the selection of positioning theory as its theoretical framework and subsequent conceptual language. The methodology of the study is outlined in Chapter 3, including the research design and rationale for using qualitative meta-synthesis, data collection and analysis procedures, and the strategies in place to ensure the validity of the study. Chapter 4 outlines the findings of the study, comprised of the data descriptions and analysis, organized thematically. This chapter also provides a discussion of the study's findings. Finally, Chapter 5 provides conclusions and implications for future practice and research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Because this study employs qualitative meta-synthesis as its methodology, the goals of the current chapter are somewhat limited in scope; however, they retain a high level of precision and structure. Specifically, the purpose of this chapter is twofold—first, to establish the need for the current study, and second, to subsequently justify the construction of its theoretical framework and conceptual language—both of which are accomplished through the review and analysis of extant literature. First, an overview of models of clinical supervision in teacher education is provided. Next, communication in clinical settings is discussed, including common patterns of communication and occurrences in field-specific contexts. Then, relevant literature regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad is examined. Gaps in the current literature will be discussed as a concluding piece of each of these sections of the chapter. Finally, justification for and foundations of the theoretical framework and conceptual language chosen to support the current study are detailed, followed by a brief conclusion.

Clinical Supervision of Pre-Service Professionals

Before a discussion of clinical supervision models can take place, the concept of supervision must first be defined. A number of definitions of clinical supervision exist. Robert Goldhammer, author of the seminal work on clinical supervision (1969), was one of the first in the field of education to apply the term to the training of teachers. Borrowed from the field of medicine, this early use of the term clinical supervision in education referred to "a process for perfecting the specialized knowledge and skills of practitioners" (Pajak, 2003, ¶4). More recently, Bernard and Goodyear (2004), researchers in the field of health professions, have devised a more expanded definition of clinical supervision, as

an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior

member or members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over

time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the

more junior person(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the

clients, she, he, or they see, and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the

particular profession. (p. 8)

This definition, though widely accepted in many professional contexts in the United States

(Milne, 2007), has met with opposition, leading a number of differing definitions of clinical

supervision to arise. Burns and Badiali (2016) note the pervasive lack of consistency in defining

supervision specifically in the context of teacher education. For the purpose of the current study,

the definition of supervision offered by Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2014) will be

utilized, stated simply as "assistance for the enhancement of teaching and learning" (p. 9), as it

allows a measure of flexibility regarding the practical needs and details of supervision as it

occurs across fields.

The terminology used to identify those included in the supervisory process is also

inconsistent. As mentioned in chapter 1, terminology within the field of education alone varies

widely from one context to another. Students in teacher education programs are referred to in

the literature as pre-service teachers, teacher candidates, student teachers, or interns; in-service

teachers who serve as mentors to pre-service teachers are referred to as mentor teachers,

cooperating teachers, in-service teachers, practicing teachers, site teachers, or veteran teachers;

and supervisors of pre-service teachers are referred to as supervisors, site supervisors, or

university supervisors. Within this chapter, every effort has been made to clarify the included

research by streamlining the terminology used, most frequently referring to those involved in pre-service clinical supervision as the supervisor, the mentor, and the pre-service teacher.

Finally, the term *model* must be qualified in the context of this chapter as well. Although a model often refers to a framework utilized to support research or analyze data, model in the confines of the current study generally refers to a specific structure adhered to in carrying out the supervisory process. The remainder of this section will discuss models of supervision in education and how those models impact the interpersonal dynamics of supervisory relationships in an effort to justify the need for the qualitative meta-synthesis informed by this review of literature.

Models of Supervision in Teacher Education

Edward Pajak (2002) identified four distinct groupings of clinical supervision in practice from the initial inception of supervisory practices in the late 1960s to the time his article was published in 2002. Those models include the original clinical models, the humanistic/artistic models, the technical/didactic models, and the developmental/reflective models (p. 190). Because a full examination of all models of supervision in teacher education is beyond the scope of this review and because the field has continued to evolve since Pajak's 2002 publication, only the most prominent and relevant models found in pre-service teacher supervision today will be discussed. These include the supervisory triad model, the clinical supervision model, and the developmental supervision model, as well as supervision that occurs in a professional development school setting.

The supervisory triad model. The supervisory triad model is a traditional one in educator preparation programs, and as the name suggests, involves three key players: the university supervisor; the cooperating teacher, also known as the mentor teacher; and the student

teacher (Figure 1, below). On a cursory level, each of these three individuals has a unique set of responsibilities associated with his or her role—mentor teachers provide a stable, educative environment in which good practices are modeled for the student teacher; student teachers plan, implement, and reflect on teaching under the mentor's constant guidance; and supervisors serve as liaisons between the university and the goings on of the practicum, providing student teachers with feedback on observed performance. This triadic relationship exists to prepare pre-service teachers for independent classroom teaching, described by Borko and Mayfield (1995):

> At their best, student teachers' relationships with both cooperating teachers and university supervisors can provide feedback about specific lesson components, suggestions about new ways to think about teaching and learning, and encouragement to reflect on one's practice. When these conditions exist, the potential of student teaching is realized; student teaching *is* teacher education. (p. 515, emphasis added)

However, research has shown that in practice, members of the triad regularly experience difficulty in defining these roles on a practical level. Slick (1997) found that supervisors feel a responsibility to serve as "gatekeeper" to the teaching profession, which leads to an unintentional and uncomfortable hierarchical relationship among triadic members. Bullough and Draper (2004) further state that "triads are inevitably hierarchical and thus promote shifting alliances, one with the university supervisor on top and another with the cooperating teacher on top, with conflict a potential consequence" (p. 408). This continual shift often leads to miscommunication and confusion within the triad (Basmadjian, 2011; Meegan, Dunning, Belton, & Woods, 2013).

FIGURE 1.

Traditional Triad Supervision Model (Allen, Perl, Goodson, & Sprouse, 2014)

University
Supervisor

K-12
Students

Cooperating
Teacher

Student
Teacher
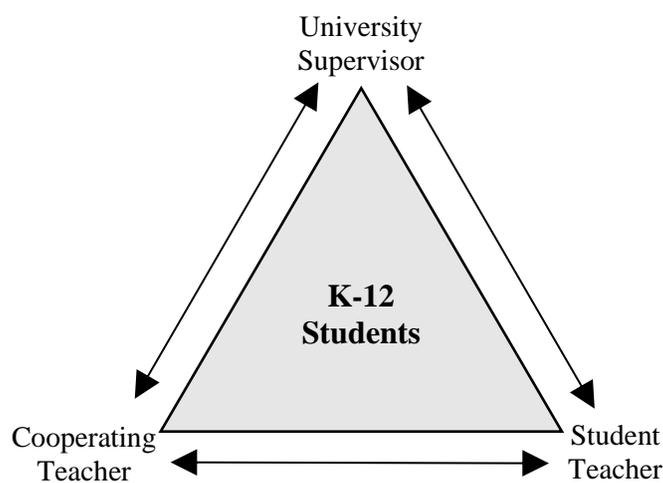
Clinical supervision model. Clinical supervision, first detailed in published form by Robert Goldhammer (1969), is a five-step cycle "designed to provide formative evaluation feedback [to] help [a] teacher take corrective action to improve instruction" (Siens & Ebmeier, 1996, p. 302). The steps of the clinical supervision cycle include the pre-observation conference, classroom observation, data analysis and strategy, conference, and the post-conference analysis (Goldhammer, 1969; Pajak, 2003). Although originally intended for use with in-service teachers, this model has been adapted for use with pre-service teachers by numerous educator preparation programs for several decades (NCATE, 2010; Range et al., 2013; Siens & Ebmeier, 1996). Table 2 below details the responsibilities of both the teacher candidate and the clinical supervisor during a clinical supervision cycle, which shows this model's emphasis on "collecting objective data, focusing on instructional activities, providing frequent feedback from the supervisor through multiple evaluation cycles, and experimenting in the teacher's classroom" (Siens & Ebmeier, 1996, p. 303).

Although generally successful, the clinical supervision model has drawn a number of criticisms. First, it assumes the existence of a more knowledgeable other, who in this case operates from an implied evaluative standpoint (Gelfuso et al., 2015). This assumption by default shifts the relationship between teacher candidate and clinical supervisor from one of collaboration to one of a hierarchical nature, with the pre-service teacher assuming the role of "empty vessel" (Gelfuso et al., 2015, p. 8). This stance discredits the knowledge and insight brought into the relationship by the pre-service teacher, setting the stage for the potential perpetuation of this relationship between the pre-service teacher and his or her future PK-12 students (Gelfuso et al., 2015). Second, this model of supervision does not provide adequate support to mentor teachers. Zeichner (2010) notes that in this traditional arrangement, mentor teachers are primarily expected to "provide a place for student teachers to practice teaching" (p. 90) with little or no support or professional development given in return. A third criticism of clinical supervision is purported by Burns and Badiali (2016) as a "failure to recognize the pedagogical potential of supervision" (p. 169). When teaching is reduced to a set of discrete skills that need simply to be learned, the pre-service teacher's position as a thinking agent is eliminated (Gelfuso et al., 2015), reduced instead to one of passive imitation.

TABLE 2.

Adaptation of Clinical Supervision Cycle for Supervision of Teacher Candidates (adapted from Pajak, 2003)

	Teacher Candidate Tasks	Clinical Supervisor Tasks
Stage 1: **Pre-Observation Conference**	Mentally rehearse and orally describe the lesson to be taught, including instructional methods, content, intended outcomes, etc.	Gain an understanding of what and how the Teacher Candidate intends to teach during the upcoming lesson by asking probing and clarifying questions
Stage 2: **Classroom Observation**	Teach the lesson to the best of his or her ability	Record events and behaviors as accurately and objectively as possible
Stage 3: **Data Analysis and Strategy**	Assist Clinical Supervisor in making sense of collected data, if asked (not required)	Analyze the collected data and prepare for the upcoming conference
Stage 4: **Conference**	Reflectively examine practices and events and tentatively plan future instruction	Assist Teacher Candidate in noticing and reflecting on behaviors and events that happened during the lesson
Stage 5: **Post-Conference Analysis**	Provide honest feedback to the Clinical Supervisor about the previous four steps of the clinical supervision cycle	Reflective examine his or her own practices during the previous four steps of the clinical supervision cycle

Developmental supervision model. Although clinical supervision is widely used by educator preparation programs and has over the years resulted in improved practice on behalf of both supervisors and student teachers (e.g. Siens & Ebmeier, 1996), many calls for reform have come. Siens and Ebmeier (1996) cite that while "clinical supervision meets many of the aims of the recent professionalism movement, it appears to not go far enough because it views and treats all teachers as if they were identical" (p. 303). Carl Glickman's (1981) framework of developmental supervision provides supervisors with a continuum including four approaches that

range from a high level of supervisor responsibility/low level of teacher responsibility to a low

level of supervisor responsibility/high level of teacher responsibility, allowing the supervisor to

determine an appropriate level of guidance and support for each teacher—or in this case, student

teacher—based on his or her needs (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2.

Continuum of Supervisory Behaviors (Glickman, 1981)

| Directive Control | Directive Informational | Collaborative | Nondirective |

⟵――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――⟶

Maximum Supervisor Responsibility/
minimum teacher responsibility

Maximum Teacher Responsibility/
minimum supervisor responsibility
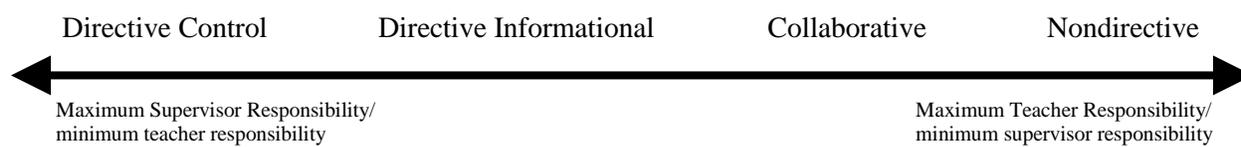
Developmental supervision is accomplished in three phases: choosing the best approach,

also known as the diagnostic phase; applying the chosen approach, known as the tactical phase;

and fostering teacher development, known as the strategic phase (Glickman, 1981; Glickman &

Gordon, 1987; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014). These three phases are further

described as follows:

- Phase 1: Choose the Best Approach (Diagnostic)—The developmental supervisor

  ascertains the student teacher's level of functioning in relation to a particular issue,

  done primarily through conversation and questioning

- Phase 2: Applying the Chosen Approach (Tactical)—The developmental supervisor

  assists the student teacher in solving the identified issue using a chosen approach

  (directive control, directive informational, collaborative, or nondirective) based on

  previous diagnosis

- Phase 3: Fostering Teacher Development (Strategic)—The developmental supervisor

  promotes professional growth in teachers by strategically increasing exposure to new

ideas and problem solving methods and/or decreasing the amount of support supplied

the student teacher during conferencing, with an ultimate goal of increased self-

sufficiency (Glickman & Gordon, 1987; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014)

Developmental supervision is rooted in three overarching propositions: that all teachers operate

at varying levels of professional development; that because of these varying levels of

professional development, all teachers need to be supervised differently, with more support given

to teachers functioning at lower levels of professional development; and that the ultimate goal of

supervision should be to promote teachers' movement toward higher stages of thought (Siens &

Ebmeier, 1996).

As noted, this model of supervision was originally intended for use with in-service

teachers and has been modified by educator preparation programs for use with pre-service

teachers. There it has found particular success with traditional teacher candidates "in the early

stages of adult development and in need of supervisors who were able to adjust their

communication and behavioral approaches to support the candidates' developmental needs"

(Strieker, Langub, & Wright, 2016, p. 32). Those in support of the developmental supervision

model assert that it has the potential to substantially increase student teachers' abilities to be

"more active, autonomous, and thoughtful about instruction" (Glickman & Gordon, 1987, p. 68).

Strieker, Adams, Cone, Hubbard, and Lim (2016) have offered a discussion of their personal

implementation of a redefined version of Glickman's model in the pre-service supervisory

setting. The results of their self-study revealed that supervisors promoted "co-teaching, co-

reflection, and co-generative dialogs" (p. 1) among mentor teacher/pre-service teacher pairs

while primarily utilizing collaborative and nondirective approaches to their work as supervisors.

The authors contend that supervisors' use of these approaches directly impacted teacher

candidates' ability to insightfully reflect on their teaching practices and make self-determined progress toward professional growth.

Professional development schools. Greater in scope than the previous three models discussed, professional development schools (PDSs) can be defined as "school-university partnerships whose comprehensive mission is greater than the institution, [which exists to] attend to the learning of all stakeholders with the ultimate purpose of improving preK-12 student learning" (Burns & Badiali, 2016, p. 157). A PDS differs from a more traditional model of supervision by way of its designed intentionality—instructional experiences provided pre-service teachers are more deliberate, purposeful opportunities for professional growth are afforded to all members of the triad, and the university-school link is no longer a meaningless formality. Establishment of a PDS requires commitment from both the university and the local school system to the continued education of all—PK-12 students and pre-service teachers, as well as school and university faculty. All parties agree to work together toward a common desired outcome of ultimately increasing student learning. Research has shown that graduates of programs employing PDSs are more prepared to teach than their peers who did not participate in comparable programs and are more confident in their knowledge and abilities in the classroom. Additionally, in-service teachers participating in PDSs note improvements in their own classrooms and also at the school level, attributable to an increase in quality professional development, research, and mentoring that come along with PDS implementation (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Although the relationships developed between the key players in PDSs (supervisors, mentor teachers, and pre-service teachers) are by nature quite intimate and should not be forced into existence if any level of authenticity is to be achieved, they are often instead seen as

"arrangements" or "agreements" (Stephens & Boldt, 2004), created by high-ranking administrators from school systems and universities, with little or no initial input from those whose day-to-day practices will be most immediately affected. To achieve optimal success, key players must be considered and brought together first, as opposed to the "administrative matchmaking" (Stephens & Boldt, 2004, p. 707) that happens more often than not. Additionally, because of their "clinically rich teacher education contexts" (Burns & Badiali, 2016, p. 157) PDSs have been called potentially "ideal contexts" (p. 157) in which the skills necessary for effective supervision of pre-service teachers may be explored. In a PDS setting, teacher education coursework is delivered at the PK-12 school site. This affords pre-service teachers the opportunity to immediately observe and/or apply what they are learning in class, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Several benefits of PDS-based teacher education to teacher candidates have been identified, including improved self-efficacy, increased skills in collaboration and co-teaching, and a greater sense of lifelong learning. Darling-Hammond notes that pre-service teachers engaged in supervision in professional development schools "learn in all parts of the school, not just individual classrooms; they receive more frequent and sustained supervision and feedback and participate in more collective planning and decision making among teachers at the school" (2006, p. 309). Additional benefits for K-12 students include having their needs better and more quickly met, having access to multiple teaching styles, and potentially increased academic achievement (Strieker et al., 2017b). Implementation of a PDS has the potential to bridge the gap between university-taught knowledge and methods, providing an exemplar of how they should come together in the field as practice in action.

Gaps in the Current Literature

The literature on supervision in teacher education almost exclusively reports the composition of the supervisory relationship to be triadic in nature, inclusive of the pre-service student, the university supervisor, and the mentor teacher with whom the pre-service teacher is paired in the field (e.g. Allen et al., 2014; Pajak, 2002; Range et al., 2013). However, very few studies have focused on the full triad, often focusing on a chosen dyad within the triad instead (e.g. Graham, 1993, 1997; Rush et al., 2008; Slick, 1997, 1998). A variety of methodologies and theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks were employed to guide research regarding various models of supervision. However, a majority of the studies accessed for inclusion in this review of literature did not formally name any theoretical or conceptual framework as an underpinning for original research, with only one study naming a particular theory as a frame for research. Models deeply entrenched in a single theoretical or conceptual framework are generally not found in the literature on teacher education, with the exception of the developmental supervision model guided by Glickman's (1985; Glickman & Gordon, 1987) developmental supervision framework. Largely absent from the literature regarding models of supervision in teacher education are empirical or theoretical reviews of existing literature, including meta-analysis, meta-synthesis, rapid review, and meta-summary (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). Although some do exist (e.g. Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2016; Cochran-Smith et al., 2014), the fact that so few studies of this nature regarding supervision in teacher education are available underscores the need for the current study, a qualitative meta-synthesis of existing literature regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad of teacher education.

Communication in Clinical Settings

As discussed, both dyadic relationships and triadic relationships are identified in the literature on clinical supervision across fields. A reoccurring theme within this body of literature regarding these relationships is that of communication. While there are similarities within the extant research regarding communicative practices in various pre-service clinical settings, there are also a number of notable differences. The following section will discuss those similarities and differences first in general terms, and then in the context of four clinically-based professional fields—teacher education, social work education, nurse education, and counselor education.

Patterns of Communication

As noted, two prevalent patterns of communication in the literature regarding supervisory contexts are dyadic communication, or communication between two individuals, and triadic communication, or communication among three individuals, both of which have been examined across many contexts over the course of several decades. In 1979, Taylor, de Soto, and Lieb conducted two experiments using dissimilar methods in an effort to better understand disclosure patterns among acquaintances. The authors found that individuals were more likely to divulge "secrets" in a dyadic setting with closed boundaries than in either a dyadic setting with open boundaries or a triadic setting. Later, in 1995, Palmer and Thompson took their own look at the differences between dyadic communication and triadic communication. They conducted a study with 114 undergraduate psychology students where the students were randomly assigned to groups of three and asked to complete a task—to design a home that met the needs and budget constraints of a hypothetical client. As an added component of the task, each member of the triad was assigned a "specialty" (e.g. structure, finishes, land) and given confidential information

regarding possible options available within that specialty, some of which would earn the corresponding "specialist" a bonus. Because of the availability of the bonuses, each member of the triad had a vested interest in negotiating the inclusion of his or her available options into the design of the home. The authors found that through these negotiations, dyadic communication occurring within the established triad led to an increased sense of competition as compared to those participating in full-group discussion. They also found that the formation of a dyad within the triad led to the temporary isolation of the triad's third member—a circumstance that rotated to include all members in all capacities for the duration of the task—resulting in an overarching sense of diminished group morale and trust.

Tschan (2002) conducted a review of three studies on cycles of communication adhering to the action steps of 1) orientation and preparation for the task, 2) execution of the task, and 3) monitoring and evaluation of the task's success. She found a commonality among triads, dyads, and individuals using a think-aloud process in that there was a significant positive correlation between cycle quality and successful task performance, meaning that as communication improved, so too did task performance in each of the groupings of individuals included in the study. Looking specifically at triads of communication in young-adult stepchildren in established stepfamilies, Baxter, Braithwaite, and Bryant (2006) identified four triadic communication structures inclusive of the child, the stepparent, and the residential parent: the *linked triad*, in which the child/residential parent and the stepparent/residential parent dyads were positively valenced while the child/stepparent dyad was not; the *outsider triad*, in which the child/residential parent dyad was positively valenced while the remaining two dyads were not; the *adult-coalition triad*, in which the stepparent/residential parent dyad was positively valenced while the other two were not; and the *complete triad*, in which all three dyads were positively

valenced. The authors promote the complete triad as the most ideal of the four, but "urge stepfamily members and researcher alike to explore the possibility that multiple communication structures can be functional" (p. 395). These studies serve to highlight the complexities of communication that occurs in both dyadic and triadic settings. With this in mind, the next section will discuss communication as it occurs in field-specific supervisory contexts.

Communication in Pre-Service Teacher Education

Communication in pre-service teacher education has been studied from many perspectives over the years. In 2007, two researchers (Tang & Chow, 2007) examined how feedback was communicated in supervisor/pre-service teacher dyads using the learning-oriented field experience assessment (LOFEA) framework, which assesses three primary domains of pre-service teacher performance: professional attributes, teaching and learning, and involvement in the education community. As a result of implementation of the LOFEA framework, teacher candidates became more active in constructing professional knowledge and reflecting on their professional practice and goals, while supervisors became more adept at "mak[ing] possible the sponsoring of teacher construction of professional knowledge and enhancement of self-regulated learning and a growth orientation" (p. 1080).

A second study (Tsui, Lopez-Real, Law, Tang, & Shum, 2001) involving three supervisors, five mentor teachers, and six pre-service teachers examined the discourse that occurred in supervisory conferences with all three triad members present. The authors of the study identified an imbalance of power within the triad that was skewed in favor of the supervisor in most contexts. In spite of this imbalance, it was found that complementary contributions were made to the learning of the pre-service teacher by both the supervisor and the mentor teacher. The authors make the point that instead of attempting to balance the power

within the triad, "it would be much more effective and realistic and productive to enhance their complementary roles by developing a long-term relationship that fosters mutual trust, and understanding of and respect for each other's work" (Tsui et al., 2001, p. 322).

Two studies address the implementation of structured communication in the supervisory process. Edgar, Roberts, and Murphy (2011) investigated the use of a structured communication form and its impact on the pre-service teacher supervisees' sense of professional efficacy. Supervisors of 82 pre-service agricultural science teachers used the form to rate their supervisees in twelve areas of "accomplished practices": assessment, communication, continuous improvement, critical thinking, diversity, ethics, human development and learning, subject matter knowledge, learning environment, planning, role of the teacher, and technology (p. 13). The ratings were then shared with the pre-service teachers and the university. The data collected revealed there was no significant relationship between the use of the structured communication form and pre-service teachers' sense of professional efficacy; however, the authors defended their position that the effect of using structured communication during field experiences should be further examined, and that both pre-service teachers and mentor teachers should be provided instruction on improving their communication skills.

Similarly, James, Hall, and Fraiha (2015) studied the implementation of a structured communication format that included a pre-determined set of guiding questions and goal setting tasks developed in an effort to "address the perceived communication challenges between pre-service teachers and their respective cooperating teachers in terms of when and how feedback is shared and interpreted" (p. 1). Results clearly indicated that the use of guiding questions was "an important component for keeping both [pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher] focused on areas of growth and allowing [the] feedback process to become recursive" (p. 8). As with the

previously discussed study, James et al. assert that the "results from this study support the need for providing communication-strategy specific training to [cooperating teachers] so that they can more effectively give useful feedback to their [pre-service teacher mentees] and then co-monitor the implementation process with their mentee" (p. 10). One study (Strieker et al., 2017a) focused not on a structure of communication, but rather on year-long, co-taught clinical experiences, found that implementing co-teaching provided members of the triad with a layer of intentionality and guidance for their work—including their dialogue with one another—normally not found in traditional supervisory contexts. In simply providing more structure to the roles and responsibilities assumed by each triad member, the communication within the triad was inherently more structured, resulting in an increase in teacher candidates' efficacy and expertise, a higher level of accountability for K-12 student learning due to having two adults (mentor teacher and teacher candidate) in the classroom on a regular basis, and a more democratic distribution of power within the classroom.

Communication in Other Pre-Service Preparation Programs

    Social work education. Communication is a crucial component of pre-service preparation programs outside of education as well, including social work education, nurse education, and counselor education. Maynard, Mertz, and Fortune (2015) found the lack of effective communication to be a recurring theme in their study centered on the task supervision and field instruction model of social work supervision. The authors noted that "[s]ocial work program staff were unclear about who should be talking to whom about what and when the communication should take place" (p. 525). This confusion regarding roles and responsibilities often led to the social work student acting as the go-between for the task supervisor and the field instructor as well as a potentially diminished educative outcome for the student. These findings

aligned with Abram, Hartung, and Wernet's earlier study (2000) of the factors associated with high-quality field experiences utilizing the task supervision and field instruction model, which "made it crystal clear that common philosophy and values, clarification of roles and division of labor, and frequent communication are three aspects of the relationship between the on-site non-MSW task supervisor and the off-site MSW field instructor that contribute to a positive experience for students" (p. 179). In their study, a four-component pattern of communication proved optimally effective: 1) a three-way conference to develop the learning agreement at the beginning of the practicum, 2) frequent communication between all dyads in the triad, 3) a mid-semester site visit involving all three parties, and 4) a three way conference to evaluate the student's learning and performance at the end of the field practicum (p. 182).

Nurse education. Nathan, Marland, and Lindsley (1965) conducted a study that examined operant communication practices (specifically looking, listening, and talking behaviors) of a single psychiatric nursing supervisor and three of her supervisees. Although the supervisor was the same in each situation, each supervisor/supervisee dyad was found to be unique in terms of its observed operant communication behaviors. The authors found that "changes in talking rate [of a dyad member were] independent of changes in looking and listening or changes in intensity of a relationship" (p. 266), a finding oppositional to a previously supported clinical perception that the frequency of talk and relationship intensity were positively correlated. In response to these findings, it was asserted that "the need to consider more than verbal content and frequency of speech in fully evaluating interpersonal relationships and communication" should be given heed in future research.

That consideration was given by Mather, Marlow, and Cummings in their 2013 study of health care staff associated with a university undergraduate nursing program. The involved

healthcare professionals noted a desire for an efficient, easily accessible method of communication with the university, particularly in regard to supervisors' roles and responsibilities. In response, the authors devised a communication strategy that utilized a digital platform (in this case, Twitter) that allowed all stakeholders to access pertinent information in a single location, at their convenience, and directly from the university. Utilization of the digital platform resulted in two primary challenges: human factors, including the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the clinical supervisors, which were seen as detrimental in maximizing engagement in platform's use; and systems factors, including previously established policies and procedures within some of the included facilities. It was concluded that in spite of these challenges, continued use of information communication technology "needs to be encouraged as it will enhance opportunities to provide safe, high quality clinical experiences for students" (p. 165).

From their systematic review of over 200 relevant articles, Chant, Jenkinson, Randle, and Russell (2002) identified a number of problematic issues pertaining to communication in nursing education. They identified problems with implemented strategies for teaching communication skills to nursing students, including a lack of variability, general shortages, and a lack of specificity in communication skills training; a bias toward mechanistic communication as opposed to relational communication in the field; unrealistic or nonexistent evaluation of currently implemented communication skills training; a failure to tailor communication skills training to students' learning styles and/or academic abilities; and the existence of a hidden curriculum that exerts social control over communication and emotional functions; and a gap between classroom instruction and practice in the field. Also noted were specific social barriers to using communication skills in practice, including workplace policies and practices; a perceived dominance of biomedical patterns of discourse; certain aspects of the setting

environment; the hierarchical nature of healthcare; discrimination and social divisions on the basis of gender, race, class, and professional status; occupational or ward culture; and stress and a lack of support structures.

A series of practical tips from Puppe and Neal (2014) for both faculty and nursing staff could potentially assuage the shortcomings identified by Chant et al. (2002). The authors suggest having clinical faculty maintain a physical presence in the unit in an effort to "build relationships and provide interaction with busy clinical nurses" (p. 2) and conduct face-to-face meetings at the beginning of each semester with the clinical nurses and students to "open lines of communication, clarify student-learning needs, and validate faculty need for staff" (p. 2). Suggestions for clinical nursing staff include intentionally welcoming nursing students to the unit and discussing their goals and needs, implementing active listening processes, and acting as an explicit role model for students. Finally, Puppe and Neal (2014) assert that both faculty and staff should utilize strategic questioning in an effort to increase students' reflection on their professional practices; provide both positive constructive feedback in a way that will be received and acted upon by students; and create professional relationships with one another so that all members of the supervisory triad (faculty, staff, students) are abreast to all pertinent information.

Counselor education. In their examination of the interpersonal skills of family therapist supervisors, Wetchler and Vaughn (1991) surveyed a total of 280 Approved Supervisors of the American Association for Marriage and Family along with 266 of their supervisees. The authors found that both supervisors and supervisees acknowledged the same six interpersonal skills as the most crucial in a supervisee's professional development: the supervisor's ability and willingness to provide direction to the supervisee; the supervisor's willingness to confront the supervisee when appropriate to do so; the supervisor's ability to assist the supervisee in assessing

their own strengths and weaknesses; the supervisor's ability and willingness to provide

constructive negative feedback; the supervisor's response(s) to the supervisee's concerns; and

the supervisor's ability to build the supervisee's confidence. The authors note that the "high rate

of correspondence" (p. 68) in the supervisor and supervisees' responses could possibly be

attributed to the fact that the responses came from supervisory pairs, but that the correspondence

identified "shows that both members were able to recognize the importance of that interpersonal

skill in the supervisory process" (p. 68). They also assert that these skills could be considered a

core set for use in training future supervisors.

In a second study centered on supervisors' interpersonal skills, Ladany, Mori, and Mehr

(2013) utilized multiple measures to identify characteristics of both effective and ineffective

supervisory practices. From data gathered from the 128 subjects, the authors found that along

with other skills, effective supervisors engaged in open discussion with their supervisees and

offered them consistent feedback—both positive and negative, depending on the circumstance—

and reinforcement in reaction to the student's observed performance. Supervisors deemed

ineffective by their respective supervisees did not provide students with sufficient feedback or, in

some cases, needed constructive criticism so that the supervisee could effectively improve his or

her professional practice. Mirroring the previously discussed suggestion made by Wetchler and

Vaughn (1991), the authors propose using their findings regarding the qualities of effective

supervisors as "a primer for supervisor competencies" (Ladany et al., 2013, p. 41).

Gaps in the Current Literature

A number of similarities arise from the literature regarding communication in pre-

professional clinical settings. For instance, a number of articles across fields discuss the transfer

of communication skills to pre-service students in their respective fields (e.g. Chant et al., 2002;

Puppe & Neal, 2014; Wetchler & Vaughn, 1991). Others focus on the effectiveness of

communication practices in supervisory settings (e.g. Abram et al., 2000; Mather et al., 2013;

Maynard et al., 2015; Nathan et al., 1965). While these similarities exist, there are many

contrasts as well. One would assume that the prevalence of a given structure of supervision

(dyadic, triadic, etc.) in a given field would be mirrored by its prevalence in the extant literature

regarding relevant communication practices. However, as illustrated by Table 3, that does not

appear to be the case. In both teacher education and nurse education, triad-based models of

supervision are most prevalent in practice yet this is not reflected in the literature, as the majority

of research regarding communication in these settings focuses on dyadic pairings found within

the supervisory triad (e.g. Chant et al., 2002; Edgar et al., 2011; James et al., 2015; Nathan et al.,

1965; Tang & Chow, 2007).

TABLE 3.

Prevalence of Supervisory Structure as Compared to Literary Representation

Professional Field	Most Prevalent Supervisory Structure	Most Prevalent Structure Represented in the Literature	Congruence
Teacher Education	Triadic	Dyadic	
Social Work Education	Dyadic	Dyadic	✓
Nurse Education	Triadic	Dyadic	
Counselor Education	Dyadic	Dyadic	✓

Another notable difference found in the literature regarding communication in

supervisory settings is the use of varying methodologies and theoretical and/or conceptual

frameworks to guide original research. In teacher education as well as the other related fields,

there exists a mix of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. Authors employed a

variety of theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks in guiding their work, while others employed no specific theoretical or conceptual framework at all. This lack of uniformity supports the needs for the current study, as does the general lack of studies employing qualitative meta-synthesis methodology. Because few studies that examine the communication practices of supervision in teacher education share a common lens, the synthesis at the center of the current study will unify several disparate viewpoints under the umbrella of a single theoretical framework and conceptual language, discussed at length later in this chapter.

Finally, one of the goals of the current study is to identify patterns of communication that occur within the supervisory triad that influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. It appears that very little research exists on this topic. Both Edgar et al. (2011) and James et al. (2015) examined the influence of structured communication on pre-service teacher efficacy; however, these studies are in no way comprehensive portraits of how patterns of communication influence pre-service teachers' overall clinical experiences. Additionally, they do not provide any empirical data on non-structured, organic patterns of communication that occur within supervisory settings. This again underscores the importance of the current study, as it seeks in part to synthesize the pockets of existing knowledge on the influence of communicative practices of the supervisory triad on pre-service teachers' clinical experiences toward the construction of new knowledge.

Summary

Communication practices in teacher, social work, nurse, and counselor education share a common use of dyadic and triadic structures. In each of these fields, issues related to communication contribute to the dynamics of the supervisory context in which they occurred. From this review of literature, it was expected that the study it informed would find the structure

of communication (dyadic, triadic, etc.), the possession (or lack thereof) of interpersonal skills, and conflict as primary themes regarding influential factors in the synthesized literature. The next section of this chapter sharpens in focus and examines literature regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the structure central to the current study—the supervisory triad of teacher education.

Interpersonal Dynamics of the Supervisory Triad of Teacher Education

Roles and Responsibilities within the Triad

Davies and Harré define a role as "static, formal and ritualistic" (1999, p. 32) in nature, inherently inclusive of a great deal of assumption regarding the intentions and motivations behind the actions and speech acts of others. On a cursory level, the roles of each member appear straightforward: mentor teachers provide a stable, educative environment in which good practices are modeled for the student teacher; student teachers plan, implement, and reflect on teaching under the mentor's constant guidance; and supervisors serve as liaisons between the university and the goings on of the practicum, providing student teachers with feedback on observed performance. On a deeper level, however, the minute details and intricacies of these roles are much more complex. The roles of each member of the supervisory triad are "ill-defined" (Slick, 1998), as there is no consensus in the literature as to the defined tasks and responsibilities of any member of the triad. Bullough and Draper (2004) contend that "roles and role expectations held by the three parties [of the supervisory triad] often are unclear and shifting" (p. 407), often leading to confusion and miscommunication within the triad.

Yee (1968) asserted decades ago that a pre-service teacher's clinical experience is an opportunity to "perform, evaluate, act, react, and adapt in relationship with and in response to others involved in the [supervisory] setting" (p. 97). The author specifically noted the contrast of the clinical experience as compared to the largely passive act of engaging in university

coursework "where the students are mostly passive and absorbing whatever the instructors say and do" (p. 97). The mentor teacher's role in the supervisory triad remains largely defined in context, often as either as the "go-between" for the pre-service teacher and the university supervisor (Graham, 1993, 1997; Veal & Rikard, 1998; Yuan, 2016) or as staunch opposition to the handing-down of criticism from the university "ivory tower," seen as separate from the "real world" of teaching (Graham, 1997; Tan, 2013; Veal & Rikard, 1998). Finally, the university supervisor's role is seen largely as one of detached administrator, responsible for "providing superficial conciliation and facilitation of the relationships between cooperating teacher and student teacher" (Yee, 1968, p. 108) and, as "gatekeeper" to the profession (Slick, 1997, 1998), one who must balance duties of both assessment and assistance (Slick, 1997; Yee, 1968). As noted by Slick (1998), there is clearly a "need to define roles and responsibilities of the triad members" (p. 823) in an effort to clarify both the goals and intentions of the student teaching process (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Gelfuso et al., 2015; Lunenberg, Korthagen, & Swennen, 2007; Veal & Rikard, 1998).

Preparation and Training

Jordan, Phillips, and Brown (2004) pose an interesting and valid question: Why don't we provide supervisors and mentor teachers with the same level of training that we provide pre-service teachers? This question is, of course, in reference to the practices of supervision, regarding which the authors state the following:

Knowledgeable supervision and mentoring are key elements in developing good teachers. They must be done by professionals with observational and analytical skills who can provide immediate feedback based on systematically collected reliable and valid data to practicing and prospective teachers. Practicing and prospective supervisory or mentoring

personnel must be prepared to provide this type of analytical evaluation in order to

encourage, develop, and retain young talent. (p. 219)

The lack of professional development in supervisory practices provided to supervisors and

mentor teachers has resulted in a lack of effective interpersonal communication and a loss of

educative growth for pre-service teachers in field experiences. These issues are discussed below.

Professional development of supervisors. Kilbourn, Keating, Murray, and Ross (2005)

raise an important point by stating that "[l]earning how to give constructive feedback is a critical

hurdle for the [supervisory] process to be effective," further noting that "[c]onstructive feedback

in teaching does not come with being a good teacher" (p. 299). It is often assumed that because

a supervisor was formerly an effective teacher or administrator, that he or she will also be an

effective supervisor of pre-service teachers. Dinkleman, Margolis, and Sikkenga (2006)

conducted a hybrid case study/self-study of two of the authors' difficulties with managing the

shift from teacher to teacher educator with no direct guidance in doing so. The authors found

widely varying opportunities to reflect on their practices, as well as a devaluing of the work of

supervising pre-service teachers, in favor of conducting research and engaging in other

university responsibilities. As such, the self-studied authors found themselves struggling to

devote adequate time and attention to supervisory activities and a distinct lack of guidance or

training in how to rectify the situation.

Levine (2011) asserts that "we know surprisingly little about how teacher education

programs support initial training and ongoing professional learning among supervisors, or what

supervisors themselves think that they require to grow professionally" (p. 930). The author

promotes implementation of professional learning communities for supervisors, asserting that the

following five attributes of such communities can contribute to supervisors' increased

effectiveness: establishing norms promoting collaboration; developing trust and familiarity; engaging in activities that deprivatize practice; providing access to logistical information and shared expectations about the role of supervisors; and making time for professional collaboration (p. 930). Levine found that implementation of professional learning communities for supervisors including these five attributes met the self-identified needs of 19 supervisors at a large university, and also promoted richer educational experiences for their pre-service teacher supervisees.

Novice supervisors' dual responsibilities of learning *to* practice as supervisors and learning *from* practice as they engage in initial practice was explored by Burns and Badiali (2016) in a PDS context. The authors found that novice supervisors' learning was facilitated by three distinct forms of mentoring: conceptual mentoring, or guidance in the fostering of thoughts and beliefs regarding the goals and mission of the PDS that served as the context for supervision; procedural mentoring, or guidance in resolving practical issues that arose throughout the supervisory process; and emotional mentoring, or assisting novice supervisors in diffusing intense emotional reactions to situations or events taking place during the supervisory process, through actions such as listening, giving advice, and/or providing affirmation. In the absence of this mentoring, the authors declare that the educational community reduces the value of supervision to "merely a technical practice enacted by thoughtless practitioners" (p. 417).

Professional development of mentor teachers. The lack of consistent preparatory professional development for supervisors is mirrored by the lack of training provided to teachers in the field who serve as mentors to pre-service teachers. In looking at the impact of mentor teacher professional development on pre-service teachers' growth and development of pedagogical skills, Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002) found that mentor teacher professional

development did assist them in providing feedback and professional guidance to pre-service teachers. More recently, Magaya and Crawley (2011) reported that although professional development programs such as the one discussed by Giebelhaus and Bowman are effective, the implementation of such programs remains sparse. Additionally, the authors report that process of selecting teachers to serve as mentors to pre-service teachers is largely dependent on teachers volunteering to take on that role. Those selected as mentor teachers were provided no formal training; instead, they relied on their undergraduate and graduate educational experiences and/or on-the-job experiences and training as the source of their mentoring expertise.

Tension and Conflict

Perhaps as an extension of the lack of professional development and training afforded to supervisors and mentor teachers, communication issues have long been cited as a primary source of tension within relationships among members of the supervisory triad. Yee (1968) reported that the supervisory triad "appears to seek greater dyadic balance at the cost of decreased triad cohesiveness" (p. 106), with balanced relationships found in "dyadic coalitions" (p. 106). This position is corroborated by Veal and Rikard (1998) and Bullough and Draper (2004), who agree that mentor teacher/university supervisor communication is pervasively weak across the field and that this weakness often leads to a shifting of position and power of both the mentor teacher and the pre-service teacher as a result. Veal and Rikard (1998) further assert that the mentor teacher/pre-service teacher dyad within the supervisory triad is strengthened as a method for managing the tension caused by the university supervisor's "temporary disturbance of the functional triad" (p. 114) when he or she is inserted into the clinical setting. More recently, Rush, Blair, Chapman, Codner, and Pearce (2008) found effective communication to be "one of the most important lessons to be learned regarding mentoring preservice teachers" (p. 131),

suggesting that the lines of communication should remain open among all parties so that conflict and miscommunication are kept at a minimum.

The hierarchical nature of the triad is a second source of tension among its members. Veal and Rikard (1998) state that "a triad is by necessity hierarchical, creating a change in power distribution as members seek to form coalitions and alliances" (p. 109). As discussed previously, their study of mentor teachers' perspectives on the supervisory triad led to the emergence of two separate but related triads related to a single clinical setting—the "institutional triad" with the university supervisor as most powerful, followed by the mentor teacher, and concluded with the least-powerful member, the pre-service teacher; and the "functional triad" with the mentor teacher as most powerful, followed by the pre-service teacher, and concluded with the pupils in the classroom as holding the least amount of power. In this context, the introduction of the university supervisor to the clinical setting caused tension for both the mentor teacher and the pre-service teacher, as the university supervisor represented the "institution of *higher* education" (Veal & Rikard, 1998, p. 112, emphasis in original) and was seen as critical and distant. The recognition if tension within the triad attributable to hierarchical power dynamics has been corroborated time again over decades of research, and continues to exist as a concerning issue in practice today (e.g. Coates & Thoresen, 1976; Draves, 2008; Ellsworth & Albers, 1995; Hetherington, 2014; Ritchie, Rigano, & Lowry, 2000).

As discussed previously, roles within the supervisory triad are ill-defined and shifting (Slick, 1998). This lack of clear expectations and responsibilities for members of the triad has led to conflict, as evidenced by recent research. For example, Sim's (2011) examination of a "story of interpersonal tensions and contradictions" (p. 146) highlights the role confusions caused by the lack of communication between the university and the school in which pre-service

teachers engage in field placement. In response, Sim asserts that "it is critical that the interpersonal demands of supervision become an important focus of the partnership between universities and schools if practicums are to be beneficial to all stakeholders" (p. 139). Additionally, Han and Damjanovic (2014) found that pre-service teachers sometimes conform their teaching practices to match those of their mentor teachers. In instances when this conformity did not occur, pre-service teachers exhibited high levels of resiliency and positivity in their commitment to practices they deemed more developmentally appropriate for students than the pre-established curriculum and assessment practices implemented by their mentor teachers. The researchers acknowledge that in instances such as these, "preservice teachers are trying to balance the tension between fitting in to the teaching environment and experimenting concepts and strategies learned in their coursework" (p. 298).

In other settings, however, the issues of balancing the tension between university and field were not present. Strieker et al. (2017a) examined the relationships and practices between co-teaching pairs comprised of a mentor teacher and a pre-service teacher and found that year-long, co-taught clinical experiences resulted in "a sharing of power and responsibilities between the mentor teacher and the [teacher] candidate, which empowered the candidates' professional development" (p. 52). In this case, instead of conforming to their mentor teachers' practices as found by Han and Damjanovic (2014), pre-service teachers instead developed a stronger sense of professional efficacy and the beginnings of their own pedagogical voice.

Influence of Technology on Triadic Dynamics

A number of studies discuss the introduction of video in the supervisory context. Sewall (2009) examined the impact of what she called "video-elicited reflective debriefings," or post-observational supervisory conversations between the pre-service teacher and supervisor around a

video recording of a lesson taught by the pre-service teacher in the supervisor's absence, on pre-service teachers' ability to reflectively communicate. Kelting, Jenkins, and Gaudreault (2014) studied essentially the same intervention, calling it video stimulated recall, with an emphasis on how pre-service teachers' focus shifted due to its implementation. Laura Baecher led two recent studies (Baecher, McCormack, & Kung, 2014; Baecher & McCormack, 2015) centered on the impact of video on pre-service teacher reflection and supervisory conferencing. In each of these studies, findings showed movement toward increased pre-service teacher reflectiveness on their teaching practices and how they might improve, as well as an increase in openness to the process of supervisory conferencing. This impact is described by Sewall (2009), stating that "the supervisor-driven 'top-down' dynamic found in traditional [post-observational debriefing] interactions does not exist in [video-elicited reflection] conversations. The dynamic instead became 'bottom up,' that is, constructed and driven by the novice teacher" (p. 23). Baecher and McCormack (2015) argue that that "bottom up" dynamic has the potential to "[give] teacher candidates a greater voice in their [post-observation conferences] and, in turn, [foster] a less imperator-style approach to supervisor feedback" (p. 171).

A second example of technology's impact on triadic dynamics is the use of a bug-in-ear (BIE), defined as "wireless technology [used] to receive verbal corrective feedback immediately, yet unobtrusively through an earpiece" (Scheeler, McKinnon, & Stout, 2012, p. 78) in real time as the pre-service teacher is instructing students. Giebelhaus (1994) examined the effectiveness of the BIE strategy by dividing 22 pre-service elementary teachers into two groups—the control group, in which each pre-service teacher was provided with advice and prompting in real time from his or her mentor teacher; and the control group, in which pre-service teachers did not utilize BIE technology. The author found that some pre-service teachers in the treatment group

made immediate adaptations to their teaching practices based on the prompting they were given by their mentor teachers through the BIE system. Although statistically significant differences were not found between the control group and treatment group in terms of pre- and post-study assessment data, the author notes that "cooperating teachers and their student teachers enjoyed using the BIE and considered it an effective and appropriate means of communicating with the student teacher during the teaching process" (p. 371). More recently, Scheeler, McKinnon, and Stout (2012) expanded the study of BIE use to also include the use of webcams. Five pre-service special education teachers were given Bluetooth devices through which they received feedback and prompting in real time from remotely-located supervisors, along with webcam-equipped laptop computers used to transmit a live video feed of the pre-service teacher's actions to accompany the audio feed. The immediate feedback provided to the pre-service teachers via the BIE effectively increased their success in implementing a specific teaching technique more so than the more traditional model of delayed feedback that happens in a non-BIE supervisory context. Additionally, the BIE was found to be an "acceptable, nonintrusive way for observers to provide immediate feedback to teachers from remote locations" (p. 86). The authors suggest that the use of BIE and/or webcam technology in supervisory settings could prove to be a boon for universities whose students are placed in geographically scattered locations, making authentic supervisory experiences more feasible and accessible without the loss of supervisors' time commuting to each physical location.

Gaps in the Current Literature

Relatively few of the studies related to the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad reviewed in this chapter utilized quantitative methodology (Giebelhaus, 1994; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002; Magaya & Crawley, 2011; Scheeler, McKinnon, & Stout, 2012; Yee, 1968).

While quite informative, the studies employing quantitative methodology were only capable of providing an impersonal view of the "highly personalized relationship[s]" (Graham, 1997, p. 524) formed within the supervisory triad. For example, in Magaya and Crawley's (2011) study regarding the selection of mentor teachers and their subsequent lack of preparatory training for service in the mentor teacher role, the quantitative methodology utilized did not allow for surveyed participants' explanations of *why* their employed selection processes were used.

A large portion of the studies regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad employed qualitative methodology. Each of these studies provided "human" details of the topic of study, such as participants' feelings, reactions, desires, and thoughts in relation to the description of the events that took place (e.g. Baecher & McCormack, 2015; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002; Han & Damjanovic, 2014; Veal & Rikard, 1998; Yuan, 2016). Although each of the qualitative studies included in this review are highly informative and effective in their aims, they are limited to their respective settings. Included studies have focused on a number of somewhat narrow contexts related to supervisory practices: mentoring of pre-service teachers (e.g. Burns & Badiali, 2016), the introduction of technology to supervisory settings (e.g. Baecher & McCormack, 2015), training for mentor teachers and university supervisors (e.g. Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002), tensions in dyadic relationships within the supervisory triad (e.g. Graham, 1997), and so on. Only one study included in this review of literature engaged in analysis of data collected from each member of the full triad (Bullough & Draper, 2004). Although that single study was very informative, its focus on a "failed triad" leaves more questions than it provides answers regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad, particularly regarding the interpersonal dynamics of triads deemed successful.

As evidenced, the current state of the empirical conversation on supervisory practices is fragmented into pockets of knowledge across the broad field of pre-service teacher education. Thus, the researcher chose qualitative meta-synthesis as the best method for cohesively representing the extant literature as a whole toward construction of new knowledge. This directly supports the current study's goal of contributing to that conversation in a way that is "more hermeneutic, aiming to understand and to explain phenomena" (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016, p. 28). Qualitative meta-synthesis methodology will be discussed at length in chapter 3 of this study.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Language

Theoretical and/or Conceptual Gaps in the Current Literature

A majority of the existing literature regarding both models of and communication within supervisory contexts across fields does not employ a theoretical or conceptual framework. The same cannot be said for studies that specifically pertain to the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad, which have utilized a variety of theoretical and conceptual frameworks in underpinning their respective research. A number of studies specifically employed theories or conceptual frameworks dealing with collaboration. Graham (1993) explored the "curious position" of both the mentor teacher and the pre-service teacher and how those positions contribute to tension within the relationship using a Vygotskian perspective extended by James Wertsch's exploration of individuals' "multiplicity of voices" (p. 214). Four years later, Graham (1997) took another look at the supervisory triad, this time discussing two primary tensions that occur between mentor teachers and student teachers—differences in personal teaching philosophy and tolerance for uncertainty—through use of a framework for collaborative inquiry based on five key principles: mentor teacher ownership of the program and process because they

had a hand in its design; implementation of a year-long student teaching experience for

participating pre-service teachers, as opposed to a more traditional shorter experience;

consistency in the university faculty members involved, in that the same faculty were involved

for the entire school year; content area research conducted by pre-service teachers and their

mentors in an effort to connect theory to practice; and intentional respect for the school setting

and its local participants. Kilbourn et al. (2005) also utilized a framework centered on

constructive feedback and inquiry with two central aims—providing unambiguous feedback

based on evidence, and assisting pre-service teachers in monitoring and improving their

pedagogical practices through inquiry.

One relevant study utilized a theoretical framework that focused on intrapersonal issues.

Yuan (2016) used a hybrid combination of self-discrepancy theory and possible-selves theory in

examining two pre-service teachers' formation of identity in relation to the mentoring they

received during their 10-week clinical experience. The combination of these theories served as

an "interpretive framework for individuals to evaluate themselves and others, as well as to plan

and adjust their current and future behavior" (p. 189), and included three "domains of self" (p.

189): the *actual self*, or the characteristics actually possessed by the individual; the *ideal self*, or

the characteristics the individually would ideally like to possess; and the *ought self*, or the

characteristics an individual should possess as a result of responsibilities or roles held by the

individual.

The majority of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to underpin studies

regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad were focused on interaction—

between individuals, such as the dyadic interactions that occur within the supervisory triad; and

between individuals and entities, such as society at large or determined social constructs (e.g. the

teaching profession). For example, Veal and Rikard (1998) utilized triad theory to examine how a group of cooperating teachers described their interactions and relationships with university supervisors and student teachers. Two studies relied on social learning theory to frame their work. Burns and Badiali (2016) utilized a combination of social learning theory and transformational learning theory to explore mentoring practices that support pre-service teachers' learning, while Levine (2011) used tenets of social learning theory in the context of communities of practice to explore the needs and desires of university supervisors in carrying out their duties.

Finally, Bullough and Draper (2004) used positioning theory to explore negotiations of power and position in an ineffective supervisory triad. Of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in the aforementioned studies, positioning theory emerged as having the potential to address both the relationships members of the supervisory triad form with one another as well as the patterns of dialogue that occur between triad members. Additionally, positioning theory makes allowances for the reflexive nature of positioning as a contributing factor to the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad, where other frameworks take on a more static, role-based view of each member's station in the triad and in life. As a result, the positioning theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for the current study.

Positioning theory has been selected as the theoretical framework and subsequent conceptual language to underpin this study of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad because of the triad's inherent reliance on both discourse and positioning within the supervisory storyline. Additionally, positioning theory recognizes communication and dialogue as integral to the construction of one's identity and position within a defined community—in this case, each member's position and identity within the supervisory triad.

Foundations of Positioning Theory

Positioning theory is defined as the "study of local moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 1). It is rooted in social constructionism, a hallmark of which is the "epistemological challenging of the traditional way of doing psychological research" (p. 3) that has come to be known as a "second cognitive revolution" (p. 3). This revolution asserts that discourse is not simply a manifestation of thought as previously assumed, but rather that discourse must be recognized as a phenomenon in itself, connected to but also independent from thought. In this vein, positioning theory is founded on the notion that "[n]ot only what we do but also what we can do is restricted by the rights, duties, and obligations we acquire, assume or which are imposed upon us in the concrete social contexts of everyday life" (p. 4) through discursive practice.

Mutually Determining Triad of Positioning Theory

Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) have determined the structure of conversation to be tri-polar, consisting of "positions, storylines, and relatively determinate speech-acts" (p. 18), as shown in Figure 3 below. The authors have termed this tri-polar cycle the "mutually determining triad" (p. 18). In the context of this triad, one's position is determined by the social force of the storyline in which it is included, a storyline is composed and acted out according to the positions members assume and/or are assigned through speech acts, and speech acts are made intelligible as others assess them against the backdrop of the individual's known position as well as the context of the overarching storyline in which members of the conversation are participating.

FIGURE 3.

Mutually Determining Triad of Positioning Theory (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 18)

position

social force of   storyline
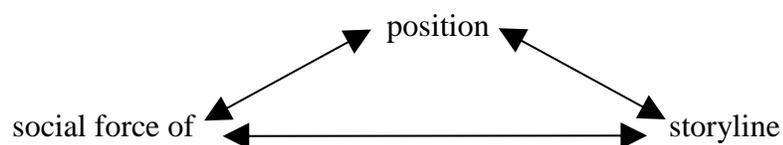
Position. Within the confines of positioning theory, a position is defined by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) as:

> a complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual as are sustained by the cluster. (p. 1)

As discussed in chapter 1, several models of positioning exist, including first, second, and third order; performative and accountive; moral and personal; self and other; and tacit and intentional. One's position—seen as dynamic and fluid in nature, as opposed to role, viewed as static and fixed—is manifested through discourse. Positioning of self and others occurs as an extension of one's understanding of the moral order of the storyline in which one is operating. It always occurs within the context of a specific moral order of discourse, and is founded on the "rights, duties and obligations within the moral order in which the discursive process occurs" (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 23).

Storyline. Positioning theory defines an episode as "any sequence of happenings in which human beings engage which has some principle of unity" (Harré & Secord, 1972, p. 10, as cited by Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 4). Episodes include individuals' behaviors, but also move beyond the external to include the "thoughts, feelings, intentions, plans and so on of all

those who participate" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 5). A storyline, then, is the broad

plot of a unified sequence of one or more episodes. It is the "narrative which is being acted out

in the metaphorical drama" (Barnes, 2004), in which all members of the supervisory triad, in this

case, play a part.

 Speech acts. Van Langenhove and Harré note that because people are often viewed as

objects easily located in the Newtonian and Euclidian space/time grid, it has been assumed that

peoples' social interactions should be located on that grid as well. However, the authors refute

this assumption as inadequate, offering instead the alternative "persons/conversations referential

grid" as the location of human social interaction (1999, p. 15). On this alternate grid, "social

acts, including speech-acts, are taken as the 'matter' of social reality" (p. 15). The most basic

unit of social capital in this setting then is conversation, as "[i]t is within conversations that the

social world is created" (p. 15). The illocutionary force of speech acts, including nonverbal

contributions to conversation, influence the positioning and repositioning of those involved in

the discourse to the extent that the speech act in question is "taken up" by all parties (p. 34).

Connections to Culture

 Positioning and culture are inextricably linked. Carbaugh (1999) discusses positioning in

the context that it is a "transitory interactional accomplishment that creatively implicates,

(re)produces and possibly develops cultural meaning systems (which are themselves cross-

culturally variable)" (p. 176). Tan and Moghaddam (1995) go so far as to say that "a satisfying

discussion of positioning (on any level) absolutely *requires* the inclusion of cultural

considerations" (p. 388, emphasis in original). Indeed, all social interactions are firmly grounded

in the cultural-moral framework employed by the individuals involved in a given situation. The

culture to which one ascribes could be defined in broad terms (e.g. American culture) or in a

more focused manner (e.g. the culture of my 4th grade classroom), with more than one cultural network simultaneously influencing a single storyline and its participants.

Additionally, there is no set of factors that act upon individuals, either internally or externally, that are most responsible for the differences in positioning among cultures, as the "particular attributes or other dimensions that are taken to be most salient and relevant in positioning oneself and others [will vary] widely with culture and cultural ideals" (Moghaddam, 1999, p. 83). For example, Carbaugh (1999) defines a set of values that exemplify personhood in American culture on an ontological level, called a "code of dignity" (p. 169), as follows:

- The *intrinsic* worth of each person, the ability to recognize and support individuals as holding some socially redeemable value, even if this is difficult at first to notice.

- *Self-consciousness*, or self-awareness, or personal reflectiveness, the ability to ascertain who one is and is not, what one can and cannot do, to know one's necessities, abilities, capacities, and limits, independent of, as well as within, one's typical roles.

- *Uniqueness*, to know how one's necessities, abilities, and capacities differ from others.

- *Sincerity*, or authenticity, or honesty, to be forthcoming and expressive about one's self, to coalesce one's outer actions with one's inner thoughts and feelings. (Carbaugh, 1999, p. 169)

As an added layer of complexity, Carbaugh asserts that within American culture there is an additional "code of honor […] based not upon personal uniqueness, but upon institutional and historical precedence" (p. 170). This code of honor ascribes value to those positioned as honorable (or conversely, dishonorable) by American culture at large, based on factors such as gender, military service, or race. The author notes that "[f]rom the vantage point of a code of

dignity, the positions of honour are often [viewed] as relationally constrained or stereotypically obliged" (p. 170).

As discussed in chapter 1, positioning occurs interpersonally among individuals and groups, as well as intrapersonally within individuals. This intrapersonal positioning is known as reflexive positioning (Tan & Moghaddam, 1995). Just as there are cultural influences on interpersonal positioning, so too do cultural influences act on the reflexive positioning of individuals. Central to reflexive positioning is the defining of "self," the boundaries of which shift to meet the context of the culture in which an individual is situated. For example, Western cultures extol the notion of an "unbounded self" with emphasis on individualism, while non-Western cultures value more highly a collectivist orientation in which the needs of the whole "is the primary unit of concern and no sharp boundary is drawn between the self and others" (p. 397). When individuals of differing cultures come in contact with one another, including within the context of supervision, the potential for conflict and/or miscommunication is abundant, as the familiar roles and positions to one member of the triad may be oppositional to those familiar to the others.

Positioning of Supervisory Triad Members

In the supervisory triad, each member's position is at least partially dependent on his or role. For example, if a mentor teacher were to give a pre-service teacher a directive regarding how a particular episode of instruction should be carried out, that could be seen as helpful or at least acceptable, given the positions of the individuals involved in the conversation. If the conversation were reversed, however, and the pre-service teacher gave a directive to the mentor teacher, that could potentially be seen as presumptuous, disrespectful, or inappropriate, depending on the relationship between the two. These positions are, of course, dependent on the

context and content of the storyline these individuals are playing out. Because roles within the triad are poorly defined across the field, positioning of members within the triad is often problematic and leads to miscommunication and discord (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Graham, 1993, 1997; Slick, 1997, 1998). Bullough and Draper (2004) called on positioning theory to assist them in describing the complicated inner workings of the supervisory triad as "a tale of power negotiation and of positioning and being positioned to influence learning, preserve one's sense of self, and achieve or maintain a measure of control over one's situation" (p. 418).

Although they do not intentionally use the conceptual language of positioning theory, several other studies discussed in this chapter note the importance of positioning in the process of learning to teach. Yuan (2016) notes that a pre-service teacher's identity is shaped through interactions with the mentor teacher, the school environment, and "their imagining about the future" (p. 189), all of which are rooted in dialogue, be it external or internal. Ultimately, Yuan concluded the "congruence and disparity of the [participating] student teachers' different identities" (p. 195) were influenced by various personal, institutional, and socio-cultural factors. Veal and Rikard (1998) assert that the introduction of the university supervisor to the clinical setting is so disruptive to the relationship between mentor teacher and pre-service teacher that two distinct triads are actually formed. The "functional triad" includes the mentor teacher, the pre-service teacher, and the pupils in the classroom and positions the mentor teacher as the most powerful member, while the "institutional triad" places the university supervisor at the apex of power and is inclusive of the traditional triad members—university supervisor, mentor teacher, and pre-service teacher. This argument was validated and advanced more recently by Martin et al. (2011), who, in their study of school-university partnerships, recognized the existence of four primary aspects of relationships developed by university supervisors in the field—relationships

with individuals, relationships within similar groups of people, relationships across groups of

people, and interactions within the university–elementary school interface (p. 303). The authors

eluded to positioning when they made the following observation: "[C]ultivating and navigating

multiple types of relationships presented challenges: Each required something different from us.

We constantly shifted roles in these interactions, moving through varying degrees of

intersubjectivity and distributions of power" (p. 303).

The notion of "distribution of power" is discussed by Graham (1997), who details what

she calls "familiar" problems (p. 515) within the triad with the following example:

The student teacher feels she has limited power to express concerns or challenge

authority since it might jeopardize her career; the mentor teacher, who has little insight

into the teacher education program, feels responsible for problems that occur within the

relationship, imagining the student teacher's felt tensions are somehow her "fault," a

dilemma which makes her reluctant to contact the university counterpart for any help;

and the university supervisor who rarely wields any real authority within the teacher

education program must contend with perceived or real rifts between school and

university-based personnel, caught between competing concerns and different

perspectives about the "real world" of teachers and the "ivory tower" of university

faculty. (p. 515)

In this excerpt, each member of the supervisory triad has positioned themselves and have also

been positioned by external forces based on each member's assumptions regarding the storyline

of traditional student teaching. From these positions come the impetus for the actions of each

member. Because the members of the triad are commonly "strangers to one another" (p. 514),

they often "lack rapport with one another or insight into the frames and images each brings to the

working triad" (p. 514). This lack of rapport and insight very often leads to miscommunication and tension among triad members, and ultimately a loss of educative potential for the pre-service teacher (Valencia et al., 2009).

Summary

Study of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad of teacher education is a complicated undertaking. It involves examination of unique individuals, settings, and contexts, and the contributions of each to the preparation of pre-service teachers to professional practice. Considering these factors, the author has chosen positioning theory to frame the current study, a qualitative meta-synthesis with a central aim of exploring how the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences, because of its contextualization of triadic relationships within dialogue and culture.

Conclusion

The central goal of the current study is to explore how the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. As an emerging field, there are relatively few studies that discuss the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad; however, it is the supposition of the researcher that the synthesis of existing research will "transcend the findings of a collection of qualitative research studies" (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016, p. 27) and contribute new knowledge to the field.

In conclusion, this review of literature has achieved both of its primary goals—to justify the need for the current study and to justify the selection of positioning theory as its theoretical framework and subsequent conceptual language. First, this chapter discussed research on the clinical supervision of pre-service professionals in teacher education. Next, literature regarding communication practices in the contexts of pre-service teacher, social work, nurse, and counselor

education were examined, with an emphasis on the structures of communication found in each setting. Then, studies specifically focused on various aspects of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad of teacher education were then explored. Each of these sections was concluded by a discussion of the gaps in the literature and how the current study would serve to fill those gaps. Finally, detailed justification of positioning theory as the theoretical framework and subsequent conceptual language chosen to underpin the current study was provided. This chapter has clearly established the need for the current study as well as the selection of positioning theory as its theoretical framework and subsequent conceptual language. The next chapter will provide a discussion of its methodology, qualitative meta-synthesis.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

While the previous chapter established the need for the current study and the justification for its chosen theoretical framework and conceptual language, this chapter serves as an explanation of the choice and processes of the study's methodology. Underpinned by positioning theory, this qualitative meta-synthesis seeks to explore the influence of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad on pre-service teachers' clinical experiences.

Research Questions

The research question and subquestions guiding this study are as follows:

1. How do the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences?

    a. What factors influence the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad?

    b. What patterns of communication that occur within the triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences?

    c. How does the positioning of self and/or others by members of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences?

Research Design

Choosing Qualitative Meta-Synthesis

Creswell (2013) describes qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of

study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or

themes. (p. 44)

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study because of the "human problem" being studied.

Successful supervision of pre-service teachers depends on the development of a relationship

among the members of the supervisory triad, the absence of which could potentially derail the

pre-service teacher's educative experience while participating in student teaching (Borko &

Mayfield, 1995; Bullough & Draper, 2004; NCATE, 2010; Slick, 1997). Stake (2010) notes that

a key distinguishing feature of qualitative research is that it aims for understanding of

phenomena as opposed to aiming for explanation. Because the overall intent of this study is to

better understand the human aspects of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad and

how those dynamics influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences, the decision to utilize

qualitative research methodology was a natural one.

Stake (2010) suggests that a method of inquiry should not be chosen until after specific

research questions have been determined. In chapter 2, several studies regarding interpersonal

dynamics of the supervisory triad were reviewed and analyzed on a cursory level. The review

and analysis of that literature provided the researcher with a number of models for proceeding

with the current study. The methodologies and theoretical and conceptual frameworks of those

models were compared to the determined goals and research questions of this study, and from

that comparison choices were made regarding the current study's design. Specifically, the

methodology chosen for the current study is qualitative meta-synthesis.

Qualitative meta-synthesis methodology was chosen for this research because it best

suited its primary objective—to produce new knowledge of the interpersonal dynamics of the

supervisory triad—through the collection and synthesis of empirical qualitative research. This

methodology was also chosen because of its potential to articulate the collective voice of an emerging field of study toward improved practice, as Britten et al. (2017) note that "well-conducted systematic reviews of qualitative research provide the opportunity to inform policy and practice" (p. 1371).

Description of Method and Research Design

The qualitative meta-synthesis methodology has been utilized across disciplines for several decades, predominantly so in the field of nursing (Erwin et al., 2011; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). In recent years the interest in this methodology has increased, particularly in "practice disciplines" (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, p. 1) such as education. Although interest is rising, there are still relatively few examples of qualitative meta-synthesis available in the extant research on education. The meta-synthesis methodology, an outgrowth of the seminal qualitative synthesis methodology, meta-ethnography, was conceived as a response to a parallel quantitative methodology, meta-analysis (e.g. Glass, 1976). In their classic work *Meta-Ethnography: Synthesizing Qualitative Studies*, Noblit and Hare (1988) observe that "[b]ecause the positivists see knowledge as accumulating, they have been more interested in developing approaches to research synthesis than have interpretivists. A meta-ethnography fills this void by proposing a uniquely interpretive approach to research synthesis" (p. 12). Meta-synthesis differs from meta-ethnography in that "meta-ethnography is a form of metastudy that entails the interpretive comparison of study findings, not the integration of them" (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, p. 21). Specifically, meta-synthesis is defined as "a form of systematic review or integration of qualitative research findings in a target domain that are themselves interpretive syntheses of data" (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003, p. 227).

For this study, a process designed as a hybrid combination of the "partially overlapping six phases of the two combined methods of Noblit and Hare and Sandelowski and Barroso" established by researchers in the field of education (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015, p. 80) was utilized. These six phases include: (1) getting started—conceiving the synthesis; (2) deciding what is relevant to the initial interest—deciding the target of the study; (3) reading the studies—appraising included reports; (4) determining how different studies are related—a targeted comparison; (5) translating the studies into one another—forming the qualitative meta-synthesis; and (6) expressing and presenting the meta-synthesis. What follows is a cursory description of the process followed by the current synthesis. Each of the components of this process will be explained in further detail later in this chapter.

Getting started. Noblit and Hare describe this first phase as one in which "the investigator is asking, How can I inform my intellectual interest by examining some set of studies" (1988, p. 27). It is in this stage that the researcher explores "intellectual interests that qualitative research might form" (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p. 26), leading to the eventual formulation of the research questions and problem statement guiding the current study.

Deciding what is relevant. Selection criteria for studies included in this meta-synthesis have been chosen carefully and intentionally. Among these criteria is relation to the central aim of the study, a bounded time period for study publication, and the requirement that all chosen studies must be empirical qualitative research with full-text online availability. Each of these, as well as additional criteria, are discussed in depth later in this chapter.

Reading the studies. The studies deemed appropriate for inclusion in this meta-synthesis were read and reread in an effort to achieve researcher saturation in the content and context of each. A number of studies were excluded at this point after they were read and reread

due to a lack of relevance to the central focus of the study at hand, explained in further detail later in this chapter.

  Determining relationships among studies. Relationships among the studies synthesized for this research were determined using directed qualitative content analysis. Use of this method begins with theory, as codes are defined both before and during data analysis and are derived from both theory and relevant findings in the literature being reviewed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1286). For the purpose of this dissertation, coding was initially determined by the research sub-questions guiding this study, with additional codes developed during the course of the study as needed.

  Translating the studies into one another. Reciprocal translation will be utilized for the synthesis of data in this study. According to Noblit and Hare (1999), "[r]eciprocal translations of studies into one another enable holistic accounts that […] are comparative, emic, and historical" (p. 109). Use of reciprocal translation is appropriate when synthesizing "studies that can be translated using metaphors, concepts, and themes that are common to both" (Onwuegbuzie and Frels, 2016, p. 28).

  Expressing the synthesis. Final expression of the current synthesis was done through the current written study including themes derived from the original studies, along with an oral defense of the research the study details.

Approach to Inquiry

  The overarching design of this study was based largely on Noblit and Hare's (1988) original meta-ethnographic approach and as such, it is grounded in the interpretive paradigm of naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1978; Noblit & Hare, 1988). In contrast to the positivist viewpoint that knowledge is cumulative, an interpretive view prompts researchers to

"seek an explanation for social or cultural events based upon the perspectives an experiences of the people being studied" (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p. 12). Lincoln and Denzin (2011) describe research produced through an interpretivist lens as being "like a quilt, a performance text, or a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole" (p. 6). This description is quite applicable to the approach taken in the current study, as it sought to weave together several individual primary studies toward the construction of cohesive knowledge through qualitative meta-synthesis.

Data Collection

Sampling

Data for this qualitative meta-synthesis was derived from secondary qualitative data sources. The sampling bounds for this study include three of the four parameters originally put forth by Sandelowski and Barroso (2007)—topical, deemed "conceptual" for the purpose of the current study; population; and temporal—and an additional fifth parameter established by the author of the current study, that of access. Each of the four included parameters are defined as follows:

- *Conceptual parameters*—Bounds defining the topic(s) to be studied
- *Population parameters*—The people (individuals and/or groups) observed in the primary studies to be included in the current synthesis
- *Temporal parameters*—Defined time frame from which data may be collected
- *Access parameters*—Bounds detailing point(s) of access for studies to be included in the synthesis (e.g. full-text online, full-text in print, etc.) as well as language accessibility (i.e. published in English or another language)

Further explanation of and justification for each of these criteria in relation to the current study is detailed in Table 4.

TABLE 4.

Explanation of and Justification for Sampling Parameters (modified from Erwin et al., 2011)

Parameter	Justification
Conceptual	
Examines the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad of teacher education	Examining the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad was required as a central aim of each included study. This first criteria is critical, as a great deal of quality research exists on supervision that does not center on the interpersonal dynamics of the triad, and was therefore excluded from this synthesis.
Population	
Examines supervisory triads that exist in the context of American schools	Due to the inherent links recognized by positioning theory between culture and positioning, as well as the current author's lack of extensive knowledge regarding cultures aside from American culture, only studies examining supervisory triads in American schools were included for synthesis.
Temporal	
Published between 2002 and 2017	The time frame from which literature will be chosen for this research is 2002 to present. In an effort to glean data regarding current supervisory practices in the field, only studies published within the past 15 years were included.
Access	
Published primary research	Only published studies were considered in an effort to streamline and simplify the research procurement process.
Published in the English language	Due to limited availability of resources, studies published in languages other than English are unable to be translated and were therefore not included in the synthesis.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument. As noted by Stake (2010), the qualitative researcher "him- or herself is an instrument, observing action and contexts, often intentionally playing a subjective role in the study, using his or her own personal experience in making interpretations" (p. 20). The current researcher's constructivist lens brings to this study in an informal capacity the view that knowledge is constructed based on individuals' perceptions and interactions with others (Bruner, 1990; Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1933; Vygotsky, 1978). As someone who personally identifies as a constructivist, the researcher brings to this study a set of beliefs about how learning can and should take place. Among these are the importance of learning in community with others; the encouragement of student inquiry and dialogue; and the nurturing of students' natural curiosities for learning through authentic, engaging experiences. In the context of supervision, these beliefs are addressed through participation in the supervisory triad, comprised of the pre-service teacher, the mentor teacher, and the supervisor (Goldhammer, 1969). Because supervision occurs in a social context, the constructivist worldview of the researcher lends itself well to the central focus of this study, as well as the formal application of positioning theory as the frame for this research.

Instruments and Search Protocol

A systematic approach to data collection was employed for this study (Booth et al., 2016; Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). The instruments utilized for data collection in this study included both electronic and manual retrieval methods. For this work, five techniques were employed: keyword and concept searches in electronic databases; citation tracking, including forward and

backward chaining; journal browsing; snowballing; and pearl growing. These strategies are detailed in the context of the current study below.

Keyword and concept searches in electronic databases. Booth et al. (2016) note that the bulk of searching for literature to synthesize is done through searches of electronic databases, and this study will be no different. Both keyword and concept search techniques were employed, defined in Table 5 and further discussed later in this chapter. In order to complete this search, the following electronic databases and search engines were accessed: ERIC (at EBSCOhost); Education Source; ProQuest; SAGE Journals; Emerald Insight; Taylor & Francis Online; Wiley-Blackwell Online Library; JSTOR; ProjectMUSE; ScienceDirect; and GoogleScholar. These databases were chosen because of their accessibility to the researcher as well as their relevance and scope as related to the current study.

TABLE 5.

Relevant Concepts and Keywords

Relevant Concepts	Relevant Keywords
Pre-service teacher supervision, patterns of communication, communication in pre-service education, interpersonal dynamics	Pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, supervisor, interpersonal dynamics, communication, teacher education, student teaching, supervision, mentoring, triad

Citation tracking. Citation tracking includes both forward chaining and backward chaining. Forward chaining begins with a study deemed appropriate for inclusion in the synthesis. That study's citation is entered into a citation database to discover other works that contain it as a reference, allowing the researcher to "leap forward" (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, p. 42) in his or her research. In a similar fashion, backward chaining also begins with entering the citation of an appropriate study into a citation database. The researcher then

identifies the documents cited in the initial study in an effort to identify additional relevant studies for inclusion in the synthesis.

Snowballing. Snowballing "refers to using the reference list of a paper or the citations to the paper to identify additional papers" (Wohlin, 2014, p. 1) that may be appropriate for inclusion in the current synthesis. This technique is very closely related to the aforementioned citation tracking techniques in that it utilizes citations within a document to discover additional studies.

Journal browsing. The following five peer-reviewed journals will be manually searched by reviewing article titles and journal indexes: *Journal of Teacher Education; Teaching and Teacher Education; Teacher Education and Practice; National Teacher Education Journal; and Teacher Education Quarterly.* These specific journals were selected for manual searching due to their close relation to the topic of the current study. This complementary technique is intended to "validate the systematic review of the databases and the search terms used, and also to determine whether other relevant articles [are] available" (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015) but not located through the electronic database searches.

Pearl growing. Pearl growing is a technique in which a "pearl," or a study the researcher deems to be a perfect for inclusion in relation to the aims of the current study, is utilized as a starting point for discovering other relevant works. The pearl's citation is entered into a citation database, allowing the researcher to identify the subject headings by which it is labeled within that database. Those headings are then used as search terms in an effort to identify other potentially relevant works identified by the same headings.

TABLE 6.

Variations of Thesaurus Terms within Two Databases

Keyword Term	Variations*	
	ERIC (@EBSCOHOST)	Education Source
Pre-Service Teacher	*Preservice teachers*, student teachers, *teacher interns*	Student teachers, *education interns*
Mentor Teacher	*Cooperating teacher*, master teachers	Master teachers, *teacher supervisors*
Supervisor	Teacher educators, *student teacher supervisors, college faculty*	Teacher educators
Interpersonal Dynamics	*Interpersonal relationships, supervisor supervisee relationship*, interpersonal communication, *group dynamics*	*Interpersonal relations*, interpersonal communication
Teacher Education	Teacher education, *preservice teacher education*, professional education	Teacher education, professional education, *teacher training, education—study & teaching*
Student Teaching	Student teaching, *field experience programs, clinical experience*, practicums*, internship programs, laboratory training*	Student teaching, practicums
Supervision	*Supervision*, practicum supervision, *clinical supervision (of teachers), supervisory methods*	Practicum supervision, clinical supervision (education)
Mentoring	(none)	*Mentoring in education*
Triad	(none)	(none)

*Subject terms in *italics* were original to the respective database.

Search Results

  Conducting the search. Booth et al. (2016) suggest beginning the literature search process by familiarizing oneself with the existing research pertaining to the topic of study. A "scoping search" (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016, p. 110) of two of the eleven databases to be accessed for data collection was conducted in order to identify variations of thesaurus terms utilized by these databases, detailed in Table 6. As noted by Burns and Badiali (2016), there is a pervasive lack of consistent terminology within the field of education. This is clearly evidenced by the variety of keyword and thesaurus terms necessary for inclusion in this search for relevant literature. A commonly used form of each keyword was used to commence the search for variations in each database, and include the following: *pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, supervisor, interpersonal dynamics, teacher education, student teaching, supervision, mentoring, and triad.* The returned variations of these search terms is shown in Table 6 (above).

  The collection of data for this synthesis followed a process shown graphically in Figure 4. After the scoping search was conducted and the initial list of search terms was established, a systematic search for literature was conducted, utilizing the five techniques discussed in this section. Once the search was complete, the collected studies were evaluated for inclusion in the current synthesis based on the parameters established previously in this chapter (see Table 5).

FIGURE 4.

Data Collection Steps for the Current Synthesis
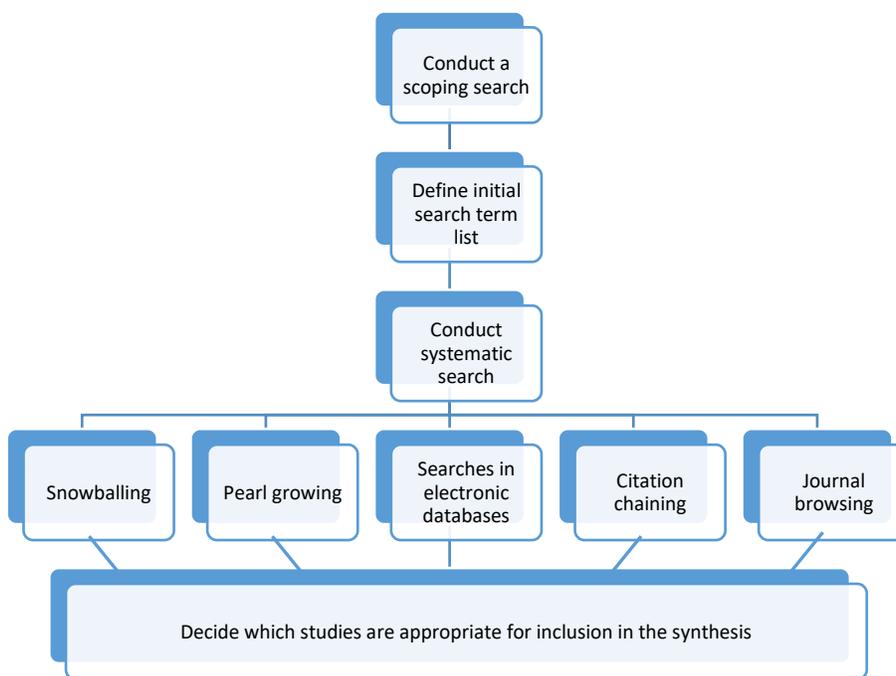
Conducting the search using the process described above ultimately yielded eleven studies deemed worthy for inclusion in the current synthesis. The full search, shown graphically in Figure 5 below, initially identified a total of 877 references potentially relevant to the current study. Of these 877 references, 263 were removed due to duplication and an additional 423 were removed after their titles and/or abstracts were reviewed by the researcher, leaving a total of 191 remaining references. Of these, 152 were removed due to the reference being outside the established sampling bounds for the study (conceptual, population, temporal, and access), leaving a total of 39 remaining references. The full text of each of these 39 studies were carefully examined and as a result, eleven references were selected for final inclusion in the current qualitative meta-synthesis.

FIGURE 5.

Data Collection and Selection Process

Initial Identification	Total: n = 877	<u>Method of Identification:</u> • References identified via database search (n = 832) • References identified via citation tracking, snowballing, journal browsing, and pearl growing (n = 45)
First Screening	Remaining: n = 191	<u>Reasons for Removal:</u> • Duplication of record (n = 263) • Removed after review of title and/or abstract (n = 423)
Determining Eligibility	Remaining: n = 39	<u>Reasons for Removal:</u> • Removed due to reference being outside the established sampling bounds for the study (conceptual, population, temporal, and access) (n = 152)
Final Inclusion	Remaining: n = 11	<u>Reason for Removal:</u> • Removed after review of full text of reference (n = 28)

Data Analysis

Phases of Analysis and Interpretation

As mentioned previously, directed qualitative content analysis was used in determining

relationships among the eleven references included in this study, a method of analysis

appropriate for use when "existing theory or prior research exists about a phenomenon that is

incomplete or would benefit from further description" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). The

directed qualitative content analysis took place by following three steps, outlined by Hsieh and

Shannon (2005) and modified by the researcher to fit the needs of the current study:

1. The researcher identified key concepts as initial coding categories, named in the next section of this chapter.

2. Operational definitions for each category were determined using positioning theory and existing literature. These definitions accompanying the pre-determined codes are named in the next section of this chapter.

3. The researcher began coding immediately using the predetermined codes listed in the codebook, the initial entries of which are named and defined in the next section of this chapter. After data was coded using the initially established codes, coding categories were expanded and redefined as necessary to meet the needs of the collected data.

Instruments and Protocol for Coding

The instruments utilized for data analysis in this study include the NVivo software and the researcher herself. As discussed previously, the researcher is the primary instrument in a qualitative research study. She used the NVivo software as a tool for coding, storing, and visually representing the analysis of collected data. Regarding coding, Creswell (2013) describes his personal approach as follows:

I begin with a short list, "lean coding" I call it—five or six categories with shorthand labels or codes—and then I expand the categories as I continue to review and re-review my database. Typically, regardless of the size of the database, I do not develop more than 25-30 categories of information, and I find myself working to reduce and combine them into the five or six themes that I will use in the end to write my narrative. Those researchers who end up with 100 or 200 categories—and it is easy to find this many in a complex database—struggle to reduce the picture to the five or six themes that they must end with for most publications. (p. 184)

In an effort to avoid this "struggle," the author of the current study established only three initial

primary themes, a direct reflection of the sub-questions guiding the study as well as its key

concepts and supporting theoretical framework: "factors," meaning identified factors of

influence on the supervisory triad; "patterns of communication," meaning the patterns of

communication recognized as occurring within the data; and "positioning," meaning the

positioning of self and others within the supervisory triad. After initial coding was complete

using these three codes, additional subcodes and sub-subcodes were added and the data was

reorganized as needed. The final codebook utilized for the current study is shown in Table 7

below. The results of this coding process are discussed at length in the next chapter of this study.

TABLE 7.

Codebook for Data Analysis

Initial Code	Subcodes*	Sub-subcodes*
Factors	Background and Responsibilities of Triad Members	
	Expectations	
	Role Clarification	
Patterns of Communication	Included Parties	Full Triad
		MT/TC
		US/TC
		MT/US
	Conditions for Communication	
	Interaction Frequency	
	Difficulties in Communication Practice	Miscommunication and Confusion of Message
		Conflict or Incongruence Among Triad Members
		"Stuck in the Middle"
Positioning	General	
	of MT	
	of TC	
	of US	

*MT = Mentor Teacher; US = University Supervisor; TC = Teacher Candidate

Trustworthiness of Interpretation

Perhaps most prevalently used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013), Guba (1981) identifies four aspects of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria were developed in response to four concerns with trustworthiness—truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality, respectively. Guba's 1981 publication, along with several since, provide methods for meeting each of the four aspects of trustworthiness.

Credibility

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Guba notes that "[e]xtended interaction with a situation or a milieu leads inquirers to an understanding of what is essential or characteristic of it" (p. 85). Because there were no human subjects involved in this study, and therefore no firsthand interactions with people, situations, or physical settings, the studies included in the synthesis were viewed as "participants" instead. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation of these participants (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) included the reading and rereading of the studies by the researcher until saturation had been achieved.

Establishing structural corroboration or coherence. Establishing coherence in this study followed Guba's (1981) assertion that the finished product of a study should display "consistency, synchronism, logic, and being 'all of a piece'" (p. 86). Additionally, throughout the data analysis phase of this study, special care was taken to ensure that internal contradictions, if they should arise, are accounted for and interpreted.

Transferability

    Do theoretical/purposive sampling. As discussed previously, the sampling criteria for this study were established as an intentional method to be utilized by the researcher and are intended to "maximize the range of information uncovered" (Guba, 1981, p. 86) by the data collection process. The established criteria ensure that the studies included in this synthesis will not be "typical"; instead, they will be representative of the full body of extant literature available regarding the current topic of study in an effort to increase the probability that this study's findings will be transferable to other contexts.

Dependability

    Establish an audit trail. In order to combat the threat of inconsistency throughout the research process (Guba, 1981), Sandelowski & Barroso (2007) suggest documenting "all procedures, changes in procedure, and results" (p. 232). The authors maintain that when conducting a research synthesis, detailed records of all search procedures and their results as well as researcher rationale "behind the selection, use, development, or abandonment of those strategies" (p. 229) should be kept. This recording of thinking and acting serves to make the research process transparent. The author of the current study kept detailed records of all data collection and analysis processes implemented, including decisions made and the rationale for doing so throughout that implementation.

Confirmability

    Practicing reflexivity. Creswell terms this practice of reflexivity "clarifying researcher bias" (2013, p. 251). The researcher at the helm of the current study has identified her personal worldview previously in this chapter. Additionally, she recognizes that her position as a university faculty member involved in supervision within her own practice may have caused her

to be biased in some way or to make assumptions regarding the underlying meanings, intentions, or other perceived nuances potentially derived from the data. As such, she made every effort to remain neutral in her analysis of the data, to continually be self-reflective, and to strictly adhere to the methods of this study, outlined previously.

Limitations and Delimitations

The researcher identified three possible limitations that may have influenced the findings of this study:

1. Although the researcher made every effort to procure all studies worthy of inclusion in this dissertation study, it is possible that one or more relevant studies were left undiscovered and therefore not included.

2. As an emerging field of study, empirical qualitative research related to the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad is limited. As such, a relatively small number of studies (n=11) met the criteria for inclusion in this study, limiting its generalizability.

3. Because qualitative meta-synthesis was used as the methodology for this study, it is inherently limited to the research and findings produced by previous researchers. As such, the current researcher was limited in what was allowable in terms of deviating from the execution of the synthesis in order to investigate avenues of research that were discovered through the process of conducting the study at hand.

In addition to the above limitations, the researcher has also identified two delimitations of this study:

1. The conscious decision to exclude studies published prior to 2002 limited the pool from which studies were selected for inclusion in this study and therefore eliminated an

unknown number of studies that may have otherwise been acceptable for inclusion in this work.

2. The use of positioning theory as the theoretical framework of this study inherently narrowed the focus of the study. Although very useful in framing the synthesis, the use of positioning theory may have also inadvertently caused the researcher to leave potential knowledge and findings untapped that would have been made apparent through the use of a different lens.

Ethical Considerations

Although human subjects were not involved in this study, the researcher still upheld the basic tenets of ethical and moral research behavior, including honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, respect for intellectual property, competence, and legality (Resnik, 2015).

Conclusion

In sum, the aim of this qualitative meta-synthesis was to examine how the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. This study explored the factors, patterns of communication, and positioning of self and others that influenced the interpersonal dynamics of the triad in an effort to produce new knowledge and positively affect future practices in the field. Employing a systematic approach to relevant research, this synthesis and analysis of these existing studies has contributed new knowledge to the field and may ultimately serve as a model for future meta-syntheses in educational research.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

As discussed previously, the aim of this study was to explore the influence of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad on pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. Qualitative meta-synthesis methodology was chosen for this study in an effort to collect and synthesize empirical research toward the construction of new knowledge. Relevant studies were gathered and then synthesized using directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This chapter is organized by themes that emerged from the data in response to the research question and subquestions guiding the study, which are:

1. How do the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences?

    a. What factors influence the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad?

    b. What patterns of communication that occur within the triad influence a pre-service teacher's clinical experience?

    c. How does the positioning of self and/or others by members of the supervisory triad influence pre-service teachers' clinical experiences?

First, identified factors of influence to the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad are discussed. Next, the patterns of communication that arose from the studies are explored. Finally, the positioning of triad members done by self and others is discussed. Each of these sections is followed by a discussion of findings, followed by a brief summary.

TABLE 8.

Descriptions of Studies Included in the Current Synthesis

Author (Year of Publication)	Aim	Sample Population	Methodology	Conceptual/Theoretical Framework
Bullough and Draper (2004)	To explore the experiential level of mentoring and of managing mentors over the course of an academic year in a triad composed of a senior high school mathematics intern, her assigned mentor teacher, and a university supervisor	One student teacher, one mentor teacher, and one university supervisor	Qualitative (Unspecified)	Positioning Theory
Campbell and Lott (2010)	To explore the relationships between university supervisors, in-service teachers, and pre-service teachers (triads) participating in a joint pre-service and in-service professional development project	Two student teachers, two mentor teachers, and one university supervisor	Phenomenology	Positioning Theory
Fernandez and Erbilgin (2009)	To compare aspects of post-lesson conferences led by cooperating teachers and by a university supervisor working with two mathematics student teachers	Two mathematics student teachers, their mentor teachers, and one university supervisor	Qualitative (Unspecified)	Sociocultural Theory
Goh and Hannon (2012)	To provide an account of Goh's experiences as a neophyte university supervisor providing supervision to a student teacher	One novice university supervisor	Autoethnography	Metzler's (1990) description of the Noble Triad and Devil's Triad within the supervisory triad
Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011)	To examine the roles and role perceptions held by members of physical education student teaching triads while engaged in a seven-week elementary student teaching experience	Two student teachers, two mentor teachers, and one university supervisor	Case Study	Social Constructivist Theory
Katz and Isik-Ercan (2015)	To explore how cultural differences between a field-based team and the university supervisor led to unanticipated challenges and points of conflict in an early childhood teacher education program in Midwestern United States	Two student teachers, one mentor teacher, and one university supervisor	Ethnography	Ethnographic logic of inquiry utilizing the concept of languaculture

Author (Year of Publication)	Aim	Sample of Informants	Methodology Utilized	Conceptual/Theoretical Framework
Koerner et al. (2002)	To find out if there is tacit agreement among the various participants in student teaching about what a good student teaching experience looks like and about the roles that each participant should play	Seven university supervisors, and twenty-one student teachers and their mentor teachers	Qualitative (Unspecified)	Grounded Theory
Murphy (2010)	To examine the perceptions of relationships formed among members of the student teaching triad and to examine the perceptions of supervision of student teachers given by cooperating teachers and college supervisors	A convenience sample of eight distinct student teaching triads	Qualitative (Unspecified)	(None stated)
Nguyen (2009)	To examine an inquiry-based teaching/learning model involving diverse members of learning communities in the contexts of teacher–learner (expert–novice) reciprocity, school culture and social relations	Four student teachers, four mentor teachers, and one university supervisor	Case Study	Socially-constructed, culturally-framed conceptions of teaching and learning and critical inquiry as a philosophical and pedagogical stance
Silva (2003)	To explore the use of triad journaling as a collaborative tool for enhancing teaching and learning in a professional development school context	Ten student teaching triads from two cohorts within a single professional development school	Case Study	(None stated)
Valencia et al. (2009)	To explore how interactions between members of a student teaching triad in specific contexts shaped opportunities for student teachers to learn to teach language arts	One student teacher, one mentor teacher, and one university supervisor	Case Study	Activity Theory

Data Descriptions

Data for this study is comprised of eleven empirical, peer-reviewed studies that were published within the past 15 years, from 2002 to 2017. These studies, described in greater detail in Table 8, focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the full supervisory triad as opposed to being limited to the study of dyads within the supervisory triad. Additionally, each of the triads represented in the included studies were set in American schools, relevant to the current study due to the inherent links recognized by positioning theory between culture and positioning.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Factors of Influence

Role clarification. Within the context of positioning theory, the terms *role* and *position* are clearly delineated from one another. As discussed in chapter 1, position is fluid because of its dependence on "conventions of speech and action that are labile, contestable and ephemeral" (Harré, 2008, p. 30). Role, in contrast, is seen as "relatively fixed, often formally defined and long lasting" (Harré, 2008, p. 30). The distinction that roles are viewed as *relatively* fixed within positioning theory—not *permanently* fixed—is of critical importance. A second critical point is the recognition of both role and position as occurrences that take place within the context of the storyline of supervision. Storyline, a broad sequence of unified happenings in which individuals engage both internally (i.e. thoughts, feelings, plans, and intentions) and externally (i.e. physical performance), can be fluidly defined in the context of this study as both a specific triad's engagement with one another over a finite period of time, or more generically as the universal practice of triads' ongoing engagement in the work of teacher education across the field.

The current study finds that roles and the perception of roles vary from triad to triad and also within a single triad over the course of time (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Campbell & Lott,

2010; Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Murphy, 2010; Nguyen, 2009; Silva, 2003; Valencia, Martin, Place, and Grossman, 2009). As such, there remains a need to define the roles of each member of each unique supervisory triad; however, in general, the roles of triad members are explicitly clarified neither by members within individual supervisory triads nor universally across the field (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Campbell & Lott, 2010; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Murphy, 2010; Valencia et al., 2009). In the absence of clarity, individuals within the triad often construct their own definitions of each member's role. These individual conceptions are often not shared with others. Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) recount the experience of a member of one of the supervisory triads they examined as follows:

> Early in her student teaching experience, [teacher candidate] Maria defined her role in the triad and attempted to construct meaning and guidelines regarding the role of the cooperating teacher through her own set of expectations. She firmly believed these guidelines were essential for her to grow and develop into a better teacher. However, Maria kept these expectations to herself and assumed that the other members of the triad held the same beliefs. (p. 48)

As noted previously, lack of role clarification often leads to "an ongoing process of negotiating who would do what, when, and where, with whom" (Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015, p. 63). Goh and Hannon (2012) note that, in a study with the first author acting as university supervisor, she and the mentor teacher "did not have prior opportunity to clarify [their] roles within the practicum, and this may have compounded the hierarchical issues which surfaced" (p. 73). Additionally, Katz and Isik-Ercan (2015) found "frame clashes" brought about by the differences between the

languaculture represented by the field-based setting versus that of the university. The authors

assert that these clashes "made visible differences in cultural expectations of the institutionally

based actors, clashes that were often bidirectional; that is, the clash had consequences for how

actors viewed their work, met their responsibilities, and took up, or not, what others proposed"

(p. 66). In these examples, members of the triad internalized their own conceptions of the roles

of triad members, but these conceptions were not shared nor agreed upon by the remaining

members of the triad, leading to confusion and "lost opportunities for learning to teach"

(Valencia et al., 2009, p. 318). In an effort to combat this issue, Johnson and Napper-Owen

(2011) suggest the following:

> The confusion and misunderstandings that currently plague many student teaching triads
>
> may be alleviated through open discussions about role perceptions and expectations.
>
> These discussions could be as simple as a meeting with triad members prior to the student
>
> teaching experience to discuss expectations. Continued dialogue among triad members
>
> during the student teaching experience would then open the doors for a more positive
>
> learning experience and provide a better way to construct knowledge regarding role
>
> expectations. (p. 54)

Patterns of communication among and within the triad are discussed at length later in this

chapter.

Expectations of triad members. The current study finds that much like triad member

roles, member expectations in terms of the intricacies of one another's performance and/or

positioning within the triad are often unclear or unarticulated (Campbell & Lott, 2010; Goh &

Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Murphy, 2010;

Nguyen, 2009; Valencia et al., 2009). Campbell and Lott (2010) found that "uncertainty in

expectations can also act as a social force capable of forging roles and a storyline misaligned with those thought most advantageous or sought by a university supervisor" (p. 364). Even when they are articulated, the current synthesis shows that expectations for field experiences are often misaligned among the members of the supervisory triad (Campbell & Lott, 2010; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Murphy, 2010; Valencia et al., 2009). For example, in a triad studied by Valencia et al. (2009), the authors found that "although each person acted in good faith, according to perceptions of his or her roles, there were significant tensions among the multiple settings in which everyone participated. Chief among these were multiple views of the goal of field experiences, mentoring, and effective [content] instruction" (p. 318).

Background and responsibilities of triad members. A third finding of this study regarding factors of influence is that supervisors tend to view their roles through the lens of theory and in connection to the academic work of the university, while mentor teachers tend to view their roles through the lens of practicality (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Murphy, 2010). As stated by Goh and Hannon (2012), "[o]ftentimes, supervision expectations of the university supervisors are based on theory, having spent more time in the academia setting, whereas supervision expectations of cooperating teachers are based on pragmatism, having spent more time in a practical physical education classroom" (p. 74). Additionally, Fernandez and Erbilgin (2009) contend that

> university supervisors might be the only people who specifically aim to connect
>
> university programs with schools. Thus, the backgrounds of the university supervisors
>
> seem vitally important if we want student teaching to be an experience where prospective

mathematics teachers continue to learn about teaching aligned with recent reforms and

theory. (p. 107)

The setting in which a member of the supervisory triad is primarily immersed (university or P-12

school) deeply impacts his or her view of the purpose of field experience and, more specifically,

the expectations of triad members, particularly that of the teacher candidate.

Although a great deal of data from the current study exist regarding the background and

responsibilities of the university supervisor and mentor teacher, only one of the studies included

in the current synthesis specifically addressed the background and responsibilities of the teacher

candidate. Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) recognize that "student teachers have a variety of

responsibilities in their role as student teacher. Student teachers typically plan lessons, practice a

variety of teaching methods, and develop a realistic understanding of school life" (p. 52).

Clearly teacher candidates have their own unique responsibilities and personal backgrounds that

influence their student teaching experiences; however, they are positioned through representation

in existing research as secondary to the backgrounds of those responsible for imparting their

wisdom and knowledge to the teacher candidates, namely the mentor teacher and the university

supervisor.

The professional development received by mentor teachers and university supervisors

was also identified as an influential piece of these individuals' professional backgrounds in

relation to the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009;

Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Murphy, 2010; Valencia et al., 2009). Mentor teachers tend to

rely on their personal experiences as the basis for their mentoring practices during student

teaching. They are generally not provided with any formal training. Although professional

development for university supervisors is more common than that offered to mentor teachers, it

is by no means a universal practice. Some supervisors are provided with formal training on how to supervise, while others are not. Fernandez and Erbilgin (2009) discussed the professional development provided to the university supervisor and mentor teachers involved in the triads at the center of their 2009 study, describing it as follows:

> The cooperating teachers and the university supervisor in this study had participated in a general student teacher supervision course completed by all cooperating teachers in preparation for supervising student teachers from a southern state university. The content of this course was focused on helping prospective supervisors improve their self-reflection and listening skills. Additionally, the course discussed general techniques for observing student teachers' lessons, such as recording on- and off-task student behaviors or making a diagram of the student teacher's movements in the classroom. This course was the only preparation for supervising student teachers completed by the cooperating teachers. […] On the other hand, the university supervisor completed this general supervision course and later participated as a co-supervisor for two mathematics student teachers under the guidance of an experienced university supervisor of mathematics student teachers, the first author of this article. (p. 108)

The authors concluded that this professional development was not optimally effective, primarily because "[i]t lacked attention to approaches for questioning student teachers and ways of engaging student teachers in thinking deeply about the content and content pedagogy of their lessons" (p. 108).

Discussion of Factors of Influence

The current synthesis shows that the success or failure of a given triad cannot be attributed to a single factor. Although effective communication is the foundation of triads that

well serve their primary purpose—preparation of pre-service teachers for in-service practice—its existence alone is not sufficient in determining success. The findings of this study support the long-held contention that roles within the triad are ill-defined and shifting (Slick, 1998), specifically finding a lack of clarity in defining not only the roles but also the expectations of triad members. Gee (2000) notes that "[w]hen any human being acts and interacts in a given context, others recognize that person as acting and interacting as a certain 'kind of person' or even as several different 'kinds' at once" (p. 99). In much the same way, in the absence of role clarification, triad members define the roles of self and others themselves. These self-conceptions of role are not always shared with the remaining members of the triad, leading to confusion for all and diminished learning for the teacher candidate. Similarly, when triad members' expectations are unclear or unarticulated, that lack of clarity can overtake the trajectory and tone of the field experience, "act[ing] as a social force capable of forging roles and a storyline misaligned with those thought most advantageous" (p. 364) by those within the triad. Even in cases when expectations are articulated, incongruence of those expectations among triad members often leads to frustration (Isik-Ercan, Kang, & Rodgers, 2017; Martin, Snow, & Franklin Torrez, 2011).

Although it is evident that a lack of clarity regarding roles and expectations with triads has been noted in the literature for some time (Basmadjian, 2011; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Meegan et al., 2013; Slick, 1997, 1998), these issues have by no means been broadly rectified or eradicated in practice. However, alternatives have been explored. Wilson (2006) examined the views of triad members who participated in an alternate model of supervision known as the Clinical Master Teacher (CMT) model. In the CMT model, the mentor teacher takes on the traditional roles of both the mentor teacher as well as the supervisor, which allows the university

supervisor to take on the role of liaison, collaborator, and occasional observer. This reimaging of roles led to their definition—in the triads implementing this model, the redefined roles of mentor teacher and university supervisor were made clear to all involved. Participants in the study noted that they preferred this model of supervision to a more traditional arrangement, possibly attributable to the fact that all members' roles were clearly defined.

All triad members have duties and responsibilities outside of those related to the work of the triad. Additionally, each member comes to the triad with his or her own unique set of life experiences that contribute—either directly or indirectly—to the work of the triad. As such, triad members also bring to the clinical experience their own positioning of self in terms of professional responsibility. Mentor teachers largely position themselves first as teachers of their K-12 students (Bullough, 2005; Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014), while university supervisors often see the more traditional obligations to the university (e.g. research and teaching) as their primary duties (Rodgers & Keil, 2007; Slick, 1998). As such, the clinical education of the pre-service teacher becomes a secondary responsibility for both the mentor teacher and the university supervisor. This situation is particularly evident when the university supervisor is in a full-time faculty role at an institution of higher education. This finding highlights a critical gap in the education of pre-service teachers—if neither the mentor teacher not the university supervisor consistently view preparing teacher candidates for practice as their primary responsibility, the candidate's potential growth and professional nurturing is inevitably diminished. Some have suggested that mentor teachers engage in professional development similar to that sometimes provided to many university supervisors, specifically aimed at guiding mentor teachers in becoming more intentional in their role as mentor to pre-service teachers; however, the implementation of this suggested professional development happens infrequently at

best (Valencia et al., 2009). The lack of clarity and direction afforded to university supervisors and particularly mentor teachers—through professional development or any other means—is a pervasive weakness in the practice of pre-service teacher supervision across the field of education.

Patterns of Communication

Included parties. Findings within this theme are organized by discussing the dyadic and triad patterns of communication identified from the data analyzed for this study: full triad communication, mentor teacher/teacher candidate communication, university supervisor/teacher candidate communication, and mentor teacher/university supervisor communication.

Full triad communication. The current synthesis finds that roles and positions taken on by triad members greatly influence both the quality and the quantity of the triad's communicative interactions (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Nguyen, 2009; Valencia et al., 2009). An example of this comes from Valencia et al. (2009):

> [S]tudent teachers entered the field with ideas and approaches they were eager to try out, few of the cooperating teachers provided opportunities to implement them. When they did provide such opportunities, most teachers were unavailable or unable to provide feedback. Similarly, supervisors sometimes had valuable perspectives that they felt unwilling to share due to the feedback they had received from the university, the affiliation they felt with the cooperating teachers, and their commitment to preserving harmony. And cooperating teachers juggled classroom and school responsibilities with mentoring yet were given little support or training in how to serve these dual roles. As a result of these cross-setting tensions, opportunities to learn were missed and minimized.

Moreover, student teachers became complicit actors in what was, for them, a deeply

important and high-stakes setting. (p. 318)

The roles and positions taken on by triad members also greatly influence who dominates the

triad's communicative interactions. Goh and Hannon (2012) related that the mentor teacher

dominated triadic interactions in the triad at the center of their study because she held the

greatest amount of teaching experience among the three of them, leading the university

supervisor to "[experience] a transactional hierarchy of power with the cooperating teacher,

demonstrated by a domination of voices during meetings" (p. 76). A second example of this can

be found in Bullough and Draper's 2004 study that examined what they deemed to be a "failed

triad." In this study, the mentor teacher and university supervisor had positioned one another as

oppositional to the other's interests and sensibilities regarding the teaching of mathematics,

which eventually led to their outright avoidance of one another and essential abandonment of

their shared responsibility of fostering the teacher candidate's learning and professional

development. This resulted in the teacher candidate reporting feelings of being "stuck in the

middle" (Bullough & Draper, 2004, p. 414) between the mentor teacher and university

supervisor, discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Mentor teacher/teacher candidate communication. No consistent trends were identified

through this synthesis regarding communication frequency between the mentor teachers and

teacher candidates. Some pairs conversed frequently (Campbell & Lott, 2010; Johnson &

Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Murphy, 2010; Valencia et al., 2009), while

others rarely spoke with one another (Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011). Mentor teachers focused

their discussions with teacher candidates on generalities of teaching instead of topics such as

subject matter content and pedagogy. A particular focus was placed on classroom management,

even in instances when pedagogy or content were discussed as well (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Valencia et al., 2009). To exemplify this finding, Valencia et al. (2009) state the following:

> It is not that cooperating teachers and student teachers failed to discuss classroom matters—they did. They talked frequently, often at the end of the day or in brief exchanges throughout the day, and four of nine teams spent considerable time together planning upcoming lessons. However, these conversations were focused on more general issues instead of specifics of language arts lessons. although all the student teachers in this study except one were highly rated by their cooperating teachers and viewed as colleagues, these novice teachers yearned for, and could have benefited from, the perspectives and guidance of their classroom mentors. (p. 314)

Fernandez and Erbilgin (2009) further note that "[c]onferences led by the university supervisor consisted of a dramatically smaller percentage of classroom management content than those led by the cooperating teachers." (p. 104). This finding may again be rooted in the notion that, as mentioned previously, the environment in which a member of the triad is primarily entrenched largely determines his or her view on the practicum. In this instance, because classroom management is so critical to an in–service teacher's overall success and because it is perhaps a topic on which the mentor teacher is knowledgeable, he or she may revert to using it as a primary point of discussion with the teacher candidate. In taking on the role of mentor to an inexperienced pre-service teacher, the mentor teacher may be positioning him/herself as expert by engaging in speech acts that assert his or her authority as such.

In practice, mentor teachers were positioned by their respective teacher candidates as being a source for information and feedback that would help them grow professionally

(Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Murphy, 2010). Three of the studies included in the current synthesis discussed how the TCs to were able to "grow and develop quickly as a result of the shared dialogue between [the teacher candidate] and [the] cooperating teacher" (Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011, p. 50). This rapid growth was attributed to the relatively increased amount of time mentor teachers spent in communication with their respective teacher candidates as compared to university supervisors.

University supervisor/teacher candidate communication. The current study's findings indicate that university supervisors tend to focus their discussions with teacher candidates on subject matter content, pedagogy, and theory (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Valencia et al., 2009). The approaches to supervision they utilized were often educative in nature and utilized questioning as a frequent mode of communicating with the teacher candidates (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Silva, 2003). In general, teacher candidates have a desire to receive feedback on their growth and performances in the classroom; when the mentor teacher is unwilling or unable to provide that feedback, teacher candidates turn to the university supervisor as one who may provide them with comments. In triads studied by both Johnson & Napper-Owen (2011) and Valencia et al. (2009), mentor teachers gave little or no feedback to their teacher candidates regarding their instructional performance, leading the teacher candidates in these triads to intentionally seek that feedback from their university supervisors.

Mentor teacher/university supervisor communication. Communication between the mentor teacher and university supervisor is the least documented pattern of communication among all dyads within the supervisory triads represented in the current synthesis. Overall, the current study identified a general lack of effective communication between the mentor teacher and university supervisor about the teacher candidate's progress and skill development

(Bullough & Draper, 2004; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Murphy, 2010). In triads where the university supervisor and mentor teacher do communicate with one another, there is no consistent pattern regarding the content or the polarity, either positive or negative, of their interactions (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Campbell & Lott, 2010; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Murphy, 2010; Valencia et al., 2009). For example, on one end of the spectrum lies the relationship between the mentor teacher and university supervisor in a "failed triad" explored by Bullough and Draper (2004). For this pair, each positioned the other as a threat and discredited any skills, abilities, and knowledge they brought to the supervisory relationship. By the end of the supervisory period, communication was avoided completely between the two. On the other end of the spectrum, Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) discuss a triad in which the mentor teacher and university supervisor enjoyed a positively functioning dyadic relationship in which each had positioned the other as having good intentions toward the teacher candidate's professional growth and overall practicum experience.

Conditions for communication. Space and conditions for constructive communication must be intentionally created (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Silva, 2003). Bullough and Draper (2004) assert that "[t]here is a need to attend to the conditions required for communication to take place, but attending to those conditions requires attending to how triad members positioned themselves and how they responded to being positioned" (p. 418). The authors contend that "positions that invite communication can be mindfully created and systematically supported. They do not, we believe, just happen, at least not often" (p. 419). Intentionally creating conditions and space for effective communication is a key factor in the overall effectiveness of the supervisory triad. Goh and

Hannon (2012) concur, stating that "building rapport between the university supervisors and the cooperating teachers will enhance the likelihood of developing a Noble Triad, defined as occurring "when the three individuals within the triad are bonded together for the singular benefit of the student teacher" (p. 66). If triads are to become "noble," members of the triad must be intentional about creating the space and conditions necessary for them to do so.

One study included in the current synthesis created intentional space and conditions for communication among triad members via a triad journal (Silva, 2003). This study included ten supervisory triads implemented over the course of two years, and found that the journals provided evidence of role re-conceptualization by both the mentor teacher and university supervisor; heightened communication among all triad members; the journals' "potential [use] as a vehicle for nurturing a problem posing culture, which is a critical feature of an inquiry-oriented professional development school" (p. 77); and provision of "the energy, space, and time for the type of reflection that leads to shared professional growth" (p. 79). Although triad journaling appears to be an effective method for creating appropriate space and conditions for communication among triad members, it has not been widely implemented, making it difficult to ascertain its potential impact across the full field of supervision.

Interaction frequency. This study finds that interactions between the mentor teacher and teacher candidate happen more frequently than interactions between the university supervisor and the teacher candidate (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Murphy, 2010). As a result, the relationships between the mentor teacher and teacher candidate were often reported to be closer and more developed than those between the university supervisor and the teacher candidate, though this was not true in all cases (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Murphy, 2010). Also, because of the supervisor's infrequent

visits, it was suggested that the mentor teacher may be a more accurate evaluator of the teacher

candidate's improvement and overall performance (Goh & Hannon, 2012; Murphy, 2010).

Many researchers suggest that triad members talk more, but "such a conclusion would

misrepresent the depth and complexity of the problem faced" (Bullough & Draper, 2004, p. 418).

Simply talking more will not change the ineffectiveness of the triad unless the talk that happens

is productive and in pursuit of the same shared goal for the student teaching experience.

Increasing positive communication may be dependent on the aforementioned factors of existing

conditions for communication, such as the intentional creation of a time and space that promotes

such action, and the determined roles and positions of triad members.

Difficulties in communication practices. Clearly, not all pre-service teacher

supervisory triads are dysfunctional. However, the data synthesized in the current study did give

rise to three difficulties that occur frequently in practice: miscommunication and confusion of

message; conflict or incongruence among triad members; and teacher candidates being "stuck in

the middle" between university and field. This section discusses each of these identified issues.

Miscommunication and confusion of message. This study finds that the messages given

to teacher candidates by mentor teachers and university supervisors in separate dyadic settings

tend to lack cohesiveness. Mentor teachers and university supervisors often gave conflicting

and/or confusing feedback to teacher candidates (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Fernandez &

Erbilgin, 2009; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015). For example, in one

of the triads examined by Fernandez and Erbilgin (2009), the teacher candidate positioned

herself as a strong teacher based on the high level of positivity of the feedback she was given by

the university supervisor, when in fact the supervisor felt the teacher candidate had considerable

room for professional growth. Miscommunication and confusion among triad members was fed

by a lack of open and honest communication regarding norms, expectations, and roles assumed, confusion that Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) assert could be alleviated through role- and expectation-establishing discussion prior to the start of the practicum.

Conflict or incongruence among triad members. There is often a "clash" between representatives of the university community (i.e. university supervisors) and representatives of the P-12 teaching community (i.e. mentor teachers). Findings from this study assert that both mentor teachers and university supervisors frequently position themselves as agents of their respective contexts (university or field), which leads to misalignment of their assessment and expectations of the teacher candidates' performance (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Nguyen, 2009). In only one case noted in the current synthesis did a study document any manner of resolution to this issue. Nguyen (2009) noted that

> the [mentor teacher/university supervisor/teacher candidate] triad did not always share
> the same perspective on matters[,] for they each brought their own viewpoints, strengths,
> and limitations. So rather than insisting on reaching consensus, they worked hard at
> honouring each other's voice and broadening their cultural, social, and political
> repertoire. (p. 662)

In this case, the members of the triad made an intentional effort to learn from and with one another. This example affirms Johnson and Napper-Owen's (2011) previously discussed assertion that open communication within the triad may mitigate potentially negative outcomes.

"Stuck in the middle." Two of the studies included in the current synthesis discussed teacher candidates being "stuck" between the university and field. In the first, when the relationship between the mentor teacher and university teacher devolved into conflict, the teacher candidate "felt pressure to take sides" (Bullough & Draper, 2004, p. 410) and pledge her

allegiance to one of them. The teacher candidate reported feeling frustrated and "not knowing what to do about it" (p. 412). Ultimately, she chose to align with the mentor teacher because of her "desire for a positive evaluation from [the mentor teacher]. She positioned herself to assure such an outcome" (p. 415). In the other, a pair of teacher candidates found themselves caught between the expectations of their shared mentor teacher and the languaculture established by the field setting, and the expectations of their university supervisor and the languaculture and requirements of the university's teacher preparation program (Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015). Both of these examples resulted in teacher candidates positioning their mentor teachers as having more power than their university supervisors, establishing the mentor's position as "one who knows and understands teaching from the inside, where claims to expertise grounded in many years of experience trump authority claims based on years of academic study" (p. 415).

Discussion of Patterns of Communication

The importance of open, frequent communication within triads cannot be understated. The factors of influence discussed previously in this chapter are an outgrowth of the influence communication, or lack thereof, has on the functioning of the triad. The current study reveals that communication within the triad happens in both triadic and dyadic patterns, though not all occur at the same rate of frequency. In terms of dyadic communication, mentor teacher/university supervisor communication is the least documented pattern within the triad. It is unclear from the literature why communication within this dyad does not occur more frequently. While not specifically stated in all cases, perhaps this deficit could be attributed to a lack of time or space to converse, ignorance of its importance in the process of clinical education, or that neither the mentor teacher nor the university supervisor tend to view supervision of pre-service teachers as their primary duty. Conversely, mentor teacher/teacher

candidate communication was found to happen most frequently as compared to other communication structures within the triad. Mentor teachers and teacher candidates are in contact on a daily basis. As such, communication of some kind between the two becomes almost inevitable simply due to proximity. In many cases, communication within this dyad leads to stronger relationships and a greater sense of trust between the two. Lu (2007) asserts that the mentor teacher is the most vital member of the triad to teacher candidates' learning to teach. This vitality is most likely attributable to the daily interactions the mentor teacher has with the teacher candidate.

In addition to the frequency of communication among various groupings within the triad, the content of communication varied among groupings as well. In mentor teacher/teacher candidate dialogue, generalities of teaching—particularly classroom management—were the dominant topics of conversation, while in university supervisor/teacher candidate dialogue, subject matter content, pedagogy, and theory were the dominant topics discussed (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Valencia et al., 2009). This again supports the notion that both the mentor teacher and university supervisor position themselves first as agents of their respective primary settings. Because mentor teachers largely position themselves first as teachers of K-12 students, it makes sense that their conversations would center on issues that most directly influence the day-to-day operation of the classroom. Similarly, because university supervisors often position themselves first as professors and scholars, it makes sense that their conversations center on more abstract facets of teaching. Both Elrod (2017) and Paparone (2015) found that open, reflective dialogue regarding professional practice, expectations, and positioning of self and others among triad members aids in the personal and professional growth of teacher candidates. Findings of the current study recommend that all members of the triad engage in open dialogue

about the perspectives of one another because doing so would increase the effectiveness of the clinical experience for the teacher candidate.

As in all interpersonal relationships, conflicts were documented in some of the triads central to the studies included in the current synthesis. Rhoads, Samkoff, and Weber (2013) identified seven causes of tension between a mentor teacher/teacher candidate dyad they studied, and included a) the amount of freedom afforded the teacher candidate in choosing teaching methods; b) the topics within the content area to be emphasized in instruction; c) time management; d) the teacher candidate's ability to understand students' content knowledge and difficulties; e) the mentor teacher's tendency to interrupt the teacher candidate while teaching; f) the mentor teacher and teacher candidate's difference in opinion regarding the role of feedback; and g) the difficult personal relationship forged between the two. On a broader scale inclusive of all three triad members, the current synthesis found evidence to support the existence of each of these sources of tension. Two additional sources of tension were also identified as a result of the current synthesis, including teacher candidates' confusion due to mixed messages regarding their performance from the mentor teacher and the university supervisor in separate dyadic settings, and the teacher candidates' feeling of being "stuck in the middle" between the mentor teacher and university supervisor in terms of expectations and responsibilities. Even in triads that did not devolve into dysfunction, a large number of appeared to exhibit missed opportunities for teacher candidates' professional and personal growth due to a lack of effective communication.

The current study's findings are parallel to Baxter, Braithwaite, and Bryant's (2006) assertion that although "multiple communication structures can be functional" (p. 395) in triadic relationships, open communication among all members of the supervisory triad is most effective. Eight specific communication structures were identified as an outgrowth of the current synthesis,

modeled after those originally defined by Baxter et al.'s (2006) research on stepfamily

interactions. A graphic representation of these structures is shown in Figure 6 below. The eight

structures identified are defined as follows:

- The *Closed Triad*, in which no communication or ineffective communication occurs on

    a regular basis. A triad's designation as Closed does not necessarily imply that

    communication was or is not happening; in some cases, the quantity of communication

    is high, but the quality of that communication is low.

- The *Field-Coalition Triad*, in which effective communication only occurs within the

    field-based dyad populated by the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate (MT/TC).

- The *University-Coalition Triad*, in which effective communication only occurs within

    the university-based dyad populated by the university supervisor and the teacher

    candidate (US/TC).

- The *Expert-Coalition Triad*, in which effective communication only occurs within the

    experience-based dyad populated by the mentor teacher and the university supervisor

    (MT/US).

- The *TC-Linked Triad*, in which the common link in effective communication is the TC.

    In this triad, effective communication occurs within the TC/US dyad and within the

    TC/MT dyad.

- The *MT-Linked Triad*, in which the common link in effective communication is the MT.

    In this triad, effective communication occurs within the MT/US dyad and within the

    MT/TC dyad.

- The, *US-Linked Triad*, in which the common link in effective communication is the US. In this triad, effective communication occurs within the US/TC dyad and within the US/MT dyad.

- The *Open Triad*, in which effective communication occurs within all three dyads of the triad (MT/TC, US/TC, and MT/US) and also within the full triad (MT/US/TC).

FIGURE 6.

Structures of Communication within the Supervisory Triad
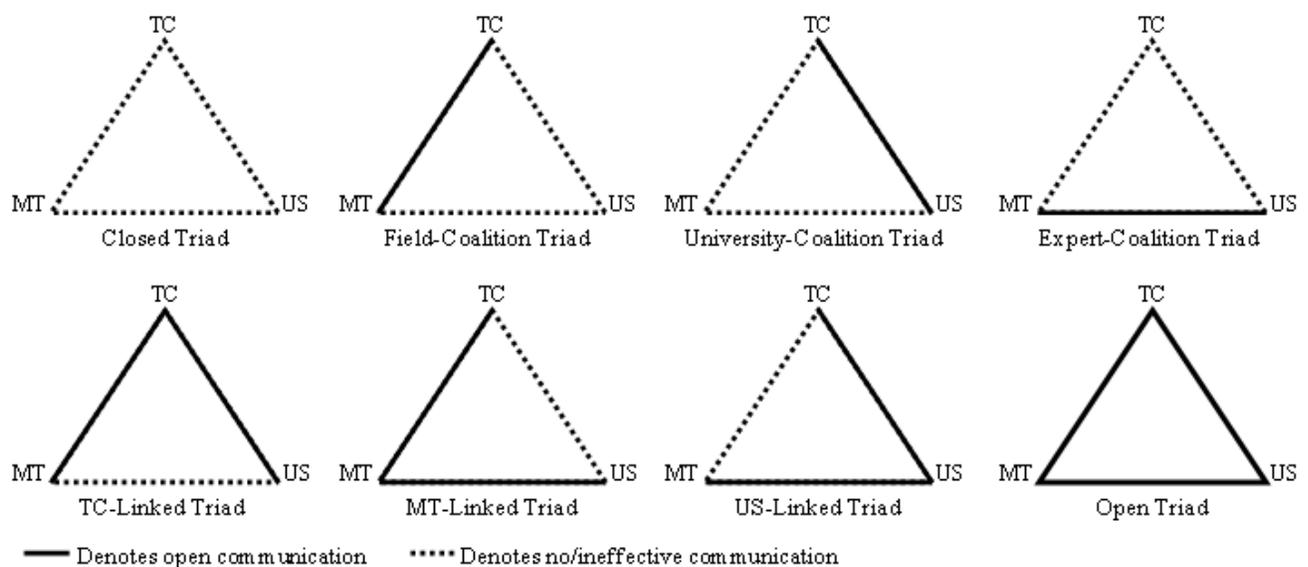
Of the 40 total triads included in the eleven studies synthesized, four of the eight aforementioned structures of communication were identified. The most prevalent structure identified in the literature was the Open Triad, while instances of the University-Coalition, Expert Coalition, MT-Linked, and US-Linked Triads were not found at all. The numerical representation of those structures is shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9.

Occurrences of Identified Communication Structures in Synthesized Studies

Communication Structure	Number of Occurrences
Closed Triad	10
Field-Coalition Triad	1
University-Coalition Triad	0
Expert-Coalition Triad	0
TC-Linked Triad	10
MT-Linked Triad	0
US-Linked Triad	0
Open Triad	19

As noted, the Open Triad was the most prevalent communication structure exemplified by triads in the synthesized studies. While true, this does not indicate that each of the 19 triads labeled as such operated in the same way or at the same level of efficiency or effectiveness. Conversely, because ten triads were labeled as Closed Triads does not mean that they failed completely in their charge to provide pre-service teachers with an educative experience. In fact, Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) note that even in adverse clinical settings, "dealing with tension and negotiating differences offer[s] student teachers opportunities for growth" (p. 111).

A common point agreed upon by many researchers is that the mentor teacher/university supervisor dyad is a particular relationship that needs to be better developed across the field (Goh & Hannon, 2012; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Valencia et al., 2009), additionally evidenced in this context by the large number of TC-Linked Triads evident in the research synthesized in the current study. This communication structure places the teacher candidate in the middle between the mentor teacher and the university supervisor, leaving the teacher candidate more

susceptible to the difficulties in triad communication practices discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study. Finally, it is surprising that only one Field-Coalition Triad was identified among the 40 triads included in the eleven synthesized studies. A finding of the current study is that the mentor teacher/teacher candidate relationship tends to be more developed than the university supervisor/teacher candidate relationship due to the comparatively high frequency of communication between the mentor teacher and teacher candidate. However, this did not translate to identification of Field-Coalition Triads in the literature. Instead, triads appeared to have either shifted their communication structures to the poles (either totally effective or totally ineffective), or to have ineffective communication between the mentor teacher and university supervisor while the remaining two dyads inclusive of the teacher candidate are open and effective.

Although the data in Table 9 regarding communication structures is informative, it must also be noted that this data is the current author's secondary assessment of triadic relationships for which she was not privy to the original, raw data collected and analyzed by the original authors of the synthesized studies. In this case, the author was forced to rely on the original authors' analysis and presentation of each triad's communication practices. It is quite possible that, given the raw data from each data's interactions in their entirety, she would have come to a different conclusion regarding the structure of each triad's communication. Also, because positioning is a social practice embedded in discourse and changes fluidly over time, it is not only possible but probable that triads represent several communication structures fluidly over the course of the clinical experience in concert with shifts in positioning. This is another point of difficulty in labeling a triad as employing a single structure of communication. In the context of

the current study, the author attempted to broadly label triads based on their most prevalent

structure of communication as represented by the original authors of their respective research.

Positioning of Self and Others

   Synthesized studies underpinned by positioning theory. The authors of two studies

included in the current synthesis employed positioning theory as the theoretical framework for

their research: Bullough and Draper (2004) and Campbell and Lott (2010). The only common

thread between the triad studied by Bullough and Draper (2004) and the two studied by

Campbell and Lott (2010) was that all members of the triad positioned themselves and each

other, and that positioning of members had an influence on the clinical experiences of the

involved teacher candidates. What follows is a discussion of the findings that arose from those

studies regarding the positioning of members of the supervisory triad, both individually and

collectively.

   Bullough and Draper (2004) report a triad rife with misaligned positioning of self and

others, which led to an explosive struggle for power and authority. The university supervisor

positioned himself as an expert due to "his research and reading as a mathematics educator" (p.

417). The mentor teacher and teacher candidate also positioned him as an expert, although they

did so conditionally—the mentor teacher adding that he was interested solely in the education of

the teacher candidate and not of her high school students, and the teacher candidate adding that

although he had a great deal of expertise he was "irrelevant" (p. 417). The mentor teacher

positioned herself first as a teacher of high school students and secondarily as a mentor to the

teacher candidate. The mentor teacher did not provide the teacher candidate with a great deal of

support or guidance, and was positioned by the teacher candidate "not as a more informed other

who might help her to develop as a teacher but as someone who must be pleased to find future

success as a teacher—success being defined as being employable based on positive mentor

evaluations" (p. 417). Although she was seen by her principal and other colleagues as a highly

effective teacher, the university supervisor positioned the mentor as "a deficit as a teacher and

thus mentor" (p. 413). This opinion was based on his own pre-conceived notion of the qualities

and dispositions of an effective mentor, and the mentor's misalignment with those conjectures.

Recognizing that the mentor teacher and university supervisor positioned themselves in

opposition to one another, the teacher candidate took on the position of one with little influence

over the functioning of the triad, who simply needed to survive the clinical experience in order to

ultimately move forward with her career.

Campbell and Lott (2010) recount the experiences of much more harmonious triads,

although not without concerns. The positioning of both the mentor teachers and the teacher

candidates were congruous among all triad members—both mentor teachers and teacher

candidates were positioned as collaborators. However, here was a slight discrepancy in the

positioning of the common university supervisor. In one triad, he initially positioned himself as

a facilitator of the experience, but later repositioned himself to be a learner, encourager, and

colleague within the triad. These positions were affirmed by the mentor teacher and the teacher

candidate. In the second triad, the university supervisor again positioned himself as a colleague

and collaborator; however, neither the mentor teacher nor the teacher candidate agreed, instead

positioning the supervisor as the "…organizer…but not as a partner or collaborator" (p. 362).

Synthesized studies not underpinned by positioning theory. The authors of the

remaining nine studies included in the current synthesis did not utilize positioning theory in their

research; however, positioning of triad members was clearly evident throughout the findings of

those studies. The following section is a discussion of the findings that arose from those studies regarding the positioning of members of the supervisory triad, both individually and collectively.

In general, the member of the triad perceived to be the most knowledgeable about teaching is positioned as most powerful, most frequently the university supervisor (Goh & Hannon, 2012; Valencia et al., 2009). In this context, the triad member deemed most knowledgeable is often determined as an extension of years of experience. In other words, the triad members with the most years of experience in teaching is often seen as the most knowledgeable by the remaining members of the triad, particularly the teacher candidate. This sometimes leads to power struggles between the mentor teacher and the university supervisor (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015). In no triad was the teacher candidate found to be positioned in a role of dominance. Additionally, triad members position and reposition themselves and each other fluidly as the storyline of the practicum was played out (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Campbell & Lott, 2010; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Silva, 2003).

The current synthesis identifies that mentor teachers are often positioned as ones who understand the "real" work of teaching (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Valencia et al., 2009). They are seen primarily as educators of their P-12 students, not teacher educators (Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Valencia et al., 2009), who look to the university to define their role in the supervisory triad (Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011). When that role is not clearly defined by the university, mentor teachers often take on the task of defining their role within the triad themselves, heavily relying on their own student teaching and other professional experiences to do so (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Murphy, 2010; Valencia et al., 2009).

Unlike mentor teachers, who are positioned as having insider knowledge regarding current classroom practices, data from this study finds that university supervisors are often viewed by both mentor teachers and teacher candidates as outsiders to the classroom (Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002). The primary roles of the supervisor identified by the current synthesis are serving as resource to the teacher candidate and mentor teacher and as the liaison between the university and the field (Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002). Because they take on the position of liaison, they are often concerned with the teacher candidate upholding the requirements of the university teacher preparation program as well as upholding their own university-related duties (Goh & Hannon, 2012; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Valencia et al., 2009), perhaps bolstering their aforementioned position as one who is removed from the day-to-day realities of the actual classroom.

Teacher candidates are routinely positioned as "learner[s] learning to teach" (Campbell and Lott, 2010, p. 359; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002). As such, this study finds that they often take on the role of conforming to their mentor teachers' image of a "good" teacher candidate in an effort to successfully complete the student teaching experience (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Valencia et al., 2009). They are positioned as the least powerful member of the supervisory triad, in spite of the fact that the triad exists primarily as a tool for furthering their skill and knowledge. Although frequently positioned as collaborators alongside their mentor teacher and university supervisors (Campbell & Lott, 2010; Goh & Hannon, 2012; Nguyen, 2009; Silva, 2003), they also sometimes seen as "guests who

[are] 'renting space'" from their host mentor teachers (Valencia et al., 2009, p. 311; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011; Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015).

Discussion of Positioning of Self and Others

As stated, because positioning is embedded in discourse, triad members position and reposition themselves fluidly and frequently as communication happens over time. All members of the triad position themselves as well as the remaining members of the triad, and that positioning has an influence on the TCs clinical experience. Triads in which members' positioning of self and others was largely aligned resulted in harmonious, well-performing triads. Conversely, underperforming or dysfunctional triads and/or those fraught with discord are those in which members' positioning of self and others is dissimilar. This dissimilarity often leads to a struggle for power and authority within the triad, particularly between the mentor teacher and the university supervisor. In the triad detailed by Bullough and Draper (2004), the mentor teacher positioned herself as a strong teacher who was well-respected by her colleagues. However, the university supervisor positioned the mentor teacher as one who was not forward-thinking and, eventually, as a threat to the education of not only the teacher candidate but also the K-12 students for whom the mentor teacher was responsible. Similarly, the university supervisor positioned himself as an expert in the teaching of mathematics based on his work at the university level, while the mentor teacher positioned him as arrogant and too far removed from the classroom to understand the "real" work of teaching. It is clear that effective communication is an essential ingredient in aligned positioning of self and others, and subsequently, the positive functioning of the triad towards the ultimate goal of pre-service teachers' preparation for professional practice (Tan, 2013; Traister, 2005).

The notion of identity is closely related to that of position. Multiple definitions have been ascribed to identity, including as a "collection of stories about persons, or more specifically, those narratives about individuals that are reifying, endorsable, and significant" (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 16), and, more simply, "to be recognized as a certain kind of person by others" (Gee, 2001, p. 99). Bucholtz and Hall (2005) even go so far as to define identity as "social positioning of self and other" (p. 586), inextricably linked to one's position. Yamakawa, Forman, and Ansell (2005) found positioning to be integral to the formation of identity, relative to the storyline being played out by those involved. They observed that two students' identities as "math thinkers" (p. 19) were directly linked to the internal and external positioning of themselves in relation to their conformity (or lack of conformity) to the teacher-directed storyline of "reform mathematics" (p. 19). In the current study, defining triad members' identities relative to the enacted storyline of supervision is essentially impossible, as doing so would require access to more raw data than is provided in the studies synthesized. However, it can be asserted that the construction of one's identity within the triad is a "process is motion" (Henry, 2016, p. 291), anchored in dialogue and fluidly shifting over time.

Summary

In sum, the clinical experiences of pre-service teachers are influenced by a number of factors. These include role clarification, triad members' backgrounds and responsibilities, and triad members' expectations for the clinical experience. They are also influenced by the patterns of communication that exist within the supervisory triad, including the parties included in communication, the conditions for communication, interaction frequency, and difficulties in communication. Finally, the positioning of self and others that occurs throughout the student teaching experience impacts pre-service teachers' clinical experiences as well. The next and

final chapter of this study will provide suggestions for future research as well as implications for

future practice based on the findings produced by the current synthesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Current Study

Research on the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad of pre-service teacher education is an emerging field of study. Pockets of knowledge via empirical literature have existed for a number of years across the field; however, very few studies have sought to express the voice of the field collectively. This study was completed in an effort to fill that void—not through the summarization of the eleven studies included, but instead by synthesizing existing research toward the construction of new knowledge and improved practice in the field through use of qualitative meta-synthesis methodology.

The reform of pre-service teacher education has been called for for many years by both individuals and organizations such as John Goodlad (1999), Linda Darling-Hammond (1995, 1999, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2016), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; 2010). The clinical experience component of pre-service teacher education has been cited by many as the most influential piece of pre-service education (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2005, 2010). At the center of the clinical experience are the relationships formed and subsequent work completed by the members of the supervisory triad— the pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, and university supervisor. Without addressing the interpersonal dynamics of field-based supervisory triads, the success of any implemented reform will be limited at best. As such, the ultimate goal of the author of the current study in investigating the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad is to positively influence practice in the field so that pre-service teachers are better prepared to enter the workforce upon completion of their pre-service training.

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad on pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. Positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1999; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) served as the theoretical framework and, subsequently, the conceptual language used to frame this study. Positioning theory recognizes communication and dialogue as integral to the construction of one's identity and position within a defined community—in this case, the supervisory triad. As in Chapter 4, the following discussion is organized by themes that emerged from the data in response to the research question and sub-questions guiding the study (see Chapter 1). This chapter will provide limitations of the findings, implications for practice, and six suggestions for future research, followed by a brief summary.

Limitation of Findings

Although more robust in generalizability than each of the individual original studies synthesized, the current study is still somewhat limited in its generalizability because it synthesized a relatively small number of studies (n=11). Additionally, the current study still does not specifically address data regarding non-traditional supervisory practices in the field, such as the previously mentioned CMT Model (Wilson, 2006). The data synthesized within this study was additionally restricted by the sampling bounds chosen by the author, including those regarding concept (limited to research that examined the full supervisory triad), access (limited to research published in English), population (limited to research that examined American triads), and time (limited to research published within the last 15 years, i.e. 2002-2017).

The final subquestion guiding this study asks how the positioning of self and/or others by members of the supervisory triad influences pre-service teachers' clinical experiences. Because the current author did not have access to the original raw data collected for the eleven studies

synthesized, she therefore was not privy to all of the social forces acting upon the supervisory storylines detailed. Although every effort was made by the current researcher to address this question fully, the current author acknowledges that being inherently dependent upon the observations and interpretations of data by the original researchers of each included original study has subsequently limited her ability to explore this and perhaps other unmentioned avenues of research. Finally, as the principle instrument of this qualitative study, the researcher acknowledges her role as a college faculty member involved in the education of pre-service teachers may have biased her collection, analysis, and expression of the current synthesis.

Implications for Future Practice

At present, too many aspects of clinical education are essentially left to chance—selection of mentor teachers, appropriate matching of triad members, defining roles and expectations within the triad, and the construction of interpersonal relationships, to name a few—when many of these aspects can and should be enacted with a larger measure of intentionality. Informed by both the current findings as well as previous literature (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 1995; 2005; 2006; 2007, 2010; NCATE, 2010), the author of the current study suggests that the ways in which the traditional method of pre-service teacher supervision is implemented be examined and possibly redesigned across the field to include greater structure in role and expectation definition within the triad, as well as in triadic communication practices, particularly between the mentor teacher and university supervisor. Institutions of higher education implementing pre-service teacher clinical experiences could benefit greatly from making these shifts—as teacher candidates' learning increases, it is likely that their overall knowledge and skill levels will increase as well, potentially leading to higher achievement on professional licensure assessments such as the Praxis or edTPA required for certification and

eventual employment. However, more importantly, making these changes will lead to the production of teachers well-prepared to take on the task of educating students immediately upon entry into the field, the current lack of which served as the impetus for this qualitative meta-synthesis.

Implications for Future Research

Several dissertations have been completed in the past 15 years that examine some aspect of the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad (Elrod, 2017; Lu, 2007; Paparone, 2015; Tan, 2013; Traister, 2005). These studies, along with other recently published works (e.g. Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2016) add to the growing body of empirical literature on this emerging strand of educational research. This study has centralized the empirical conversation on the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad. It is the opinion of the author that the current meta-synthesis of research could be seen as a launching point for a wide array of future research in the field, in terms of both content and methodology. Because of the importance and emphasis placed on the clinical component of pre-service teacher education, this field of study not only deserves but needs the continued attention of researchers and practitioners alike. Specifically, the current author suggests five potential directions for this research. First, because the defining of roles and expectations within the triad continues to be a cause for a diminished educative outcome for pre-service teachers, the current author contends that finding viable, practical solutions to these issues and then making progress toward implementing those solutions is long overdue. Second, this study confirms that communication between the mentor teacher and university supervisor happens less frequently than in any other grouping among triad members. Exploration of the potential cause(s) for this lack of communication and how communication within that dyad might be improved is greatly needed. Third, because co-

teaching and other variations on traditional methods of engaging in the clinical experience have become much more prevalent in recent years (Strieker et al., 2017a), research regarding the interpersonal dynamics of triads that intentionally employ those methods could be very impactful. Fourth, one of the studies synthesized identified journaling as a potential tool for triad members use in increasing the quality and quantity of their communication (Silva, 2003). The current author suggests that narrative analysis be used to explore triads implementing this promising method of interpersonal interaction. Fifth, the professional development afforded (or more frequently, not afforded) to mentor teachers and university supervisors was identified by this study as a factor of influence on the functioning of triads. Further exploring the design, implementation, availability, and impact of these opportunities could provide a great deal of beneficial knowledge to the field. Finally, the communication structures identified and discussed in the previous chapter by the current author exist as little more than suggestions within the context of this study. Further research to validate and implement them could benefit the field greatly, as using them to assess communication in the field could translate to improved practice among triads in various settings, both within and outside of pre-service teacher education.

Conclusion

This study has provided a "reshuffling of the deck" so to speak of current literature regarding the interpersonal dynamics of the supervisory triad. Although considerable progress has been made, the results of this study show that there is much left to be done in terms of improving pre-service teacher clinical experiences, specifically in defining the roles and expectations of triad members and improving triadic and dyadic communication in the supervisory context. As a college faculty member newly involved in the hands-on work of pre-service teacher education, this study has opened the eyes of the current author not only to

generalized improvements necessary in this work, but also to the changes she can make immediately in her own personal practice toward greater success. It is her sincere hope that this study makes a positive contribution to the critical conversation of improving pre-service teachers' clinical experiences.

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