Business Education University Supervisors' Perspectives of Mentor Teachers' Competencies

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perspectives of an expert panel of 31 business education university supervisors from the U.S. and Canada using a modified Delphi approach regarding the areas in which mentor teachers are typically most and least prepared. Findings indicated business education mentor teachers are most prepared in the areas of classroom management, teaching-related administrative duties, and establishing rapport. However, the expert panel did not reach consensus on the areas in which mentor teachers are oftentimes least prepared. The majority of the university supervisors believed business teacher preparation programs could provide mentor teachers with professional development on mentoring and expectations prior to the internship.

Keywords: business education, mentor teachers, student teaching, teacher education, university supervisors

The student teaching internship is considered as *The* final capstone experience and is oftentimes the most challenging, rewarding, and enlightening component of student teachers entire teacher preparation programs (Conderman, Morin, & Stephens, 2005; Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007; Grossman, Schoenfeld, & Lee, 2005; Pena & Almaguer, 2007; Weaver & Stanulis, 1996). In fact, internship experiences oftentimes solidify student teachers' desires to indeed pursue teaching as their careers (Conderman et al., 2005; Sadler, 2006). To create an optimal learning environment for student teachers during this critical stage, student teachers are supported by their mentor teachers and university supervisors. This triad relationship is essential for helping to promote student teachers' development into becoming effective classroom teachers (Hamman, Olivarez, Lesley, Button, Chan, et al., 2006; Kent, 2001).

Despite the importance of the triad relationship in preparing effective future teachers, little research has ensued examining the voices and perceptions of university supervisors regarding the student teaching internship (Brown & Steadman, 2011; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Steadman, 2009; Whitney, Golez, Nagel, & Nieto, 2002). Prior literature has pointed to the importance of university supervisors in the triad relationship since they typically hold a vast array of knowledge and past experience based on their practices as prior student teachers, K-12 teachers, possibly as former mentor teachers, and teacher educators (Slick, 1997). In addition, mentor teachers have been cited as being the most influential individuals in terms of making impressions and modeling classroom practices for student teachers in which their interns will most likely follow and continue (Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2008; Killian & Wilkins, 2009). Given the knowledge university supervisors may possess and the influence mentor teachers may hold, more research is needed to ascertain the perceptions of university supervisors regarding the professional development needs and abilities of mentor

teachers in their quest to model the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed of effective classroom teachers.

To a lesser extent, the business education discipline has investigated the student teaching experience by examining the perspectives of business education teacher candidates (Fletcher, Mountjoy, & Bailey, 2011), as well as, business education mentor teachers (Crews & Bodenhamer, 2009; Fletcher, Mountjoy, & Bailey, 2011b). However, the researcher has found no study exploring the perspectives of business education university supervisors. Therefore, research is needed that takes into account the shared knowledge of business education university supervisors regarding the quintessential student teaching internship, as well as, the effectiveness of the triad relationship.

Purpose and Research Questions

To address this gap in research, the purpose of this study was to identify the top three areas in which university supervisors believe mentor teachers are most and least prepared to assist their student teachers. The research questions included the following:

1. What are the top three domains in which mentor teachers are most prepared to assist their student teachers?
2. What are the top three domains in which mentor teachers are least prepared to assist their student teachers?
3. What might business teacher preparation programs do to better prepare their mentor teachers to fulfill their roles and responsibilities?

Review of the Literature

University Supervisors

University supervisors are of critical importance to the development of student teachers and typically fulfill a constructive, supervisory role in providing feedback to their interns (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003). University supervisors periodically visit the student teaching site to observe and evaluate the teaching performances of student teachers (Anderson & Radencich, 2001). However, Slick (1997) argued that university supervisors are many times seen as outsiders who enter the K-12 classroom infrequently, which may be perceived as posing a threat to the mentor and student teacher alike. In comparison to the literature on the other members of the triad, the research examining the perspectives of university supervisors is rather sparse and outdated (Brown & Steadman, 2011). Brown and Steadman (2011) speculate the reason for the lack of research on university supervisors by stating:

> In part, the absence of research on the work of university supervisors may reflect the tension that exists between the conceptual and pragmatic aspects of teacher education. Teacher education classes often focus on theoretical aspects of teaching, while university supervisors often concentrate on the practical application of such theories (p. 53).

Mentor Teachers

Despite the possible knowledge base and mentoring capabilities of university supervisors, mentor teachers have been cited as the most influential individual in shaping student teachers' practices and beliefs (Killian & Wilkins, 2009). As such, prior studies have supported the need to provide careful selection procedures and proper preparation for the roles and responsibilities of mentor teachers (Alger & Kopcha, 2009; Killian & Wilkins, 2009). Other issues include the ill-defined responsibilities and expectations for all individuals involved in the triad relationship (Alger & Kopcha, 2009; Gimbert & Nolan, 2003; Silva & Dana, 2001), as well as, the lack of effective communication among them (Alger & Kopcha, 2009). According to Tsui, Lopez-Real, and Law (2001), "The relationship among the three parties is very much influenced by the perception and expectation of each party with regard to his or her own role in the supervisory process" (p. 323).

It is critical that university supervisors and mentor teachers effectively work together to prepare student teachers for the varied challenges they will encounter in the classroom (Brown & Steadman, 2011). However, university supervisors are frequently pressed for time and limited in the amount of time they can spend in the field with observing, evaluating, and providing feedback primarily due to other demands and responsibilities including teaching, research, and various service commitments (Anderson & Randencich, 2001).

Conceptual Frameworks

Cognitive Apprenticeship

Mentor teachers play critical roles in the development of student teachers. The most effective and productive relationship between mentor teachers and student teachers are guided by the theory of cognitive apprenticeship established within the last two decades, which was modeled based on the social constructivist learning theory (Dennen & Burner, in press). This mentoring practice promotes the learning process based on social interactions among novices (in this case student teachers) and experts (mentor teachers). Utilizing a cognitive apprenticeship, student teachers participate in the essential process of observation, practice, and reflection. As such, student teachers develop cognitive and metacognitive skills by way of active participation and engagement in authentic and guided learning experiences. Mentor teachers offer coaching, mentoring, modeling, and scaffolding throughout student teaching experiences. As a result of the cognitive apprenticeship approach, student teachers are more likely to be able to transfer their learning to real-world contexts by bridging theory and practice. The cognitive apprenticeship model for student teaching is crucial in terms of student teachers' development and the optimization of clinical experiences.

Teaching Concerns

Not only are mentor teachers expected to be mentors, coaches, and role models for student teachers, they must also be able to help their student teachers overcome intense concern and frustrations they might experience during their internships. According to Fuller, Parsons, and Watkins (1974) the vast majority of student teachers, as well as, novice teachers experience a very similar pattern of concerns and frustrations as they navigate and embark upon their teaching careers. Accordingly, Fuller et al. (1974) developed a teaching concerns model characterized by

three main stages: (a) pre-teaching: a phase where individuals are primarily concerned with their own teaching performances and survival in the classroom; (b) early teaching: a phase where individuals are frequently pre-occupied with varied teaching tasks such as instructional strategies and teaching-related administrative duties; and (c) late concerns: a phase where individuals begin to reflect and think about how their teaching decisions impact their students' learning and achievement.

This study focused on the pre-teaching stage because these concerns are most often experienced by student teachers (Fritz & Miller, 2003). For example, student teachers in this stage experience concerns regarding gaining approval from supervisors, support from administration, building relationships with other teachers, content knowledge adequacy, and dealing with discipline issues. In particular, this study examined the perceptions of university supervisors regarding mentor teachers' professional development needs in the areas of mentoring (which included competencies characteristic of the cognitive apprenticeship model and teaching concerns conceptual model).

Methods

Research Design

The modified-Delphi technique (a mixed methods approach) was implemented in this study, which consisted of a multi-iterative process aimed at gaining consensus among an expert panel of business education university supervisors across the nation, as well as, Canada, in regard to the top three domains in which business education mentor teachers are most and least prepared to assist in the development of their student teachers. This technique is useful for the purpose of portraying sources of evidence or constructions which are oftentimes not publicly revealed, but are areas of shared knowledge (Stitt-Gohdes & Crews, 2004), and for deciding a consensus opinion in regard to an area which does not lend itself to precise quantification (Dalkey, Rourke, Lewis & Snyder, 1972; Ludwig, 1994). The Delphi approach enables members of the panel to openly communicate their individual positions while also converging agreement among the panelists to permit expert ideas on a topic of interest (Clayton, 1997). The Delphi method was chosen to allow business education university supervisors the opportunity to assess their subjective opinions, establish priorities regarding their perceptions of the assets and professional development needs of mentor teachers, and enable them to seek consensus without the influence evident in focus group situations.

Panel Selection

A purposive sampling technique was utilized for the recruitment of participants for this study. The criteria for participant participation in the study consisted of the following: (a) the university supervisor must have served in a supervisory role for business education student teachers within the last three years; (b) the university supervisor must be familiar with the topic of the proposed research; and (c) the university supervisor should have a deep interest and experience in the topic area. All participants responding to all three rounds earned a $30 gift card to Amazon.com to show appreciation for their time and effort.

Participants for this study were recruited from the National Association for Business Teacher Education (NABTE) database of business education teacher educators. These individuals were from diverse colleges and universities across the nation and Canada. Each NABTE member was emailed to recruit to participate in the study. Out of 92 NABTE members, 18 did not meet the criteria to be included in the study, one declined participation, and 42 did not respond. As such, a total of 31 individuals agreed to participate and completed online surveys for all three rounds, resulting in a 42% response rate.

Participant Demographics

The ages of the expert panel ranged from 35 to 70 with an average age of 56: 68% were female and 32% male. The ethnicity of the group was rather monolithic with 30 of the participants identifying as Caucasian and one Canadian. In terms of degree attainment, 19% hold Masters' degrees, 45% have Ed.Ds, and 36% with Ph.D.s. In regard to position rank, one was a graduate teaching assistant, six held the position as adjuncts, instructors, and lecturers; two were at the assistant professor level; seven associate professors; 14 were full professors; and one was emeritus. These individuals taught anywhere from two to 38 years and have mentored from four to 600 student teachers. The business education university supervisors taught at a variety of higher education institutions with 52% teaching in small urban areas (2,501-50,000) and 48% in large urban settings (50,001-2,000,000). Their student teachers taught at a variety of levels from K-12.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Online surveys were constructed and distributed, through Survey Monkey, for all three rounds of data collection. Content validity, the determination of whether the items accurately represent the intended domain, was established by a panel of eight business teacher educators prior to distribution of the instruments. Each individual from the panel were asked to appraise and provide suggestions for revision of the online survey instruments, as well as, offer advice for the inclusion of critical items which might have been missing from the questionnaires. Then, appropriate revisions were made to the instruments based on the panel's recommendations. Given the nature of the Delphi study, conventional means of determining reliability are not appropriate (Hughes, 1993). By design, the Delphi technique strives to achieve consistency in responses by gaining consensus with the items of the questionnaires.

Round One

In round one, respondents were asked a series of demographic questions. Then, participants were invited to determine the top three domains or competencies they perceived business education mentor teachers were most and least prepared to assist in the development of their student teachers, as well as, list recommendations for business education programs to adopt for the enhancement of preparing mentor teachers to support their student teachers. In addition, the panel members provided written rationales to justify and explain each competency or domain chosen. Questions were designed based on the three research questions of this study.

Round Two

During round two, a second online survey was disseminated based on results of the first questionnaire. The results of round one were summarized by the researcher and descriptive statistics such as the mean and frequencies along with a presentation of the respondents' rationales and comments to support their opinions were provided for the participants to review. Respondents were then asked to review the statements identified by the first survey that had been summarized by the researcher. Participants rank ordered statements according to perceived importance to establish preliminary priorities among items. Areas of agreement and disagreement from the respondents were identified and reassessments of initial judgments were encouraged based on the results from round one.

Round Three

The final round presented a final summary of results from round two and then asked the participants to agree or disagree with each ranking. The objective of the third round was to provide closure in regard to the research findings. Accordingly, an attempt was made to establish consensus in terms of the top three areas or competencies in which business education mentor teachers are frequently most and least prepared to assist in the development of student teachers. Consensus was determined when 80% of the respondents agreed, since this criterion is oftentimes used in Delphi studies (Ulschak, 1983).

Findings

Results from Round One

In the round one survey, participants indicated the top three areas in which mentor teachers are oftentimes most and least prepared to assist their student teachers (see Table 1). In addition, respondents supported their responses with rationales as to why they selected the top three competencies. Further, the expert panel articulated initiatives business teacher preparation programs could implement to assist mentor teachers in developing competencies needed to mentor student teachers.

Most Prepared (Round One)

In regard to the areas mentor teachers are most prepared to assist their student teachers, 16 (48.4%) of the university supervisors selected classroom management as the most prevalent issue mentor teachers are able to assist their student teachers. Establishing rapport with students emerged as the second most prevalent issue, with 12 (38.7%) of the university supervisors believing mentor teachers are typically most prepared in this area to assist student teachers. And, teaching-related administrative duties followed as the third most prevalent (35.5%) issue, with 11 individuals from the expert panel selected, in which mentor teachers are able to assist their student teachers.

Least Prepared (Round One)

In terms of the areas mentor teachers are most frequently least prepared to assist their student teachers, 16 (51.6%) believed mentor teachers are usually not prepare to help student

teachers reflect on their own teaching. Knowledge of business education as a profession emerged as the second most prevalent, with 12 (38.7%) of the university supervisors selected, issue mentor teachers are not prepared to help their student teachers. The third issue the expert panel selected was the integration of technology into teaching, with 10 (32.3%) of the university supervisors in agreement.

Recommendations for Business Teacher Education Programs (Round One)

The expert panel were able to list initiatives business teacher preparation programs could implement to assist in the development of mentor teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to optimally perform their duties, roles, and responsibilities effectively. The list, which was generated in the first round, was then categorized and summarized for the expert panel to rank in round two.

Table 1

Top Three Areas Mentor Teachers are Most and Least Prepared to Assist in Round One

Areas	Most Prepared		Least Prepared	
	f	*M*	*f*	*M*
Appropriate dispositions	1	3.2	6	19.4
Content knowledge	6	19.4	2	6.5
Effective strategies to engage students	7	22.6	6	19.4
Planning for instruction	8	25.8	7	22.6
Classroom management	16	48.4	2	6.5
Establishing rapport with students	12	38.7	2	6.5
Working with special needs' students	7	22.6	9	29.0
Technology integration	1	3.2	10	32.3
Assessment	6	19.4	4	12.9
Obtaining instructional resources	7	22.6	4	12.9
Pedagogical knowledge	6	19.4	1	3.2
Pedagogical content knowledge	8	25.8	3	9.7
Knowledge of business education as a profession	1	3.2	12	38.7
Knowledge of effective communication to parents	5	16.1	1	3.2
Teaching-related administrative duties	11	35.5	2	6.5
Organization and time management	5	16.1	4	12.9
Professionalism	2	6.5	8	25.8
Ability to reflect on one's own teaching	1	3.2	16	51.6

Note: f = frequency; *M* = mean; *n* = 31; MT = mentor teacher; ST = student teacher

Results from Round Two

In round two, the researcher summarized the results of round one, as well as, presented the rationales to the participants. In light of the summary information, respondents were asked to re-rank the top three areas in which mentor teachers are most and least prepared to assist student teachers (see Table 2). Further, the expert panel were asked to rank the top three initiatives

business teacher preparation programs could implement to enhance the preparation of mentor teachers (see Table 3).

Most Prepared (Round Two)

In the second round, the expert panel were able to reach consensus on one of the top three areas mentor teachers are oftentimes most prepared to assist their student teachers: classroom management. Out of 31 respondents, 25 (80.6%) believed classroom management was one of the top three areas, which increased from only 48.4% in round one. The second most prevalent issue of establishing rapport with students increased from round one (48.4%) to 18 (58.1%) in agreement for round two. Similarly, the third most prevalent issue of assisting student teachers with teaching-related administrative duties increased from round one (35.5%) to 16 (51.6%) in agreement in round two.

Least Prepared (Round Two)

In terms of the top three least prepared areas in round two, 22 (71.0%) of the participants indicated that the issue of mentor teachers having the ability to assist student teachers with reflection on their own teaching should be among the top three areas, which was higher than round two (51.6%). In addition, 18 (58.1%) of the expert panel selected integration of technology in teaching as one of the top three least prepared areas, which was higher than round one (32.3%) and replaced knowledge of business education as a profession in terms of rank. Instead, 15 (48.4%) of the respondents indicated knowledge of business education as a profession in round two versus 38.7% in round one.

Recommendations for Business Teacher Education Programs (Round Two)

In round two, 21 (67.7%) of the individuals from the expert panel expressed a need to provide mentor teachers with professional development prior to the student teaching internship on how to mentor and coach, as well as, delineate clear expectations for mentor teachers. Second, 11 (35.5%) of the participants believed more interaction was needed with mentor teachers to provide ongoing support and build stronger relationships. Third, 9 (29.0%) of the respondents articulated a need to provide materials to help mentor teachers fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

Table 2

Top Three Areas Mentor Teachers are Most Prepared to Assist for Round Two

	Most Prepared		Least Prepared	
Areas	*f*	*M*	*f*	*M*
Appropriate dispositions	1	3.2	4	12.9
Content knowledge	8	25.8	0	0.0
Effective strategies to engage students	1	3.2	1	3.2
Planning for instruction	3	9.7	1	3.2
Classroom management	25	80.6	0	0.0
Establishing rapport with students	18	58.1	0	0.0

Working with special needs' students	2	6.5	5	16.1
Technology integration	1	3.2	18	58.1
Assessment	3	9.7	3	9.7
Obtaining instructional resources	1	3.2	4	12.9
Pedagogical knowledge	5	16.1	0	0.0
Pedagogical content knowledge	0	0.0	1	3.2
Knowledge of business education as a profession	1	3.2	15	48.4
Knowledge of effective communication to parents	4	12.9	0	0.0
Teaching-related administrative duties	16	51.6	2	6.5
Organization and time management	1	3.2	0	0.0
Professionalism	0	0.0	4	12.9
Ability to reflect on one's own teaching	2	6.5	22	71.0
Actually being a mentor to the student teacher	1	3.2	13	41.9

Note: n = 31; *f* = frequency; *M* = mean; MT = mentor teacher; ST = student teacher

Table 3

Recommendations for Business Teacher Education Programs in Round Two

Programmatic Initiatives	*f*	*M*
Provide professional development prior to internship on mentoring and expectations	21	67.7
Increase interaction with MT, provide ongoing support, build relationships	11	35.5
Provide materials to help mentor teacher	9	29.0
Encourage mentor teacher to be more explicit with positive and negative feedback	9	29.0
Require that the university supervisor be from business education	8	25.8
Provide one college credit or recertification points for MT's training participation	7	22.6
Develop student and mentor teacher relationships earlier in the program	7	22.6
Use a pool of approved MTs who have demonstrated excellence	5	16.1
Provide training on a co-teaching model	5	16.1
Have MTs attend on-campus seminars with student teachers during internship	4	12.9
Provide financial support (possibly through purchasing equipment and resources)	2	6.5
Encourage MTs to stick to rules (require lesson plans, STs to make up missed days)	2	6.5
Help MTs understand when, how, how much, to release their classes to STs	2	6.5
Be more selective in choosing placements	1	3.2
Allow student teachers more freedom to take risks	1	3.2
Other	0	0.0

Note: n = 31; *f* = frequency; *M* = mean; MT = mentor teacher; ST = student teacher

Results from Round Three

In round three, the researcher summarized the outcome of round two and presented the results to the participants to review. In light of the review, the expert panel were asked to agree or disagree with the final top three items in which mentor teachers are typically prepared and underprepared (see Table 4). It is important to note that the classroom management issue was not included in the final round since this item reached consensus in the second round.

Most Prepared (Round Three)

During the third round, the expert panel were able to come to a consensus on the top three areas in which their mentor teachers are often most prepared. First, teacher-related administrative duties emerged as one of the top three areas in which mentor teachers are often most prepared with 29 (93.5%) of the participants in agreement. Second, establishing rapport was among the top three areas in which mentor teachers are typically most prepared with 28 (90.3%) of the university supervisors in agreement. Third, classroom management was among the top three areas in which mentor teachers tend to be most prepared with 25 respondents (80.6%) agreeing. However, it is important to note that consensus was established in round two regarding classroom management. As such, classroom management was not included in the third round for the participants to select.

Least Prepared (Round Three)

In the third round, the expert panel did not reach consensus on any of the items with regard to areas mentor teachers tend to be unprepared. The ability to reflect on one's teaching did slightly increase from 71.0% in round two to 74.2% (with 23 participants in agreement) in round three. Technology integration actually decreased slightly from 58.1% in round two to 51.6% (with 16 in agreement) in round three. Knowledge of the business education profession stayed stagnant, in comparison to round two, at 48.4% (with 15 in agreement) in round three.

Table 4

Top Three Rankings for Round Three

	Most Prepared		Most Unprepared	
Competencies	*f*	*M*	*f*	*M*
Teacher-related administrative duties	29	93.5		
Establishing rapport	28	90.3		
Classroom management	25	80.6		
Ability to reflect on one's teaching			23	74.2
Technology integration			16	51.6
Knowledge of business education profession			15	48.4

Note: n = 31; *f* = frequency; *M* = mean

Conclusions and Discussion

The expert panel members were able to establish consensus on the top three areas mentor teachers are most prepared to assist in the development of their student teachers. First, 25 of the business education university supervisors agreed (80.6%) mentor teachers are most prepared to assist their student teachers with classroom management techniques. As one business education university supervisor from the panel, which I will call Karen, noted in the first round:

Cooperating [mentor] teachers know their students well. They are more accustomed to dealing with them than are student teachers. Because they have been teaching for years, they know what works and what doesn't work with their students. They often let the

student teacher try something that they know won't be successful. They can show the student teachers the "how-to's" for daily survival.

The finding that mentor teachers are most prepared to assist their student teachers in the area of classroom management is critically important since a prior study found business education student teachers to be less self-efficacious in this domain (Fletcher, Mountjoy, & Bailey, 2011) and business education mentor teachers also believed their student teachers were not well prepared in the area of classroom management (Fletcher, Mountjoy, & Bailey, 2011b). Further, the broader teacher education literature has established that classroom management is a major concern for student teachers (Gal, 2006; Sadler, 2006), novice teachers (Hung & Lockard, 2007; Little & Akin-Little, 2008), as well as, more experienced teachers (Pedota, 2007; Shin & Koh, 2007).

Second, 29 (93.5%) of the business education university supervisors believed mentor teachers were most prepared to assist their student teachers with executing teacher-related administrative duties. The ability of mentor teachers to assist student teachers in the area of teacher-related administrative duties is encouraging since it is quite difficult to teach, replicate, and prepare student teachers in this realm outside of the K-12 school setting. This was echoed by Robert who commented in the round one survey that mentor teachers are "embedded in their context and could support the student in identifying the skills they needed to develop in that classroom/school".

Likewise, 28 (90.3%) of the university supervisors perceived mentor teachers to also be most prepared to assist student teachers with establishing rapport with their K-12 students. This finding is quite positive given that empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that a more supportive classroom environment (e.g., being liked, respected, and valued by the teacher) promotes students' positive self-perceptions, which in turn, leads to higher student engagement in the classroom (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). Further, the ability of student teachers to establish rapport with their K-12 students is one major strategy in having a well-managed classroom.

On the contrary, the expert panel did not reach consensus on the areas in which their mentor teachers were least prepared. In terms of selecting the areas in which mentor teachers are typically least prepared, Sandra explained in the first round: "It was extremely difficult to make a selection because all cooperating teachers selected should possess all of the capabilities listed and most do." In addition, these were difficult for some of the university supervisors to select because some have had little interaction with mentor teachers and are unaware of the day-to-day events taking place in the classroom. Further, this finding could be an indication that mentor teachers have individualistic challenges, which may also be indicative of the classroom and school setting in which they teach.

In terms of recommendations the university supervisors expressed to enhance the preparedness of mentor teachers, 21 (67.7%) thought business teacher preparation programs should provide professional development for their mentor teachers prior to student teaching internships on the topics of mentoring and what is expected of the mentor teachers. For example, Raymond in the first round emphasized:

Where possible, I would like to see prospective cooperating [mentor] teachers brought to the university and given a detailed course on their expectations if they are willing to work with our students. The better cooperating [mentor] teachers seem to be those who have had previous student teachers to mentor and guide.

Connection to Conceptual Frameworks

Utilizing the lens of cognitive apprenticeship, the top three areas university supervisors believed their mentor teachers were most prepared were not related to supporting student teachers through the process of mentoring, coaching, modeling, and scaffolding experiences. A high percentage of university supervisors (74.2%) did believe the ability to reflect on one's teaching was an area in which mentor teachers were least prepared; however, this domain did not reach consensus with the expert panel. And, 41% of the university supervisors in round two perceived mentor teachers to be least prepared in the area of actually being a mentor to their student teachers, but again the expert panel did not establish consensus. However, business education university supervisors did indeed articulate the need for business education preparation programs to provide professional development prior to the internship on how to be a mentor. Therefore, it is quite plausible that university supervisors do indeed believe mentor teachers need assistance from higher education teacher preparation programs in fulfilling their roles as mentors and reflective practitioners, but did not agree this is one of the areas in which their mentor teachers were least prepared.

In regard to the teaching concerns model, first, university supervisors did agree that mentor teachers are most prepared to assist their student teachers in the area of classroom management, which is one of the primary concerns and frustrations of student teachers in the pre-teaching stage (Fuller et al., 1974). As such, it is quite promising that mentor teachers are able to enhance the knowledge and skills needed of effective teachers in the domain of managing the classroom given the level of concern for student teachers in this area. Second, the expert panel believed mentor teachers are most prepared to assist their student teachers with establishing rapport with K-12 students, which is highly related to and oftentimes a strategy in establishing a well managed classroom. Or, it might be related to student teachers' needs to be liked by their K-12 students. If this is the case, Fuller et al.'s concerns model indicates student teachers are most frequently concerned with how well their K-12 students like them in the early teaching stage, which is characteristic of novice teachers within the first few years of their teaching careers. Third, managing teaching-related administrative tasks was perceived by the expert panel as an area in which mentor teachers are typically most prepared to assist their student teachers. Similar to establishing rapport with students, teachers are oftentimes most concerned with the issue of managing teaching-related administrative tasks in the early teaching stage as well, which again is usually prevalent among novice teachers within their first few years of their careers (Fuller et al., 1974). Although it might be quite useful for student teachers to better understand how to implement teaching-related administrative tasks and establish rapport with their K-12 students, which could lead to student teachers who are more prepared during their first few years of teaching, this also might point to either the need to conduct more research examining the teaching concerns stages (since this concern is typically prevalent in the first few years of teaching) or the need for mentor teachers to emphasize more intense concerns of student

teachers during this phase in their teaching careers. Accordingly, this could signal the need to educate mentor teachers about Fuller et al.'s teaching concerns model for the purpose of their understanding of the most prevalent concerns student teachers grapple with during their internships.

Contribution to Knowledge Base

This study is the first study to examine the perspectives of business education university supervisors regarding the areas in which mentor teachers are typically most and least prepared to assist their student teachers, as well as, ways in which business teacher preparation programs can respond for the purpose of enhancing the preparation of mentor teachers to fulfill their duties, roles, and responsibilities in developing student teachers. The findings of this study pointed to specific domains mentor teachers seem to be most prepared to assist from the lens of university supervisors. And, indicated the divergence of university supervisors' thoughts regarding mentor teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In addition, this study demonstrated that university supervisors are neither least or most prepared in the skill of mentoring, but believed this to be a need for further professional development. Further, the findings of this study revealed that mentor teachers might be well equipped to deal with some of the intense concerns and frustrations inherent to most student teachers, but may signal a need for mentor teachers to become more aware of other common concerns of student teachers in the pre-teaching stage of Fuller's conceptual model.

Implications for Research

Given the importance of the student teaching experience for teacher candidates, much more research is needed in the discipline of business education concerning the triad relationship and its relationship to business education student teachers' outcomes such as, self-efficacy, satisfaction with the internship experience, and commitment to the teaching profession. Moreover, a conceptual framework is needed to illustrate the possible beneficial components of the student teaching experience with regard to the triad relationship, as well as, the competencies and deficiencies of each member of the triad, for the purpose of improving how business education teacher preparation programs structure and execute the student teaching internship. This working model might assist researchers in further investigations regarding the student teaching experience.

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