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# Supporting Clinical Practice Through Rehearsals

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*Rehearsing is a form of pedagogy in teacher education to prepare pre-service teachers with instructional practices before live enactments in a classroom. This qualitative study used grounded theory to explore how rehearsals impacted five elementary literacy courses in a university teacher education program. Data comprised of prolonged observations, video recordings of rehearsals, and surveys. The process of coding and re-coding resulted in findings that reflect rehearsing provided Teacher Candidates with confidence with lesson presentation, improved understanding of literacy content, and understand how to make in-the-moment instructional decisions*

**Keywords:** Teacher education, rehearsals, preservice teachers, literacy practices

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## Introduction

“Now you guys are all observers and look at it from the teacher’s view” explains the classroom instructor for an undergraduate Foundations of Reading Instruction course in the university’s teacher education program. This quotation reflects an opportunity for pre-service teachers to prepare and practice their lesson plans in a structured and supported environment. Often, pre-service teaching is focused on curriculum, pedagogy, and the instructor’s expectations of a lesson plan structure. However, most of these concepts are meaningless if pre-service teachers are not provided the opportunity to practice instruction with feedback to create meaning of what effective teaching looks like. In this paper, pre-service teachers will be referred to as TCs (Teacher Candidates).

Teaching has become increasingly multifaceted with the need to establish beneficial relationships with students, manage daily classroom structure, and develop a keen understanding of the content (Lampert, 2010). As a result of these encounters, programs require rigorous and structured training to prepare ambitious teachers in a challenging atmosphere (Darling-Hammond, 2009). A particular pedagogy for clinical practice is rehearsing. While there are studies

conducted on the effectiveness of rehearsals in teacher preparation courses, few studies have been conducted in a literacy methods course. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the use of rehearsals in a reading methods course as a way to scaffold and bridge experiences for pre-service teachers' instructional practices in reading. The following questions guided this study:

- 1) In what ways do rehearsals offer Teacher Candidates (TCs) a lens to connect literacy theory with practice?
- 2) In what ways do rehearsals support Teacher Candidates' (TCs) ability to reflect on their knowledge of literacy?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Supported by Vygotsky's (1987, 1978, 1962) idea that learning and thinking may be expanded and influenced through social experiences, this study focused on how TCs learned from their interactions with instructors and peers. Rehearsals are coached enactments of teaching that provide frequent opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice, reflect, and improve their lesson delivery (Kazemi, Ghouseini, Cunard, & Turrou, 2016). During rehearsals, TCs were placed into groups to present lessons to peers for feedback. After rehearsals the whole class would debrief on the strengths and improvements of the lesson. In this context, learning became social and interactive by publicizing one's teaching for constructive feedback.

Another aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the Zone of Proximal (ZPD) (1978) where TCs may explore knowledge at their current level while receiving scaffolding and constructive feedback from the instructor. ZPD describes conditions that foster effective learning as when the learner begins at his or her level of knowledge and progresses to the next level with peer facilitation. Learning and collaborating with skilled individuals enables learners to adopt new skills. Through this collaborative attempt TCs are able to develop and hone their skills of teaching literacy. Vygotsky's theory of social learning supports the notion of rehearsals since practice-based teaching is facilitated with peer debriefing and instructor support of scaffolded literacy practices.

This study is situated within Shulman's (1986) framework for teacher pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The framework for teacher knowledge describes three types of knowledge educators should possess: (1) pedagogical knowledge, (2), content area knowledge, (2), and (3) pedagogical content knowledge. In confluence, content area knowledge requires an educator to extend beyond mere subject matter facts by understanding disciplinary structures and establishments of knowledge (e.g., misconceptions, developmental patterns). Pedagogical knowledge allows the teacher to present and illustrate new

information in a comprehensive manner. Since there is no single method of conveying information, an educator should have a plethora of strategies for this purpose to use in rotation. Curriculum knowledge comprises an educator's comprehension of various instructional materials and alternative resources a teaching; putting all of that together allows for teachers to successfully teach their content.

## **Literature Review**

### **Rehearsals**

Rehearsing is a form of pedagogy which is practice-based learning to enhance the preparation of pre-service teachers. This opportunity for practice-based learning creates a collaborative culture where one makes his or her teaching public and share ideas with peers in order to become aware of realistic teaching situations (Kazemi, Ghouseini, & Cunard, 2016). Public teaching creates an opportunity for TCs to experiment with different forms of classroom discourse and organize a purposeful structure of teaching content (McDonald, Kazemi, Kelly-Patersen, Mikolasy, Thompson, Valenica, & Windschitl, 2014). Crow & Larry (2015) found that rehearsals allowed candidates to practice a 'trial run' of their lessons where it was acceptable and beneficial to make mistakes while directly receiving feedback. In another study of conducting rehearsals, Inoue (2009) found that practicing pedagogical content knowledge predicts the different assumptions pre-service teachers may make when developing their understanding of discipline content. Sufficient opportunities to practice pedagogy concepts may lead to deeper understandings. Inoue's findings are mirrored in a study by Husbye, Wessel, Vander Zanden, & Karalis (2018) who explored three methods to support coaching preservice teaching in literacy instruction: rehearsals, behind-the-glass approach, and video reflection. Each method has its unique ways of coaching preservice teachers in evolving literacy competencies.

Rehearsing what one anticipates to teach can be considered a form of supervised clinical practice when the teaching is followed by debriefing in a supportive environment with mentors (Lampert, Franke, Kazemi, Ghouseini, Turrou, Beasley, Cunard, & Crowe, 2013). A constructive atmosphere helps create strong relationships and challenge one's principles and assumptions about knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2014). Lampert and Graziani (2009) describe another form of rehearsing called 'conversation rebuilding'. Conversation rebuilding consists of miming, drawing and describing in a second language learning classroom. In this type of practice-based learning, pre-service teachers analyzed a four-part conversation activity to examine ways to use linguistic forms to create and respond to content learned. Pre-service teachers rehearsed lessons using notecards which showed the content of each conversation as a guide to

understand how the various linguistic forms are used in different contexts (Lampert & Graziani, 2009). This interactive process allowed pre-service teachers to guide their students to understand the linguistic functions of language.

Another feature of rehearsals is in-the-moment coaching (Averill, Drake, Anderson, & Anthony, 2016) that allows pre-service teachers to focus, reflect, and discuss on a specific moment in their teaching. In-the-moment coaching allows the instructor to pause the presenter in the middle of their lesson delivery to discuss a specific teaching aspect and for the presenter to explain their teaching decision. These in-the-moment questions promote thinking and guided facilitation for novice teachers' delivery of instructional content. The mere observation of teaching does not necessarily produce greater experience in the field. Therefore, proficient performance may be developed by actively engaging in intentional forms of practice that are supported through reflection of the questions asked (Ericsson, 2008).

### **Effective Teaching**

One benefit of incorporating rehearsals in a teacher preparation course is to provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to discover the elements of effective teaching in ways that link with coursework. Effective teaching is pivotal for delivering quality education to students (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Quality teaching is established through competence in the classroom and experiences outside the classroom such as mentoring programs and collaborative professional development (Wang, Lin, Spalding, Klecka, & Odell, 2011). Features of effective teaching include establishing instructional differentiation, providing instructional clarity, and questioning skills; consequently, a teacher's content and pedagogical knowledge play a key role in learners' success (Kleickmann, Richter, Kunter, Elsner, Besser, Krauss, & Baumert, 2013). For instance, Foss & Kleinsasser (1996) found that many pre-service elementary math teachers were poorly prepared to teach mathematical methods or apply successful instructional strategies. Effective and quality teaching is related to the knowledge, attitudes, and dispositions teachers bring into the profession. Another component of teacher preparation is having efficacy in one's ability to teach. Self-efficacy in content area knowledge and presentation skills makes it an essential feature in literacy instruction and has been linked to improved instructional practices (Giles, Byrd, & Bendolph, 2016).

### **Teacher Efficacy**

Teacher efficacy is a teacher's confidence to produce student learning. Teacher efficacy may be described as a two-dimensional concept (Bandura, 1997). The first element is a personal factor regarding the teacher's belief in their ability to teach effectively with the necessary knowledge and skills. The second

element, teaching outcome expectancy, is the concept that a teacher's ability may produce certain outcomes in student learning regardless of outward factors such as home environment or personal experiences. Self-efficacy beliefs are best adjustable during the beginning years of teacher development to establish a continuing growth of teacher efficacy (Shaughnessy, 2004). Structured program activities, networking, opportunities for reflection, and mentoring were considered components to aid in levels of novice teachers' confidence in their program (Turley, Powers, & Nakai, 2006).

Jarrett (1999) suggests that preservice teachers' confidence to teach a subject depends on their school experiences with the content area in addition to the number of college courses taken in the content. For instance, many preservice teachers lack the background knowledge to teach literacy, feel confident to write publicly, or share their writing with an audience much less a classroom of students (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990). Self-confidence supports student growth (Iyler & Wang, 2013). Further, by identifying the experiences and attitudes pre-service teachers have as readers and writers, programs may better meet their needs and possibly change candidate attitudes to develop stronger future literacy teachers (Street, 2003).

Results from Cakiroglu's (2008) study indicate that preservice teachers in Turkey have stronger teaching efficacy when compared with preservice teachers in the United States. One method to improve this lack of teaching efficacy was examined through thirteen teachers interviewed by Phelps & Benson (2012). The researchers explored ways to instill a passion and efficacy for teaching in teacher education programs and found academic ability to be a critical component. Preparation programs should focus on academic ability in addition to professional dispositions when preparing teachers. Rehearsals offer TCs the space to enhance their professional and ethical beliefs, understand how to adjust their lesson to meet the needs of students, and learn how to appreciate the diversity and to respect the various perspectives of students (Rike & Sharp, 2008). One way to build professional dispositions is through the relationships preservice teachers build with their mentors and instructors during the rehearsal process. Through this shared journey of development, preservice teachers may gain professional inspiration from their instructors or gain a passion and resilience for teaching (Santoro, Pietsch, & Borg, 2012).

### **Teacher Preparation**

Carefully structured teacher education programs with prolonged clinical preparation have been shown to produce more effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Zeichner (2010) discussed a new paradigm of teacher education where knowledge, once perceived in an authoritative form, now is becoming co-constructed among, "academic, practitioner, and community

expertise” (p 89). Contributing to this notion, Thompson (2006) makes the point of, “uninspired pedagogy” (p194) to describe the lack of teacher education training programs that may transfer course content skills to teaching pedagogy. She explores one college professor’s elementary literacy course where the professor incorporated dialogue journals to guide pre-service teachers to gradually shift their perspective from the student to the teacher. This transition led pre-service teachers from only observing classroom teaching to comprehending teaching practices.

Similarly, Parkinson (2005) examined how using a pen-pal writing project between pre-service teachers and first graders helped pre-service teachers understand the connection between literacy theory and practice. Connecting practice and theory is impossible when pre-service teachers simply are required to imagine a situation without the power of experiential teaching to shape one’s thinking (Darling-Hammond, 2014). In another program designed to help shape pre-service teacher thinking, the sequence of a science practicum required candidates to re-teach the same lesson over a period of three to five weeks. Re-teaching allowed preservice teachers to build confidence in teaching the content and understand the flow of their lesson (Jung & Tonson, 2006).

Although studies have been conducted on the use of rehearsals to prepare TCs to teach mathematics and physical education, there is limited research on how rehearsals may impact a TC’s success in a reading methods course.

### **Methods**

The study was conducted in a large public university in the Southwest part of the United States during the fall semester with the elementary literacy courses in a teacher education program. As a part of the teacher education program’s grant funding, the participants’ instructors underwent professional development focusing on the use of rehearsals in their courses. Instructors were provided flexibility regarding how and when to incorporate the pedagogy. Rehearsals were set up by instructors, who assigned a topic for which TCs were asked to prepare a written lesson plan and then present that lesson as a rehearsal, either in front of the whole class or in small groups. The TCs prepared for their rehearsals by writing their lesson plan on an assigned content that was addressed in lecture: a read aloud book introduction, teaching points during guided reading, and a guided reading book introduction. TCs were encouraged to practice their lesson in advance and to bring their printed lesson plan to class on the day of their rehearsal. On the day of the rehearsal, the presenting TC sat in the front of the room at a round table with two to three peers who volunteered to be students to provide a more realistic setting. Then, the instructor set up the rehearsal by explaining the content being taught and what aspects of the lesson to focus on: “So we’re going to watch this book introduction and take note of what you see

and when I say pause we will freeze and talk about it and go back” (observation). Once rehearsals were conducted, the class would immediately debrief on the lesson. Debriefing may have been through oral discussion with the instructor’s guidance or using the following questions to facilitate student thinking: What did you notice? What did you like? What would you do differently?

### **Participants**

Participants were chosen from five sections of three different literacy courses in the elementary program: Foundations of Reading Instruction for ELLs, Foundations of Reading Instruction, and Content Area Literacy. The participants of the study comprised thirteen TCs in their junior year and two TCs in their senior year. All participants were working towards their early childhood to sixth grade (EC-6) teaching certification with a Bachelor of Science in Multidisciplinary Studies. Before the methods course, TCs took courses in children’s literature, general introduction to teaching, and language and literacy acquisition. All names used in this study are pseudonyms.

### **Data sources**

Applying a naturalistic approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), qualitative data was collected through course rehearsal videos, survey questions, and classroom observations during the fall semester.

**Videos.** Over the period of the semester, five TCs were recorded as they implemented rehearsals in their university classrooms. Videos were recorded using the course instructor’s iPad mini.

**Survey.** After they participated in rehearsals, participants were given surveys to document their thoughts about the learning strategy. The surveys had ten open ended questions.

**Prolonged Observations.** The implementation of the rehearsals was observed in the college classrooms during the fall semester. Direct observation field notes were taken by the researcher twice a week and reviewed for close analysis (Merriam, 1998).

### **Data analysis**

Analysis of the data sources consisted of an ongoing progression (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) of the constant comparative method, which creates theories to explain how a social phenomenon works (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Analysis began with a close examination of the videos, surveys, and observation notes which were then coded for recurring themes. Video

recordings were transcribed, survey responses were typed into a spreadsheet, and observation notes were typed.

Data was analyzed through grounded theory by starting with open coding in which the data was read and re-read to code for emergent patterns. During open coding, ten codes were explored. Next by creating a spreadsheet, open codes were listed and examined for axial coding. During axial coding, codes were re-examined and combined based on similar attributes. This examination collapsed the ten codes into five axial codes. Last, selective coding was applied to articulate theoretical assertions arising from this coding process. To ensure coding was trustworthy, the researcher established confirmability through triangulation of data, credibility through prolonged observations and peer debriefing, and transferability with purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Table 1: *Coded Data* includes the open codes, axial codes, and selective codes.

Table 1: *Coded Data*

<b>Open Codes</b>	<b>Axial Codes</b>	<b>Selective Codes</b>
1) Building confidence in teaching guided reading 2) Feelings of preparedness before teaching a lesson 3) Receiving feedback as a source of affirmation 4) Getting a feel through practice 5) Taking action based on feedback 6) Considering what teaching move to add/delete 7) Anticipating students' learning needs 8) Using correct language to use in a lesson 9) Language that is sensitive to students' language learning needs 10) Connecting content with practice	1) Providing feedback which gave encouragement to TCs about their lessons 2) Gaining confidence as a teacher. Rehearsing and presenting in front of peers was a new concept for students. 3) Understanding the structure and effective implementation of a written lesson plan. 4) Listening and watching peers present, which helped TCs learn and understand about teaching 5) Understanding that teaching is public, not a private presentation.	(1) TCs viewed rehearsals as beneficial, allowing them to feel confident as novice teachers. (2) Rehearsing allowed TCs to understand how to make professional and problem solving decisions. (3) Rehearsals allowed TCs to have a concrete understanding of content and classroom discourse.

### Findings

Findings highlighted three recurring themes: (1) TCs viewed rehearsals as beneficial, allowing them to feel confident as novice teachers, (2) rehearsals encouraged TCs to understand how to make professional and problem solving decisions, and (3) rehearsals guided TCs to have a concrete understanding of content and classroom discourse.

### **TCs viewed rehearsals as beneficial and allowed them to feel confident as novice teachers**

In collected surveys, several candidates expressed being nervous to present a lesson in front of their peers and being judged during the process: “It was nerve racking, but it really helped me realize the importance of planning ahead” (student survey). In the remark, the TC realized the importance of lesson planning to determine what elements to focus on during her lesson and what questions she planned to ask her students. As the semester progressed TCs became confident in creating a co-construction of best practices with their peers. Opportunities in mentoring, reflection, and co-construction were factors that enabled TCs to be confident when publicly rehearsing. After overcoming the fear of presenting, TCs understood what elements it took to plan and implement a successful lesson outside the college classroom. As one TC shared, “instead of just reading about it on paper or taking notes over it, I was able to see and visualize the experience” (survey). Courses supported this notion by offering the space and time to conduct rehearsals. Planning was purposeful to ensure adequate time was given for course lectures and to conduct rehearsals followed by with a whole-class reflection.

To possess confidence when teaching, TCs had to become familiar with their lesson as a mean to teach with assurance and with a professional identity. A professional identity is the evolving belief, efficacy, and motivation related to teaching. Rehearsing provided TCs the space to negotiate their personal beliefs and assumptions of teaching to establish an initial identity. Further, standing with confidence and speaking clearly were emphasized to encourage TCs to feel assured and proficient with their lesson delivery. Instructors often reminded TCs that teaching to elementary students was not the same as speaking with friends in a playful or joking manner; rather, they needed to approach the context with professionalism and poise.

Further, rehearsing lessons allowed TCs to come across unplanned scenarios that may have arisen during a lesson. Unplanned situations allowed TCs to think on the spot to handle the situation and consider the effects of their teaching. For instance, a peer could take on the role as a student and enact what may be said during the lesson. This role allows TCs to take the student’s perspective into consideration and scaffold the lesson when needed. Thus, the basic essentials of instruction were exposed through rehearsing by challenging and encouraging students to consider what-if situations, using questions, and to explain their decision making to prepare them for what may come across during their actual teaching. One participant shared in their survey response, “Getting to practice how to correctly execute a book introduction was very helpful. I was able to get a feel of how it is supposed to be done.” As an end result, TCs felt

confident going into the actual classroom ready to teach their lessons and approach unplanned-for classroom situations.

Another component that is important for leveraging the value of rehearsing is reflecting after the practice. After presenting a lesson, TCs reflected as a class by discussing what went well and what improvements could be made in the lesson. Although this naturally caused TCs to become nervous, reflecting allowed for a co-construction of meaning to share ideas and adjust their schema relative to the development of ideas. As one TC shared, it permitted her to “think from a teacher’s point of view” (survey) to address how to carry out different situations in her lesson and the realization of shifting roles from student to teacher. By thinking from a teacher’s perspective, TCs should understand the various facets of a lesson’s structure and why incorporating certain literacy practices are key to their students’ success. This opportunity to examine one’s teaching is developed during the reflection when ideas are shared and the faculty lead helped connect the learning with theory.

### **Rehearsals encouraged TCs to understand how to make professional and problem-solving decisions**

In-the-moment coaching is a rehearsing strategy that allows instructors to momentarily pause TCs in the middle of their teaching performance to question and guide their decision making and teaching techniques. This pause allows the TC and instructor or a group of TCs to collaborate on teaching decisions or problem-solve the learning path for the student. Consequently, this form of learning provided a safe environment for TCs to practice and receive constructive feedback. As one participant noted “I liked hearing feedback from my peers and my teacher to know what I did well and the things I need to work on for future lessons” (survey). Another benefit of in-the-moment pauses is it lets instructors go beyond simply providing comments on a submitted lesson plan where TCs must interpret how they could make successful revisions before implementing the lesson. The momentary pause allowed for real-time feedback.

Another advantage of rehearsals is providing a supported space for TCs to understand how to make problem-solving decisions related to their teaching. To illustrate, one TC mentioned learning the importance of wait time when posing questions while teaching and how it may change the effectiveness of a lesson. The rehearsal space provided an opportunity to solve and discuss real teaching and learning issues faced in the classroom. By rehearsing instructional practices, TCs improve their instincts in making classroom-related decisions and, in the words of one participant, being “...more conscious of my students, their level, ability, and the content I am teaching” (survey). The rehearsal interaction allows TCs to develop a responsiveness and attentiveness to the many types of distractions that may take place in a classroom. However, as in any teaching context, educators

cannot plan precisely how they want a lesson to shift during their presentation. Educators should be prepared to take on-the-spot questions and understand their students' needs to know what changes in instruction need to be made to improve learning.

Teaching reading to early elementary students requires a significant amount of competent knowledge in reading instruction and training experiences. Therefore, through rehearsals and class discussions TCs had the opportunity to collaborate on effective reading instruction through evidence-based-research strategies. This form of collaboration is reflected in the following dialogue recorded during a TC's guided reading rehearsal where the instructor paused the TC to discuss vocabulary:

TC: Can y'all say that?

Classmates: Fire engine.

TC: Yes. Good job. We're also going to go look at [paused].

Instructor: So you're doing great. I think what you would do in this situation like that on an upper level book....but another thing you might say is when you see a fire truck in the book the author is going to call it a fire engine. I would just reemphasize that so they know. You're making the decision as a teacher. Okay, go ahead.

This excerpt is an example of an in-the-moment teaching scene where the instructor paused the TC during the lesson to address what she did well and what part of the lesson she needed to rethink to make improved vocabulary teaching decisions. In this instance, the instructor is encouraging the TC to become aware of the terminology used in the text and how that may affect students' understanding of content and comprehension. This form of questioning to direct the TC's teaching decision and the effects it may have on her students was in a safe manner through the support and guidance of the course instructor.

Similarly, in the following dialogue the TC had to reconsider her teaching strategy for a vocabulary strategy during a guided reading lesson with the instructor's feedback and prompting:

TC: ...endanger. Do you guys have any idea what this passage may be about? Do we know another word for endanger?

Instructor: What is she doing now?

Peer response: Scaffolding?

Instructor: Scaffolding. What else? Scaffolding what?

Peer response: prior knowledge?

Instructor: Vocabulary. Right. She wants to make sure they know the word endanger. That's a good important thing to do. So you didn't talk about the word endangered. Tell me about that?

[pause]

Instructor: Do you think that's something you might talk about?

TC: Yes.

Instructor: Yeah how could you do that?

TC: Try giving a slight definition of the word endanger.

Instructor: Yeah or you could have them read the sentence it's in and have them predict. Why don't you try that now.

During this rehearsal, in the middle of her lesson the TC was prompted through questioning to consider ways to improve vocabulary instruction. Feedback and questioning are vital to creating a comfortable environment where TC's are aware their rehearsals serve to improve their teaching and are not a way for peers to form judgments. The instructor utilized peer responses in the class as a way to guide the TC to re-consider her teaching strategy. Further, Shulman's (1986) framework for teacher knowledge builds from knowing how to initiate general classroom discussions to understanding specific subject area knowledge. In this excerpt of the rehearsal, the instructor guides the TC to consider going from generally pointing out an academic word to discussing the word in order to build student comprehension. Research indicates that using questions during rehearsal informs TCs about improved teaching effectiveness and promotes dialogue about content.

### **Rehearsals guided TCs to have a concrete understanding of content and classroom discourse.**

“What are some good book introductions that the pretend teacher did and what are some suggestions you have for that book introduction” (video). This quotation reflects the knowledge TCs needed to recognize components of an effective book introduction and understand its importance to build reading comprehension. Academic discourse is the ability to purposively use language that facilitates discipline-specific learning in classrooms. The final theme reflected the TCs' ability to incorporate effective classroom discourse during rehearsals of their lesson plan. For instance, teaching reading fluency and comprehension is no easy task and requires extensive training in reading instruction discourse. Thus, it was important that TCs recognized the best practices in literacy instruction to apply the appropriate academic discourse during their teaching.

To illustrate this concept, during the rehearsal of book introductions it was pivotal that TCs understood the purposive language used when introducing a

picture book to elementary students. For example, they needed to clarify to learners that an author is the writer of the book and an illustrator is the person who created the images in the book by saying, “Do you all know what an illustrator means? On the cover what do you guys see?” (video) This quotation demonstrates a TC rehearsing how to incorporate the term *illustrator* and guiding students’ predications to establish a strong book introduction in a read-aloud lesson. This scene further reflects for learners the importance of teaching the term ‘*illustrator*’ to early readers and explains where to locate the *illustrator* on the cover of the book.

Additionally, in the following quotation a TC shared her observations from a rehearsal and made a connection to what the class was learning about teaching reading to ELLs: “When she was explaining stuff like the different words in the book she would point to the leg of the table and try to describe it so they can understand” (video). This reflection took place after the rehearsal when peers were reflecting and commenting on the lesson they observed. The discussion focused on what the TC observed during the rehearsal that was helpful if teaching a group of ELL students. This moment enabled the TC to recognize that visual cues may be one appropriate strategy to incorporate while teaching vocabulary to ELL students. Moreover, debriefing rehearsals as a whole class enabled TCs to explore and address quality discourse during rehearsals that promoted critical thinking and engagement among students.

### **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to examine ways that rehearsals with undergraduate TCs enhanced their connection and understanding of teaching with literacy theory. Rehearsing is a form of teacher education pedagogy to support pre-service teachers with instructional practices and decision making before real time enactment in the field. This study provides new insights in the field of teacher preparation using literacy practices. Traditionally teacher education courses have focused on understanding and composing a well-structured lesson plan with limited opportunities to examine demonstrations of effective practice (Ward, Chen, Higginson, & Xie, 2018). Previous studies have addressed the use of rehearsals; however, lacked exploring the pedagogy in a literacy course to examine how rehearsals may allow TCs to build stronger skills when teaching reading. Moats (1999) identified reading as a complicated linguistic task which entails teacher expertise and instruction. Consequently, ample opportunities are paramount for novice teachers to explore the complexity of literacy instruction through practice-based methods.

Rehearsing is a purposefully designed pedagogy that connects course content with fieldwork by converging theory with application in a clinical situation (Lampert, et al., 2013; Kazemi, et al., 2016). Thompson (2006)

addresses the need for teacher education programs to offer opportunities for learners to make the connection with content knowledge with teaching pedagogy. Similarly, TCs were able to weave together the theoretical content learned from lecture with the realistic situations they anticipate encountering in the classroom. These opportunities lead TCs to experience positive teacher efficacy. For example, discussing the use of effective literacy strategies during rehearsals builds one's background and confidence to teach vocabulary instruction and guiding reading (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990).

Socio-cultural theory suggests learners have an active and dynamic connection with their development of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1987). In this study, this form of learning took place when TCs were actively rehearsing and discussing their problem-solving strategies for teaching reading. Thus the structure of learning shifted from the instructor sharing information, to being centered on TCs developing their knowledge through problem solving situations (Kazemi, et al., 2016). Problem-based discussions arose from in-the-moment pauses during rehearsals as a way to provide constructive feedback to support the development of TCs' knowledge in teaching literacy (Vygotsky, 1978). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) refers this form of learning as scaffolded instruction. By scaffolding learning through structured rehearsals to real enactments in the classroom TCs were provided the opportunity to shift their role from being a college student to classroom teacher by considering the teaching decisions and challenges they may come across (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ma, et al., 2008).

Rehearsals also provided TCs a lens to become reflective educators by making connections to literacy strategies and theories taught during the methods course (Kazemi, et al., 2016; Unver, 2014). Lampert, et al., (2013) emphasized rehearsing as an ambitious view of teaching that requires pre-service teachers to become socially and academically aware while teaching. Survey responses echoed that TCs found it beneficial to practice the methods learned during lecture and dissect the delivery of their lessons to make connections with the course (Unver, 2014). For instance, TCs were taught the importance of previewing a book during guided reading or knowing the different parts of conducting a guided reading workshop. Both of these topics are complex and take years to master as an educator, yet through practice-based learning TCs were able to make a stronger connection to the theory of guided reading with best practices and lesson delivery. Merely reading textbook chapters and taking notes during course lecture often hindered TCs the opportunity to understand how literacy thinking and learning take place during enactments (Ward, et al., 2018). However after rehearsals, TCs began to see through the lens of a literacy educator and understand the challenging task of reading instruction (Moats, 1999). Shulman (1986) describes this form of knowledge development through three characteristics of

understanding content, pedagogy, and curriculum knowledge. TCs were able to develop their knowledge of all three areas by practicing, discussing, and reflecting on research-based literacy strategies while rehearsing. For instance, TCs were able to refine specifically on the introduction of a guided reading lesson to understand how to prepare students for successful reading comprehension. For this reason, rehearsing is one avenue for TCs to refine their understanding of literacy content, curriculum, and pedagogical knowledge through the scaffold support of their instructor and the collaboration of their peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Accordingly, TCs learning of best literacy practices was extended through the social experiences of rehearsing and sharing the experience as a whole-class.

### **Educational Importance of the Study**

Although the themes of this study are noteworthy, it is important to recognize the limitations of this study. First, the findings are from a literacy teacher education course; therefore, any advantages of using rehearsals across various disciplines may still need to be identified. Second, future research avenues may extend this study to define the differences, if any, rehearsals made on TCs outcome after enactment in a live classroom. Were the rehearsals effective to prepare TCs? What issues in literacy came up during live enactments that were not discussed during rehearsals?

The relevance of this study is to identify the benefits of clinical rehearsals to support the novice skills of TCs as underscored by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE (2010) asserted the need for various and ample occasions for TCs to connect concepts alongside clinical preparation, which echoes the worthiness of providing frequent opportunities for TCs to participate in meaningful teaching with supported feedback (Kazemi, et al., 2016).

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