Moments of Reflection: A Phenomenological Study of Preservice Teacher Reflection

Jane Ferris
jf877756@wcupa.edu

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Moments of Reflection: A Phenomenological Study of Preservice Teacher Reflection

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College of Education and Social Work
West Chester University
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Education

By
Jane M. Ferris
May 2020

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Dedication

I first dedicate this dissertation to George, Matthew, Melissa, Will, Anna, Sofia, Addie, Emmalee, Becca, Frankie, Easton, Cameron, Victoria, Louise, Nora, Billie, and Clare. May a love of learning and a deep curiosity to explore, listen, and ask questions guide you. You are capable of anything and everything. With all my love and encouragement.

This dissertation is also dedicated to preservice teachers embarking on the great adventure of being a teacher. Be attentive to those moments, to listen and reflect, and your practice and experiences will forever be changed.
Acknowledgements

“To write is to reflect; to write is to research. And in writing we may deepen and change ourselves in ways we cannot predict.” ~ Max van Manen

The process of writing this dissertation has forever changed me. While I am a naturally curious person, this experience was unlike anything I imagined, and it pushed me to think in new ways and dimensions. I thank the members of my cohort for being a part of this journey, sharing humor and encouragement at each turn. I thank all of our professors for sharing their expertise and for challenging us to think as researchers from day one. I offer additional thanks to Dr. Heather Schugar for her guidance, frequent “temperature checks,” and for going the extra mile on our behalves, and to my advisor, Dr. David Backer, for guiding me through this process, listening to my crazy thoughts, and believing in my abilities. Additional special thanks also go to Dr. Matthew Kruger-Ross, who introduced me to the world of phenomenology. When I thought I understood something, he would offer an insight or pose a question and I would be filled with a sense of excitement and wonder. Thank you, Matthew, for being a sounding board and for understanding and sifting through my thoughts when it felt like I was talking in riddles. I will be forever grateful that you were a part of this extraordinary experience.

The process of writing and thinking distanced me, physically and mentally, from my family and I thank them for their understanding, support when it was hard, and unconditional love.

Tim, thank you for the encouragement and pushes when I needed them and for the space to write, often into the early morning hours, in pursuit of both my M.Ed. and now Ed.D. Your excitement for me to attain this level of education meant heaps and was the cheering voice in my head in those lonely moments when I questioned why I was doing this.
Mom and Dad, thank you for instilling in me a love for learning, a drive to succeed, and a commitment to furthering my education. Mom, thank you for the care, help, and endless love you offered my family and me most especially during the last three years. Dad, I remember listening to you talk about your dissertation and the interest you had in the studies that led up to it. I can now say that I understand how you felt. While I have immersed myself into one particular area, the concepts and ideas that I was exposed to through my coursework were fascinating and made the journey that much more meaningful. Thank you for being my inspiration to take this leap.

As a phenomenologist, I learned that my reflections are as valuable as my participants’ reflections. In that spirit I share the following:

I sat anxiously, with other preservice teachers, in a circle, as we listened to the woman who held our futures in her hands, our student teaching supervisor. Over a period of sixteen weeks, she would decide if we had what it took to become teachers, if we could be entrusted with our own classrooms and with our own students. As I sat there, I listened attentively to each word, taking copious notes and asking questions when appropriate, to make sure that I clearly understood her expectations. It was clear – we had to earn our grades and she took her job very seriously. Earning an A would be hard work. We needed to demonstrate that we not only wanted to be teachers but that we were teachers. Over the course of the semester, she and I would meet and just when I thought I had proven my skill, she would challenge me to grow even more. By the end of the sixteen weeks, I found myself sitting across the table from her. She was reading her final evaluation of my abilities and tears streamed down my face. I did it! I proved to her and more importantly myself, that I am a teacher.
At different points over the last eighteen years, I have thought back to my supervisor and the great respect she had for the science and art of teaching and for the care and respect she had for the students in our classrooms, then and those yet to take their seats. She wanted us to be great for all of them.

The process of selecting dissertation topics proved a challenge as I am passionate about many aspects of education. In the end, it was thoughts back to my student teaching experience and the commitment I made all those years ago to do my very best for students always, that brought me to study preservice teachers and their reflective practices. As an educator who cares deeply for the future of education, I feel compelled to take an interest in the training of preservice teachers – to hold teacher training programs accountable to offering and expecting the very best, and to setting preservice teachers up for success as they transition to their own classrooms. It is my hope that this study will contribute to such continued growth for both the collegiate programs and the budding professionals.

Diane Golubuff, my student teaching supervisor, please accept my sincerest thank you for the example you set.
Abstract

Transitioning from their training programs to their own classrooms, new teachers may feel a disconnect between what they learned and what they experience. To help with this transition and to promote teachers’ abilities to respond to the varying and unique needs of their students and schools, teacher training programs, beginning in the 1980s, have incorporated the use of reflective practice. Reflection provides teachers an opportunity to engage with their experiences in such a way that prereflective understandings, assumptions, biases, and beliefs may be identified. Reviewed literature suggests that teacher training programs do not clearly define and implement reflection instruction into preservice teacher training programs. This qualitative study sought to examine the meaning of reflection for five preservice teachers enrolled in a teacher training program by specifically looking at how they defined and experienced reflection. With reflection identified as the phenomenon of this study, phenomenology was used as the theoretical framework and research method. Through two semi-structured interviews, in which the researcher met one-on-one with each participant, the researcher gathered the preservice teachers’ memories of lived experiences connected to reflection. By exploring the moments of lived experience, the participants defined reflection in both literal and technical ways. The moments also suggested that the preservice teachers experienced reflection as inconsistent and as a pathway to growth and understanding. The phenomenological findings of this study affirmed the reviewed literature calling for teaching training programs to provide clearer definitions of reflection and more opportunities to engage with and discuss reflective practices connected to a variety of experiences.

*Keywords:* preservice teacher, reflection, phenomenology
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“I am now going to take attendance. When I say your name, please say, Here. Sean.”

“Here.”

“Tara.”

“Here.”

“Anne-a.”

“My name is pronounced An-na,” the student said quietly.

“Okay. Ruth.”

“Here.”

(silence)

“Tana.”

(Giggles are heard around the classroom.)

“Ta-nod,” the student replied, turning a shade of red.

“Got it. Nik-hill.”

(Giggles are heard around the classroom again.)

“It is pronounced Nikheel,” the student stated matter-of-factly, sounding annoyed.

“Okay, Nikheal.”

Imagine if the scenario above, a teacher taking attendance on the first day of school, had sounded like this instead.

“I am now going to take attendance. When I say your name, please say, Here. Sean.”

“Here.”

“Tara.”

“Here.”
“Anne-a.”

“My name is pronounced An-na,” the student said quietly.

“Ah. Okay, thank you, An-na.”

(silence)

“Ruth.”

“Here.”

(silence)

“Tanah.”

(Giggles are heard around the classroom.)

“Ta-nod,” the student replied, turning a shade of red.

(silence)

“I’m sorry for the mispronunciation. Thank you, Tanadh.”

(silence)

“I am not certain how to pronounce the next name. It is spelled N-i-k-h-i-l.”

“It is pronounced Nikheel,” the student replied with a sense of pride in sharing the correct pronunciation.

“Thank you, Nikhil”

In the second scenario, the teacher started taking attendance in the same manner as the first time, until the teacher paused and realized that she was not going to be able to correctly pronounce the students’ names. In the middle of taking attendance, the teacher reflected that her actions were causing unwanted behavior amongst the students and negatively impacting specific student’s sense of self, and so she changed her actions to be more thoughtful demonstrating
pedagogical tact. The change in the teacher’s behavior resulted from reflection-in-action, and is one of many ways that teachers practice reflection.

Developing teachers’ reflective capacities has become a focal area for teacher education programs in response to the traditional epistemology of practice that took its lead from technical approaches to education (Calderhead, 1992; van Manen, 2015; Zeichner, 1983; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Research into models for preparation called for a paradigm shift towards inquiry-oriented and personalistic approaches such that preservice teachers were developed in ways that promoted reflective action on moral and ethical grounds, and their sense of “becoming teachers” (Zeichner, 1983). Educational researcher, Max van Manen, who specializes in phenomenological research methods and pedagogies, provided the following insight. “Beginning teachers often seem to feel the tension or the ‘poor fit’ between what they learned about teaching and what they discover is required in the practice of teaching,” (van Manen, 2015, p. 55). Providing preservice teachers with opportunities and experiences to become aware of meaning-filled moments, prepared with the knowledge and skills for ways to dynamically, tactfully, and thoughtfully respond becomes necessary (Schön, 1987; van Manen, 1991, 2015). Through doing this, ontological explorations and practices, in which preservice teachers learn to explore and question and most especially, become aware to allow meaning to come into being, become a focus.

With a political and societal responsibility to educate tomorrow’s citizens, teachers must be prepared to face the everchanging demands of their students and unique school settings, and reflection and reflective practices provide such a way (Schön, 1987; Valli, 1992; van Manen, 1991; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). The question then becomes, do, and if so, how do preservice teachers understand reflection (van Manen, 2015). In providing reflective practice development through teacher education programs, it must be acknowledged that preservice teachers come to
the profession with established beliefs and prior experiences that will challenge and shape their reflective understandings and meanings, and abilities to reflect (Calderhead, 1992; LaBoskey, 1993; Valli, 1990; van Manen, 1977, 1991). By using phenomenological research methods, van Manen suggested that preservice teachers’ interpretations of reflection in the context of their pedagogical lifeworlds can be examined (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). “Phenomenology is about wonder, words, and world,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 13). Through the practice of phenomenology, preservice teachers’ thoughts about reflection and reflective process may be explored to see how they align with the paradigm shift in teacher education focused on the teacher as a being.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the meaning of reflection for preservice teachers, who were part of an undergraduate teacher education program at a large state university in the Mid-Atlantic region, by providing preservice teachers with an opportunity to practice reflection as a way of seeking understanding.

**Rationale**

Theory versus practice, a teacher education debate, dates back to the 1930s, when the first teacher education departments started to emerge (Angus, 2001). This discussion continues today with universities as they place great emphasis on knowledge-base, and practice that demonstrates successful implementation (Zeichner, 1983). Researchers as far back as the 1930s have challenged the technical rationality model, replicated within the education system, calling for teacher development centered in reflection to propel educational reforms needed in response to political and societal reforms. Marilyn Cochran-Smith argued that “teaching has technical aspects….and teachers can be trained to perform these. But teaching is also…. more importantly,
an intellectual, cultural, and contextual activity that requires skillful decisions about how to convey subject matter knowledge, apply pedagogical skills, develop human relationships, and both generate and utilize local knowledge,” (2004, p. 298). By incorporating and emphasizing reflection in teacher development, the field of education acknowledges the central role that teachers play in their work and such reform.

Furthering research connected to preservice teachers, the work of Paul F. Conway and Christopher M. Clark (2003) suggested that one of the greatest preservice teacher concerns their study uncovered was that of the image of self-as-teacher. Through analyzing the participants hopes and fears, it was determined that they moved “from a focus on survival and questioning personal legitimacy” to being “engaged in a progression toward greater self-awareness/self-knowledge and subsequently made efforts at greater self-organization and self-development,” (Conway & Clark, 2003, p. 474 & 470). The findings of this study reinforce the importance of the environments in which preservice teachers learn and practice their teaching skills, that those environments promote needed reflexive thinking and development.

The practice of reflection, or exploration and analysis of lived experience, in education is about how educators make meaning from phenomena they experience, and it has been one way that preservice teachers have been able to explore their selfhood as it relates to self-as-teacher (Grimmett et al., 1990; van Manen, 1991). John Dewey emphasizes the importance of reflection particularly for teachers in saying that, “it enables us to know what we are about when we act,” (Dewey, 1964, p. 211). Teaching is a unique profession, one where the professional is always on the spot, having to make split-second decisions that can have, in some instances, a greater impact than ever imagined. Those entering the field of education do not come devoid of past experiences, and those experiences must be acknowledged and understood as building the
Recognizing the work that preservice teachers will do in their future classrooms, they need to be prepared to reflect so that they are able to respond appropriately when the time comes.

While reflection is a commonly prescribed practice within teacher education programs, the goal should be to “create authentic experiences with reflection that will translate beyond the university setting into personal reflective practice,” (Shoffner, 2008, p. 123). van Manen’s research questioned whether teachers need to be reflective, and if so, if they know the process for doing so (van Manen, 2015). Although reflective practice is a common phrase in teacher preparation and much research exists regarding the importance of it, it is not entirely clear exactly how preservice teachers have come to understand reflection as a part of their training, and what value they may or may not see in it. James Calderhead suggested that:

Through an understanding of how student teachers do think about practice, why they think as they do, the substance of their thinking, how their thinking is affected by alternative course designs and how attempts to change their ways of thinking have been influential, we may develop an improved understanding of the nature and potential of reflection. (1989, p. 9)

By studying these questions, valuable insight might be gained both for preservice teachers as well as for teacher education programs and how they continue to respond to the varied needs of classrooms and their learners.

**Problem Statement**
Over the last fifty years, education has weathered many political and social reforms. Teachers, able to balance theoretical knowledge with practical skills, have become highly sought after. To provide professionals ready to be successful in schools, college and university teacher education programs have had to shift away from the apprentice-style modes of preparation, and even more recently, challenge the engrained empirical, positivist approach (Zeichner, 1992, 1996). Today, reflective teaching is the latest “buzz word” as colleges and universities work to prove that their teacher candidates will have what it takes to transition to any classroom setting. The challenge lies in the fact that reflection is not clearly defined across the profession, let alone teacher education programs. By cultivating teachers who practice reflection, what does that mean, for the teacher, his/her students, and the school? In thinking about teacher reflection in relation to experience, van Manen asked, “where and how does reflection enter the reality of the pedagogical lifeworld? How is reflection in action experienced? And how may this be different from the conceptualizations of reflection in action as found in the literature?” (van Manen, 1995, p. 35). Questions of this nature need to be studied to ensure that preservice teachers’ educational programming accurately responds to their prior knowledge and beliefs, and to their past, present, and future experiences in the classroom.

In order to have a praxis that allows for phenomenological principles of teaching and learning, educators must be offered appropriate experiences and opportunities to develop these skills. “A [reflective] teacher is one who makes teaching decisions on the basis of a conscious awareness and careful consideration of the assumptions on which the decisions are based, and the technical, educational, and ethical consequences of those decisions,” (Yost et al., 2000, p. 41). To possess such a pedagogical practice, this training must begin at the time of preservice education (Conway & Clark, 2003; Yost et al., 2000; Zeichner, 1992). Qualitative research needs
to be performed to more fully understand what is or is not the experience of preservice teachers with regard to such ontological practices to help inform appropriate education programming changes and developments.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that helped to guide this study included:

- How do preservice teachers define reflection?
- How do preservice teachers experience reflection?

**Rationale for Methodology**

Research the last two centuries has focused on objectivity and numbers. Appropriately named quantitative research, it looks for correlations and cause and effect in response to statistical experimental designs consisting of variables. Around the late 1800s / early 1900s, researchers desired different ways to analyze and explain data – ways that were less experimental and more ethnography-based (Lichtman, 2013). Those working in the field of education realized that methods beyond those of a quantitative approach were needed as a disconnect was developing between educational practice and research (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008). “Over the past quarter century, education scholars [have come] to the realization that most surveys and statistical analyses failed to capture the fine-grained qualities of schooling,” (Davis, 2007, p. 574). As a result, qualitative research, exploring the why of problems through obtaining a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon, became popular. The works of John Creswell, Norman K. Denzin, Marilyn Lichtman, and Yvonna S. Lincoln provide context to the emergence of qualitative research as a valid and necessary educational research method. Denzin and Lincoln defined qualitative research as:
Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (2005, p. 3)

By studying the central phenomenon as it exists in the world, qualitative researchers construct a nonlinear, detailed, thematic understanding in relation to questions that ask how and why. Contrary to positivists, post-positivist and constructivist researchers are free to study verbal and visual communication connected to human behavior and interaction in a way that is systematic, and “[allows] for the reflexive capacity of human beings” (Lichtman, 2013, p. 12), while at the same time open to interpretation, which can similarly lead to new paradigms and reinforce theories.

From an ontological perspective, each participant in a study has a story to tell, a valuable perspective that contributes to the reality of a situation or problem, and each perspective needs to be fully researched in order to be understood. Qualitative methods provide for data to be collected, analyzed, and then displayed like that of an intricate montage or bricolage, weaving together the applicable and valuable angles (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Being able to tell the whole story, to paint the realities of one specific setting, contributes to new knowledge that can help inform decision-making, and even offer insight to studies in other settings. In many ways, the work of qualitative researchers is ongoing as the experiences, backgrounds, and voices of the
people involved vary per setting and will further add to the gathered data, revealing an even more complex understanding that can be related back to relevant theories and practice.

When determining which qualitative method to use for this study, phenomenology seemed the most appropriate choice, as it allows for the study of lived experiences, which is the essence of what needs to be explored in order to understand the meanings preservice teachers have of reflection. Taken from the philosophical works of Edmund Husserl and his student, Martin Heidegger, phenomenology at its core, studies phenomena. Phenomenon means “that which shows itself in itself,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 27). From Heidegger’s perspective, phenomenology, understood by way of ontology, particularly revolves around being in the world and the experience of a particular moment as lived (Hopkins et al., 2017; Lichtman, 2013; Smith et al., 2009). In Being in Time, Heidegger (1962) wrote that “the phenomenon of Being is that which is closest to and yet also farthest away from human beings,” (Kruger-Ross, 2016, p. 26). In their everyday lived experiences, people live in relation to the phenomenon, which is often overlooked, needing to be brought back into focus.

The research of van Manen linked phenomenology to the study of education. van Manen saw phenomenology as a method of inquiry appropriate for accessing lived experience connected to pedagogy, specifically the everydayness of the classroom and the relationship between the teacher and student. He recognized that in the study of a phenomenon, the teacher must identify and name the pre-understandings, assumptions, and bias that affect the way in which the phenomenon may be interpreted and by doing so, the phenomenon itself may truly be understood (van Manen, 1997).

Preservice teachers have experienced their own K-12 education and now train to return to the K-12 classroom to educate the next generations. Through their teacher training programs,
they may engage with reflective practices as reflection has been identified as a critical component in teacher education (Davis, 2006; Dewey, 1964; Galvez-Martin et al., 1998, van Manen, 1991; Yost et al., 2000; Zeichner, 1992). “The process of understanding and improving one’s teaching must start from reflection upon one’s own experience,” (Zeichner, 1992, p. 297).

By using the phenomenological research method, the researcher, who was once a preservice teacher, and the participant preservice teachers explored reflective experiences as a way of determining the meaning of reflection as it relates to teaching and learning as experienced through teacher training programs.

**Significance of Study**

This study contributes to research on two fronts. First, it provides context for teacher training programs in reviewing and evaluating the incorporation of reflection and reflective practices. Educational researchers maintain the significance of developing preservice teachers’ reflective skills and understandings and this study aimed to identify specifically how preservice teachers define and experience reflection and the associated meanings by drawing on their experiences. From that information, teacher education programs could determine if and what changes may need to be made in support of preservice teachers’ reflection and reflective practices. Additionally, this study provides an example of phenomenological research within the field of education on preservice teacher reflection. While phenomenology is an established qualitative method within education, use of this method to explore preservice teachers’ reflection has not been performed in such a fashion, which opens a space for further research of this nature.

**Limitations**

Choosing phenomenology as a research method yields several limitations.
meanings (Hopkins et al., 2017). While mixed methods or different qualitative measures, such as a case study or ethnography, could have been used to gather direct responses and explanations, phenomenology, centered in the practice of reflection, provides the opportunity for the researcher and participants to closely explore and study their lived experiences to yield understandings of reflection in a meaning-filled way that can provide valuable contexts for them as they continue to build and develop their reflective practices. When studying reflection, there is no right or wrong; in fact, there is no consensus as to one definition of reflection or how to instill or cultivate reflective practices that teacher education programs use. Research of this nature aims to uncover perspectives based on experiences. In using phenomenology to study educational practices, researchers and those who read the findings of this particular study must acknowledge that a limited scope was sacrificed in order to uncover and examine the perspectives of those directly involved and that from their experiences others become more experienced (van Manen, 1990).

The findings of phenomenological research are not meant to be generalized as they represent the meanings and understandings connected to the specific experiences of the participants (Sohn et al., 2017). “The only generalization allowed in phenomenological inquiry is ‘never generalize,’” (van Manen, 2014, p. 352). Unlike other forms of research, particularly quantitative methods where empirical generalizations lead to validity of findings from a sample of the population to the general population, phenomenology focuses on the examples that can be gathered from the participants to identify the unique in relation to the phenomenon.

In discussing limitations, researchers note the sample size. For this study, five, Caucasian, female preservice teachers enrolled in the same university shared their lived experiences pertaining to reflection. The researcher also shared the same race and gender as the participants. As a result, the interpretations and themes could be viewed as limited. Having a
more diverse set of participants might have yielded more varied lived experiences which would have impacted the resulting themes and the interpretations and meanings derived. This perspective into possible limitations, however, does not affect this phenomenological study. Since the findings should not be generalized, it does not matter how many participants, nor does their gender, race, or ethnicity matter, unless they were determined to be a factor connected to the phenomenon being studied (van Manen, 2014). For this particular study, gender, race, and ethnicity did not factor into the study of the phenomenon.

Finally, the phenomenological method requires the researcher identify his or her preunderstandings through either reduction or reflexivity, to then be receptive to participants’ experiences; thus, researcher objectivity is not possible (Finlay, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2017). The researcher of this study practiced reflexivity. Heidegger believed that living in the world means making sense of it while being within it (Heidegger, 1962). This perspective leads to the subjectivity of the researcher, his or her positionality, being front and central as the participants’ lived experiences unfold. Following this important and necessary step to the phenomenological method is important to note, as is the fact that it is impossible to be completely objective to the participants’ lived experiences given the nature of the research method being used.

**Definition of Terms**

*Being-in-the-world*

Heidegger’s way of noting that a person cannot be separate from the world. “Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us . . .understanding always pertains to the whole of Being-in-the-world,” (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 191–192, 194). How
one comes to understandings is directly related to his or her experiences in the world in those moments (Heidegger, 1962; Hopkins et al., 2017; van Manen 2014). Put simply, everything is context.

*Lifeworld*

Comes from the hermeneutic perspective and describes the immediate world in which a person lives – “the world of lived experience” (van Manen, 1997, p. 182). For Husserl, the term refers to “the world of immediate experience,” as experienced in the “natural, primordial attitude,” that of “original natural life” (Husserl, 1970, pp. 103-186). Husserl suggested that a lifeworld has structures and Heidegger built off of this idea by “speaking of phenomenology as the study of Being…or ways-of-being-in-the-world,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 183).

*Ontological*

Deals with the nature of Being or an understanding of Being, that answers the question, what is. Heidegger (1962) referred to ontology as the phenomenology of Being. “For Heidegger, ontology is the way of inquiring into and through Being as such,” (Kruger-Ross, 2016, p. 49).

*Phenomenology*

A research approach focused on lived experiences, stems from the philosophical roots of the German philosophers, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Husserl focused on the essence or consciousness of an experience from which to draw meaning, while Heidegger emphasized the combination of one’s consciousness with individual interpretation in order to draw meaning (Hopkins et al., 2017; Kruger-Ross, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). This study approaches phenomenology from Heidegger’s perspective, acknowledging
that understandings and meanings are derived by taking into account our being-in-the-world.

Reflection

In the context of this study, the definition of reflection comes from several key researchers. Dewey (1964) thought reflection had to do with experience, examination, exploration, open-mindedness, and wholeheartedness. Schön (1983) and van Manen (1991) defined reflection as reflection-on-action (interpreting and analyzing information after an action) and reflection-in-action (thinking about an action while doing it). van Manen (1991, 2015) also defined reflection as critical, related to consciousness, and as a pedagogical thoughtfulness. Grimmett (1989) defined reflection as a process whereby it may consist of a thoughtfulness in action, considerations for good teaching, and a reorganization or reconstruction of experience for new understandings (Grimmett, 1989).

Summary

Reflection and reflective practices contribute greatly to the preparation and training that preservice teachers receive as a part of their formal teacher education programs. Recognizing the importance of teachers situated in their reflections, it becomes necessary to think about preservice teachers’ reflection so that the reflective practices that they engage in may become deeper, in support of their engagement in dynamic and diverse classroom settings. This study fills a gap in the literature by providing a phenomenological look at the reflective lifeworlds and experiences of preservice teachers and their constructed meanings.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The word “reflection” comes from the Latin word “reflectere”, with the prefix re- for “back” and the suffix flectere meaning “to bend”. Reflection essentially means to bend back. Educational researcher Jan Bengtsson noted that reflection was initially used to describe the optics of light against a watery surface and that when using reflection in human contexts the use transforms to one that is more metaphorical; “man turns him- or herself toward him- or herself and discovers him- or herself in the reflection” (Bengtsson, 1995, p. 31). The works of John Dewey, Donald A. Schön, and Max van Manen stand out as the predominant contributors to the practical and metaphorical views of reflection within the field of education from which the research of Vicki LaBoskey, Kenneth M. Zeichner, James Calderhead, Linda Valli, and others have developed and influenced teacher training over the last century. These authors and the studies they inspired will be the focus of this chapter and associated research. While this chapter emphasizes reflection and associated traditions limited to preservice teachers, it does not explore epistemology as it relates to reflection, as the philosophy behind understanding knowledge is not central to the questions being studied. The study sought to understand the experiences and beliefs of the preservice teachers as shared, recognizing the knowledge they possessed in this particular season of their training, and not how this knowledge has come to be known. The chapter also presents a theoretical framework which focuses on phenomenological principles as they relate to lived experiences and the reflective teaching and learning of teachers in training.

The Rise of Reflective Thinking in Teacher Education Programs

Prior to the twentieth century, in the United States, formalized teacher education programs did not exist. Teachers received training through rural and urban normal schools that
later became teachers colleges. This training consisted predominantly of schooling in reading, writing, and mathematics beyond the minimum years required, and in some states was the only high school education available at that time. Professional knowledge about teaching, the beginnings of educational theory and practice, slowly began to emerge beginning in the mid-1800s. Progressive Era politics spurred the conversation over the professionalism of teachers and by the 1930s, all states required some level of professional knowledge be incorporated into teacher training. Shifts at the collegiate level also included moving from one education-based representative in each department to the creation of stand-alone education departments (Angus, 2001).

While reflection as a practice has been around for centuries, the inclusion of it in these teacher education programs emerged in the 1980s (Bengtsson, 1995; Calderhead, 1987). This trend predominantly affected English-speaking countries, including the United States, due to the positivist alignment within the social and human sciences. Education was considered a technical process and the training of its “instruments” or teachers was viewed no differently (Cochran-Smith, 2004). According to Linda Valli’s research, as “an indication of the continued popularity of this approach, over half of the 29 teacher education projects funded by the U. S. Department of Education in 1985 had skill development as the primary orientation of their funded improvement projects” (Valli, 1990, p. 17). Reflective preservice teacher thinking at the time was seen as a scientific way to solidify knowledge and skills connected to practice. Preservice teachers were highly trained on what to value and think such that they lost touch with their own moral voices (Canning, 1991; Valli, 1990).

Education in the mid-to-late 1990s saw an increase in institutional, state, and federal control, particularly regarding policy. As a result, research connected to policy became part of
the education programs’ discourse and a resurgence of technical and practical teacher training was emphasized (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Qualitative research connected to reflective preservice teacher thinking concerning personal beliefs and values, world views, and diversity occurred, but took a back-seat to the more respected quantitative measures that provided statistical analyses heavily focused on teacher preparation directly connected to student learning and outcomes (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Clarke, 1994). Researchers valuing reflection as a teacher training tool linked their research to the dominant voices studying and advocating for reflective practices as way to further promote reflection’s significance. Reflection has been widely seen as the means through which preservice teachers thoughtfully engage with their experiences, as reflective practitioners are believed to hold strong skills in critical thinking, most especially problem-solving, decision-making, and multi-perspective analysis, all highly valued teacher qualities (Galvez-Martin et al., 1998).

Despite the significant interest in reflection, the field of teacher education lacks clear consensus regarding the definition and process for instructing preservice teachers in their reflective thinking (Calderhead, 1989; LaBosky, 1993). Some even consider reflection a utopian construct that preservice teachers are encouraged to do, yet with little oversight and feedback and varied structures for it (Marcos et al., 2011). Regardless, “reflection is the means by which preservice teachers may become reflective practitioners” (Galvez-Martin et al., 1998, p. 9). The research of Elizabeth A. Davis suggested that preservice teachers must be provided with productive reflective opportunities in order “to develop and demonstrate a more complex view of teaching” (Davis, 2006, p. 281). To do so, requires that preservice teachers understand reflection and its processes.

**Definitions and Models of Reflection in Teacher Education**
Educational researchers’ definitions for reflection vary. While their ideas connect back to those of Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Solomon, and Buddha, the definitions valued over the last century have taken shape in response to the needs of society and associated educational and political movements.

**Prominent Researchers**

Beginning with John Dewey, whom many consider the originator of reflection in education as it came to be known in the twentieth century, reflection was seen as a core tool for teaching and learning (Hatton and Smith, 1995). Dewey defined reflection as one’s ability “to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealing with future experiences” (Dewey, 1938, p.110). He believed that reflection consisted of several steps from confusion to tentative interpretation, to examination and exploration, to tentative hypothesis generation, and then to determining a plan of action (McDermott, 1973). By studying one’s actions, Dewey argued that one could properly understand the consequences, which would lead to further reflective thought and action. “[Reflection] enables us to know what we are about when we act. It converts action that is merely appetitive, blind, and impulsive into intelligent action” (Dewey, 1964, p. 211). In addition to skillfully following the steps, Dewey insisted that qualities of open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness were essential to help guide the reflective process (Dewey, 1964). Open-mindedness ensures that one entertains different perspectives recognizing errors in beliefs. Wholeheartedness promotes enthusiasm and curiosity for the subject matter, instead of indifference. Responsibility “is the reality check” for open-mindedness and wholeheartedness connecting and “acknowledging that the meaning we are acting on is our meaning” (Rodgers, 2002, p. 862). By allowing these qualities to influence reflection and by identifying the attitudes
and emotions one brings to the act of reflection, Dewey further explained the work of a good thinker. Carol Rodgers studied Dewey’s views of reflection and articulated that:

Reflection is not an end in itself but a tool or vehicle used in the transformation of raw experience into meaning-filled theory that is grounded in experience, informed by existing theory, and serves the larger purpose of the moral growth of the individual and society. (Rodgers, 2002, p. 863)

Teacher reflection enables learning related to understandings of, feelings about, and interactions within the world of teaching.

Building off of Dewey’s work but opposed to the use of the scientific method approach, Max van Manen supported the idea that reflection is an experience and promoted the concept of critical reflection (van Manen, 1991). van Manen also agreed with the work of Jürgen Habermas, an influential critical theorist connected to the Frankfurt School. Habermas warned against knowledge derived from the scientific, over-technical perspective, which would threaten the connection between theory and practice, from a reflective, emancipatory perspective. His cognitive interests theory highlighted the technical and practical base within education and curriculum thinking and sought after ideal communication and truth using reflexivity (van Manen, 1977). Stemming from Habermas’s work and by linking ways of knowing, van Manen proposed three reflective levels: technical, focusing on actions and strategies; practical, negotiating meanings and interpretations; and critical, considering moral and ethical structures and parameters (van Manen, 1977). Educators reflecting in this way would consider multiple perspectives and viewpoints in making decisions and taking action, rooted in socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts. Researchers have challenged this perspective of reflection noting that van Manen’s levels appear more like a hierarchy that reflection must move through, in which the
practical, a significant component, receives less attention (LaBoskey, 1993). Additionally, it has been questioned whether preservice teachers are capable of attaining critical reflection this early in their professional practice (Calderhead, 1992).

Stemming from the social and political agendas from which the American education system originated, and from a positivist and objectivist approach embedded in thinking and culture, colleges and universities reinforced and propagated the idea of technical rationality well into the second half of the twentieth century (Schön, 1983). Technical rationality supports the notion that professional knowledge consists of the application of scientific theory and technique in problem solving and practice – “practical competence becomes professional when its instrumental problem solving is grounded in systematic, preferably scientific knowledge” (Schön, 1987, p. 8). Donald A. Schön spoke out against problem solving from the technical rationality perspective, in favor of an epistemology of practice that focuses on knowing-in-action and “problem setting, the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen” (Schön, 1983, p. 40). For professional practice, including the field of education, the ends may present themselves as complex and conflicting. Given this, Schön advocated for practitioners to demonstrate and build professional knowledge using reflection – reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Reflection-on-action concentrates on prior actions and the associated critique after-the-fact, where reflection-in-action focuses on reflection in the moment or conscious thinking and modification. His research suggested that in action settings, practitioners strayed from that which they were taught at the college/university level to apply knowledge derived from real-world settings and practice. Schön supported the notion of teachers as reflective practitioners, as opposed to mere robots applying theory to practice. Educators need to be attentive to the dynamic and nonrational aspects of teaching (van

Peter P. Grimmett challenged Schön’s perspective. He argued that “underdeveloped systems restrict professional practice to a form of technical rationality limited to generating an array of alternative problem solutions” (Grimmett, 1989, p. 19). Schön asserted that his research applied to teachers; however, Grimmett pointed to the fact that Schön never directly studied the context of teachers and their reflection. Grimmett viewed the study of reflective practice in teacher education as one where educators work to make sense of challenging or puzzling experiences. Grimmett embraced the related research of Shulman (1988), who was concerned with dichotomous thinking in education, recognizing that the question of when teachers reflect needs to be considered, beyond the who and what that defines a reflective practitioner according to Schön. Shulman reasoned that:

Teachers will become better educators when they can begin to have explicit answers to the questions: 'How do I know what I know? How do I know the reasons for what I do? ....The capacity to answer such questions not only lies at the heart of what we mean by becoming skilled as a teacher; it also requires a combining of reflection on practical experience and reflection on theoretical understanding. (1988, p. 33)

Grimmett also noted the relationship between knowledge and reflection, using three categories, “the course of the knowledge reflected on, the mode of knowing that the particular conception of reflection represents, and the use that knowledge is put to as a result of the reflective process” (Grimmett, 1989, p. 20). Using these categories, Grimmett analyzed studies
of reflective practice and identified three perspectives on the conception of reflection in relation to teacher education: “reflection as instrumental mediation of action,” “reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching,” and “reflection as reconstructing experience” (Grimmett et al., 1990, pp. 23-26). For the first perspective, the reflective process is driven by the purpose for the reflection (Grimmett et al., 1990). This type of reflective thinking develops praxis and effective teaching practices connected to research. In the second perspective, reflection revolves around particular events and the related and often competing teaching views (Grimmett et al., 1990). This mode emphasizes an increase in practical knowledge. The third perspective encourages the view that one’s personal experiences will shape the content and outcome of reflection (Grimmett et al., 1990). Steeped in critical-theoretical understandings, this dimension of reflective thinking aims to transform teaching practices in ways connected to teachers’ views of themselves as teachers in conjunction with their beliefs and values. Grimmett’s account of reflection places great significance on the context to the reflective process.

van Manen’s continued research into reflection spawned additional definitions. Put plainly, he stated that “to reflect is to think” (van Manen, 1991, p. 511) and that everyone has the capacity for such practice, but may not always capitalize on available moments. van Manen proposed four forms of reflection that specifically related to the lifeworld of teachers. The first form, anticipatory reflection, allows for organized decision making in advance. Active or interactive reflection, similar to Schön’s reflection-in-action, promotes reflection in the heat of the moment. Recollective reflection, similar to Schön’s reflection-on-action, encourages review of past experiences to promote more thorough understandings and meanings. Reflection through mindfulness represents the fourth form, which focuses on the intersection of tact and interactive
moments (van Manen, 1991). van Manen defined tact as the appropriate way of acting towards others at a particular moment (van Manen, 1991).

To exercise tact means to see a situation…to understand the meaning of what is seen, to sense the significance of this situation, to know how and what to do, and to actually do something….Tact requires that one know how a situation is experienced by the other person. (van Manen, 1991, pp. 146-147)

Through reflective behaviors, van Manen asserted that educators will be better prepared to act in the moment to the varying needs of students. Teachers need to be able to demonstrate improvisation skills in the unexpected moments (van Manen, 1991).

While van Manen supported the notions of reflective thinking and reflection-in-action as described by Dewey and Schön, he questioned whether it is realistic, in the moment, to truly reflect on all possibilities. He asserted that individuals naturally focus on the situation in the moment and make decisions and take action accordingly. van Manen offered the idea of Kairos moments: those perfect moments that challenge understandings so that new understandings develop precipitating immediate action. “Kairos moments force us to be absolutely present to ourselves and to the meaning and significance of what we are facing” (van Manen, 2015, p. 52).

In these instances, van Manen emphasized that reflection pushes pedagogical lifeworlds and prior experiences. By placing focus on the reflective process and allowing it to provide the script for the unexpected moments and interactions, van Manen believed that teachers are thinkingly acting and by doing so teachers are better equipped to respond to the ever-changing needs and demands of schools and individual classrooms (van Manen, 2015).

*Connected Literature Reviews*
In 1986, Vicki LaBoskey performed a literature review on reflection and teacher education. She found that the meaning of reflection differed for theoreticians, researchers, and teacher educators. She evaluated Dewey’s 1910 model for reflection, in which individuals move through three phases of reflection, problem definition, means/ends analysis, and generalization, and determined that while they help to focus the individual on the process of reflection, they over-emphasize logical thinking, which can in fact hinder open-mindedness (LaBoskey, 1993). LaBoskey also considered van Manen’s 1977 three levels of reflectivity and found that they can keep preservice teachers from considering “the relationship between issues within or across categories” (LaBoskey, 1993, p. 26). Additional findings from LaBoskey’s literature review suggested that preservice teachers need to interact with and reflect on artifacts connected to their teaching as this will help to expand their thinking. When considering the role of educational programs in connection to preservice teachers’ reflection, LaBoskey highlighted the significance of the programs teaching “novices what it means to be reflective and how one goes about reflecting” (LaBoskey, 1993, p. 26). Helping them to understand that reflection is a complex process in which feelings and perceptions connect and interact with one another will contribute to the depths with which they reflect and the meanings that are derived. While much of her research suggested that preservice teacher reflection focused on theoretical content, LaBoskey maintained that preservice teachers need to be encouraged by their educational programs to consider as many facets of their teaching as possible so that both practical and theoretical perspectives receive attention. Through her research, she proposed a definition of reflection in teacher education that recognizes that preservice teachers are not “blank slates;” they enter the programs with years of classroom experience contributing to beliefs connected to teaching and learning. As such, she categorized preservice teachers into common-sense thinkers and alert
novices who reflect, which takes into consideration the conditions of the reflection, the process, and the content, which yield new comprehensions. LaBoskey commented on her proposed definition and noted that she hoped it might pull together the varying perspectives in a way that highlights the “relevant factors and associate them in explicit and meaningful ways” (LaBroskey, 1993, p. 36).

Neville Hatton and David Smith also performed a literature review on reflection, and in part, focused on the definitions and strategies that promote the inclusion of reflection in teacher education programs. The researchers commented too on van Manen’s three levels noting that they should not be viewed as a hierarchy through which reflection must pass, but rather be applied independently at different points within teachers’ education and based on the type of reflection being performed. They found that critical reflection is the least common of all types among preservice teachers as it relies on established metacognitive skills and an understanding of ideological frameworks (Hatton & Smith, 1994).

Through the presented definitions and models of reflection, the complexity of reflective thinking in preservice teacher education becomes clearer. “Models of reflective thinking delineate various levels of reflection of which technical, contextual and dialectical are the most common,” (Taggart & Wilson, 1996, p. 7). As defined by the researchers in this section, from a technical perspective, reflection, connected to prior experiences, emphasizes mastery and/or application. Preservice teachers tend to reflect at this level based on limited prior experiences where as more seasoned teachers reflect at a contextual or dialectical level. The researchers defined contextual reflection as a focus on alternative practices, where dialectical reflection responds to moral, ethical, and socio-political issues, with both creating interpretive understandings for the preservice teacher. While it is rare for preservice teachers to reach the
dialectical level it is possible, and understanding why and how this level may more frequently be achieved by teachers in training has not been fully examined in available studies. Researchers have agreed that preservice teachers move through reflective levels based on available situations and training opportunities, prior experiences, and knowledge of theory.

**Concerns for Reflection in Teacher Education Programming**

In reflecting on the definitions and models of reflection, Kenneth M. Zeichner, James Calderhead, Linda Valli, Carol Rodgers, and Marc Clara provided insight to the challenges associated with incorporating reflection into teacher education programming.

In the 1980s, Zeichner challenged the existing model of teacher education and in doing so, provided a definition for reflection. Following the release of *A Nation At Risk*, the findings of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, and the creation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Zeichner noted that teacher education programs employed an apprenticeship-like model to impart pre-existing pedagogical skills and theory in response to increased governmental control in schools (Zeichner, 1996, Zeichner & Liston, 1987). From this perspective, teachers were seen as technicians or passive participants. The inclusion of reflection served the purpose merely to create an illusion of professional growth, while maintaining teachers’ subservient positions (Zeichner, 1996). Zeichner argued that, “The reflective practice movement involves a recognition that teachers should play active roles in formulating the purposes and ends of their work….Reflection also signifies a recognition that … new knowledge about teaching is not the exclusive property of colleges” (Zeichner, 1996, p. 199). Zeichner believed that a process of continued growth led to the qualities of a reflective teacher (Grant & Zeichner, 1984). He lobbied for a teacher education model that included self-reflection built in
supervisory conferences, seminars, journal writing, and inquiry experiences (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Zeichner maintained that:

Unless we can begin to prepare teachers who are willing to assume more central roles in shaping the direction of their own work and school environments, the kinds of changes which may be on the horizon with regard to the occupation of teaching will continue to maintain the familiar pattern of “change but no change”. (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 45)

Further to this point, Zeichner’s research highlighted the vast differences that exist between schools and that teacher education programs cannot fully prepare teacher candidates for all classrooms. As a result, Zeichner advocated for reflective teachers able to apply the knowledge and skills learned through their preparation programs to these diverse settings (Grant & Zeichner, 1984). Preservice teachers’ training must shine light on institutional context as well as social contexts, such that preservice teachers possess the ability to navigate and promote social justice.

Calderhead’s review of teacher education programs maintained that no consensus exists around the reflective process, including what preservice teachers reflect about and how they become reflective (Calderhead, 1992). Calderhead pointed to a lack of knowledge into preservice teachers’ professional growth and a focus on technical skills as two main challenges to developing reflective practice as a part of teacher education programs (Calderhead, 1989; Calderhead, 1992). “[Preservice teachers] will inevitably learn in diverse ways and take different meanings from the experiences that are offered to them,” (Calderhead, 1992, p. 142). Understanding preservice teachers’ prior experiences and the knowledge derived from them are critical ingredients to the way in which teacher education programs teach preservice teachers to reflect. “We need to know how the individual characteristics of the student teacher, the demands of the alternative training activities we present to them, and the contexts in which they work in
schools interact,” (Calderhead, 1992, p. 146). Identifying and exploring these components Calderhead asserted will allow for more effective programming aimed at developing reflective preservice teachers (Calderhead, 1992).

Valli evaluated the models for reflection in teacher education programs in line with her perspective that teaching serves a moral responsibility (Valli, 1990). Teacher education programs must respond to the many voices chiming into the increasing social justice contexts, including multiculturalists, feminists, and critical theorists and providing an outlet for critical reflection is one such way (Valli, 1992). Valli determined that critical reflection preparation can be accomplished by addressing technical questions within their social and ethical contexts. To do so, she identified four orientations for the preparation of teachers: technical rationality, indoctrination, practical decision making, and moral reflection (Valli, 1990). Valli believed that technical rationality, a non-reflective approach, allows for practitioners to master the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective teachers. Indoctrination, also non-reflective, involves a prescribed world view in which practitioners are trained. Practical decision making incorporates the technical components of teaching with reflective practices such that teachers become managers. Finally, moral reflection relies on thoughtful analyses connected to moral aspects of teaching coupled with beliefs and values (Taggart & Wilson, 1996). Of the four approaches, Valli considered moral reflection to be the most desirable (Valli, 1990). Supporting this perspective, she noted that, “until reflection is consistently implemented at a programmatic level, it is impossible to argue that pre-service teachers are incapable of moral reflection. Perhaps they have just not been prepared or have not been given the opportunity to reflect,” (Valli, 1990, p. 23). By rooting technical content in situations that encourage critical reflection, Valli asserted that preservice teachers would develop more advanced reflective practices.
Rodgers identified four associated problems connected to reflection and teacher education. First, no one clear definition of reflection in comparison to other modes of thought exists. Teachers do not receive an instruction manual for reflection. Second, without a clear definition, no common language exists which makes it difficult to talk about the skill. Meanings vary and overlap. Third, assessment of how well one reflects cannot be easily performed due to the vague definition and varied ways for reflecting. It is unclear what constitutes enough when it comes to reflection. Finally, due to inconsistency of meaning and process, research into the education of teachers’ reflective practices becomes challenging (Rodgers, 2002). Rodgers believed that, “Dewey would urge us to reflect carefully [so that we might think] to learn” (Rodgers, 2002, p. 864). Without clear definitions and research to clarify, support, and confirm understandings and practices at the teacher education level, preservice teachers may transition to their classrooms without strong reflective skills.

Clara’s 2015 research revolved around the ambiguities towards the practice of reflection that exist within teacher education programs. She identified reflection as “any thinking process that transforms an unclear situation into a clear one” (Clara, 2015, p. 265). Through this definition Clara pointed to the confusion that exists in seeing reflection as a phenomenon, in contrast to how a phenomenon may be observed and then characterized. Clara suggested that Dewey and Schön’s research validated the idea that reflection continuously links inferences and observations, but that there is no one clear description to how reflection specifically works, leaving room for varied interpretations. Clara pointed to the works of Davis (2006), Postholm (2008), and Gelfuso and Dennis (2014) as researchers who aligned with Dewey and Schön to further illustrate the point that “the nature of assistance and the characterization of reflection depend very much on how reflection is understood” (Clara, 2015, p. 262). Additionally, Clara’s
research argued that reflection is not always a decision-making process, nor one that always links theory and practice. She challenged the view that reflection always links theory and practice (Clara, 2015). These findings further contribute to the view that clarity is needed regarding the meaning and process of reflection in order for it to be effectively implemented in programs to become a practice of preservice teachers.

**Studies Connected to Reflection in Teacher Education Programming**

Preservice teachers’ reflection and reflective practices have captured the attention of some researchers over the last twenty years. Using qualitative and quantitative measures, the researchers added to the literature on preservice teachers’ reflection as a part of their education programs.

Researcher Rida Blaik Hourani (2013) used an exploratory case study model involving semi-structured, focus group interviews to understand preservice teachers’ perceptions of reflection, the constraints and limitations to their practicing reflection, and how prepared they were to become teachers who actively reflected. Sixty preservice teachers, who completed three practicums and one internship as a part of an undergraduate education program in Abu Dhabi, participated in the study. Focus group sizes ranged between four and eight participants. Through the research, Hourani discovered that preservice teachers “perceived reflection as evaluating one’s teaching for improving the teaching practice” (Hourani, 2013, p. 27). The participants felt that they reflected post-action more than in-action and desired more in-action opportunities. They also articulated a desire for oral reflection in addition to, and where possible in advance of written reflection. To allow pre-service teachers to reflect on their experiences as learners, a call for programming to include self-observation and meta-cognitive skills was heard. Finally, aligning the standards for reflective practice with those professional standards that teachers would be held
accountable to was suggested (Hourani, 2013). This study affirms the need for further exploration into teachers’ perceptions and beliefs around reflection and reflective practices in support of their transition to diverse classrooms.

The research of Melanie Shoffner goes a step deeper by looking at preservice teachers’ affective concerns as a part of their reflective practices and lived experiences. She pulled the findings of two case studies involving undergraduate and graduate preservice teachers to explore the possible affective concerns connected to teaching and learning that the preservice teachers might reveal through electronic reflections. Using content analysis of the discussion forums and personal weblogs from twenty-seven participants, Shoffner observed “a relational perspective toward teaching and learning, while incorporating pedagogical issues in their affective expressions” (Shoffner, 2009, p. 788). Shoffner’s research affirmed the importance of providing an intellectual context for preservice teachers to reflect on the affective domain, recognizing the importance of such reflection and preparation in the development of good teachers (Shoffner, 2009). Understanding lived experiences and the phenomena at hand remains a critical component in reflective practices research.

Researcher Joan Y. Pedro understood this importance and sought out to understand how preservice teachers interpret and practice reflection as a part of their teacher education programs by studying five graduate level preservice teachers. Using a narrative design drawing on the works of Dewey, Schön, and Zeichner, Pedro interviewed and observed the participants and collected field notes, all over the course of three semesters. The results affirmed that preservice teachers understand reflection and its purpose. The participants demonstrated abilities to reflect in varying contexts and connected their beliefs and values with educational theories in relation to their teaching practices. It is important to note that the study did not seek out whether preservice
teachers already knew the concept of reflection and its associated principles prior to their participation (Pedro, 2005). Based on the results of this study, research into the lived experiences of preservice teachers as they relate to reflection and associated meanings would be an appropriate next step.

When thinking to how teacher education programs instill and develop reflection and reflective practices, Maria Elena Galvez-Martin, Connie L. Bowman, and Margaret A. Morrison performed an exploratory quantitative study measuring the levels of reflection twenty-one preservice graduate teachers achieved over three quarters while enrolled in their methods courses and completing one field experience. As a part of the study, participants reflected in journals, and kept field journals and reading journals. The researchers applied Ross’s 1989 Criteria for Assessing Levels of Reflection, and Galvez’s 1995 framework for analyzing preservice teachers’ reflective growth as their assessment tools. Using analysis of variance, the researchers determined that statistically significant growth in terms of levels of reflection took place between quarters one and two, and quarters one and three. In analyzing the data, the researchers found that preservice teachers’ reflective skills, without any other interventions, increased the more they reflected, and that the reflections grew in terms of reflective levels as well (Galvez-Martin et al., 1998). By promoting teachers’ reflective practices and their associated experiences, preservice teachers become more prepared to respond in ways that draw on pedagogical and ontological understandings, needed to successfully navigate the vary needs within classrooms.

On a similar path, researcher Hea-Jin Lee specifically sought to understand how teacher education programs can measure and increase preservice teachers’ reflective practices. Using a grounded theory approach, Lee studied three preservice teachers in a secondary mathematics education program in Korea to determine the content and depth of their reflective thinking over
the course of a semester while participating in field experiences. Using written artifacts, including journals and questionnaires, classroom teaching observations, focus group interviews, and semi-structured individual interviews, Lee inquired into how the quality of reflective thinking can be measured and how to enhance a preservice teacher’s reflective thinking to develop a reflective practitioner. Lee determined that the context for what preservice teachers reflect on is influenced by the parameters for which the reflection take place and that preservice teachers’ capacity for reflection varies based on the parameters as well. As a result, Lee recommended that teacher education programs provide a variety of experiences and contexts during and through which preservice teachers may engage in reflective thinking (Lee, 2005).

Additional studies of interest into preservice teachers’ reflection and reflective practices include the following. Anne R. Freese’s two-year self-study tracing the journey of one preservice teacher’s growth and development in becoming a teacher highlighted the importance of helping preservice teachers identify belief and practice conflicts as they start to identify their teacher-self (Freese, 2006). Jukka Husu, Auli Toom, and Sanna Patrikainen led a qualitative study using the constant comparative method to focus on four Finnish preservice teachers’ abilities to reflect, using guided reflection focused on critical incidents as a way of developing professional knowledge. Findings from the study suggested that preservice teachers are capable of different modes of reflection including those that challenge their beliefs and values as well as those engrained is social and cultural constructs (Husu et al., 2008).

From the findings of these studies, research into preservice teachers’ lived experiences as they relate to reflection and reflective practices would appropriately provide additional context for educational programs’ consideration of possible changes and/or enhancements.

**Background to Theoretical Framework**
Education has become increasingly about the numbers, and the role of teachers as beings in the development of students’ learning and the impact of the student-teacher relationship have become less and less a priority (Magrini, 2013b; Schön, 1987; van Manen, 1977; Zeichner 1996). Speaking out against the social efficiency model that has consumed education today, James M. Magrini explained how it has kept teachers from connecting with the ontological aspects of education. In the article, “Towards a Phenomenological Understanding of the Ontological Aspects of Teaching and Learning,” he noted that “we have forgotten the sense of phenomenological selfhood that defines us” (Magrini, 2013b, p. 128). By walking through Sartre’s phenomenological description of Being-for-itself and Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology of Dasein and Dasein’s care-structure, Magrini expressed concerns over how education has unfolded. He believed that ownership of the learning process no longer resides with the teacher and student and as a result, “we are losing sight of what it means to be truly human,” (Magrini, 2013b, p. 128). In his writing, Magrini alluded to ways for positive change focused on care towards and responsibility for others’ Beings through ontological aspects. He called for authentic experiences of learning, fostered by authentic teachers, who see their students as co-creators of learning, and who concern themselves with their students’ learning and the knowledge their students create. To transfigure education and learning, Magrini realized that teachers must be aware of the ontologies of students’ Beings (Magrini, 2013b).

In 2012, Tone Saevi and Andrew Foran explained that phenomenologically educators understand their students through their experiences and use that information to inform and guide their actions and responses. “Because every way of being in the world is a way of knowing the world, we can only know the world from our personal perspective” (Saevi & Foran, 2012, p. 59). To deeply understand students and to truly care for them as individuals, Saevi and Foran noted
that educators must be aware of the students’ experiences after first recognizing the students’ differences in a pedagogical way, a way that cannot be easily explained due to its complexities. Seeing a child is seeing them first for who they are and the knowledge that comes from that – the subsequent experiences related to this sensing and understanding. From this insight, teachers further build on the information and knowledge they have acquired about their students, which is separate from the pedagogical perspectives they have (Saevi & Foran, 2012).

Having a praxis that allows for phenomenological principles of teaching and learning is important. “Phenomenology is the way of access to the world as we experience it prereflectively. Prereflective experience is the ordinary experience that we live in and that we live through for most, if not all, of our day-to-day existence” (van Manen, 2014, p. 28). Dewey emphasized the importance of reflection particularly for teachers and said that, “it enables us to know what we are about when we act” (Dewey, 1964, p. 211). Teaching is a unique profession, one where the professional is always on the spot, having to make split-second decisions that can have, in some instances, a greater impact than ever imagined. van Manen’s research calls to question that if teachers need to be reflective, do they know the process by which to do so (van Manen, 2015)? Training about reflection, whether it be retrospective, anticipatory, or contemporaneous, should be part of teacher education programs to help prepare teachers for the varied experiences and moments that they will face while teaching. By using a phenomenological theoretical framework, one can more fully understand the meaning that preservice teachers draw from their experiences with reflection.

Introduction to Phenomenology

Taken from philosophy, phenomenology at its core revolves around the state of being and the experience of a particular moment or phenomenon. Phenomenology is concerned with
experiences, to understand the structures that lie within them. As if on a quest for meaning, phenomenologists are free to make their own meaning based on the personal significance something holds for them – “how [they] have come to understand something as a result of [their] enculturation and experiences” (Hopkins et al., 2017, p. 21). Using a phenomenological lens, one is able to examine and understand experiences.

Phenomenology developed initially out of the works of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger in the 1910s. “Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, used the phrase ‘back to the things themselves’ to focus on the objective of phenomenology” (Kruger-Ross, 2014, p. 157). From a Husserlian perspective, in simple terms, an object is not just an object. It is an object through consciousness as perceived, remembered, conceptualized, and the like, with each version of the object noticeably different. If the essential qualities of everyday experience through consciousness could be identified they could, according to Husserl be applied to the conscious experiences of others (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger, Husserl’s student, saw phenomenology as the combination of ontology, or the state of being, and hermeneutics, the way in which people interpret and make meaning of their lived experiences (Henriksson & Friesen, 2012; Kruger-Ross, 2014). “Thus ‘phenomenology’ means – to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself…. ‘To the things themselves!’” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 58). In his major work, Being and Time, Heidegger highlights Dasein, which means ‘there-being’. Heidegger was “concerned with the ontological question of existence itself, and with the practical activities and relationships which we are caught up in, and through which the world appears to us, and is made meaningful” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 17). Throughout everyday life, Heidegger believed little reflection occurs as to the meaning of things as they are, and Heidegger pointed out that through such reflection, “on the way that the meaning of things
involves a showing and a hiding, a concealing and unconcealing of their meaning and

Inspired by the works of Husserl, French philosophers, Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice
Merleau-Ponty, joined Heidegger in contributing to phenomenology through the mid twentieth
century until their deaths. Sartre, known for existential phenomenology, focused on
phenomenon, consciousness, and ontology and developed the phenomenology of being and
nothingness. Merleau-Ponty, also known for existential phenomenology, contributed ontological
phenomenology embodiment connecting the lived body and thought (Phenomenology Online,
2011; van Manen, 2014). More recently, the voices of the following researchers have continued
phenomenological scholarship directly connected to the field of education: Max van Manen
(2014, 2015), who has contributed works connected to phenomenology and pedagogy,
particularly with regard to teacher and student relationships, Michael Bonnett (2009), who has
studied the idea and importance of selfhood as it relates to education from a phenomenological
perspective with an interest in pedagogy and student-teacher relationships, Stephen Smith (2011,
2012), who has studied movement and pedagogical care phenomenologically with an interest in
human science methodologies, Iain Thomson (2016), who has studied educational possibilities
from an ontological perspective of education with an interest into the works of Heidegger, and
James M. Magrini (2013a, 2013b), who has contributed works connected to curriculum in
relation to phenomenology, ontology, and hermeneutics, (van Manen, 2014, 2015; Bonnett,
2009; Smith, 2012; Thomson, 2016; Research Gate, 2020; Magrini, 2013a, 2013b).

**Significance of Phenomenology to Practice**

van Manen’s work with phenomenology understands it as a practice relevant for personal
and professional life. He has explored the relationship between theory and practice, similar to
that of who came first, the chicken or the egg, then shifted to understanding the origins of practice through the works of Husserl and Heidegger, and the impact of objectivist technological thought on practice. van Manen has also examined the connection between phenomenology of practice and pathic knowledge, as well as the influence of phenomenological writing and text on practice (van Manen, 2007). Through an understanding of these elements and active reflection, van Manen has argued that we may better have a sense of “who we are and who we may become, between how we think or feel and how we act,” even before we are aware, which will “have pedagogical consequence for professional and everyday practical life” (van Manen, 2007, p. 26).

According to van Manen, phenomenology is about gaining an insight into how the world is seen and experienced by the individual in that moment and through it, how meaning and knowledge are then construed (van Manen, 2007). Through phenomenology, one’s practice can be explored, paying attention to the singular experiences or phenomenon, and from this, thoughtfulness and tact emerge and may be applied to an array of pedagogical situations (van Manen, 2015).

**Importance of the Phenomenon**

In his 2013 research titled, “A ‘Fundamental Theory’ of Education Grounded in Ontology? A Phenomenological Rejoinder,” Magrini asked, “How are we conceiving the human being in contemporary standardized education, and does this view do violence to who we are as phenomenological subjects?” (Magrini, 2013a, paragraph 4). He answered the question by sharing the impact of social efficiency on the modern-day educational system. Magrini explained how order, logic, and knowledge have in a way, degraded American education. Magrini sought out to further explain Dreyfus’s perspective of phenomenology over logical analysis, where in which he began by defining the relationship between epistemology and ontology, by way of Madeleine Grumet, then the idea of absorbed coping, with support from Heidegger. Magrini
defined absorbed coping as being “about meaning and meaningful activity, which finds structure in the fore-the-sake-of-which we do things” (Magrini, 2013a, paragraph 17), and stated that, “more important than knowledge of our situation or surroundings, is the meaning-significance for our life that emerges from out of the situations within which we find ourselves” (Magrini, 2013a, paragraph 18). Finally, Magrini explored Vandenberg’s fundamental educational theory, in which the world of learning is one making sense of what one experiences while within the world (Magrini, 2013a). Magrini stated that, “fundamental educational theory opens the way for the essential ‘accessibility of man in his educability,’ and this is never restricted to institutionalized settings or formal definitions of education” (Magrini, 2013a, paragraph 28). The key to fundamental educational theory as described by Magrini, is that the phenomenon remains pure to its form and is not reduced to something quantifiable in accordance with social efficiency (Magrini, 2013a).

Phenomenology as a Framework

“Phenomenological inquiry has as its goal deep understanding of some phenomenon, with no mandate for prediction or control” (Lincoln, 2010, p. 6). No two experiences are the same. Research viewed through a phenomenological theoretical framework will vary from researcher to researcher. It will be focused on a particular phenomenon to understand the experience that lies within it (Lichtman, 2013).

Fundamentally, the researcher needs to be grounded in philosophy, not theory, to appropriately and adequately apply a phenomenological theoretical framework (van Manen, 2014). Phenomenology is, “…. the taking up of a certain attitude and practicing a certain attentive awareness to the things of the world as we live them rather than as we conceptualize or theorize them” (van Manen, 2006, p. 721). Philosophy must be at the core of the
phenomenological researcher’s framework, epistemology, and methodology in order to truly recognize and appreciate the essence of the phenomenon being studied in the moment (Lichtman, 2013). “The project of phenomenology aims to question the assumptions and abstractions of theory, push off theoretical frames, shake off the captive restraints of concepts, and penetrate and deflate the suppositions that are wittingly or unwittingly adopted by theory” (van Manen, 2014, p. 66). In so doing, phenomenology captures the essence of phenomena and the pure meanings that come from them.

**Addressing Pre-Understandings**

When trying to access the world of prereflective experiences or the meaning of a phenomenon, the researcher needs to address his/her pre-understandings to clearly see the pre-understandings of those individuals connected to the phenomenon. van Manen’s (2014) research identified eleven approaches stemming from the works of Husserl and Heidegger.

Husserl believed that it was important to look beyond preconceptions to truly get at the essence of a phenomenon. “Husserl’s phenomenological approach is considered *nomothetic* in that it aims to move from individual instances to establish a universal meaning, or essence, that can be applied to all humans” (Hopkins et al., 2017, p. 22). In order to accomplish this perspective, Husserl believed that the researcher must put aside pre-understandings, as if bracketing them out of consideration, in order to focus fully on those of the research participants (Hopkins et al., 2017). “The process of tapping this essence of experience and looking beyond preconceptions became known by various interchangeable terms: phenomenological reduction, *epoché*, or bracketing” (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p. 82). By approaching one’s preconceptions in this way, the researcher takes on a more objective stance (Hopkins et al., 2017).
Contrary to Husserl, and despite studying under him, Heidegger believed, that as human beings, people are incapable of parsing out preconceptions, nor should they want to as the preconceptions are part of the lived experience (Tufford & Newman, 2010). For those who choose to bracket, it should be done repeatedly throughout the research process and across levels of consciousness (Tufford & Newman, 2010). “Our perspectives are constructed by the world we live in; and at the same time, we shape and transform those perspectives” (Hopkins et al., 2017, p. 22). Heidegger described this relationship as being-in-the-world. “Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, foresight, and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us . . . understanding always pertains to the whole of Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 191–192, 194). Through the practice of reflexivity, or being self-aware of one’s preconceptions, and naming and referencing them as sources of insight throughout the research process, the researcher takes on a more subjective role which Heidegger believed was more favorable and appropriate than the objective role encouraged by Husserl (Hopkins et al., 2017). Over the years, those engaged with phenomenological research have suggested that perhaps there is a middle ground. Hopkins, Regehr, and Pratt noted in their 2017 research stemming off of the 2009 work of Smith, Flowers, and Larkin that “the negotiation of particularity versus generality is not an either/or question” (Hopkins et al., 2017, p. 22).

Great emphasis is also placed on the writing process when addressing pre-understandings as a part of the phenomenological approach. “In a phenomenological sense, the research produces knowledge in the form of texts that not only describe and analyze phenomena of the lifeworld but also evoke understandings that otherwise lie beyond their reach” (van Manen, 2006, p. 715). The moment being studied is impacted not only by the specific moment but also
by those not being studied and the influence of the researcher’s consciousness – hence the importance of bracketing. “…. writing is much less a writing down of the results of a phenomenological analysis of the data given in consciousness or experience. Why? Because the data are not unequivocally ‘given’ as such at all” (van Manen, 2006, p. 716). Data is a collection of related experiences from a moment, significantly different from the not now in which we also live and experience, wanting to be similarly reflected upon.

Summary

This chapter reviewed literature associated with the practice of reflection in relation to preservice teachers and noted how reflection has been incorporated into preservice teacher education programs. A theoretical framework associated with phenomenology was also detailed with the purpose of helping to examine and understand the phenomena of preservice teachers’ reflection. Research gaps exist in identifying preservice teachers’ understandings of reflection and how they value it and engage in such practices. While many different qualitative methods have been used to study preservice teacher reflection, phenomenology has not been a popular choice. Recognizing that reflection is a state of consciousness, which phenomenology seeks to explore, studying preservice teacher reflection in this way makes sense and will add to the literature in this field.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study examined the meaning of reflection for preservice teachers by providing preservice teachers with an opportunity to practice reflection as a way of seeking understanding. In this chapter, the phenomenological research approach will be discussed with a focus on the method in accordance with Heidegger and van Manen’s philosophical views. The research questions, participants, setting, and qualitative instruments will be presented, as well as a synopsis of the data analysis, the associated threats to validity, and the limitations of the study.

Methodology and Case Selection

Though phenomenology originated from philosophy, van Manen suggested that it is possible to do phenomenological research without being grounded in philosophy (van Manen, 2014). “Doing phenomenology means …. reflecting in a phenomenological manner on the living meanings of everyday experiences, phenomena, and events,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 23). And, in doing so, the researcher focuses on and is able to think about the everyday in contexts made available by the philosopher. “To let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself,” (Heidegger, 2010, p. 32). Phenomenology seeks the essence of a phenomenon, and often those that are taken for granted. Phenomenological questions come from those experiences that are “experientially recognizable and experientially accessible,” (van Manen, 1990, p. 297). The goal of phenomenological questions is to open up possibilities and in turn, be open to possibilities (van Manen, 1997). Heidegger suggested that the more intimately one concerns oneself with the way of phenomenology, one might receive something from it in return (van Manen, 1997). Heidegger believed that being engaged in the world involves self-reflection
(Smith et al., 2009). Through reflective questioning, lived meaning of a phenomenon or experience is explored. “For the phenomenologist, this pathos means that there is nothing more meaningful than the quest for the origin, presentation, and meaning of meaning,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 27). Using phenomenology as a research method yields an inquiry to bring to light that which is usually concealed or hidden by asking questions (Heidegger, 2010; van Manen, 2014). “…In this questioning there exist the possibilities and potentialities for experiencing openings, understandings, insights – producing cognitive and …pathic perceptions of existentialities, giving us glances of the meaning of phenomena and events in their singularity,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 29). The phenomenologist is guided by a sense of wonder to seek meaning through everyday lived experiences.

While Heidegger cautioned against relying on a method, he described phenomenology as a method (Heidegger, 1982). As a method, phenomenology is discovery-oriented, with guides and traditions to help illuminate researchers’ paths. Phenomenology “tries to ward off any tendency toward constructing a predetermined set of fixed procedures, techniques and concepts that would rule-govern [a] research project,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 29). van Manen (1997) described phenomenological researchers as scholars, sensitively observant and fascinated by the subtleties of the world around them in relation to the human and social sciences, who read and then practice reflexivity as a way of releasing that which interests them. Phenomenologists investigate and create in line with a tradition of knowledge and insights made available by those phenomenologists before them.

Driven by a sense of wonder, the phenomenological method focuses on areas where meanings and understandings originate. In identifying or orienting the phenomenon or question(s) being studied, the researcher looks at the essence of lived experience as “a certain
way of being in the world,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 39), connected to his or her interests. Recognizing that one can easily become engrossed in an area of interest and its expanse, van Manen (1997) recommended that phenomenological researchers ensure that their topics or phenomena of interest have been well-defined to support the researchers’ focus. When it comes to research participants, “the researcher purposefully selects individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and ascertains their willingness to talk about it in an audio-recorded interview. In seeking participants, the researcher needs to demonstrate genuine interest and respect for participants,” (Sohn et al., 2017, p. 131).

For this study, the researcher, (often identified by the use of the first person at various points in this and following chapters), I, was a trained teacher, who experienced preservice teacher training and hands-on field opportunities. As an educator, with almost two decades of experiences and interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and the larger school community, I learned to value reflection and reflective practices.

In approaching my dissertation and research, it was very hard for me to narrow down one particular topic as I am fascinated about a lot of things connected to education. As I thought about it more and more, I realized how much I think and reflect. I also feel strongly about improving education for future generations, and I believe that that starts with teachers. The decisions teachers make in their classrooms, how they interact with their students, colleagues, and larger school community is very important. One way to help teachers understand the significance of their role, including their problem-solving and decision-making skills, and the ripple effect they can have, comes from the practice of reflection. During a particular curriculum course as a part of my doctoral studies, I was introduced to phenomenology. I had never thought about everyday lived experience in connection to the nature of being – that there are things we
take for granted in our everyday that could have great meaning and significance if we pay attention to them. As I thought about what is important to me in connection to education, I remembered my initial teacher training experience and what I did and did not learn in those short years as an undergraduate student. I then thought about all that I learned during my first few years as a teacher, and even the experience of having preservice teachers complete field work in my classroom. All of this led me to an interest in preservice teachers and reflection.

In thinking about the practice of reflection and the process to become a teacher, I identified how teacher education programs have sought to introduce reflection to preservice teachers (Bengtsson, 1995; Calderhead, 1987; Davis, 2006; Galvez-Martin et al., 1998). Given this, it made sense to explore what reflection means to preservice teachers and how they might value and practice it as they navigate their way through their education instruction and field experiences. The specific research questions included:

- How do preservice teachers define reflection?
- How do preservice teachers experience reflection?

By using phenomenology as the research method for this study, the meaning and value of reflection was explored in the context of preservice teachers’ lived experiences. Two interviews, two weeks apart, were held with each of the five participants. Between the interviews, participants were asked to provide an artifact or document representing recent reflection. The artifact was then referenced as a part of the second interview with each participant. Interview transcriptions were reviewed multiple times to pull out phrases and statements connected to themes, which were then incorporated into the researcher’s reflexive narrative writings.

**Description of the Setting**
This study took place at a large mid-Atlantic public university in the United States. The university has close to 15,000 undergraduate students coming from less than thirty states, with females representing roughly sixty percent of the student population, and students of color representing less than twenty-five percent of the total student population (The University, 2019). Teacher preparation has always been a focus area for the university, which boasts national and regional accreditation and recognitions from professional and state education organizations and departments. As a part of the university’s teacher training program, preservice teachers have a minimum of four required opportunities to participate in field experiences prior to graduation.

Description of the Participants

Five participants were involved in this study. They were all full-time undergraduate students, enrolled in a methods course directly connected to the content area in which they planned to teach: Early Grades, Middle Grades, Secondary English, and Secondary Social Studies. The researcher randomly selected several sections connected to the content areas’ methods courses. At the time of the study, all of the preservice teachers were wrapping up their last semester with multiple courses, anticipating their final field placement, student teaching, the following semester, which would complete their undergraduate degree requirements and the course work needed to attain teacher certification. Participants at this stage in their training programs were ideal as they were in the last semester in which they would receive formalized curriculum and instruction, while also participating in field experiences, working directly in classrooms with students and teachers. The preservice teachers were all Caucasian females. Four of the five participants completed semesters one through seven with the university and one participant transferred from a local community college to the university as a junior. All of the names used in this study have been changed to protect the participants’ anonymity.
Informed Consent and Protection of Human Subjects

As a part of this study, each participant signed a consent form. (See Appendix A IRB Appendices Consent Form.) Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. To further protect confidentiality, interview recordings, transcriptions of the interviews, and the electronically received artifacts were kept on a password-protected computer. Three years after the completion of this study, all data, including the Google form, audio-recordings, transcriptions, and artifacts will be destroyed or permanently deleted from the password protected computer. Reports and articles about this research will protect participants’ identities to the fullest extent possible.

Instrumentation

A qualitative study relies on gathering the unrestricted perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2015). Data collection tools are thoughtfully designed to correspond directly to the type of qualitative method being used (Lichtman, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln suggest that the qualitative researcher is like a bricoleur, weaving an intricate quilt. The qualitative researcher must consider the voices present in their research, sometimes including themselves, and the varying techniques used to gather the different voices and perspectives. What is gathered, like individual quilt tiles, then put together creates a complex display that more fully details the very nature of something (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). When seeing a quilt for the first time, it may be seen for all that it is – a whole object displaying a pattern or singular image. Then, the viewer begins to study it more closely, to see the intricate pieces that contribute to the whole, understanding their function and design. It is in this same way that qualitative research can be viewed and understood. “The [researcher’s] structuring of context invites [readers] into a world with which they may have had little experience, but which becomes an arena in which [they]
may begin to build deep understanding, compassion, community,” (Lincoln, 2005, p. 32). By looking at the whole and then taking the time to explore and reflect on the stories, experiences, and perspectives within, a deeper understanding develops that helps to create new contexts and meanings that can be extrapolated. For this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews and also collected one artifact, or reflective document, from each participant.

**Interviews**

Interviews, like conversations, allow for participants to share more personal information, such as thoughts and feelings, connected to a phenomenon in response to appropriate, conversational prompting, from the researcher (Creswell, 2015; Lichtman, 2013; van Manen, 1997). Phenomenological interviews provide an opportunity to gather first-hand, narrative accounts of individuals’ lived experiences that are not always visible (Roulston, 2010; Sohn et al., 2017; van Manen, 1997). “In the encounter, experience becomes an unfolding process that is constituted by loops of memory, reflection, description and questioning in the interview,” (Høffding & Martiny, 2016, p. 545). Experiences are not something that can be easily returned to and so the questioning of an interview is critical in helping the participant to access back to those moments in time and to reflect on them. “In the interview, the first-person perspective needs to be understood on its own terms,” (Høffding & Martiny, 2016, p. 561). While factual details contribute to an understanding, they are less important than developing an understanding of what an experience has meant to a person, as this first-hand experience can only be derived from the individual who lived it (Høffding & Martiny, 2016; Sohn et al., 2017).

In order for the interviewee to openly share and to stay as close as possible to the experience as lived, a researcher using the phenomenological method must create an atmosphere that reflects privacy, trust, safety, sincerity, and respect (Sohn et al., 2017). The researcher needs
to be sensitive, contributing minimally to the conversation so as to minimize bias and present a neutral stance (Roulston, 2010). Katheryn Roulston, with the University of Georgia, provided a typology connected to the quality of qualitative interviews for new researchers. Referencing the work of Steinar Kvale (1996), Roulston suggested that best practices leading to a quality interview include specific, relevant answers, short interview questions with long participant answers, and follow-up from the researcher to verify interpretations and understandings and to clarify meanings presented (Roulston, 2010). “Our knowledge remains open to being revisited and re-interpreted. Ultimately, one can never avoid making interpretations, but one’s aim in the interview is to get descriptions that are as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible,” (Høffding & Martiny, 2016, p. 547). By doing so, the researcher provides the most accurate account of a participant’s lived experience.

The key to a successful phenomenological interview relies on several factors. The phenomenological researcher should encourage the participant to access an experience retrospectively and to guide the participant towards a concrete experience on which to focus. Then the goal is to direct the participant’s attention to dimensions solely of that experience, (Petitmengin, 2006; van Manen, 1997). To do this, the researcher should use open-ended questions to help sustain focus on and encourage participants to dig into and share deeper meanings of their experiences (Seidman, 1998). “Transcripts of good phenomenological interviews include long segments of participants talking without pause or prompt. Quite often participants comment that they achieved new insights about the meaning of events in their lives,” (Sohn et al., 2017, p. 134). van Manen notes that effective phenomenological questioning may lead to moments of silence with a focus on the heart of the experience. “The phenomenological interview aims for pre-reflective experiential accounts,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 314). The
interview works to separate out views, interpretations, and perceptions of experiences. Additionally, the researcher should encourage participants to use their words rather than the words connected to the study to help keep the purist form of the participants’ subjective experiences without losing or hiding any subtleties (Petitmengin, 2006).

For this study, each participant was interviewed twice, with two weeks between interview one and two. The interviews ranged from over 30 minutes to over an hour. Using a semi-structured interview format, participants were guided through a series of questions (see Appendix B Interview Questions) that flowed as if the participant and researcher were engaged in a conversation. Some questions were asked to all participants and some varied based on the experiences and comments the participants shared (Lichtman, 2013). For example, the researcher asked each participant the question, what is your first memory of reflection, but only asked one of the participants, what do you mean you can look at your students, in response to an anecdote shared. The following questions represent a sampling of the interview questions asked:

- When someone says the word reflection, what does that mean to you?
- How do you reflect?
- What is your first memory of reflection in the context of you becoming a teacher?
- How would you describe the instruction you have received in how to reflect?
- How would you define an experience?

Question starters included:

- Do
- What
- How
- Why
After participants shared the memories of their lived experiences, providing or upon being requested to provide detail, the researcher confirmed her understanding of the experiences and asked clarifying questions regarding the associated meanings. At the end of each interview, the researcher provided the participants with an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the interview. Many noted how comfortable they felt and how the interview caused them to think about experiences in ways they had not previously.

**Reflective Documents**

Per IRB approval, participants were asked to provide an artifact, or reflective document. (See Appendix A IRB Appendices *Scripts.*) Artifacts, or documents can offer valuable insight connected to the phenomena being studied. “They provide the advantage of being in the language and words of the participants, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them,” (Creswell, 2015, p. 222). At the end of the first interview, the researcher asked the participants to each provide one reflective document related to a recent reflection. The reflections could be written, 2D, or audio-visual. During the second interview, the interview questions referenced each participant’s respective reflective documents as a way to gain access to the participant’s associated lived experiences with reflection.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The study began with identifying the setting and then the college’s particular courses that directly led up to the final field experience or student teaching block. Methods courses were selected across grade levels, pre-school through high school, and across high school subject areas. Emails were sent to professors requesting an opportunity to visit course sections to share about the study and inquire for interested participants. During six scheduled classroom visits students were given an information sheet (see Appendix A IRB Appendices *Information Sheet*)
that included a link to a Google Form (See Appendix A IRB Appendices Google Form) to sign-up. Professors also offered to email the document with the hyperlink directly to their students. Fifteen students signed-up using the Form. Based on availability, and to ensure representation from across the grade levels and subject areas, seven participants were selected. Two extra participants were selected in the event any participants chose not to continue with the study or if there were any data collection issues. This proved to be a good decision, as one participant, in the time between submitting interest to participate and the first interview, decided not to continue on with student teaching in the spring semester and another participant was unable to provide an artifact or meet for the second interview based on other commitments.

With course visits in October, the first round of interviews was held in November. Interviews lasted about an hour with thirty minutes to an hour between when the next participant was scheduled so that participants never saw one another entering or exiting the interview room. After each day of interviews, the interview recordings were uploaded to Same Day Transcriptions company’s portal to be transcribed. Transcriptions were then reviewed and the questions that proved beneficial that may not have been on the list of interview questions were added for the next scheduled interviews. At the end of each interview, the script about the needed artifact or reflective document (See Appendix A IRB Appendices Scripts) was shared and the date and time for the second interview as well as the date for artifact submission was confirmed with the participant. It became apparent that participants wanted this information in writing and so a follow-up email was sent to each participant confirming the date, time, and location for the second interview as well as listing the information for the artifact for reference. Participants then replied to the email when sending their artifact. Artifacts were received within one week of the first interview and reviewed.
It was assumed that participants would prefer to meet at the college’s main campus and initial interviews were set-up accordingly; however, it was determined during interviews with participants that they were living off campus and driving onsite for the interviews. As a result, the second round of interviews were held at one of the college’s satellite locations, which was easier to access and where parking was free.

The second round of interviews were held in December, about two weeks following the first round of interviews. The second interviews lasted between one hour and one and a half hours and were similarly scheduled such that participants could enter and exit the interview room without being seen by other participants. Following each day of interviews, the interview recordings were uploaded to Same Day Transcriptions to be transcribed. Transcriptions were then reviewed and the questions that proved beneficial that may not have been on the list of interview questions were added for the next scheduled interviews.

In January and February, interview transcriptions were analyzed in accordance with the selected data analysis approaches to identify themes. The researcher then practiced reflexivity, writing and rewriting in response to the themes connected to the participants’ lived experiences and those of the researcher.

Data Analysis

When analyzing phenomenologically, the researcher aims to identify and understand the themes or structures of lived experiences through the use of varied approaches in conjunction with the researcher’s positionality. There are no set rules or strictly defined processes when it comes to phenomenological analysis (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2014). “…one’s theoretical framework influences the interpretation of the descriptions…[and] the descriptions sometimes put one’s theoretical framework under pressure. The analysis is therefore a dialectical process in
which one’s view of the meaning of the descriptions changes,” (Høffding & Martiny, 2016, p. 544). Phenomenological analysis seeks to identify themes from which thoughtful meaning and learning may be derived.

van Manen offered three approaches to uncover and isolate themes in text connected to a phenomenon: theme analysis, conceptual analysis, and insight cultivators (van Manen, 2014). For this study, the researcher used theme analysis. Using theme analysis, a researcher focuses on the following approaches to reading text: the wholistic, the selective, and the detailed. Using the wholistic approach, the researcher considers the identified text as a whole, looking for a phrase or sentence that might capture the fundamental meaning or significance of the entire phenomenon, from which a phrase is generated to capture the meaning. From the selective approach, the researcher looks and makes note of direct statements or phrases that reveal the significance connected to the phenomenon. The detailed approach has the researcher study every sentence or phrase to determine its significance in relation to the lived experience. As themes emerge, commonalities may surface and will require additional study. The “essential quality of a theme … [is that we] … discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is,” (van Manen, 1990, p. 107). Once themes are identified, the researcher then begins the process of writing. The creation of a written product that measures the researcher’s thoughtfulness, understandings, and ability to bring to light that which is not readily seen or available to all, is the true goal of phenomenological research, as explained and demonstrated by Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology’s scholars. In the words of van Manen:

Writing separates us from what we know and yet it unites us more closely with what we know…..Writing distances us from the lifeworld, yet it also draws us more closely to the
Writing abstracts our experience of the world, yet it also concertizes out understanding of the world. Writing objectifies thought into print and yet is subjectifies our understandings of something that truly engages us. (van Manen, 1997, pp. 127-129)

Through the complex process of writing, which includes reflecting, recognizing, and rewriting, the researcher attempts to justly capture the essence and meanings of a phenomenon.

For this study, the interviews provided the lived experiences from which to investigate and understand the structures associated with the experiences. The researcher used the wholistic reading, selective reading, and detailed reading analysis approaches. First, participant-by-participant, the researcher read the transcriptions for the first interview then the second interview. Bearing the research questions in mind, reflective notes were written as to what stood out fundamentally about each participant’s understanding and meaning of reflection. The researcher then read the transcriptions, in the same order, repeatedly, and she identified statements and phrases that seemed essential or revealing about the participants’ lived experiences in relation to reflection. A list of the statements and phrases was created. Using the detailed reading approach, the research looked more closely at each statement and phrase to see what might be revealed about reflection. The researcher then looked for commonalities across the phrases and statements, which were directly used in reflexive narrative practices, contributing to the writings in Chapter 4. These writings were arranged thematically using moments identified from the memories of lived experiences the participants shared.

While the researcher asked each participant to provide a reflective document, the documents were not used as a form of triangulation. Triangulation refers to the process of validating data or information gathered, and in qualitative research it can include using multiple methods or practices (Creswell, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In a phenomenological study,
the participants and the researcher each have their own truths, understandings, and positions that are identified and shared as a part of the reflexive processes; “there is no single interpretive truth,” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 15). The way that a certain phenomenon is explored and understood as a part of one study will not be the same way across all studies due to nature of human experience and positionality, and this inherently understood of phenomenology (van Manen 1997, 2014).

Validity, Reliability, and Bias

Validity refers to a study’s “findings and interpretations [being] accurate” (Creswell, 2015, p. 258). Unlike other qualitative methods, sample selection criteria, member checking, triangulation, and other internal and external validity measures do not factor into phenomenological studies. It is not possible to validate a phenomenological study as a whole (van Manen, 2014). Phenomenological researchers should check with participants to make sure that they have captured and understand the essence of a participant’s lived experience, which is a form of validation (Sohn et al., 2017; van Manen, 1990). “The affirmation from participants that our accounts resonate with their lived experience is important and highly valued,” (Sohn et al., 2017, p. 140). The researcher has the responsibility to interpret the stories and anecdotes to extrapolate themes and understandings, and then communicate these through reflexive narrative. “The validity of a phenomenological study has to be sought in the appraisal of the originality of insights and the soundness of interpretive processes demonstrated in the study,” (van Manen, 2015, p. 348). van Manen proposed that a phenomenological study could be validated on the grounds that it is rooted in scholarly phenomenological literature, that it includes a phenomenologically valid question, that the human data to be analyzed comes from experience-filled descriptive accounts, and that validation criteria appropriate for other research methods are
not used (van Manen, 2014). A valid and exceptional phenomenological study according to van Manen may or may not include a lot of findings, will create a sense of wonder, will present reflective insights connected to recognizable everyday experiences, and will promote reflection and deep insight (van Manen, 2014).

The researcher for this study attempted to ground the study in phenomenological literature connected to van Manen, who aligned predominantly with Heidegger. The study’s research questions sought to understand meaning around a select group’s lived experiences, as captured through detailed conversations. During each interview, the researcher thoughtfully questioned and confirmed that she was accurately hearing and understanding the experiences as described. Once all data was collected, the researcher carefully analyzed each transcribed conversation, looking for themes. These themes were analyzed through the researcher’s reflexive narratives meant to acknowledge bias, provide insight, and spark wonder and further reflection.

In comparison to validity, reliability suggests that a researcher could repeat another researcher’s study, by replicating the method and procedures in a comparable setting and receive similar results (Creswell, 2015). The possibility of obtaining reliable results from a phenomenological study is impossible, given the essence of the method - studying life experiences impacted by individuals’ positionalities and epistemologies, and drawing new insights (van Manen, 2014). The results of this study are unique to the researcher and her positionality and epistemology, as it is also to the participants and their lived experiences.

In addition to validity and reliability, phenomenological researchers must be constantly aware of bias. Phenomenologists make meaning based on the personal significance something holds – “how we have come to understand something as a result of our enculturation and experiences,” (Hopkins et al., 2017, p. 21). Preunderstandings and lived experiences are
complex. These frameworks naturally guide one, and in order to practice reflexivity, one must let them go, to “place ourselves at the beginning….and thus witness the birth of meaning,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 237). By overtly identifying beliefs, biases, perceptions, understandings, and prior experiences in the process of analyzing and reporting on a study’s findings, the phenomenologist strengthens the study and the significance of the narrative. The researcher of this study practiced reflexivity as a way of making her bias known to allow the lived experiences of the participants to take on new meaning and provide new insights.

**Positionality**

Positionality refers to the spectrum of positions, from insiders to outsiders, that researchers assume in connection to their studies’ settings and the challenges they may experience as a result. How researchers position themselves even impacts how they respond to epistemological and ethical issues connected to their studies (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Since the researcher of this study is an educator and was once a preservice teacher, the researcher attempted to have a positionality of that of an insider in collaboration with other insiders – preservice teachers. Since the researcher was not a professor at the university where the preservice teachers were enrolled and had no prior relationship with any of the participants, they should have felt no pressure to impress or share beyond what they did in response to the questions asked of them. Additionally, the researcher noted her familiarity with the preservice teacher training process and in conversations prior to and after each interview, and in doing so, the researcher engaged the participants in chitchat building her ethos with them. Despite this, participants frequently commented that they hoped their responses were what the researcher was looking for or apologized when they did not understand the questions asked. “When we constantly engage to understand how our positionality biases our epistemology, we greet the
world with respect, interact with others to explore and cherish their differences, and live life with a fuller sense of self as part of a web of community,” (Takacs, 2003, p. 38). When responding to the participants’ displayed insecurities, the researcher encouraged the participants and altered questions and responses accordingly, listening intently to every word that was said. Additionally, the reflexive practices of the researcher allowed her to acknowledge her presence in the study and any related bias (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

**Summary**

This chapter reviewed the selected methodology for this study and described the setting and participants, and the way in which the participants’ confidentiality and safety was maintained. The instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis were also identified and outlined. Elements of qualitative research studies that do not apply to the phenomenological method were discussed, as was the presence of bias in connection to the importance of reflexivity. Finally, the researcher’s positionality was introduced. As van Manen explained:

> The point of phenomenological research is to ‘borrow’ other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience in the context of the whole of human experience. (1997, p. 62)

By gathering and acknowledging memories of lived experiences from both participants and researchers, the phenomenological method captures where new meanings, wonder, and prereflective experience originate.
Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This study sought to examine preservice teachers’ lived experiences connected to reflection by encouraging participants to engage in the act of reflection. Specifically, the following questions guided this study:

- How do preservice teachers define reflection?
- How do preservice teachers experience reflection?

Using a phenomenological research method, five preservice teacher participants met twice with the researcher, one-on-one, to respond to semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix B Interview Questions) that sought after the preservice teachers’ lived experiences and associated meanings. Phenomenology focuses on the essence of everyday lived experience where meanings and understandings originate. As a method, it captures participants’ and researchers’ experiences with certain phenomena where pre-reflective thought originates to uncover and explore the wonders and meanings of such experiences. Unlike other research designs, no fixed set of procedures or techniques exist for phenomenology. The phenomenological researcher, following the footsteps of other phenomenologists, aims to gather, often through interviews, lived experiences connected to a phenomena. For this study, a semi-structured interview format allowed for the participants’ stories and experiences to become known to the researcher, who then, in line with the phenomenological method, practiced reflexivity to highlight and make known that which interested her.

Between the first and second interview, each participant provided a reflective document that was referenced as a part of the second interview to help elicit the participants’ lived experiences. Following the first interview, the researcher read and listened to each of the
transcribed interviews to help inform questions for interview two. Following the second round of interviews, the researcher read and listened to each of those transcribed interviews. The researcher reviewed the transcriptions from the first interviews again, and then she pulled out of interview one and two transcription phrases essential or revealing about the participants’ lived experiences in relation to reflection. This practice aligns with van Manen’s view that text should be considered “as sources of meaning,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 320). The researcher then looked for commonalities across the phrases and statements, which were directly used in reflexive narrative practices, contributing to the analysis in this chapter.

The researcher’s reflexive thoughts and commentary contributed to this phenomenological research and can be found throughout this chapter, identified by paragraphs and sentences that begin with the use of the first person (e.g., “I noticed…”). van Manen (1997) reminded phenomenological researchers that when it comes to educational research:

Research and life are drawn more closely together in our understanding of research/writing as a form of thoughtful learning….We should remind ourselves that, from a reflexive point of view, research and theorizing themselves are a pedagogic form of life and therefore inseparable from it….Phenomenological engagement is always personal engagement. (pp. 155-156)

Moments of teaching and learning are unique. By studying and being attentive to individual experiences, educators may be better prepared to thoughtfully respond. In this spirit, phenomenological educational researchers write to learn and write to teach. By identifying the understandings and meanings of a participant’s lived experience and connecting them to the lived experiences of others involved in the study, including the researcher’s experiences in relation to the phenomena being studied, the research produced themes, or moments,
representing authentic and unique contributions that help to build greater understandings. Through phenomenological engagement the participants and the researcher came to know themselves better as educators and human beings, and how they think and feel in relation to the phenomena. As an educator who experienced professional teacher training and has also benefited personally and professionally from reflective practices, I saw this study as an opportunity to learn about a small facet in the professional teacher training space, to provide unique context and lived experience for those working in this space, and to offer preservice teachers with an opportunity to think about their experiences connected to reflection as they progress with their training.

In line with phenomenological research practices, the reflexive writings and the themes, or moments, have been arranged into sections that follow a sort of timeline, beginning when the preservice teachers entered the teaching profession to their experiences as a part of their professional training. The moments specifically refer to the situations or events in which the preservice teachers found themselves, and from which or during which they reflected. To help create a context for each participants’ memories of lived experiences with reflection shared through the sections related to these moments, general participant background information is provided first. This organization enables exploration of the reflection-related phenomena being studied.

**Participant Background Information and General Reflective Practices**

Five female preservice teachers enrolled with The University participated in this study. The participants’ concentration areas spanned early grades, middle school, and secondary English and Social Studies. Each preservice teacher willingly shared her personal experiences connected to reflection, including reflective practices and frequency of reflection, and those
reflection-related experiences directly connected to becoming a teacher. The names of the participants have been changed as has identifying information shared during the interviews. The following is meant to provide background information connected to each participant.

Sarah

Sarah enrolled as a freshman with The University to study secondary education Social Studies. At the time of the interviews, she had participated in seven field experiences and was in the fall semester of her senior year, desiring upon graduation a position teaching juniors or seniors at the high school level. She knew she wanted to be a teacher from a young age, when she could be found teaching her stuffed animals. The experience of having some “absolutely terrible” (Interview, 11/12/2019) teachers in elementary school further motivated her to want to become a teacher, and the best one she can be. When asked about how often she reflects, Sarah said that she might do so five to ten times a day, at least that she is aware of, recognizing the presence of conscious and subconscious reflection. She also noted that, “It probably depends on if I’m in one of my field placements….I definitely reflect a lot more….probably around like twenty-five to thirty times [then],” (Interview, 11/12/2019). When asked about the methods Sarah used to reflect, she mentioned using a notebook to record her observations, actions, thoughts, and what in the future she would want to do differently for certain situations or scenarios. Sarah also noted about reflective thoughts she experiences while in the act of teaching. For in the moment reflective practices, Sarah described them as, “If I watch a student in my field, blatantly on their phone, completely ignoring the teacher, [I] will be thinking in the moment. Like wow, I wouldn’t have just ignored that,” (Interview, 11/12/2019). Sarah’s explanation for why she wanted to become a teacher and her reflective habits echoed her commitment to be the best educator she can be, and suggested her familiarity with reflective practices.
Beth

When Beth enrolled at The University as a freshman, she selected a non-education science-related major. While she believed that “it’s an amazing field,” she noted that she was not a “science-minded person,” and realized that she had always wanted to be a teacher, but had been steered away from it due to some negative connotations, (Interview, 11/13/19). Wanting “to be that positive influence in a student’s life,” (Interview, 11/13/19), Beth transitioned to a major in secondary education with a focus in English, because:

I think in English specifically you can just do so much, and you can touch on so many areas in the person’s life and really discuss so much. And that’s really attractive to me, that opportunity for discussion and I think you learn a lot about yourself as a teacher while teaching the students as well, and I think that’s really cool. (Interview, 11/13/19)

By the time of the interviews, Beth was a fifth-year student, in her ninth semester, and had participated in five field experiences. Ideally, Beth would like to become a high school English teacher. When asked about how often she reflects, Beth said daily, both consciously and subconsciously. She felt that she often reflected as a result of her major. “We’re told to reflect often, like in assignments…like reflect on this piece of work, reflect on your field experience, reflect on everything,” (Interview, 11/13/19). When asked about the ways she practices reflection, Beth mentioned using a journal to capture her thoughts. For class assigned reflection, she mentioned coursework that requires a written response. Beth also described reflective thoughts that would not be written down in response to questions like, “What happened [so] that I’m here? Why am I feeling this way? This went really well [because]. What can I learn from that? What went well here?” (Interview, 11/13/19). Beth’s journey to become a teacher resulted
from reflective decision making, and she noted that reflective practices continue to be significant to her as she navigates her teacher training courses and experiences.

Karen

After completing over three and half years of schooling at a community college, Karen, a first-generation college student, transferred to The University to earn a Bachelor of Science in Education in Early Grades Preparation with additional certification in Special Education for grades Pre-K to 8th. Karen’s motivation to become a teacher with such certifications emerged from her own educational experience. “Growing up, I was in the Special Education program. Education was not very big in my family,” (Interview, 11/14/19a). Despite education not being highly valued by her family, Karen knew she wanted to be a teacher:

I remember my earliest memories playing with my [siblings] and forcing them to be my students…. In middle school and high school, I even would find myself, you know once I understood the information that was being taught, I would try to go above and beyond and help my fellow students. (Interview, 11/14/19a)

At the time of the interviews, Karen was classified as a junior, and had completed three field placements with the community college and two with The University. Upon graduation, she shared that she desires to become a second grade teacher. When asked how often she reflects, Karen understood the question in terms of her teaching training only and said, “probably about four times a day” (Interview, 11/14/19a), and sometimes more depending on whether coursework required reflective responses. The directions and expectations related to her coursework and field work seem to strongly influence Karen’s understanding of reflective practices. She shared that she desires to do well and likes knowing the parameters and expectations. As for the ways that Karen practiced reflection, she noted it being “mainly internalized” (Interview, 11/14/19a), as in
she would think about things and question them. The experience of a writing course also had Karen “just very slightly….jot down different feelings” (Interview, 11/14/19a). Karen described herself as a social person, and as a result her preferred method for reflection is to talk about her thoughts with others:

It’s just me talking about um, experiences that I’ve gone through throughout the day or the month or the year and how I think I did well, how I could’ve done things differently….how I need to improve, how I could change a situation, and how I could make a difference and if that’s even reasonable or if it’s just a wish. (Interview, 11/14/19a)

Karen very literally responded to the questions asked of her, asking at times for clarification in how she should respond to certain questions that called on her to think about her experiences. Based on what Karen shared, she reflects on a personal level with friends and as directed in relation to her professional teaching training, no more no less.

**Laura**

At the time of her initial enrollment with The University, Laura selected English Literature as her major; however, in realizing limited job prospects with such a major, she switched to studying secondary education with a focus in English, ideally teaching at the middle school level. Laura shared that she came to love teaching through her love for English. “I realized that I could be that person that made me fall in love with English Literature. So I’ve grown to love teaching even though that’s not why I first went into it,” (Interview, 11/14/19b). When asked how frequently she reflects, Laura replied, “24/7, 365. Always. I don’t think there’s a moment where I’m not reflecting on something that happened,” (Interview, 11/14/19b). At different points in the interviews, Laura commented on having perfectionistic tendencies,
including a strong desire to impress her professors and those teachers at assigned field placements with whom she interacted. She felt that these tendencies at times impact her confidence, and as a result she felt that she sometimes over reflects. “As soon as something comes out of my mouth whenever I’m [teaching] I’m questioning it. Did I say that right? Do they understand? I don’t know if that’s the best thing. I should probably stop doing it,” (Interview 11/14/19b). In contrast, she expressed a growing sense of confidence specifically with regard to her teaching abilities that she attributed in part to her professors frequently asking her to share what went wrong and why. In response to how she practices reflection, Laura shared the questions that come to mind as thoughtful self-reflection outside of course assignments is her preferred reflective method. “I question what happened. I think about what happened like that was good, what happened that was bad, how I would have redone what I did. It’s just a lot of pondering of what happened,” (Interview, 11/14/19b). Laura’s perfectionistic nature, desire to impress, and longing to inspire her students drive her continuous need to reflect.

*Kristen*

Kristen enrolled in The University to earn a Bachelor of Science in Middle Grades. At the time of the interviews, she was a senior, in her seventh semester, and had completed seven field experiences. Despite knowing that she always wanted to work with children, while in high school Kristen explored a variety of career options, including advertising. Around the same time, a younger sibling, with a learning disability, was struggling in school. Based on the stories the sibling would relay, Kristen felt as if the sibling’s teachers did not understand the sibling, and so at home each night, Kristen and her sibling would work on the sibling’s homework together. Through this experience, Kristen, “realized that every child learns differently,” (Interview, 11/18/19). She shared that she started to wonder about the causes of student anxiety and their
dislike for school. “In elementary school, a lot of kids are kind of clumped together. They like school. Or they don’t like school. But, then, middle school is when that kind of decision sticks with them,” (Interview, 11/18/19). Based on this, Kristen aspires to teach fifth or sixth grade. In thinking about her reflective practices, Kristen described herself as a perfectionist with a fear of failure. She feels motivated to reflect if it will make her a better teacher or a better student. She wants to be the best that she can be for her students and in relation to the grade that she earns as a part of her professional teaching program (Interview, 11/18/19). When asked about how often she reflects, Kristen shared that it depends on the day. For Kristen, reflection can make her feel more stressed, especially if she has a lot happening and a day did not go very well. On better days, she thought that maybe she reflected less consciously than on not so good days. Kristen noted that her preferred methods for practicing reflection are to think through events or situations or to write down her thoughts, reflecting that, “it doesn’t look as bad when it’s on paper,” (Interview, 11/18/19). Kristen’s perfectionistic tendencies coupled with her educational experiences and realizations inspired her to make a difference. As such, she actively practices reflection as she finds or feels benefit or is directed.

In summary, the five participants’ areas of study span early education and middle grades, as well as secondary education with concentrations in English and Social Studies. Whether they knew they wanted to be teachers from a young age or stumbled into the field closer to college, they all expressed contentment with their studies and look forward to their student teaching placements.

In terms of reflection, the five participants all answered the researcher’s questions about frequency of reflection and ways of practicing with ease and certainty. All five participants shared that they believe they reflect daily, most especially in relation to their teaching training
programs as prompted. Additionally, they noted similar ways of engaging with reflection, whether it be time spent thinking about certain experiences and what went wrong or well, or journaling.

As the questions dug deeper to understand the five participants’ lived experiences with reflection and reflective practices, understandings started to emerge. For Sarah, Laura, and Kirsten, perfectionism has prompted and driven their reflective practices. Beth and Karen found comfort and success in following rules and directives and reflected accordingly. In learning of the participants’ experiences that led them to want to become teachers, and in hearing of the frequency and ways in which they practice reflection, the door opened to further explore their lived experiences with and through reflection.

Definitions and Defining Moments

In reviewing the interview transcriptions and the researcher’s reflexive notes from the interviews, definitions of reflection and three themes, or moments, emerged from the participants’ responses. These moments included: personal development moments, moments in entering the teaching profession, and professional teacher training moments. Prior to examining these moments to understand the meaning and value the participants have and place on reflection, the participants’ definitions for reflection are shared, including the researcher’s reflexive narrative. By identifying and naming participants’ definitions, one can better understand the participants’ context for and framing of reflection that is expanded upon through the three moments.

Definitions of Reflection

When asked what the word reflection means, the five participants provided similar responses. Three participants saw it as an experience or noted that the reflection connects to
experiences. Thinking literally, two defined it as looking or thinking back. Three of the preservice teachers talked about self-reflection in the context of growth, suggesting that reflection can be defined as growth. Aware of the purpose of this study, three chose to describe reflection’s meaning in relation to tasks associated with teacher education.

As for the meaning of reflection, Kristen, Sarah, and Beth thought of reflection as an experience: “taking into account your experiences….connecting [them] to other experiences,” (Interview, 11/18/19), “thinking about your experience,” (Interview, 11/12/2019), and “a learning experience,” (Interview, 11/13/19). Sarah and Beth described reflection as “looking back upon what you have done in the past or what you are witnessing and thinking about your thoughts on it, your opinions on it, and what you would potentially change or not change,” (Interview, 11/12/2019) or “thinking back….to something that you witnessed,” (Interview, 11/13/19), for the purpose of analyzing what happened. Kristen also saw reflection as coming “to a conclusion,” (Interview, 11/18/19). Additionally, Laura, Karen, and Kristen named or referenced the idea of self-reflection. Laura described it as, “how you view yourself internally and externally….a reflection of yourself,” (Interview, 11/14/19a) for the purpose of growth.

When describing reflection, Laura, Kristen, Karen, and Sarah also spoke about the connection of reflection to education. Laura noted that “you have to question like what you’re doing as an educator. It could also be a reflection on your students and how they’re doing,” (Interview, 11/14/19b). Kristen gave an example of reflecting on a lesson (Interview, 11/18/19), and Karen considered reflection:

Standing back and looking at your students and seeing how they’re taking the information that you have taught them. And how you feel, that if they have soaked up the information that you meant for them to take in, as well as how you could teach something
differently or better, or if you need to completely change something. (Interview, 11/14/19a)

In response to seeing reflection as an experience, Sarah went on to talk about the effectiveness of the experience, in relation to teaching. When reflecting, she said that she considers an experience from the perspective of, “if it’s something you would be able to do again, and be either more effective or at the same level of effectiveness,” (Interview, 11/12/2019).

Across the five participants similarities existed with regard to what reflection means to them, whether it be single or multiple experiences, literal definitions, growth connected to self-reflection, or the reflection expected as a part of professional teacher training. From these definitions and meanings, the researcher sought to explore more of the understandings and values that the preservice teachers place on reflection.

When initially listening to and then reviewing the participants’ definitions, I felt a sense of connection to what they shared. If I were to go back in time to when I was in their position, I might have shared similar literal definitions and meanings. As Laura noted and I remember, in the build-up to student teaching, there is an emphasis on reflection (Interview, 11/14/19b). After each lesson, either for students or our peers, we had to produce a written reflection, sometimes directly in response to prepared questions and other times without any prompts.

In thinking about the theoretical framework and research methodology for this study, I found Kristen, Sarah, and Beth’s use of the word “experience” interesting. They could have used the words “observation,” “situation,” “thing,” “event,” or “time” and instead, all three used the word “experience”. I asked Kristen how she would define an experience and she said, “as something that in some way, shape, or form changes you. Whether you learn something, or gain something, or achieve something,” (Interview, 11/18/19). Kristen’s definition of experience
further reinforces the meaning she finds in reflection and also struck a chord with why I subscribe to phenomenology’s connection to education as a framework and research method. Phenomenology seeks understanding and meaning from human experience, from that which is known or closest and yet also farthest away, as Heidegger (1962) defined it. As such, experience acts as a fundamental aspect, or touchstone, of phenomenology. Experiences allow pre-understandings, beliefs, assumptions, and even biases to surface. By approaching experiences with openness and wonder, one can access the phenomenon of being. In the context of the experiences Kristen shared as a part of this study, they related to her development of self-as-teacher. I believe that providing preservice teachers opportunities as a part of their professional teacher training to engage with reflection and think about reflection and their experiences in this way strengthens their educational practice significantly. Preservice teachers may feel better prepared to respond to and in the unique and varying school-related situations they may encounter, which will benefit their future students and school communities.

The preservice teachers’ responses also offered another interesting insight into how they define reflection. For them, reflection means evaluating whether a goal or outcome was accomplished, or effective, or whether they did what they were supposed to do. Reflection in their eyes has a very evaluation-based feel. I see reflection beyond evaluation. Reflection can provide insights and understandings. Watching a student, parent, or co-worker, and thinking about his/her behaviors, actions, and words, I can learn so much about another person. Reflection as a tool, another possible meaning, can aid in the relationships I develop personally and professionally and this view or meaning of reflection did not present itself when participants were asked, “When someone says the word, ‘reflection,’ what does that mean to you.”
Looking back over the definitions and meanings provided, the participants understood reflection to be an experience, in which one thinks back or self-reflects on personal matters or those connected to teaching to consider whether or not a goal or outcome was achieved.

**Moments in Entering the Teaching Profession**

To understand how the participants experience reflection, including what it means and how they value it, the participants were asked to describe their first memories of reflection in connection to their teacher training thus far. When reviewing each of the participants’ shared memories of lived experiences of reflection connected to entering the teaching profession, three particular moments were identified across four participants: the choice to become a teacher, the transition to being a teacher, and the responsibility of a teacher. Following the detail of each moment, the researcher provided a connected narrative related to her experiences and those of the participants.

**The Choice to Become a Teacher.** When asked about her first memory of reflection in connection to teaching, Kristen shared thoughts she had around deciding to become a teacher. She struggled to feel confident about the decision based on the reactions of others and the stereotypes often connected to teaching:

The first time, I really thought about it was when I was switching my major in high school. I think that was the first time I really reflected on what it means to be a teacher. Because the high school I went to, a lot of times I felt like it emphasized, not that teaching was a bad career to go into, but, “we want STEM majors. We want the doctors and the engineers of the world.” …. Like, I always felt it was all about privilege, like people around me, the money that they were making. And so, when I switched my major to education, I was kind of worried. I was like, “I don't want to be judged.” …. But then, I
was like “why would I?” Why should I be worried about what other people think? I'm like when you tell people….“I want to be a middle school teacher.” They were like, “Oh, my goodness, Bless you!” I think that was the first time I really thought about what does it mean to be a teacher? Because obviously, society sometimes paints teaching as, oh, you know, we just teach the ABCs, and have them read books. So, I remember, that was the first time I really thought about what is teaching? And why do I want to do it? Do I want to do it just because I think I have the, because I have the summers off? And, because I get to use pretty colored pens and decorate my classroom? No. I want to do it because I want to impact these, all of these future kids that will be my students. So, I think that was the first time I really thought about reflecting, and teaching, and not like as a way to like better my instruction, or anything. But, just, why am I doing this? Because I think there's a lot of people who say, “Oh, if my career doesn't work out, I'm just going to be a teacher.” And I'm like, “No. That's not the case.” Like, you're not just going to be a teacher. You go into teaching, you should go into teaching because you want to go into teaching. (Interview, 11/18/19)

Kristen’s confidence in selecting education as her major came through as she proudly reflected on this defining choice and moment. In reviewing Kristen’s memory of this lived experience, she captured the moments when she reflected on “what does it mean to be a teacher;” and why she wanted to become a teacher, “Why am I doing this.” Kristen’s experience with reflection in this moment mixed feelings and perceptions. Morally, she felt strongly about why someone should or should not become a teacher. “You go into teaching. you should go into teaching because you want to go into teaching.” Through her reflections, Kristen was able to articulate her choice of
becoming a teacher and navigating through the emotions, perceptions, and moral challenges that existed around her.

When I heard Kristen share this first reflection in response to the commentary and critique of others regarding the choice to become a teacher, it caused hairs on the back of my neck to raise. When I first met my father-in-law, after sharing my chosen profession, he told me that those who cannot do, teach! To me, this sounded absurd. To be able to teach, I believe requires more skill than actually performing any task being instructed, as the teacher must know the content, possess a strong understanding of pedagogy, and know his/her students in order to appropriately and effectively respond to their needs and engage them. Teaching is complex, and a profession, no less or more than others. The fact that a school or learning community would allow teaching to be considered less than is shocking and disappointing.

In regard to Kristen’s selection of the memory to share, I was surprised she did not choose a memory from the start of her schooling with the university; however, in listening to her share about this moment, I understood the profound impact it had on her. As someone who hires educators, I inquire about the choice to become a teacher as I believe that it says a lot about a candidate’s motives and commitment to the profession, and Kristen’s reflection-filled experience demonstrated that she had thoughtfully considered the choice to become a teacher. Kristen’s memory of her lived experience navigated emotions and moral challenge leaving her feeling resolute in her decision.

Moving beyond the decision to become a teacher, two of the participants’ first memories connected to reflection and entering the teaching profession occurred as they made the transition from student to teacher.
The Transition to Being a Teacher. Both Laura and Beth, when prompted to share their first reflection connected to teaching, offered memories of lived experiences that related to their transition from student to teacher.

When asked about her first memory of reflection in connection to teacher education preparation, Laura shared the following memory, in which she recalls reflecting on the conscious shift from being the student in a classroom to being the teacher:

My first field experience I was just thinking what am I doing right? What am I doing wrong? It was weird stepping out of that student position and being a higher authority within a classroom with students who were two or three years younger than me. It was very strange, so I was definitely self-reflecting in that moment because I wanted to make that shift over from being a student to being a teacher. I felt like I just wanted to kind of like sit in the chair with them and just listen to the teacher. But I'm like no, I'm in that authority role now. I can’t be a student anymore. So that was difficult. I would say that’s the most difficult thing is not being a student anymore, being the teacher. Especially doing secondary ed. I don't know if elementary ed faces the same sort of weirdness whenever you walk into a classroom. And I'm not a very tall person. They're all towering over me, and I'm just like if I was in their position, why would they listen to me? I would probably be like who’s this girl up in front of the classroom who thinks she’s in charge of me? So I had to be very firm with myself and be like you're the adult now. You’re the teacher. You have to start acting like it. (Interview, 11/14/19b)

This moment proved to be a pivotal one for Laura, as she “[stepped] out of that student position and [became] a higher authority within [the] classroom.” She thought about what it must be like to be the students in that classroom. “They're all towering over me, and if I was in their
position, why would they listen to me.” She also thought about how she needed to present herself. “I had to be very firm with myself and be like you're the adult now. You’re the teacher. You have to start acting like it.” Laura described this moment as feeling strange yet natural. Strange that she was no longer the student and natural in that she had been working towards becoming the teacher and it was happening. While Laura vividly remembered this particular moment, she shared that she had had several other moments since such as this one when she needed to quickly remind herself of her role in the classroom. Laura spoke positively about her in-the-moment reflections in response to this lived experience; she called it “constructive” reflection. “I don’t think I was doing anything wrong in those moments,” (Interview, 11/14/19b). For Laura, reflection provided her a pathway to think about how she could do better.

Similar to Laura, Beth provided a memory of a lived experience in which she reflected on the moment in her first field class when she realized that her role in the classroom had changed:

My first course in which I had to do field hours, was the first time that I had been back into a secondary classroom without being a student of that classroom. So that observation and the reflecting on that observation, cause I had to, and because you know, that was part of the assignment was to reflect on my experience. But also, I think probably subconsciously also, just thinking that it was kind of interesting to be back for the first time with kind of a different eye, with a different lens than being a student sitting in that class. I remember kind of thinking reflection wise when I was observing, just observing a teacher with a different lens than the students do. Like oh, I know XYZ about teaching, now like I know why she's doing these things a little bit. (Interview, 11/13/19)

Beth’s reflection of her changed lens portrayed that moment when she was no longer only a student in the classroom. Beth found the experience to be an interesting one. Reflection allowed
her to understand the moment she was experiencing and also others that came to mind from when she was a student, experiencing teachers’ lessons and wondering about the associated directives and/or teachers’ actions or responses. Similar to Laura, Beth found reflection to be a helpful tool in the moment to understand and process what she was experiencing – the new lens she had acquired.

In thinking about Laura and Beth’s lived experiences, I can relate to those moments of transition. I have always had a young-looking face. While I am on the tall side, unlike Laura, when sitting amongst students in the classroom, I have had visitors look right at me and ask for the teacher’s whereabouts! Like Laura, a Secondary Education major, I remember one of my early field placements, in a high school. I was assigned to a classroom where my content area of focus, United States History, was being taught and I was intrigued by the class discussion, finding myself wanting to jump into the discussion. I had to remind myself of my purpose in the room – to observe classroom management techniques. When the time came for me to teach a lesson, I can clearly remember standing in front of the class and the students all looking at me. I felt young, a bit like an imposter, trying to be something that I was not yet.

Similar to Laura and Beth, I also found value in using reflection-in-action in situations like these. Schön’s (1983, 1987) referred to professionals’ reflection-in-action as “[thinking] about doing something while doing it,” (p. 54). Reflecting on feelings, observations, and my interactions with students and parents in the moments they were happening, helped me to feel more confident in my interactions and in my instructional practices. While reflection can be a powerful tool after-the-fact, the value of conscious thinking and modification in the moment, can provide invaluable insight and next steps.
In addition to reflecting on the use and value of reflective practices through lived experiences in making the choice to become a teacher and seeing oneself as the teacher, one preservice teacher, Sarah, spoke of her reflection connected to understanding the responsibilities of a teacher.

**The Responsibility of a Teacher.** In response to the question asking for the first memory of reflection in connection to teaching, Sarah shared her experience with a student and the direction she provided the student through a one-on-one teaching opportunity:

I was [placed] in a seventh grade history class…. We were really only supposed to be learning about like rubrics, grading, his gradebook, all that stuff. And then in class one morning [the teacher] and I had been talking, and he learned I had [an interest in] special education. And so he said that there was a student in his class with an IEP that he was having difficulty supporting. And he wanted to know if I would be willing to work with her during class on the next project. And I jumped at the opportunity to be able to help him, instead of sitting in the back of the room waiting for the next project to be done to grade it. And so I remember sitting with [the student] and we weren’t even at the area of being able to set up the content yet, or go over the content. We were just talking about how to set up her Word document to put all the information in. And I realized that the way that I explained to her to make a table made sense to me. But if I was a student who had no experience with working with Microsoft Word tables or anything like that, it wouldn’t make any sense. And so I realized she was just kind of staring at her screen, kind of clicking around to make it look like when you’re trying to make it look like you know what you’re doing. But you really have no idea. You just want the person to think you know what’s going on. I could get that vibe from her. That’s what was going on. And so
then, I realized okay that makes sense to me. It doesn’t make sense to her. I need to rework how I just said that. And then I thought about if I was to put myself in her shoes, what I would have taken from what I said. And then when I took a minute or two to re-evaluate while she was still fooling around with Microsoft, I realized how I could have explained it more. And I got paper and I drew it how it was supposed to look. And so it was really beneficial for her. (Interview, 11/12/2019)

Sarah eagerly accepted the classroom teacher’s offer for her to help a student. She did not anticipate that by doing so, that moment would open her eyes to the vast responsibilities of a teacher to his/her students. By practicing reflection in the moment, Sarah realized that her directions “went in one ear and out the other” (Interview, 11/12/2019) as the student did not demonstrate an understanding of what to do. In that moment, Sarah realized the great responsibility she had – to find a better way to help a student in need. By choosing to put herself in the student’s shoes, Sarah’s reflection-in-action guided her subsequent directions and interactions with the student. “I realized how I could have explained it more,” and the interaction not only helped the student, but also proved to be quite impactful for Sarah. As she sat reflecting on this moment, this memory of an experience, Sarah understood the gravity of a teacher’s responsibility.

Listening to Sarah share this memory of her experience, I remember watching preservice teachers working one-on-one with students in my classroom. I too would have the teachers in training work with those students who needed a bit of extra support. One of those instances, my student named Cindy, was working with a preservice teacher named Ms. Smith. I watched as Cindy repeatedly nodded in response to Ms. Smith’s questions. At one point, my eyes locked with Cindy’s and it was as if she was begging for me to interject myself, as she was completely
lost and unable to advocate for herself. Resisting the urge to jump in, I kept a close proximity and slowly Ms. Smith started to alter her questioning, realizing that Cindy and she were not on the same page. After class, I asked Ms. Smith to share about her experience working with Cindy and she briefly reflected on her realization that Cindy was not going to tell her that she was struggling and that if Ms. Smith had allowed, Cindy would have continued to act as if she understood the activity. The responsibility of a teacher is great. Being attune to students’ verbal and nonverbal cues while thoughtfully presenting curriculum can present a challenge, especially for novices.

Being able to reflect-in-action, or in the moment, as Sarah did, provides practitioners with the opportunity to assess what is happening and make, if needed, an immediate change or alter course. Sarah, like Laura and Beth, benefited from practicing reflection-in-action.

Through their use of reflection, Kristen, Laura, Beth, and Sarah navigated moments of lived experience connected to deciding to become a teacher, transitioning to seeing oneself as a teacher, and fully understanding that responsibilities of a teacher. Kristen found reflection useful in thinking through morally and emotionally charged comments and perceptions. Laura valued reflection in helping to provide her with a path towards growth and development. Beth used reflection as a tool to help her understand and process her experiences. Sarah reflected to gain greater perspective and understanding. Whether they practiced reflection-in-action, putting themselves in someone else’s shoes, or adapting to their new lenses, the practice of reflection aided the preservice teachers in their entry to the teaching profession. In reviewing these shared moments, the meanings and values and experiences these preservice teachers had with reflection become known.
At the time of the two interviews, the participants had been deeply invested in their teaching training programs for at least two years. In addition to thinking about moments connected to entering the teaching profession, the preservice teachers shared moments of reflection related to their ongoing professional training as a part of their enrollment in an education program. Their experiences as a part of the professional training provide another set of moments from which to seek and explore the meanings, values, and experiences of the preservice teachers in connection to reflection.

**Professional Teacher Training Moments**

Throughout the two interviews, participants were asked to think about their experiences with reflection as a part of their professional teacher training with The University. To understand participants’ experiences with reflection as a part of their professional training and the meanings and values they place on reflection, the participants responded to a series of questions that related to a reflective document they each provided prior to the second interview. All five reflective documents connected to the participants’ teacher training. Participants shared why they selected the reflective pieces they did, and then were guided to reflect on the experience connected to the document and/or to the creation of the document. The two moments, document selection and field experiences, offer insight into how the participants define reflection. The moments also describe how the preservice teachers experience reflection and place meaning and value on reflective practices through understanding the choices they made in selecting reflective documents to share and the memories of lived experiences in classrooms that translated to reflective opportunities. A third moment, received instruction, explores the participants’ memories of lived experiences connected to the reflective practice instruction offered by The University’s education program as a further way of understanding the meanings and values the
preservice teachers have for reflection. The researcher included her reflexive narratives at different points throughout each of the following moments.

**Document Selection.** Participants were asked to provide a reflective document as a part of the study. (See Appendix A IRB Appendices *Scripts* for the artifact, or reflective document directions that were provided to each participant.) Based on the directions, participants could provide any kind of written or 2D reflection. All five participants provided reflection that was either assigned or voluntarily created in connection to their professional teacher training. The reflections Sarah, Laura, Karen, and Kristen provided resulted from or were connected to University course assignments. Sarah and Laura’s reflections connected to field placement observations. Karen and Kristen shared reflections they wrote in response to a lesson they each taught as a part of a field placement. Different from the other participants, Beth’s reflection came from an internal desire to capture her thoughts after teaching a lesson as a part of a field placement. The fact that all five participants chose to provide reflective pieces connected to their professional teacher training programs, when they could have selected any reflective pieces, including those of a personal nature, relates to the definition, meaning, and value of reflection as they see it, and most especially into how they experienced this study.

When writing the script for the artifact directions as a part of the IRB process, I purposefully chose to be vague. I was curious to see how the participants might understand the directions in relation to their definitions of reflection, and how that would guide their artifact selection. Secretly, I hoped that some might choose to provide personal reflective pieces, as part of interview one focused on personal, non-teaching related reflective experiences. I think the participants knew I was also interested in their experiences as preservice teachers and so that guided their artifact selection.
Beth and Kristen noted that their reflective pieces were recently completed in relation to the timing of interview two, making the pieces easy selections. Interview one was scheduled within a week or two to The University’s fall break, and participants agreed to send me the artifacts within two days to a week after that time. Realizing the lead up to a break is a busy time, it is not surprising that some of the participants chose not to look through past reflective pieces and instead shared the first one they came upon or the most recently completed one.

Unlike Beth and Kristen, Karen and Laura described their artifact selection as intentional in a different way. Karen noted that “this was the most, I feel, up to date and most mature piece that I had. Also, there were a lot of guiding questions to this, which I felt was helpful,” (Interview, 12/4/19b). Karen’s comments generally about reflection and those connected to this artifact aligned with her desire to have guidelines and prompts from which to reflect (Interview, 11/14/19a; Interview, 12/4/19b). In response to why she selected the artifact she did, Laura shared that:

I wanted to choose something from one of my higher-level field classes because I felt like that’s, I won’t say that’s the best I’ve done, but that’s like true to my best work….I started looking through my assignments….I remember being really proud of what I handed in at the end of this semester. So when I started reading through it, I was like, “Yeah, this is good self-reflection.” (Interview, 12/5/19)

Similar to Karen, Laura selected a reflective piece that she felt she did well on. She felt proud of the work she had handed in, that in her mind it represented “good self-reflection.” Laura’s reflection of her selection makes sense given her self-proclaimed perfectionistic tendencies and desire to impress.
In the moments getting to know Karen and Laura, I observed that they desire to do well and impress. They like to follow the rules and shared that their reflections directly responded to the directives of their professors. I was not surprised then in interview two to hear that they selected reflections for which they thought they did well in meeting the reflective assignment expectations. Their selections and the information they provided about them suggested that Karen and Laura also define reflection as something that can be externally elicited and evaluated.

The reflective document that Sarah selected also offers insight into how she defines reflection, as well as the meaning and value she places on the practice. Sarah’s selection of a reflective document resulted from a memorable experience she had. Sarah observed a teacher whose classroom management techniques angered her. She shared the following reflection about the reflective document:

This one was infuriating to write. And I remember it took me maybe fifteen minutes to write it because I was very angry….I remember coming home and immediately writing the reflection. And it just stuck with me. It’s something I mention in all of my classes when they ask about effective classroom management strategies. It’s just always right there. (Interview, 12/3/19a)

The observation experience left a lasting impact on Sarah, and she used the opportunity to reflect on it to process through her emotions. In this moment reflecting on this lived experience, Sarah shared that the classroom management technique the teacher used was not unlike ones she had experienced as a student and it brought back memories of how she was treated by teachers. She reflected aloud in this moment about her personal connections to this experience, the strong emotions that triggered memories of the reflections that had occurred years prior. In a similar way, when she was asked to select a reflective piece for this study, Sarah knew right away which
piece she wanted to select, even though it was created quite some time before Sarah’s participation in the study. For Sarah, reflection can be emotion-filled and has a sense of interconnectedness, as if experiences continue to build on one another, resulting in growth.

Sarah’s selection of a reflective document interested me greatly. I’m sure we have all encountered times when we have watched a professional do or say something with which we disagree. I question that the reflection in these moments comes from us placing ourselves in the professional’s shoes and asking what we would do and why. Sarah’s reflective document selection also prompted me to think about the role of intense emotions when it comes to reflection. Strong reactions can prove to be powerful driving forces subliminally connected to future experiences. I was reminded of a similar field placement experience that I had had, and how I had vowed to myself that I would never be like that teacher in the ways he tried to motivate his students. While I may not recollect on that observation frequently, deep down, the experience and the associated reflections have impacted the way I teach and motivate and generally interact with students, which, like Sarah, has resulted in other reflective moments from subsequent lived experiences. I can think through frustrating, joyous, embarrassing, proud, and disappointing moments, like Sarah did, to process through experiences to seek greater understanding related to future steps or similar situations in the future, resulting in the value of reflection.

Thus, by discussing the selection of the reflective documents provided, further insight became available as to how the participants understood reflection and found value and meaning in it as of the time of this study. For Beth and Kristen, little thought about the actual document selection was given in part due to the busy time of year. For Beth, Karen, Lauran, Kristen, selection criteria connected to internal and external evaluation. For Sarah, the selection of the
reflective document connected to the intensity of the emotions that resulted from a lived experience. To understand more about the participants’ understandings of reflection and the meanings and value they associate with it, the researcher engaged the participants in moments discussing the creation of the reflective documents.

**Field Experiences.** In thinking about the memories of the lived experiences connected to professional teacher training from which their reflective documents emerged, two participants, Laura and Kristen, expressed the value they have for reflective practices. Laura reflected on a field placement observation while Kristen reflected on field placement teaching opportunity. While varying words were used, the underlying tenor across the two reflections portrayed the preservice teachers’ desires to sincerely reflect on their experiences and to grow from them.

In the moments spent thinking about the classroom observation that connected to her reflective document, Laura’s understanding of reflection as being very critical shone through. Laura shared that it can feel easy to go through the motions but not actually reflect. This kind of reflective practice:

> Forced me to think more about what I went through. I think sometimes, it's easy just to go through the motions of fieldwork. You show up. You do what you're supposed to do. You get your papers signed and you go home. And that's not the purpose of it at all. And I think that's why [our professors] require us to do things like this, and to see how I could connect [the experience] to what I was learning in the classroom and to then talk about how I've grown as a future teacher. I think that was really great. (Interview, 12/5/19)

Laura was able to see value in an assignment that required her to reflect. In looking back on the experience, she realized that showing up and observing was not the crux of the assignment. The
purpose was to think about the experience after-the-fact and to consider its implications in relation to what was being taught in related her teacher training courses.

While she may not always enjoy writing or thinking critically, Laura shared that she saw value in reflections like this:

I think that I put in a lot of work into this, and if I didn't find value in self-reflection, I would have just blown it off, because I think, especially English majors, can get away with blowing things off a lot because we sound fancy and I could write a whole paper on something I've never read and it sounds good. But I took this seriously….I think I took it very seriously and I really thought there was value in what we learned that semester, so I was willing to put my best into a reflection. (Interview, 12/5/19)

When asked if she thought she put more value into the reflective document connected to this experience because it was going to be graded or because it was an opportunity to genuinely reflect, Laura replied, “an opportunity to genuinely reflect, for sure, because by the time that this came about, I was pretty set in my grade, and I don't think I'm extremely grade-motivated. I see the value in doing this kind of stuff.” (Interview, 12/5/19). The more Laura thought about this classroom experience and her takeaway from it, the prouder she became. She understood how reflection fit into the context of her teacher training coursework and the value that came from it.

Similar to Laura, Kristen’s memory of a classroom experience offered insight into how she came to value reflective practices as a preservice teacher. In the moments spent reflecting on a field placement teaching opportunity, Kristen first noted that this type of experience had been relatively new to her at the time. She shared that the type of reflections she created up until this point were mostly in relation to a reading or a lesson plan that was not actually taught. In a field
experience where she was expected to actively teach lessons, her reflective practices felt different. Kristen noted she understood reflection in a way such that it must feel honest:

I remember in my first year or two here I kind of not fabricated but I would only talk about the positives. I was scared to admit failure. I was scared to admit something going wrong. Whereas you learn so much more from what goes wrong than what goes right. So in this reflection, I was honest. I was like it didn’t go to plan, and I had to kind of improvise. But you know what? That’s okay, and this was what I learned from it…. It’s about learning from it. It’s always taking what happened to you, whether it was good, bad, whatever and learning from it. (Interview, 12/3/19b)

With this understanding of reflection, Kristen’s thoughts in response to her memory of this experience revolved around this experience being a first for her – a first to reflect in a profoundly honest way and a first to reflect on an actual teaching experience. “Since this is the first course that I’m actually really teaching and taking control of the classroom, I think that’s why it’s the first time I’ve really reflected like this,” (Interview, 12/3/19b). Kristen’s observation suggests that with additional exposure and responsibility reflections may become more detailed due to more content or experiences on which to reflect.

When asked how this experience and related reflective document connected to the value she places on reflection, Kristen shared:

I wrote a lot. I think that’s important with a reflection because it’s really easy sometimes like those reading responses, you know, people will just look, and they’re like, paragraph one, paragraph two, paragraph three, okay, I’m going to pull out one line from each and talk about what it means to me….I sat there, and I really thought about everything that happened in the lesson, why I did what I did, why I made my decision. And I think that’s
important, too….I didn’t only talk about what happened, but I also talked about my decisions during the lesson. I talked about what went wrong, what went right, and then why I taught what I did and why I grouped my students the way I did. So there was a lot that went into the reflection, which I think is the best kinds of reflections when there’s actually, you know, a lot of substance to it. (Interview, 12/3/19b)

Kristen attributed the fact that she wrote a lot to the value that she placed on reflective practice. Had she not valued such a process, she noted that she may not have “really thought about everything that happened in the lesson” and instead merely commented on one or two aspects. Additionally, because Kristen valued the process, she talked about her decisions during the lesson, what went correctly and what went wrong. In the moments reflecting on this teaching experience, Kristen articulated the high value she places on such reflection with honest, thoughtful, and thorough reflection at its core.

In listening to Laura and Kristen share their memories connected to the classroom observation and field placement teaching experience, I found myself remembering what it was like to write reflections as a part of my undergraduate teacher education program. I remember an almost formulaic response structure that I used for classroom observations and then when I started teaching, the reflection techniques changed. My university supervisor was known for high expectations and for holding preservice teachers accountable. Getting an A from her resulted from knowing what you were doing and doing what was educationally appropriate, hard work, dedication, and most especially commitment to growing. The last expectation, professional growth, I observed was not understood by many in my cohort. Our supervisor wanted to see that we knew what it meant to reflect.
I remember on Tuesday afternoon, during our designated cohort meeting time early in the semester, she explained how our post-observation meetings would run, with her providing direct examples from the observation and we were expected to appropriately reflect on the examples such that she would see growth in those areas and others during subsequent observations. Our reflections were oral and followed-up by written narratives. I still vividly remember sitting in the library and her asking me why something happened in relation to a small group of students and my realization of how their behavior directly resulted from an action I had or had not taken. My university supervisor knew, that like Laura and Kristen, I was a perfectionist who desired to impress, and I also sincerely wanted to be a teacher. She pushed me to think deeply and question everything, and then move on to the next experience.

The experiences of Laura and Kristen felt similar. They were going through motions and a pivotal moment provided the experience that would change their actions and thoughts moving forward. Reflective practices took on new meaning and value for them in those moments. Being honest with themselves and taking the time to think through their experiences - the good, the bad, and the ugly - Laura and Kristen found renewed significance in their evolving reflective practices.

Through the memories of the lived experiences connected to the reflective documents they provided, Laura and Kristen expressed the meaning and value they have for reflective practices. By being honest with themselves and taking the time to thoughtfully reflect, they were able to grow in response to professional teacher training experiences. This growth Laura and Kristen experienced also affected other study participants who reflected on their professional teacher training experiences particularly with regarding to the instruction they received.
**Received Instruction.** As a part of moments spent discussing and reflecting on their reflective documents, Sarah, Beth, and Kristen provided reflections specific to the reflective practice instruction they received as a part of The University’s education program. All three participants’ reflections described vague or routine-like reflective instruction. As a part of their reflections and lived experiences, they offered recommendations for how The University’s professional teacher training program could strengthen reflective practice instruction. The three preservice teachers’ reflections and recommendations directly connect to how they experienced reflection and to the meaning and value they place on reflective practices.

When Sarah thought about the reflective practice instruction she had received from The University, she recollected that she had gone close to seven semesters without specifically talking about reflection. While she was asked to complete diary entries along the way, there was little guidance as to what should or should not be included. Sarah noted:

> They asked for diary entries essentially like what did you see and feel? And then I think because I always think, I always reflect on things without even realizing I’m doing it sometimes. Mine always end up being like analytical, like reflective pieces, where other people are like, “I got to the field at 7:45. I watched videos until 8:15.” ….like we never received any direct instruction on why it’s important. (Interview, 11/12/2019)

Sarah went on to reference a University-specific template for lessons and instruction, noting that the last part of the template includes a section for reflection, but the limited directions suggest the reflection should be connected to the lesson in relation to the applied assessment(s), not any kind of overall lesson reflection connecting the teacher and students with what happened or did not happen during the lesson. Sarah shared that this type of reflection, which often her teachers have not required, does not promote self-reflection.
As Sarah continued to talk about her reflection-connected instruction experiences she shared her memory of an experience at a field placement that took place the day before interview two held. She proudly identified the experience she had with her field placement professor as her first real guided reflection:

I taught a lesson in my [field] placement and by that I mean like this week…. I [have] taught three lessons so far. They have never really taught us how to effectively sit back and look at the work that we have done. The first time I really had a guided effective reflection was yesterday when [my] professor came to observe me and she asked me [questions]. After I finished teaching a lesson she had taken notes on my lesson and she had taken notes on one of the observation forms that they have and then she asked me immediately like “what did you think you did well, what would you change, what would you keep,” that kind of guided us through the reflection process. (Interview, 12/3/19a)

In this moment reflecting on this experience, Sarah further defined how she understands reflection, as a process following instruction to consider what went well or did not go well for further consideration. Through this experience, Sarah also saw gaps in the instruction received since starting the program. She said it was “the first time I really had a guided effective reflection,” suggesting that she found value in this experience. She then started to think through what a reflective instruction framework could be beginning freshman year for The University’s preservice teachers. She expressed the importance of self-reflection in connection to such a framework, like “building the bricks of learning how to reflect,” such that, “[you] reflect on what you are instructing, then on what you are planning, and then on how you are instructing it.” (Interview, 12/3/19a). For Sarah, reflection comes from personal experience and she believes that intentional clear directives to practice reflection will benefit preservice teachers. As a
preservice teacher, Sarah clearly finds meaning and value in reflective practices in that she can identify where better practice could take place and can articulate ways of doing so.

Similar to Sarah, in the moments reflecting on her reflective document and the experiences as a part of her professional teacher training, Beth felt the reflective instruction she received as a part of The University’s education program could have been clearer. Specifically, she recalled:

I don’t think [a professor] has ever said, “Reflect because.” It’s just “Reflect. Put your thoughts down on paper,” and then maybe we, like if it’s an in-class assignment then maybe we talk about our reflections a little bit and we… get some feedback from different people and their different thoughts but we don’t really say why we’re doing it.

(Interview, 12/3/19a)

This feeling of vagueness continued across Beth’s reflections, as she remembered at the end of each field observation being instructed to provide a general reflection encapsulating how the experience went and what she thought about it. In response to these directives, Beth wished for more instruction surrounding intentional reflection, like journaling, to promote time for thinking back or thinking about feelings connected to teaching experiences. Beth expressed a desire for more self-reflection:

I think being rather self-aware is pretty important because you’re dealing with students at an age where they’re still coming into themselves and understanding a lot of new things. So, I think a lot of self-reflection and understanding yourself is beneficial to future [teachers] because if you don’t really know yourself….I think that just makes everything more confusing. (Interview, 12/3/19a)
In the moment reflecting on the instruction she received connected to reflection, the value Beth placed on reflection became evident. Statements like “being self-aware is pretty important” and “self-reflection and understanding yourself is beneficial to [teachers]” showed that Beth finds value as a preservice teacher in practicing reflection. In a moment spent thinking about the value of reflection, Beth replied, “I think it’s important to reflect throughout courses leading up to becoming a teacher. I don’t think it’s innate for everybody to be a teacher,” (Interview, 12/3/19a). Beth understood the impact reflective practices can have for aspiring teachers, helping them to be success professionals despite their backgrounds, abilities, and skills. The fact that Beth had an opinion connected to how she was instructed to practice reflection and offered ways and value statements regarding how reflective practice could be made more significant as a part of preservice teacher training further suggests that Beth believes in and values reflective practices as a preservice teacher.

Kristen had a similar experience to Sarah and Beth with instructional experiences connected to reflective practice. In moments spent discussing reflective practices, Kristen remembered that when she started with The University, she was asked to reflect a lot but was unclear about what that really meant:

I remember in the beginning when I didn't really know what reflection was. I was so like, "Well, does it have –?" If I don't talk about every single paragraph in the reading, or, if I don't bring up the main point that the person sitting next to me brought up, is that okay?.... Honestly, I was probably pretty annoying, annoying the professors freshman year, or being like, "Well, what do you mean just reflect on the reading?" .... Because I was so used to reading something and always having to find the deeper meaning, or the symbolism behind it..... So, I think, just like, kind of, getting clarity and getting the
assurance. I'm someone who needs a lot of… assurance that what I'm doing is correct and that I'm on the right track. So, just hearing that kind of reassurance, telling me just how to speak about how something changed you? Or, how it made you feel? Like, I think that was most important. (Interview, 11/18/19)

Kristen shared that she remembered trying to relate what she had learned and done in high school for reflection-based assignments in response to the directions she received from her professors, but was uncertain if that was a correct correlation:

I can't remember a time in high school that I just reflected on something without having it be worth a grade or about something – oh, that deeper meaning that they always talk about in high school. [Kristen chuckled.] I was so worried…if I don't talk about, like if I'm reflecting on a lesson, I don't talk about, you know, what each one of my students says. Is that wrong? That was the thing that I think was really hard for me. (Interview, 11/18/19)

By reaching out to her professors to ask for clarity, Kristen reflected that she better understood their expectations of her reflective practices.

A lot of times, professors [were] like, "I'm not looking for you to fill in a bunch of checks and boxes. I'm looking to see what you've learned from this experience.” And, that was so meaningful to me because I was like, it doesn't matter, if I don't hit every single thing on the rubric. What matters is that I was meaningful, and thoughtful, and showed what I learned. And, how it impacted me. The best professors who have taught me about reflection never emphasized like getting it correct. They emphasized it being meaningful. [They would] say, "You're going to get a ten out of ten, or whatever on the reflection if you put the effort in, and show me that you've thought about it.” It shouldn't be about
getting it right. It should be about focusing on how to grow as a person. Or, how this reading spoke to you. Or, how this moment, and whatever spoke to you. Not like did you meet all of the guidelines and type three pages double spaced. (Interview, 11/18/19)

By reaching out to her professors, Kristen sought clarity around their expectations connected to her reflective practices. Had Kristen not reached out to her professors, she might have been left constantly wandering about the nature and value of her reflections in relation to her teacher training preparations. Kristen’s thought-filled reflection of her experiences in general suggest that she not only cares about doing a good job, she also values the practice of effective and meaningful reflection.

In moments spent thinking about the reflective document she selected and the instruction she received from The University regarding reflective practices, Kristen commented, “I think that if you don’t reflect you might not grow,” (Interview, 12/3/19b), which suggests the strong relationship she perceived between reflective practice and professional development. In this vein, she went on to reflect that The University education program’s reflective practice instruction could be expanded to include different forms of reflection. She shared:

And they usually have a few questions to guide us. But just like different lengths of reflection because I think a lot of us get kind of, not tired of reflecting, but it sometimes seems a little routine to always type a reflection, [and] answer the questions. And also having us not only reflect in the earlier years on readings, that just gets a little old because usually like the readings, especially in one course, they’re going to be at least somewhat similar because it’s all covering somewhat similar topics. Like there was one course where we were like writing a reflection every week. And we were like, okay, this
Kristen identified some of the instruction she received from The University’s education program as feeling “routine”. She desired different ways to practice and express her reflection beginning in the early years of training all the way through field experiences. Kristen noted that the reflective practices employed while training to be a professional should be able to extend into the classroom, recognizing the importance of reflective practice for professionals in the field. Kristen’s memory of her lived experiences connected to instruction related to reflective practices and her connected sentiments demonstrate the meaning and value she finds in reflective practices as a preservice teacher.

As someone who values reflective practices, and as an educator who believes in the importance of strong principles of learning and instruction, I was disappointed to hear of the vague instruction Sarah, Beth, and Kristen experienced as a part of their professional training program. Their reflections, noting vague directions and understandings and inconsistent processes or ways of practicing reflection, affirmed the concerns expressed by the research of Rodgers (2002). I believe that if a university does not display a consistent understanding of and processes surrounding the instruction and inclusion of reflective practices, it cannot expect that its preservice teachers fully understand and potentially value such practices, nor be able to demonstrate and transition into professional positions with established practices that could contribute to their professional success.

Beth’s comments about knowing yourself in order to be able to support your students also resonated with me. My interests in reflective practices stem from seeing such practices enhance teacher-student relationships, positively impacting students’ learning. If teachers do not have a
strong sense of self, grounded by reflective practices, how can they appropriately respond to the varying and complex needs of their students? Beth seems to see this connection and values reflective practices as a way of being prepared to respond or deal with what her students might bring to her classroom.

I also found Kristen’s comments, about the reflective instruction she has received to-date feeling routine, interesting. While I am pleased by her sense of practicing reflection often, especially assigned reflection, the fact that it feels routine suggests that a motion or muscle memory is being completed to check boxes, as she referred to them, not necessarily a significant consideration thinking deeply about something. This concern relates back to how collegiate institutions present and instruct on reflective practices.

Additionally, the similarities in the recommendations Sarah, Beth, and Kristen offered for The University’s teacher training program to strengthen its reflective practice instruction did not surprise me but did impress me. Sarah’s building blocks analogy for scaffolding reflective practices throughout all years of teaching training connected with Kristen’s suggestions. Their ideas connect to principles for teaching and learning that they have been exposed to as a part of curricular design practices. Beth’s desire for more self-reflection as she explained it connects to her either innate understandings related to the importance of understanding individuals or to specific training she has received through The University’s education program, which is a key to success in diverse settings as Zeichner and Grant (1984) explained. By conveying a consistent understanding of and processes for reflective practices, as recommended by Sarah, Beth, and Kristen, I believe preservice teachers would feel more confident and successful in the classroom and working with students, which would ultimately contribute to their success transferring to their own classrooms as professional teachers.
Finally, I think it is important to note that Sarah, Beth, and Kristin chose to participate in my study. As a part of this lived experience, they responded to questions that called on them to deeply think about their experiences, their actions, reactions, and feelings with regard to their reflective practices and associated understandings and meanings. They were allowed to question such experiences and wonder what would have happened had they been different. I found it affirming that they too see value in reflective practices for preservice teachers and that they see transference to their success as professional teachers.

Thus, through moments connected to document selection, field experiences, and received instruction, the participants’ definitions and understandings of reflection and the meanings and values associated with reflective practices became visible. In reflecting on their professional teacher training, the participants spoke of internal and external evaluation, emotions, honesty, professional growth, and the transference of reflective practice from preservice teacher to professional educator.

**Summary**

van Manen wrote, “The reward phenomenology offers are the moments of seeing-meaning,” (van Manen, 2007, p. 12). Through the interviews of five preservice teachers, the moments of everyday lived experience connected to memories of reflection bring into focus the definition and meaning reflection holds for this study’s participants. The preservice teachers defined reflection framed within the context of their teacher training as an experience, as thinking back, and as self-reflection. The defining moments of entering the teaching profession and those during professional teacher training continued to build on the provided definitions, adding a technical perspective, while also providing insight into how the preservice teachers experienced reflection. As they entered the teaching profession, the preservice teachers
experienced reflection as a pathway for growing and understanding. Through their professional teacher training, the preservice teachers experienced reflection as inconsistent and as a continued pathway for growth and understanding. In Chapter Five, these definitions and insights into the phenomenon of reflection will be further explored in relation to literature from Chapter Two.
Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter begins by acknowledging the philosophical and theoretical framework that grounds this study. The chapter then situates the findings of this study in the research literature, highlights limitations, and explores implications and recommendations in connection to discoveries from the previous chapter.

Philosophical Grounding

As elementary and secondary schools have responded to political and social reforms over the last fifty years, educators have worked to balance theoretical knowledge and practical skills. In its response to the social efficiency model, education has lost sight of the role of teachers as beings towards the development of students’ learning (Magrini, 2013b; Schön, 1987; van Manen, 1977; Zeichner 1996). Teachers, charged with the responsibility to educate, must be prepared to face the constantly changing demands of their students and unique school settings by appropriately addressing and supporting varying and dynamic needs. Reflection and reflective practices provide teachers a way to respond (Grimmett et al., 1990; Schön, 1987; Valli, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

A similar tension has existed at the collegiate level. On one hand, educators must receive technical and practical training to appropriately teach subject matter. On the other, they have responsibilities to apply pedagogical skills and develop human relationships navigating complex situations that require skillful decision-making, all while propelling educational reforms in response to the political and societal reforms. To do so, educational researchers have challenged the technical rationality model calling for teacher development centered in reflection.

In light of elementary, secondary, and collegiate experiences, Magrini (2013) would argue that, “that contemporary education has silenced, covered-over, and occluded the more
primordial and ontological aspects of our Being,” (Magrini, 2013a, paragraph 3). Through reflection educators make meaning from the phenomena they experience which in turn allows them to explore their selfhood as it relates to the self-as-teacher and to the relationships that are then formed (van Manen, 1991).

The research of Heidegger grounds the discussion of reflection as a phenomenon to study. Phenomenon means that which is immediately available to our senses. For Heidegger, a phenomenon is more than the essence of something. It is the tangible that one perceives when in the presence of the phenomenon. In *Being and Time* Heidegger (1962) wrote, “the phenomenon of Being is that which is closest to and yet also farthest away from human beings,” (Kruger-Ross, 2015, p. 3). Through everyday lived experiences, people live in relation to phenomena. Phenomenon are often overlooked, and as such phenomenology is needed to bring focus back to lived experience. Heidegger understands phenomenology as, “our way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology, and it is our way of giving it demonstrative precision,” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 60). By bringing that which is hidden into focus, phenomenology allows for knowledge about a phenomenon to be known.

van Manen, who linked phenomenology to the study of education, builds on Heidegger’s understanding of phenomenology by saying that it is “the way of access to the world as we experience it prereflectively,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 28). By prereflectively, van Manen is referring to the everyday through which one lives. Like Heidegger, van Manen sees phenomenology as going back to the beginning of the things themselves, to the lived experiences, to the moments, to find how meaning and knowledge come to be (van Manen, 2007). Through the practice of reflection, a phenomenon or lived experience may become known. van Manen suggested that, “our ‘common sense’ pre-understandings, our suppositions,
assumptions, and the existing bodies of scientific knowledge, predispose us to interpret the
nature of the phenomenon before we have even come to grips with the significance of the
phenomenological question,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 46). Herein lies the problem with
phenomenological inquiry – too much is already known. With this perspective, and to truly grasp
an understanding for the phenomenon from which to derive meaning, one must come to terms
with one’s beliefs, biases, and assumptions – to name them and understand them.

By thinking about and reflecting on an experience, wondering what it was like, what it
means, how one lived through it, what pre-understandings and assumptions one had that
contributed to the experience, takes what may have been an ordinary experience, and turns it into
something extraordinary – a phenomenal phenomenon. More often than not, people do not
reflect on their experiences at all. By drawing attention to such moments, and taking the time to
wonder about them, one brings to focus something which might have been taken for granted that
contributes to a greater experience. Even when engaging in so-called reflective practices such as
think-alouds in conversations with friends and mentors or through more solitary activities such
as journal writing, one often does not truly engage in the sort of deep reflection that
phenomenology can inspire.

With a theoretical framework steeped in phenomenology, the focus of this study lies
within the everyday, within the lived experiences that will reveal the phenomenon from which
meaning and significance may be understood. Heidegger challenged humankind to engage with
philosophy, to see past the potential “uselessness” of it from a technical perspective and use it as
an inquiry tool into the meaning of Being (Kruger-Ross, 2016). Philosophy has the power to
create knowledge and move or change those who choose to engage with it. From that lens,
phenomenological explorations into everyday experiences become fascinating wells from which
personal knowledge and understanding that have the potential to serve the greater good may flow.

As a philosophical way of questioning and exploring lived experiences, with a sense of openness and wonder in what may be discovered, phenomenology also provides a method for qualitative research (Dahlberg et al., 2008; van Manen, 1990). Phenomenological research:

[borrows] other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of human experience. (van Manen, 1997, p. 62)

Phenomenology as a framework and research method seeks to understand and find meaning in the nature of a phenomenon as a basic, fundamental human experience. Using a phenomenological framework and methodology, preservice teachers’ memories of lived experiences with reflection can be questioned and explored to better understand the phenomena of reflection at this point in the future educators’ training.

**Summary of the Study**

Through the application of phenomenology, as a research method and theoretical framework, this study sought to explore preservice teachers’ lived experiences of reflection. By using phenomenology as a theoretical framework and a research method, the researcher, who was once a preservice teacher, together with the participant preservice teachers explored reflective experiences to determine the meaning of reflection as it relates to teaching and learning as experienced through teacher training programs.

Preservice teachers, training to have their own classrooms, need to have the necessary understanding and skills connected to reflection and reflective practices to be prepared.
Recognizing that preservice teachers come to their professional training programs with prior experiences and beliefs that shape their reflective understandings and the experiences they have with reflection and reflective practices, the examination of their interpretations of reflection in the context of their life worlds provides needed context (Calderhead, 1992; LaBoskey, 1993; Valli, 1990; van Manen, 1977, 1991, 1997, 2014). By examining the meaning of reflection for preservice teachers, and by providing them with an opportunity to practice reflection, their experiences can be understood to help inform the training preparing them for the evolving demands they will experience when they transition into their classrooms and school communities.

Phenomenology provides an approach to research in turning to people’s understanding to uncover the essence of their lived experiences and the associated meanings and values that result (Hopkins et al., 2017; van Manen, 2014). By inquiring into preservice teachers’ lived experiences with reflection, their unique perspectives, personal beliefs, and values were uncovered to provide a context from which to understand reflection in collegiate preservice teacher training programs, specifically:

- How do preservice teachers define reflection?
- How do preservice teachers experience reflection?

Five preservice teachers, all enrolled in the same university, participated in this study. The participants’ concentration areas spanned early grades, middle school, and secondary English and Social Studies. Through two, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, the participants shared their memories of lived experiences with reflection and engaged in thoughtful thinking about their reflective understandings and practices. The researcher, who produced reflexive narratives in response to the participants’ memories of their lived experiences,
reviewed all of the interview transcriptions searching for essential phrases connected to the shared experiences, and then looked for commonalities which were used to identify themes or moments related to the phenomena being studied. The defining moments that connected to the study’s guiding research questions occurred as the preservice teachers entered the teaching profession and those during their professional teacher training.

Findings in Connection to the Research Questions and Literature

This study sought to understand the meaning of reflection for preservice teachers enrolled in an undergraduate teacher education program specifically by exploring how they define and experience reflection. Using each research question as a subsection, the researcher reviewed the findings from the preservice teachers’ memories of their lived experiences with reflection in connection to the associated literature to answer each question. The philosophical connections to the theoretical framework guiding this study are also included within each subsection.

How Preservice Teachers Define Reflection

In inquiring into the definitions of reflection, it is important to note the connection to phenomenology. As a theoretical framework, phenomenology, through the work of Heidegger, calls for a return to the beginning, where meaning originates, as if on a quest for the meaning of meaning. By first defining the phenomenon, reflection, it orients the meanings that come from this study.

To understand the preservice teachers’ lived experiences with reflection, the researcher first needed to know how the preservice teachers defined reflection. Through direct questioning and the participants’ memories of lived experiences, the researcher identified two ways in which the preservice teachers defined reflection. They defined it in a literal way and in the context of their teacher training. From a literal perspective, the preservice teachers defined reflection as

**Literal Definitions.** During the interviews, when asked what reflection means to them, the preservice teachers replied with similar definitions. First, they considered it a natural-feeling, a looking back on something, or a thinking back to something, which could either be something they observed or that happened to them. This perspective affirms Dewey’s (1938) definition of reflection as looking back in such a way that fulfills a natural bodily reaction.

Additionally, this view of reflection as thinking back can also be seen in the preservice teachers’ selections of reflective documents to share. As a part of the study, participants provided a self-selected reflective document to assist in the prompting of questions connected to reflective lived experiences during interview two. All of the documents provided connected to “reflection-on-action,” as Schön (1983) referred to it, or to “recollective reflection,” as van Manen (1991) referred to it. Both researchers’ descriptions of reflection, refer to a review of past experiences to promote a more thorough understanding from which to derive meaning. In their definitions of reflection, the preservice teachers found value in being able to think back to situations and experiences after the fact, and in finding understandings and meanings in such a way.
The preservice teachers also defined reflection as an experience. Kristen described reflection in the context of considering one’s experiences and connecting them to others. Sarah described reflection as standing back and looking at one’s experiences to think about them, and Beth situated the definition of reflection in the context of learning experiences. van Manen noted that, “from a phenomenological point of view, experiences seem to arise from the flow of everyday existence,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 35). The fact that the preservice teachers understood reflection as an experience suggests their awareness of their lifeworld, and how they see and think of themselves in this space of the everyday. This connects to the research of Heidegger (1962) who saw the lived world as an ontological study, where emphasis should be placed on meaning as opposed to knowledge in relation to a phenomenon. Experience serves as a touchstone of phenomenology. By defining reflection as an experience, the preservice teachers situated reflection in their everyday as an ontological place from which they derive meaning.

Dewey’s (1916) research would also support the preservice teachers defining reflection as experiences and deriving meaning from those experiences. Dewey considered, “Reflection [the] process of reconstruction and reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience,” (Rodgers, 2002, p. 848). Similar to how Kristen described reflection as experience, connecting the experience to other experiences, Dewey believed that what one does with experience results from the meaning placed on it. Through the meaning Kristen placed on her reflective experiences, she connected them to other reflective experiences.

Finally, Grimmett’s (1989) research relates to the preservice teachers’ definition of reflection as an experience. He suggested that, “Those who hold to this conception of reflection argue that experience, as embodied in our personal biography, constitutes both the content and consequence of reflective thinking.” By defining reflection as an experience, the preservice
teachers open themselves up to explore the self-as-teacher. This perspective allows the preservice teachers to consider who they are, what they know, and how they respond across varying situations. They reconstruct their experience through reflection.

Beyond defining reflection literally as thinking back and as an experience, the preservice teachers also described it technically in relation to their current known context – teacher training.

**Technical Definitions.** The preservice teachers also defined reflection in regard to its connection to their preservice teacher training. The preservice teachers defined reflection as technical, identifying how well or poorly something went in relation to their teaching or working with students. For example, Sarah described reflection as, “if it’s something you would be able to do again, and be either more effective or at the same level of effectiveness,” (Interview, 11/12/2019). This definition suggests a technical aspect. When reflecting on an experience with a student, Sarah thought about her interactions from a teaching perspective, thinking about how she could have instructed or explained something better. In sharing about a recent reflective experience, Sarah proudly relayed the questions her supervisor asked her to consider, “what did you think you did well, what would you change, what would you keep,” (Interview, 12/3/19a). As Sarah spoke about the experience with the student and the one with her supervisor, her definition of reflection as a process through which she thinks about how well she taught and ways to improve her teaching skill appeared to be her primary focus. Similar to Sarah, Kristen talked about the experience of learning to think about what went well and what went wrong with her lessons. “Whereas you learn so much more from what goes wrong than what goes right. So in this reflection… I was like it didn’t go to plan, and I had to kind of improvise. But you know what? That’s okay, and this was what I learned from it,” (Interview, 12/3/19b). Kristen’s definition of reflection that emerged from memories of lived experience focused on her teaching
skill and improvement with it. She defined reflection as a process in which she thought about her teaching a place of thinking about her instruction.

Karen and Laura’s definitions of reflection also connected to the act of teaching, specifically focusing on the learners. Karen defined reflection as “standing back and looking at your students and seeing how they’re taking the information that you have taught them,” (Interview, 11/14/19a). Laura considered reflection to be observing how well students are doing in terms of the educational context in which they are learning.

Sarah, Kristen, Karen, and Laura’s definition of reflection focusing on instruction and student learning connected to the research of van Manen (1977) and Valli (1990). They found that preservice teacher reflection yielded more technical perspectives as their experiences and backgrounds lacked deep knowledge of pedagogical practices nor a deep awareness of moral, ethical, and socio-political issues from which to reflect. LaBoskey’s (1993) research found similar findings, yet she considered what van Manen called, technical perspectives, to be pedagogical and curricular by nature. In congruence with van Manen, Valli, and LaBoskey’s research, the preservice teachers defined reflection technically. Based on the field experiences they have had to-date and the guided questioning they received, they saw reflection as a way to focus on their technical or pedagogical practices and skills, whether it be instructing or observing student learning.

Through their shared responses to questions and memories of lived experiences connected to reflection, the preservice teachers’ definitions of reflection came to be known and understood. The preservice teachers defined reflection in literal terms as thinking back and as an experience. They also defined reflection in the context of their teacher training as technical. By having the preservice teachers define the phenomenon of this study, the contexts and
understandings from where their experiences originate are known and understood. How the preservice teachers defined reflection directly impacted how they experienced it.

**How Preservice Teachers Experience Reflection**

To inquire into how preservice teachers experience reflection requires a context that phenomenology as a theoretical framework and research methodology provides. By designing a situation through which preservice teachers could think about and reflect on their experiences, that which might not otherwise be seen, became visible. Phenomenology “consists of reflectively bringing into nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 32). Through phenomenologically focusing on lived experiences in relation to reflection, the ways in which the preservice teachers experienced reflection became known.

The preservice teachers participating in this study shared memories of lived experiences connected to becoming a teacher and of lived experiences either observing a classroom or teaching in a classroom. As the participants shared their memories, in the form of moments, they revealed two similarities related to how they experienced reflection. For some, reflection as a process resulted from inconsistency. The experience of reflection was vague or resulted from confusion regarding its purpose. For many, reflection served as a valuable pathway contributing to professional growth and greater understanding. This pathway helped lead the preservice teachers more resolutely toward a profession they felt strongly about or it helped them to grow as teachers, changing their perspectives and developing their understandings.

**Reflection as Inconsistent.** As the preservice teachers shared their lived experiences connected to reflection and their teacher training, inconsistencies emerged. In some instances, despite valuing reflection, the participants did only what they needed to do in order to earn the
grades they desired or saw how their peers might respond in this way. Some even experienced the directive to reflect as vague and unclear and needed to seek out further clarification to meet minimum expectations or go beyond those expectations if desired. The research of Calderhead (1992) and Rodgers (2002) into teacher education programs, Clara (2015) into the phenomenon of reflection, and Hourani (2013) into preservice teachers’ experiences with reflection, connected with the preservice teachers’ experiences of reflection.

In reviewing all of their comments connected to their memories of lived experiences of reflection in regard to their teacher training programs, the preservice teachers experienced reflection from a place of inconsistency. Laura and Karen in particular noted that they are natural rule followers and as such they like to have prompts and guidelines to follow when reflecting. Laura reflected that as an English major, she could easily comply with the scripted directions for a reflective assignment writing a “fancy” sounding paper that may or may not actually include deep reflective thinking, but that would fulfill the directions as assigned. Karen, when thinking about a particular reflective assignment, shared, “there were a lot of guiding questions….which I felt was helpful,” (Interview, 12/4/19b). This structure enabled Karen to turn in reflections that she felt met her teachers’ expectations and in turn would ensure a good grade for her. Karen was content and found comfort with her experience of knowing how to meet the expectations and doing exactly what she needed to do when asked.

In contrast to how Laura and Karen experienced reflection, Beth experienced vague directions connected to reflection. She recalled, “I don’t think [a professor] has ever said, ‘Reflect because.’ It’s just ‘Reflect. Put your thoughts down on paper,’” (Interview, 12/3/19a). As she continued to reflect on her experiences, she realized that never did a professor explain why she and her peers, or even professionals, should reflect. Similar to Beth, Sarah shared that
she had never received any direct instruction on the importance of reflection. As she remembered a particularly guided reflection experience, Sarah noted that over the many field experiences she had had, where she was given the opportunity to engage and interact with students, that she had not previously experienced effective reflection instruction.

In thinking about her experiences with reflection in connection to her teacher training, Kristen shared that in the beginning of her training, she did not really know what reflection was. She remembered asking, “If I don't talk about every single paragraph in the reading, or, if I don't bring up the main point that the person sitting next to me brought up, is that okay?” (Interview, 11/18/19). She found the provided directions to be vague.

As Kristen further reflected on her experience of reflection as a part of her teaching training, she noted that she did have some professors who helped her to understand reflection as meaningful. She remembered professors saying, “I'm not looking for you to fill in a bunch of checks and boxes. I'm looking to see what you've learned from this experience,” (Interview, 11/18/19). Kristen’s experience with reflection began with confusion but resulted in clarity based on her self-advocacy.

The inconsistencies the five preservice teachers experienced with regard to reflection as a part of their teacher training programs connects to research related to reflection and teacher education programs. In addition to preservice teacher reflection focusing on technical aspects, Calderhead’s (1992) research found that teacher education programs lacked consensus around the reflective process, particularly with regard to what preservice teachers reflect about and how they become reflective. Building on these findings, Rodgers’s (2002) research revealed that teachers in training do not receive instruction for reflection, particularly in the form of a manual. This lack of instruction, Rodgers found, makes it difficult to have a clear definition or common
language that can be used by all faculty across a teacher training program. Furthermore, Rodgers maintained that without a clear understanding of what reflection is and how the process works, it becomes unclear what constitutes enough when it comes to reflection or how to assess how well one has reflected. The inconsistent experiences of the preservice teachers directly echoed Calderhead and Rodgers’s findings as they experienced vague instructions and expectations. The preservice teachers experienced an inconsistent understanding of process in connection to what they reflected on and in some instances felt unclear with how to go about reflecting.

Additionally, the research of Clara (2015) related to the inconsistencies the preservice teachers experienced. Clara’s research discovered that in not seeing reflection as a phenomenon, teacher education programs did not clearly describe how reflection works which resulted in varied interpretations. The preservice teachers’ experiences with reflection expressed varied understandings of reflection in connection to it as a phenomenon, which furthered the vague and varying situations in which the preservice teachers found themselves.

Finally, the research of Hourani (2013) found that preservice teachers desired more in-action and oral reflection opportunities. The experiences of the preservice teachers connect with this desire as they felt that their experiences with such types of reflection were few and delayed into their timeline of experiences within their teacher training programs.

In summary, the preservice teachers experienced reflection as inconsistent. They experienced the varying degrees to which they could reflect based on professor expectations and direction and they also experienced vague and unclear directives connected to the definition and process of reflection. Despite these inconsistencies, the preservice teachers also managed to experience reflection as a pathway that contributed to their professional growth and greater understandings.
Reflection as a Pathway. As the preservice teachers shared memories of lived experiences connected to their teacher training, the moments they shared portrayed reflection as a pathway that led to professional growth and greater understandings. The preservice teachers’ experiences with reflection connected to the research literature, specifically to that of van Manen (1977, 2015) who studied levels of reflection and Kairos moments, Schön (1983) who studied the thinking of professionals, Dewey (1916) who studied reflection in the context of spontaneous interpretation of experience, LaBoskey (1993) who researched reflection and preservice teacher training, and Grant and Zeichner (1984) and Zeichner and Liston (1987) both who wrote about preservice teachers becoming reflective.

The participants experienced reflection as a pathway that led them through moments of professional growth and to greater understandings. To begin, Kristen and Laura experienced reflection in a way that caused them to analyze meanings, perceptions, and assumptions to make practical decisions. Reflection served as a pathway for Kristen to address a particularly challenging moment and emerge with a sense of confidence and conviction. When Kristen reflected on the decision to become a teacher, she had the following thoughts. “When I switched my major to education, I was kind of worried. I was like, ‘I don't want to be judged.’ … But then, I was like ‘why would I?’ Why should I be worried about what other people think?” (Interview, 11/18/19). Kristen started by reflecting on her assumptions of what others would think. The assumptions resulted from reactions she received when she told people that she wanted to be a middle school teacher. “They were like, ‘Oh, my goodness, Bless you!’” (Interview, 11/18/19). She also reflected on reactions she heard in connection to teaching in general, saying:
society sometimes paints teaching as, oh, you know, we just teach the ABCs, and have [students] read books…. I think there's a lot of people who say, “Oh, if my career doesn't work out, I'm just going to be a teacher.” And I'm like, “No.” …. you're not just going to be a teacher. You go into teaching, you should go into teaching because you want to go into teaching. (Interview, 11/18/19)

In deciding to be a teacher, Kristen faced moments of doubt and traversed moral challenges connected to her decision. In her reflection on this decision, Kristen felt resolute. van Manen’s (1977) research connected to reflection proposed three levels, technical, practical, and critical, through which educators navigate to consider multiple perspectives and viewpoints when making decisions or taking action. Through critical reflection van Manen believed the most significant questions facing teachers and education can be addressed. By critically reflecting on the assumptions and perceptions of others, Kristen was able to address significant questions and even self-doubt regarding her career choice. Reflection became a pathway that allowed Kristen used to traverse multiple perspectives and viewpoints to determine how she wanted to proceed.

Similar to Kristen, Laura experienced reflection as a pathway helping to guide her transition from student to teacher. Laura shared a memory of a lived experience in a classroom in which she reflected on her role. “It was weird stepping out of that student position and being a higher authority within a classroom with students who were two or three years younger than me. It was very strange,” (Interview, 11/14/19b). In these moments when she was feeling uncomfortable asserting herself in her new role as teacher, Laura found herself practicing reflection-in-action to reassure herself. “I had to be very firm with myself and be like you're the adult now. You’re the teacher. You have to start acting like it,” (Interview, 11/14/19b). Reflection-in-action, as Schön’s (1983, 1987) research called it, referred to reflection in the
moment or conscious thinking. In these moments, Schön believed practitioners are called on to derive knowledge from real-world settings and make appropriate modifications or changes to practice. Laura found herself in a moment for which her theoretical training had not prepared her. She described the moment as strange yet natural. For years, she had assumed the role of student and it felt strange to deviate from that place. From a practical perspective, the moment was a natural one – she was training to be a teacher and should assume that role. Laura experienced reflection-in-action to think about the situation in which she found herself and from it, she felt reassurance in how to proceed down the path of transitioning from student to teacher.

Similar to Laura, in using reflection-in-action, Sarah experienced reflection as a pathway to greater professional understanding. Sarah shared of an opportunity to work one-on-one with a student during a field placement. Sarah was providing the student with directions to complete a computer-based task, when she realized, “[the directions make] sense to me. [They don’t] make sense to her… And then I thought about if I was to put myself in her shoes, what I would have taken from what I said,” (Interview, 11/12/2019). By thinking in the moment, Sarah’s experience with reflection provided her with needed insight in how best to proceed. She saw that there was confusion. By thinking about how she should respond in that moment to the situation, and by applying knowledge taken from the setting and her prior experience, Sarah made a needed adjustment. “I realized how I could have explained it more. And I got paper and I drew it how it was supposed to look. And so it was really beneficial for her,” (Interview, 11/12/2019). As Sarah reflected on this moment, she experienced what van Manen called a Kairos moment. Kairos moments present the intersection between lived experiences and prior experiences. Through unexpected moments and interactions, van Manen (2015) believed that teachers became better equipped to respond to the ever-changing needs of students. By being present in the moment to
experience the student not understanding her directions, Sarah saw the confusion first-hand and was able to make adjustments right away. This experience of reflection-in-action coupled with a significant Kairos moment proved to be quite impactful for Sarah, as it provided her with a pathway to greater professional understanding and visibility into the responsibilities of a teacher.

Sarah also shared another impactful experience with reflection that contributed to her experiencing reflection as a pathway for growth. As a part of a field experience, Sarah observed a classroom teacher and the teacher’s classroom management techniques angered her, bringing back memories connected to her schooling experiences. The techniques also conflicted with best practice instruction Sarah received from The University. How Sarah described that she reflected through this lived experience, by responding to emotion, connected with the research of Dewey (1916). Dewey’s research offered spontaneous interpretation of experience as a way one might reflect in reaction to an experience. He described this reaction as “things leap to mind. From the ‘feltness’ of the experience possible meanings suggest themselves. These suggestions…. come out of our previous experiences, and are therefore sensible, though not always thoughtful conclusions,” (Rodgers, 2002, p. 852). Sarah had an immediate reaction to what she experienced in the classroom and her reflection “leapt” out of her. As she reflected on this experience, Sarah noted that she refers back to this experience often, sighting its connection to other experiences or observations. Dewey noted that one can be quick to respond and not pay attention to other interpretations or angles connected to the experience at hand. Through Sarah’s continued reflection of this moving experience, she demonstrated a commitment to growth through reflective practice.

As Kristen navigated a field placement teaching experience, she shared how reflection also served as a pathway to greater understanding. Her reflective practices prior to this
experience had been solely based on theoretical content and for the first time, she was reflecting on practical components directly connected to a “real” teaching experience where she took control of a classroom. The reflective process felt different for her. “I remember in my first year or two here I kind of not fabricated but I would only talk about the positives. I was scared to admit failure,” (Interview, 12/3/19b). LaBoskey’s (1993) research found that those new to teaching need to be taught about the meaning and value of reflection and how to perform such practices. Without this instruction, they might not understand the complex process through which feelings and perceptions connect and interact to allow for greater reflection and new meanings and understandings to become available. LaBoskey advocated for preservice teachers to be encouraged to consider both practical and theoretical perspectives through their reflective practices, recognizing preservice teachers predominantly focus on the theoretical content. LaBoskey maintained that preservice teachers are not “blank slates” as they come with years of classroom experience contributing to their beliefs connected to teaching and learning. Kristen’s reflection on her thoughts and feelings coupled with her beliefs about teaching and learning contributed to her professional growth and greater understandings in connection to her reflective practices. She noted that, “You learn so much more from what goes wrong than what goes right. So in this reflection, I was honest. I was like it didn’t go to plan, and I had to kind of improvise. But you know what? That’s okay, and this was what I learned from it,” (Interview, 12/3/19b). In the end, Kristen was able to look back over her reflection and note all that she considered. “There was a lot that went into the reflection, which I think is the best kinds of reflections when there’s actually, you know, a lot of substance to it,” (Interview, 12/3/19b). In thinking about the experience of reflection, Kristen shared, “It shouldn't be about getting it right. It should be about focusing on how to grow as a person,” (Interview, 11/18/19). Reflection provided a pathway for
Kristen to be honest with herself about her decisions, actions, feelings, and understandings, contributing to her learning and growth.

The reflective experiences of Laura, and Sarah, and Kristen affirmed the research of Schön (1983), van Manen (1977, 2015), and LaBoskey (1993). Reflection-in-action, critical reflection connected to moral questions, Kairos moments, and combining theoretical and practical components with prior lived experiences proved to be significant to some of the preservice teachers in this study as they experienced reflection. Through their experiences in navigating the choice to become a teacher or transitioning to being the teacher, the preservice teachers’ experienced reflection as a pathway to professional growth and greater understanding.

The preservice teachers also revealed reflection as a pathway to professional growth and greater understanding when talking about the importance of self-reflection in connection to their teaching training. Laura described self-reflection as, “how you view yourself internally and externally….a reflection of yourself,” (Interview, 11/14/19a) for the purpose of growth. When speaking about reflective moments, Laura often referred to them as self-reflective and evaluated those instances as “good” in relation to her experiencing growth through the process of reflection. In sharing experiences with reflection, Sarah noted that she desired opportunities to self-reflect finding value in such practice as it contributed to her growth. As she continued to reflect on her experiences, Sarah considered self-reflection a pathway building a context for developed reflection ultimately contributing to strong and effective reflective practice yielding growth opportunities and new experiences. Similar to Laura, Beth also expressed the importance of self-reflection in connection to preservice teacher growth. Beth believed that, “self-reflection and understanding yourself is beneficial to [teachers],” (Interview, 12/3/19a). This perspective
suggests the value Beth also places on reflection and the connection she sees between it and professional growth.

The research of Zeichner with colleagues Grant (1984) and Liston (1987) into reflective practice as a part of teaching training programs connects with the preservice teachers’ view of reflection as a pathway to growth, with regard to self-reflection. Grant and Zeichner (1984) believed that growth was directly related to reflective practices and that preservice teachers who reflect will grow. The preservice teachers participating in this study shared of experiences through which they felt that their reflective practices led them to grow. Zeichner’s research with Liston (1987) suggested that self-reflection, as a pathway for growth, be included in the list of reflective practices and experiences that preservice teachers might engage with as a part of their training. In reflecting on their experiences, the preservice teachers agreed with Zeichner and Liston’s suggestions, valuing those opportunities to self-reflect as a part of their teaching training programs.

Thus, in reflecting on their lived experiences with reflection as a part of their teacher training programs, the preservice teachers were able to bring to light that which might not otherwise be visible – the way in which they experienced reflection. Through what they shared, they experienced reflection as inconsistent and as a pathway.

**Findings Summary**

By using phenomenology as a research method and theoretical framework, the preservice teachers’ memories of lived experiences with reflection offered pause to wonder and explore the answers to how preservice teachers define and experience reflection. By approaching preservice teacher reflection phenomenologically, reflection as the phenomenon was studied through memories as it was experienced, providing a prereflective access to where meanings and
understandings originate for future professional educators. Through a phenomenological gaze, reflection, which could be construed as common and everyday, became extraordinary and offered insight and perspective.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study contained limitations in methodology, analysis, and generalizability.

**Limitations in Methodology**

Phenomenology as a method seeks to study and understand experiences and the associated perspectives around a phenomenon, which are unique to the individual participants and the researcher. As a result, phenomenological studies focus on a narrow scope in order to properly examine the experiences. Those who read phenomenological studies can then expect to become more experienced and gain greater understanding. Additionally, in phenomenological studies, the researcher identifies his/her preunderstandings and reactions through either reduction or reflexivity. In this study, the researcher produced reflexive narratives included with the analysis of the findings. Phenomenology acknowledges the impossibility of separating the researcher’s positionality from the study, as the researcher also constructs meaning through writing. “Writing separates us from what we know and yet it unites us more closely with what we know,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 127). Through phenomenological writing, the researcher creates knowledge that is both subjective and objective.

An additional methodological limitation stems from the researcher’s limited experience with phenomenological questioning. van Manen wrote that “to truly question something is to interrogate something from the heart of our existence, from the center of our being,” (1997, p. 43). While the researcher provided open-ended questions that sought to elicit the participants’ lived experiences, the questions did not dig deep enough. As the participants were starting to get
at the essence of their experiences, the researcher moved the participants forward, not providing an opportunity for the participants to pause and tell all aspects of the experience. While the researcher used the most concrete stories shared, there is the possibility that some of the findings result from overinterpretations, speculations, and the personal opinions of the participants in thinking back to the specific experiences. In the future, the researcher could complete a pilot testing of the questions first, to confirm that they would obtain the needed first-hand, experiential information.

**Limitations in Analysis**

Phenomenology does not specify a specific way in which to analyze human experience. The focus of analysis rests in exploring available themes and insights. Using a holistic and selective approach, the researcher considered the participants’ lived experiences as a whole and then made note of specific statements or phrases that revealed significance connected to the phenomenon. A different researcher with a different positionality might identify different themes and insights as significant to the phenomenon.

**Limitations in Generalizability**

Due to the nature of the research method, the exploration of the findings of phenomenological studies are not generalizable. With a focus on a singular phenomenon, from the perspective of a select group of individuals with unique experiences, backgrounds, perspectives, and preunderstandings, the findings specifically relate to the study in question and as such cannot be used to arrive at universal insights connected to the phenomenon, preservice teacher reflection (Sohn et al., 2017, van Manen, 2014). Thinking of this study’s unique participants, the five preservice teachers were all Caucasian females, the predominant race and gender enrolled in the teacher education program, from which the participants were selected. It is
important to note that this phenomenological study did not draw attention to anything race or
gender related, as they were not addressed by the research question nor did come up as a part of
the interviews in accordance with the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, while the
participants were randomly selected, they represented a narrow section of those studying
Education at The University. Three of the participants represented the secondary level, with two
concentrated in Secondary English. The remaining two participants represented Early Grades and
Middle Grades respectively. Limitations could exist in the small number of participants, their
uniform gender and race, as well as the small number of concentration areas represented. Given
the methodology though, and the fact that the study does not focus on the participants’ gender or
race, the experiences captured by this study connect to those individuals, who chose to
participate, as they have come to experience their specific teacher training programs with The
University and cannot be generalized to others.

Implications for Educational Practice

Through the findings gathered from the preservice teachers’ memories of their lived
experiences with reflection pertaining to how they define and experience reflection, implications
for educational practice were identified. Professional teacher training programs and institutions
need to determine and communicate a clear definition of reflection and expected reflective
practices beginning when the preservice teachers begin their studies. By doing so, the preservice
teachers’ reflective practices will strongly develop from a sense of purpose and understanding.
Additionally, teacher training programs and institutions need to provide a variety of experiences
from which the preservice teachers may reflect to help introduce the different types or levels of
reflection beyond that of a technical nature. This would include opportunities that encourage
moral and ethical reflection connected to teachers’ beliefs and values. In doing so, preservice
teachers will have a clear and consistent understanding of reflection that they are able to apply to and in a variety of contexts in which they consider multiple perspectives and viewpoints before taking action. This will result in novice teachers who are better equipped to respond to the varying needs of their students, families, colleagues, and larger school communities.

By the very nature of this study, the preservice teacher participants were encouraged to talk about and think about their reflective practices and experiences. Following the second interview, each participant chose to offer commentary about how much her participation in this study caused her to think about her reflective practices in the time between the two interviews. The participants’ reactions were similar. The experience caused them to be more aware of their reflective practices. Several participants noticed they personally reflected more than they thought they did. The participants also shared that they felt their reflections between the two interviews contained more meaningful reactions and critical thought. In thinking about the preservice teachers’ reactions to the study, it might behoove teacher training programs and institutions to engage preservice teachers in settings where they feel comfortable talking about their reflective practices and lived experiences with reflection as a way of bringing those everyday experiences that might be taken for granted into nearness such that new knowledge and understandings may be uncovered.

In making these recommendations for educational practice, a tension exists that must be recognized. Teacher education, as it has evolved over the last two centuries consists of a predetermined way in which preservice teachers are trained and programs certify their preparation. Those engaged in the field of teacher preparation articulating a need for reflection, which requires a sense of open-endedness, especially when viewed from a phenomenological
lens, experience a conflict. The fixed nature of teacher training programs makes it difficult to allow for the practice of reflection as recommended by this study.

**Implications for Future Educational Research**

Based on the findings from this study, future educational research could proceed in several directions. A similar phenomenological study could be conducted with male preservice teachers to explore their definitions and experiences connected with reflection. Additionally, a phenomenological study could be performed at a collegiate institution where the teacher training program clearly defines reflection and its practice and process. Understanding preservice teachers’ experiences within such a setting would provide additional context to understanding the phenomena of reflection for this particular population as well as the impact of such reflective structure on the experiences.

In tangential commentary as a part of the interviews, the participants shared their professional desires related to teaching. Based on how they understand reflection in connection to their professional practice, it would be interesting to perform a longitudinal phenomenological study first interviewing the participants as preservice teachers, then reconnecting with them their first year of teaching, and then three years later. The work of Freese (2006) followed one preservice teacher’s growth and development in becoming a teacher noting the significance of reflective practices. Along the same lines, it could be beneficial to connect with the same individuals at three points in their teaching career, first in training, second as they are navigating their first classroom experience, and finally when they are starting to feel a bit less novice, to explore their lived experiences with reflection. It would be interesting to learn of their lived experiences with reflection at the different stages to see if their experiences in those moments support the research of others. Questions to explore might be whether at the different stages the
participants’ lived experiences with reflection connect with van Manen’s (1977) three reflective levels; how have the participants’ experiences with reflection-in-action, as Schön (1987) described, evolved; what Kairos moments, as defined by van Manen (2015), the participants might experience; and how participants’ prior classroom experiences contribute to their reflective practices, as suggested by LaBoskey (1993)? Through such a longitudinal study of participants’ lived experiences, a researcher could trace the participants’ reflective evolutions, and provide further context for preservice teacher training programs committed to reflective preparation.

**Concluding Thoughts**

This study focused on the shared lived experiences of five preservice teachers going through the motions of learning and practicing what they learn, to fulfill the requirements set before them in order to become professional educators. Through participation in this study, which included two interviews, each preservice teacher responded to and engaged with questions that sought after their memories of lived experiences with reflection. The moments the preservice teachers shared connected to becoming a teacher and to their professional teacher training. Using phenomenology, a reflective approach, as a research method and theoretical framework, allowed for the phenomenon of reflection, an act of the everyday, to come into focus such that the preservice teachers and the researcher could explore their understandings and meanings connected to it. While each preservice teacher’s experiences were uniquely her own, the five shared common threads pertaining to their definitions of and experiences with reflection. In this final chapter, a summary of findings was offered in connection to the philosophy that grounded it and the relevant literature associated with it. Limitations connected to the study and implications for educational practice and future research were also discussed.
Thinking specifically to how the preservice teachers experienced reflection, those working in the field of higher education as a part of teacher training programs particularly may feel concerned that the preservice teachers experienced it as inconsistent. Recognizing the important relationship between reflection and teachers’ abilities to respond to the unique and varying needs of their students and school communities, those responsible for teacher training programming do need to ensure that any possible inconsistencies within their programs are addressed. Afterall:

Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible, and ensures the progress of the individual and, ultimately, society. (Rodgers, 2002, p. 845) Given this, the programs would be encouraged to start by considering how reflection is defined and then look to the ways that reflective practices are instructed, implemented, and experienced across all facets of teacher training.

The fact that the preservice teachers also experienced reflection as a pathway for growth and understanding offers hope to those higher education teacher training programs where inconsistencies may exist. The preservice teachers’ experiences suggested a familiarity with reflection, as they shared a variety of moments in which their lived experiences connected to reflection. The expressed value the preservice teachers placed on reflection in relation to how they understand reflection based off of their experiences offers further hope. As teacher training programs work to address any inconsistencies that may exist, there is the possibility that preservice teachers will continue to engage with reflection as a part of their lived experiences and that this reflection will contribute to their professional growth and understandings.
At the conclusion of each second interview, the preservice teachers each briefly commented on their experience of participating in this study. Their comments spoke to the value they found in sharing and discussing their lived experiences. They spoke of new awareness in their everyday lived experiences connected to reflection. Some of the awareness they shared suggested shifts in how they viewed themselves and their interactions and experiences. van Manen poised the question, “can phenomenology, if we concern ourselves deeply with it, do something with us,” (van Manen, 1997, p. 45)? The experience of participating in this study, in taking the time to think reflectively about their lived experiences, to wonder, and to be open, filled the preservice teachers with insights and questions. As they embark on their professional journeys, it is the researcher’s hope that this experience of reflection will remain with them as they navigate the many lived experiences to come, including the first day of school, when addressing each of their students by name.

As the researcher who also participated in this phenomenological study, I will offer my personal reaction to van Manen’s question. I wholeheartedly believe that phenomenology can “do something with us”. In allowing ourselves to be truly open to wonder, to consider, to question, and most especially to feel emotions in connection to those aspects of our everyday lives that are often taken for granted or not within our frequent focus, we are bound to change. This change may present itself differently each time, and regardless of the form, the outcome leaves us with new experiences to explore.

As I reflect on my preservice teaching experience and my experiences as a new teacher, my first year and each first year at a new school, and I think about the insight I have gained over the years. It is my hope that reflection will continue to hold a place of meaning for the preservice teachers who participated in this study and that through their use and awareness of it, they
become the best possible teachers they can, for themselves and most especially for the students they will meet.
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Appendix

Appendix A IRB Appendices

Information Sheet

The Meaning of Reflection: A Phenomenology of Student Teacher Experience

For her dissertation research as a part of West Chester University’s Graduate School ED.D. in Policy, Planning, and Administration, Jane Ferris is studying reflection in connection to preservice teachers. You may ask Jane Ferris any questions to help you understand the study. If you choose to be a part of the study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

1. **What is the purpose of this study?**
   - To examine the meaning of reflection for preservice teachers

2. **If you decide to be a part of this study, you will be asked to the following:**
   - Participate in two one-on-one audio-taped interviews with the Primary Investigator, Jane Ferris
   - Provide a sample of reflective work

3. **Are there any experimental medical treatments?**
   - No

4. **Is there any risk to me?**
   - Risks to the participant are minimal and not expected; however, if you experience any discomfort, you have the right to withdraw at any time.

5. **Is there any benefit to me?**
   - Your participation in this study will result in the opportunity to reflect on your understanding of reflection, which may provide you with insight into how you see the practice of reflection applying to your personal and professional pursuits.

6. **How will you protect my privacy?**
   - Participants will be given pseudonyms to protect identities. You name will not be used in any reports.
   - Personal identifying information will not be collected during the audiotaped interviews.
   - Audio-taped interview recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed.
   - Transcriptions and other data connected to the interviews and sample work will be kept confidential via a password-protected computer and only Jane Ferris and Co-Principal Investigator, David Backer, PhD., will have access to your responses.
   - Three years after the completion of this study, data will be destroyed or permanently deleted from computers.
   - Subsequent reports and articles about this research will protect participants’ identities to the fullest extent possible.

7. **Do I get paid to take part in this study?**
   - Participants will receive a $20.00 Amazon gift card at the completion of the study.
   - Participants may have the opportunity to receive Methods course extra-credit or hours towards required professional development for their participation.

8. **Who do I contact in case of a research related injury?**
   - For any questions with this study, contact: Jane Ferris, Primary Investigator, at 484-678-1074 or via JF877756@wcupa.edu

For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact West Chester University’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) at 610-436-3557.
Consent Form

Project Title: The Meaning of Reflection: A Phenomenology of Student Teacher Experience

Investigator(s): Jane Ferris; David Backer,

Jane Ferris  
Student Researcher  
West Chester University  
Ph#: 484-678-1074  
jf877756@wcupa.edu

David Backer, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
West Chester University  
Ph#: 610-436-2326

Project Overview:

As a part of her Doctoral dissertation, Jane Ferris, will examine the meaning of reflection for preservice teachers. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. If you consent to participate, you will be asked to participate in two 1-1.5 hour interviews and provide a reflective sample. Results from this study may be informative to post-secondary teacher education programs who place value on preservice teachers’ reflective practices.

You may ask Jane Ferris any questions to help you understand the study. If you choose to be a part of the study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

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   o Participate in two one-on-one audio-taped interviews with the Primary Investigator, Jane Ferris
   o Provide a sample of reflective work

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   o No

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I, ___________________________ (your name), have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

Subject / Participant Signature: ___________________________  Date: __________

Witness Signature: ___________________________  Date: __________
The Meaning of Reflection: A Phenomenology of Student Teacher Experience

Thank you for your interest in participating in Jane Ferris's dissertation research.

Investigator(s): Jane Ferris; David Backer,

Jane Ferris  
Student Researcher  
West Chester University  
Ph#: 484-678-1074  
JF877756@wcupa.edu

David Backer, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
West Chester University  
Ph#: 610-436-2326  
DBacker@wcupa.edu

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You may ask Jane Ferris any questions to help you understand the study. If you choose to be a part of the study, you have the right to change your mind and stop being a part of the study at any time.

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For any questions about your rights in this research study, contact West Chester University’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) at 610-436-3557.

If you would like to proceed with becoming one of the study’s participants, please answer the following:

Participant’s first and last name:

Participant’s email address:

In which University course did you learn about this study:

Preferred days of the week for interviews:

Preferred times of day for interviews:

I have read this form and I understand the statements in this form. I know that if I am uncomfortable with this study, I can stop at any time. I understand that I will be asked to sign a Consent Form prior to the first interview beginning and can opt out at that time should I choose. I know that it is not possible to know all possible risks in a study, and I think that reasonable safety measures have been taken to decrease any risk.

Subject / Participant’s Electronic Signature:

Today’s Date:
Email Responses

Email Response A

Hello <name of participant>,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study, The Meaning of Reflection: A Phenomenology of Student Teacher Experience.

Based on your preferred dates and times, please plan to join me for the first interview session at <time> on <date> in room <name/number> of the _________ Building. If this particular date and time does not work with your schedule, please let me know and I will email you additional available dates.

You do not need to bring anything with you for the interview.

If you have any questions or if anything comes up between now and <date of interview>, please feel welcome to reach me via 484-678-1074 or JF877756@wcupa.edu.

Thank you again for being willing to participate. I look forward to meeting with you on <date of interview>.

~ Jane Ferris
Student Researcher

Email Response B

Hello <name of participant>,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study, The Meaning of Reflection: A Phenomenology of Student Teacher Experience.

At this time, all participant spaces have been filled. If a spot becomes available, I will reach back out to you via this email address.

Thank you again for your interest in participating.

~ Jane Ferris
Student Researcher
Scripts

Audio-Recording

Good morning/afternoon! Thank you for beginning willing to participate in my research study, The Meaning of Reflection: A Phenomenology of Student Teacher Experience. I will ask you questions, and the interview will last between 1 and 1.5 hours. Please note that I will be audio-recording your responses to each of the questions. Your responses will be kept in the strictest of confidence. Neither your name nor West Chester University’s name will be included in my data analysis. The audio recordings and the transcript of the interviews will be kept on a password protected computer. All responses and recordings will be destroyed within three years following the completion of this dissertation research.

Artifact - Reflective Document

By <date determined based on interview date and research timeline>, please email me an artifact related to a recent reflection. The artifact may be written, 2D, or audio-visual. Please note that whatever you select, it will need to be provided to me via email. In your email, please also tell me what the reflection relates to and when it was created.
CITI Training Completion Reports

Jane Ferris CITI Training

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Jane Ferris (ID: 8160803)
- **Institution Affiliation:** West Chester University of Pennsylvania (ID: 3022)
- **Institution Email:** JF877754@wcupa.edu
- **Institution Unit:** EDD
- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 31876229
- **Completion Date:** 29-Jul-2019
- **Expiration Date:** 29-Jul-2022
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score:** 92

### REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY

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<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>DATE COMPLETED</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Populations in Research Requiring Additional Considerations and/or Protections (ID: 16680)</td>
<td>03-Jun-2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)</td>
<td>03-Jun-2019</td>
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<td>Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)</td>
<td>03-Jun-2019</td>
<td>4/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)</td>
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<td>5/5</td>
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<td>Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)</td>
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<td>4/5</td>
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<td>5/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)</td>
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<td>5/5</td>
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<td>Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)</td>
<td>29-Jul-2019</td>
<td>4/5</td>
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</table>

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: [www.citiprogram.org/verify?k2503da1d-017b-44da-bf7c-4e13a986d01b-31876229](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify?k2503da1d-017b-44da-bf7c-4e13a986d01b-31876229)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)

Email: support@citiprogram.org
Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: [https://www.citiprogram.org](https://www.citiprogram.org)
Same Day Transcriptions CITI Training and Agent Confidentiality/Nondisclosure Agreement

This is to certify that:

Crystalle Kei Foley

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Basic/Refresher Course - Human Subjects Research (Curriculum Group)
Social/Behavioral Research Course (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Fordham University

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify?wcf025199-0e67-41f3-ab26-943f397ce5b0-23390918
CONFIDENTIALITY/NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

This agreement is entered into as of _____________, 2015 by and between Same Day Transcriptions, Inc., with business address at 11523 Palm Brush Trail, Suite 102 Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202, hereafter “Company” and _______________ (please print name/company clearly hereafter “Agent”).

Agent recognizes and acknowledges that it may be in possession of certain secrets and confidential information ("Confidential Information"), which will be disclosed by the Company on a limited basis under this Agreement. Agent desires to work with respect to certain Projects under conditions which would preserve the confidentiality of said Projects and all, confidential information and other proprietary information and know-how which may be disclosed to Agent in connection with such Project.

In consideration of the premises, and other good and valuable considerations, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, Agent and Company agree as follows:

1. Confidential Information: Agent recognizes and acknowledges that, as a consequence of and through its activities in connection with any Project, will be exposed at the election of the Company to certain Confidential Information. Such Confidential Information may include, but is not limited to, programs, systems, data plans, processes, procedures, strategic planning, tools, mechanisms, or other items or compilations of information relative to production and marketing processes, products or research and development.

2. Existence of Confidential Relationship: Agent recognizes and acknowledges that, by virtue of its position and participation in any Project, a Confidential relationship exists not only between Agent and Company, but also between Agent and certain of Company’s customer. The Agent shall neither use Confidential Information nor circulate Confidential Information within its own organization or to its officers, employees, agents or representatives except as follows:
   a) Agent will limit the disclosure only to its employees and Agents involved in any Project. Agent agrees to treat the Confidential Information with no less than the same degree of security, internally and with respect to third parties, that Agent would exercise in treating its own Confidential Information.
   b) To the extent necessary for negotiations, discussions, or consultations with personnel or authorized representatives of the Company.
   c) To the extent necessary for conducting normal and customary credit analysis for a proposed transaction related to the Project.
   d) To the extent necessary for preparing bids, estimates, or proposals for submission to the Company;
   e) Any other purpose that the Company may hereafter authorize.

3. The obligations of Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall terminate with respect to any particular portion of Confidential Information if such information:
   a) was in the public domain at the time of the Company’s communication thereof to Agent;
   b) entered the public domain through no fault of the Agent after the Company’s communication to the Agent;
   c) was in the Agent’s possession free of any obligation of confidentiality when communicated to the Agent;

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d) was rightfully communicated to the Agent free of any obligation of confidentiality after the Company’s communication to the Agent;
e) was developed by employees or agents of the Agent independently of and without reference to any Confidential Information that the Company has disclosed in confidence to the Agent; or
f) was communicated by the Company to a third party free of any obligation of confidentiality.

4. All tangible materials (including, without limitation, documents, financial statements, models, graphs, computer data and lists) furnished to the Agent by the Company and which are designated in writing to be Confidential Information shall remain the Company’s property and shall be returned to the Company promptly upon its request.

5. The Agent agrees not to directly or indirectly contact any party related to the Project for purposes of competing with the Company in providing or offering to provide any form of financing or delivering power to the Project for a period of two years from the date hereof.

6. Applicable Law: This Agreement, together with any dispute which may arise out of the Agreement, shall be governed by Florida law. If any of the provisions of this Agreement are declared void, such provisions shall be deemed separate from this Agreement and the Agreement shall otherwise remain in full force and effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, THE PARTIES HAVE CAUSED THIS AGREEMENT TO BE EXECUTED AS OF THE DAY AND YEAR FIRST WRITTEN ABOVE.

By: AGENT

_________________________________________________________ Authorized Signature

_________________________________________________________ Print name and organization

Agent’s address:_____________________________________________________________

By: SAME DAY TRANSCRIPTIONS, INC.

_________________________________________________________ Authorized Signature

Please fill out this form neatly in dark ink, print, sign and send the entire copy, as well as a completed w-9 tax form to Same Day Transcriptions, Inc.: fax 856.282.5500; e: billing@samedaytranscriptions.com
Your executed copy will follow shortly thereafter via email.
Appendix B Interview Questions

Participant # ______     Date & Time: _____________________

Semi-Structured Interview #1 Questions

1. What semester are you in?
2. When will you be student teaching?
3. Have you had any field experiences to-date?
4. What is your concentration area?
5. When someone says the word reflection, what does that mean to you?
6. When do you think a teacher reflects?
7. Why do you think a teacher reflects?
8. Why do you want to be a teacher?
9. How often do you reflect?
10. How do you reflect?
11. What value do you place on reflection?
12. Why do you place this kind of value on reflection?
13. How do you see reflection benefiting you as a teacher?
14. How would you describe the instruction you have received in how to reflect?

15. What is your first memory of reflection?
   a. When? Where? Who was involved? What were you reflecting on? What did you do to reflect?

16. How do you understand reflection as it relates to you becoming a teacher?

17. What is your first memory of reflection in the context of you becoming a teacher?
   a. When? Where? Who was involved? What were you reflecting on? What did you do to reflect?

18. When was the last time you reflected in relation to becoming a teacher?
   a. What prompted this reflection? What did you reflect about? What did you do to reflect?

19. Would you say that you are reflective person?

20. How would you describe how reflection feels?

21. How do you feel about this experience today?

22. Have you had any experience like this before?
Semi-Structured Interview #2 Questions

1. About how many field courses / experiences have you had?

2. Please describe the artifact that you provided me.

3. How did you select the artifact that you sent me?

4. What experience does this artifact connect to?

5. What stands out to you in that experience?

6. How does this artifact connect to your understanding of what reflection is?

7. How do you think this artifact relates to the value that you believe should be placed on reflection?

8. What do you think constitutes an experience?

9. How would you define an experience?

10. Do you think that reflection is connected to personal growth?

11. Do you think that reflection is connected to professional growth?

12. Would you ever ask students to reflect?

13. Do you think that reflective practices connect to your relationships with students?

14. Do you think it is important to reflect on being a teacher?
15. How do you think the university could include reflection instruction in the curriculum for future student teachers?

16. What has this experience of thinking about reflection been like for you?

17. What stands out to you about this experience?