COOPERATING TEACHER ADVICE

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Abstract—Four experienced and four new cooperating teachers tape-recorded meetings with their student teachers for 2 weeks. Protocols were analyzed for advice statements. There were 55.2% coded Consultant—dealing with the present case and no elaboration, and 44.8% coded as Teacher—with some elaboration or explanation. Of Teacher advice statements, 84.7% included an elaboration or explanation, and 16.7% included reference to future cases within an elaboration. Regarding antecedents, 55.2% were solicited by student teacher question or comment, 37.1% by review and discussion of student teacher's lesson plans, and 7.6% as unsolicited. While experienced cooperating teachers tended to provide more advice, percentages in the various categories were essentially similar for both new and experienced cooperating teachers.

Studies of expertise indicate that advanced levels of competence are acquired in the world of practice and not during professional schooling per se. There are many bright and capable students graduating from teacher education programs but if they are to become experts it will take a considerable amount of time engaged in teaching. A sense of the value of this experience can be seen in experts' apparent integration of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1987), knowledge of students, and knowledge of instructional strategies and classroom management (Berliner, 1986; Dunn & Taylor, 1990; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986). This integration is very unlikely for the novice teacher if for no other reason than lack of experience with teaching subject matter to students using various strategies. But other than verifying the need for experience, what have we learned that can help us structure the experience of the novice so that it leads to higher levels of competence, if not expertise?

Most current recommendations in this regard focus on notions of reflectivity. While a consensus definition of reflectivity does not exist it has often been described as emphasizing cognitive, affective, and ethical/moral components (Adler, 1991; Calderhead, 1989; Korthagen, 1992; Schön, 1987; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991; Van Manen, 1977; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). While reflectivity can be encouraged by direct teaching and guidance, these procedures are considered inadequate to promote the full range of reflective thought. Instead, inquiry oriented strategies are considered more desirable in addition to activities that involve self direction and self management. Also very prominent in the reflectivity literature is the high value put on...
learning from guided or coached practice as opposed to primary reliance on research and theory derived teaching principles (Schön, 1987, Chap. 1). While attempts to incorporate reflective practice ideas in teacher education are widespread, there are no clear directions for doing so. Unfortunately, as Calderhead (1989, p. 46) says, “Definitions of reflective teaching have been analytically derived and are prescriptively oriented.” As such there are ideal models of reflection but not much guidance for practice.

The absence of clear cut procedures for reflective teaching notwithstanding, the well accepted view that expertise is not formally “taught” but learned from experience has placed the environment of the novice teacher under close scrutiny. Certainly a very important element in the student teacher’s environment is the cooperating teacher. If a student teacher is to engage in reflective thought, be mindful as opposed to mindless, be thoughtful as opposed to thoughtless, it may depend, at least to some extent, on the cooperating teacher’s advice and recommendations.

What kinds of advice and recommendations might result in more reflectivity and mindfulness?

Dunn (1984) and Dunn and Taylor (1990) have recommended that more advanced professionals use advice-strategies derived from hierarchical analyses of expertise in working with novices. An advice-strategy is “instruction” that encourages a learner to look for relationships/patterns to facilitate development of conceptual knowledge or higher level rules that may be used in subsequent problem solving. Advice-strategies are domain specific in that they are derived from specific hierarchical analyses of expertise. However, advice-strategies do not teach intellectual skills directly. While geared toward the acquisition of these capabilities, they essentially provide instructional guidance about how best to take advantage of instructionally related experiences. Advice strategies are primarily concerned with how learners will think and act during future cases after deliberating on present or past cases.

Similar notions have been recommended by Salomon and Perkins (1989; and Perkins & Salomon, 1988) in their descriptions of low and high road transfer. Low road transfer occurs through much practice across time that gradually leads to automaticity. It is possible that one could become an expert by virtue of extensive practice of this kind. High road transfer is different in that there is a deliberate attempt through mindful abstraction at application from one context to another. To promote high road transfer Salomon and Perkins (1989) recommended giving advice to learners to look for situations in new contexts that are analogous to experiences they have already had. This advice can range from general encouragement to being very precise regarding the analogous relationships to investigate.

Both advice-strategies and high road transfer advice are supposed to encourage “mindfulness” as opposed to “mindlessness.” As such they are similar in some respects with attempts to promote reflectivity (Calderhead, 1989). Perhaps one difference would be that advice-strategies and high road transfer are provided to guide the learner towards acquiring and/or transferring some pre-identified higher level intellectual skills, not unlike guided discovery (Mosston, 1972), even though these intellectual skills may be imprecise and the knowledge domain ill-structured. On the other hand, attempts to promote reflectivity are not necessarily provided to encourage the acquisition of specific declarative or procedural knowledge but rather to encourage the strategy of reflection itself.

Another view of advice came from a study investigating how more experienced cooperating teachers work with a student teacher doing a planning task (Dunn, Taylor, & Henning, 1989). The planning sessions were video-taped and transcribed and idea units were analyzed to determine cooperating teacher “style.” Although cooperating teacher advice was not the primary focus, of particular interest for the present study were two distinct emphases in cooperating teacher advice. Some advice was directed primarily towards how to negotiate the present case, that is, this unit, these students. In these instances the cooperating teacher was acting much like a consultant (i.e., giving consultant advice). At other times it was clear that the advice was related to more than the present case and was also intended to affect the student teacher in the future when dealing with other students and other lesson plans. The implication in these cases being that the cooperating teacher is concerned with transfer and acting more as a
Cooperating teacher (i.e., giving teacher advice).

The purpose of the present study is to investigate more directly the advice that cooperating teachers give to student teachers. Although this is not an expert/novice study per se, we also compared experienced cooperating teachers with cooperating teachers working with their first student teacher. The specific questions we investigated were:

What is the nature of advice that cooperating teachers give to student teachers? Is it primarily "teacher", as opposed to "consultant" advice? Is it likely to promote transfer?

Are there differences in the advice that experienced cooperating teachers give to student teachers as opposed to cooperating teachers working with their first student teacher?

Method

The participants in this study were eight cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs, all in elementary classrooms in northwest Ohio. Four Experienced cooperating teachers had worked with a minimum of 10 student teachers (mean = 17). Four New cooperating teachers were working with their first student teacher. The cooperating teachers were randomly selected from a group of cooperating teachers meeting either the criterion of working with a minimum of 10 student teachers or working with their first student teacher. Not surprisingly, the Experienced cooperating teachers also had more teaching experience than the New cooperating teachers (24.5 vs 12.3 years).

The cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs were asked to audio-tape record their meetings for 2 weeks during the middle or second half of student teaching. We were asked not to do this earlier during student teaching because it might cause some confusion and stress for student teachers. The specific instructions were as follows:

Please remember that we do not want to control what happens during your meetings in any way. They should be as natural as possible. We are asking that you tape the meetings that take place during the following times: (specific weeks were listed). Please use one side of a tape to represent one day of meetings. For example, if you have a 13 minute meeting on February 12, label that tape "February 12," and turn the tape over to be used on the next day that you have a meeting. Do not worry about filling up the remaining space on the tape. Also, do not tape more than one meeting on any particular day. We realize that you will not be able to record all discussions that the two of you will have. In addition, we do not expect to have recordings for every day during the weeks mentioned above.

For purposes of this study advice was defined as: "a recommendation for a decision or course of action coming from the cooperating teacher and directed toward the student teacher." Of primary interest was what we were calling Teacher advice, that is, advice that encouraged positive transfer on the part of the student teacher (also "mindfulness" or "reflectivity"). Positive transfer could be either "horizontal" positive transfer (using what one already knows in new contexts), or "vertical" positive transfer (lower-level skills facilitating the acquisition of higher-level skills).

Audio-tapes were transcribed and protocols analyzed for cooperating teacher advice statements (student teacher statements were not coded). Advice statements were classified along two dimensions: (a) Consultant--Teacher and (b) solicited--unsolicited. The first dimension is considered more important and its two sub-categories, Consultant and Teacher, will be explicated below.

Consultant Advice

If the advice was primarily aimed at the present case, either "this" specific group of students or "this" specific content to be taught, it was coded as Consultant. Although such advice is absolutely important and quite necessary at times, by itself, it is unlikely to promote transfer or reflectivity. An example would be a statement such as, "Make sure you keep your eye on Johnnie while you're working with that other group." It must be said here that advice coded as consultant does not imply that a cooperating teacher wanted a student teacher to be mindless regarding his/her actions and decisions or be unconcerned about future implications of these actions and decisions.

Teacher Advice

When the advice included some elaboration judged to promote transfer, mindfulness, or ref-
lectivity, it was coded as teacher advice. There were two categories of Teacher advice used in coding protocols, each dealing with a different level of elaboration. To some extent these categories combined both the Prudential Discourse and Justificatory categories that Zeichner and Liston (1985) used in analyzing protocols of supervisory conferences. In their study they coded advice and justification separately. In this study the nature of the justification dictates advice classification.

**Level 1—Advice with explanation (T1).** Advice statements in this category also included an explanation or justification for the recommended action but with an emphasis on the present situation and environment. While not necessarily eliciting deep levels of reflectivity these statements at least do not encourage the mindless following of advice. The most common forms of explanation or justification were using prior events or conditions in support of present action, or using some pedagogical rationale in support of present action. An example of this kind of advice would be: “Remember to compliment Susan for completing her work. She often gets discouraged, especially doing mathematics. I’ve been working with her and the compliments seem to be working.”

**Level 2—Advice with exemplar/category reference or an advice-strategy (T2).** Advice at this level would be directed towards more than the present students and present lesson plan and indicates a concern that the student teacher learn for the future, and/or that the advice will affect the behavior of the student teacher when dealing with subsequent students, classes, and future lesson plans. This could be exemplified by reference to the superordinate category of which the present exemplar is a member; or a concern that the student teacher learn more about this superordinate category. For example, in a preliminary study (Dunn et al., 1989) a cooperating teacher gave the following advice to the student teacher regarding planning for teaching Stephen Crane’s *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*: “I think you need to spend some time discussing the western.” The setting for this short story is the western U.S.A. before the turn of the century. Without elaboration the advice would be categorized as “consultant” advice in that there was no apparent reference to anything other than the present case and no elaboration or justification. However, if the cooperating teacher added: “If the setting is unfamiliar to the students it is best to provide some background on that setting so they can better understand the story,” the advice would make reference to a class of situations (in this case settings that are unfamiliar). The point here is that the advice makes it clear that the present event is an exemplar of a “class” of events and the advice makes reference to this relationship. Purposefully encouraging students to deal with exemplar–category relationships promotes high-road transfer according to Salomon and Perkins (1989).

Also at this level, advice could take the form of what has been referred to as an “advice-strategy”, that is, instruction that encourages a learner to look for relationships/patterns that may facilitate development of conceptual knowledge or higher level rules (Dunn, 1984; Traband & Dunn, 1988; Dunn & Taylor, 1990) but does not teach these intellectual skills directly. For example, in a study of expertise in teacher planning, Dunn and Taylor (1990) found evidence that expert teachers were able to select effective strategies/activities for teaching various characteristics in short stories. Or in other words, for a particular story by a particular author they “knew” what would work, even if they had not yet read that story. This knowledge apparently had been learned over many years. Instead of trying to teach these relationships directly to prospective teachers, advice-strategies could be used to influence the behavior of prospective teachers in situations in which they could learn more about these relationships. A statement such as: “Try to find relationships between characteristics of short stories and effective strategies/activities,” is an example of such a strategy. This type of advice is certainly related to more than the present case and recommends that the student teacher behave in such a manner as to learn more from future cases. It is not our intention to limit the notion of an advice strategy to just telling the learner something. Presumably the results could serve as input for further discussion and reflection.

In addition to the Teacher-Consultant dimension we felt it important to consider the antecedents for advice statements especially with regard to advice that may have come in response
to a question from the student teacher. We used three categories:

1. Solicited—the advice followed a question from the student teacher or was elicited from a comment by the student teacher.

2. Solicited/Plan—the advice was elicited from an inspection of student teacher generated plans, or a continued discussion of student teacher generated plans.

3. Unsolicited—advice not resulting from any current behavior of the student teacher, but essentially what the cooperating teacher initiates. Also included in this category would be advice that related to student teacher behaviors that occurred on some day prior to the present meeting.

Results

There were 25 recorded meetings, 14 for the Experienced group and 11 for the New group. Tapes for these sessions were transcribed and the protocols were coded using nine categories. There were two basic categories for advice: Teacher and Consultant. Teacher advice was further divided into two sub-categories based on the level of elaboration, T1 and T2. Then each advice statement, whether Teacher or Consultant was also categorized as either Solicited (S), Solicited Plan (SP), or Unsolicited (U). Inter-rater reliability of two judges for four randomly selected protocols was over 90%.

Advice Examples from Experienced Cooperating Teachers

Jan had worked with over 30 student teachers. She teaches first grade and is considered an excellent teacher. All four of her meetings with Julie, her student teacher, dealt primarily with planning, and it was definitely a team planning atmosphere. There were lots of “we’s.” Jan held regular meetings and our research procedures were hardly any concern at all. She literally just turned on the recorder. In addition to specific planning there was considerable discussion of routines and issues and problems that spanned the quarter. There was also discussion of Julie’s visits and observations in other grades and classes. In one of their meetings Julie initiated the following discussion:

Julie: You know what he still has trouble with, and um, maybe to suggest to his mom, I don’t know if she does this, he still has trouble with those question words, like What, Would.

Jan: That is so common in first grade. Like the Ws, like I’ll have kids that, I mean they just throw up their hands when they see a word that begins with W. And I’ve done a lot of different things with them. One of the things you can do is like um, have them read stories, you know how we did those pictures that you lift up?

Julie: Uh huh.

Jan: Well you can do who, what, when, where, and they write the words and then they have to tell.

Julie: That’s good.

Jan: Like to, to um, to use the words a little bit more, you know. And that, that seems to help some.

Jan offered some advice that could help Julie with the present problem but she also related this particular situation to a class of situations, that is, first graders having trouble with W words. As such this advice was coded T,S, that is, Teacher level 2—directed to more than the present case, and S—solicited by a question from the student teacher.

In a different meeting Jan and Julie were discussing an upcoming unit. During these planning sessions Jan’s advice would often be very task specific and primarily related to how that class session could proceed. For example, Julie was planning for a unit on numbers and the use of sticks to represent numbers. Julie had noticed that some students were having problems understanding that larger sticks could represent 10 smaller ones and that larger numbers could be represented by sets of these larger sticks.

Jan: But you’re going to have to do something with their sticks, you know, their ten sticks and the one stick. So, umm, we’re going to have to have some kind of, this is probably, probably as good as anything else you can do. If they, if they’re altogether and they all have their sticks out in front of them and they start together, if you could keep them together, you’ll be OK.

This advice was coded as CS, Consultant—dealing primarily with the present case and no elaboration, and Solicited—elicited by a comment from the student teacher.

Pat is another experienced cooperating teacher. She teaches third grade, has 25 years of teaching experience and estimated that Polly was her 21st student teacher. All three of their meetings were for planning. Polly is in her 30s, has children of her own and had worked in many capacities before going through teacher educa-
tion. She is also a gymnast and had taught gymnastics. Polly did not behave as a student teacher. She was very self assured, seemed to be very knowledgeable about how to work with children, and was very assertive about her views. In fact, one of the authors, while visiting the classroom to make research arrangements, thought she was the cooperating teacher. As was the case for Jan and Julie, Pat and Polly’s meetings were more like team planning. Interestingly, 74% of Pat’s advice was “consultant.” This was the highest percentage for any of the cooperating teachers. However, the content was often regarding classroom routines, checking on how things were going (time, materials, etc.). One had the distinct impression that things were going well in the classroom and very little explanation was provided. The following conversation is somewhat typical of their meetings.

Polly: Okay and we have a spelling test scheduled for today at 1:40, right?
Pat: Right, and if you have any time you could put some words in cursive writing that they could use, that they could copy on the back to give them practice.
Polly: Yeah, because they’ve used all the lowercase letters.
Pat: They have?
Polly: So they can do it.
Pat: That’s great!
Polly: Good, that’ll be nice.
Pat: Okay, the next thing is this afternoon we’re going to have Right to Read Week, we’re going to do...
Polly: Read time at 2:45.
Pat: Right, which means drop everything and read. NOH I think we can still use the time from 10:05 till 10:35, unless you would want to get back to that English before it gets too old.
Polly: I would, I would kind of like at some point tomorrow to have them revise their stories.
Pat: Let’s do that tomorrow.
Polly: If you don’t want it at 10:00 we can do it in the afternoon.
Pat: We need to do it at 10:05 because the children go to speech.
Polly: Right.
Pat: And they will have had a whole hour of reading.
Polly: Let’s do it then because I really want it to stay fresh in their minds, they were on such a roll yesterday and it was going so well that I don’t want. I don’t want to lose that momentum.

It was difficult to distinguish Pat from Polly in this and their other meetings. Listening to the tape while reading the transcribed protocol helped considerably. The routine of reviewing lesson plans from more of a team planning perspective may preclude much advice of the “teacher” variety. It is possible of course that the overall procedures may facilitate transfer. But it is also likely that Polly’s high skill level and maturity reduced the need for “teacher” advice. In fact, in another protocol Polly gave considerable advice to Pat. The initial coding of the transcript without listening to the tape, resulted in a misclassification for this transaction.

A third experienced cooperating teacher, Sue, also taught third grade. She had taught for over 25 years and Scott was her 18th student teacher. Their meetings were brief and focused on how Scott did on that day or a previous day, or particular issues that either Sue or Scott wanted to discuss. Not much in the way of planning was discussed in these meetings. Of course, planning meetings could have taken place but were not recorded. The advice in their meetings was often of the Teacher variety. In fact, 65% of Sue’s advice was coded as Teacher, the highest of any cooperating teacher. This no doubt was due in part to the type of meeting. Most consultant advice occurred during planning meetings when the focus was on how this unit was going to go with these students. Meetings to discuss and give feedback about teaching often focused on how such teaching could be done in the future. During one such meeting Scott was discussing a problem with keeping track of all the grades. Sue did make some recommendations and then the conversation changed to a specific issue of record keeping.

Sue: Okay it sounds like your bookkeeping’s keeping up then. It’s mind boggling to keep track, it’s really difficult. But I think that if you have a procedure and you don’t want to get too far behind you can deal with it. But um, always verify everything that you do. You should have it written down so that you can document it. Right now we don’t have parents that need the documentation but we used to have parents who would come and say, “Now my child has an F. What is this? When did they get this F?” I usually send Fs and Ds home and have a parent’s signature and then return. You have to decide how you want to handle this.
Scott: Well, with the folders and things in the folders you sent home on Friday, they have everything: Fs, As, Bcs.
Sue: Yes they do have everything. The only problem is that a lot of times boys and girls will take those F papers out and the parents never see them. So like, like Nolan Marin’s mom wants me to write “10 papers.” “14 papers.” So on Friday, I’m going to do that for her.
Cooperating Teacher Advice

Scott: Oh yeah, so she knows how many papers are in the folder.
Sue: Right, (she will know) how many papers are in the folder. Cause I mean if they want to they can still throw them away.
Scott: And then do you keep a record of how many um, like when you send a D or F paper?
Sue: Yes. (Here the cooperating teacher discusses a coding system she uses for keeping track of low grades and whether or not parents see them)
Scott: So you have some kind of code then.
Sue: Yes, some, some code.
Scott: Cause I’ve noticed I’ve, I’ve sent a few home and they have to have them brought back signed but I don’t keep a record of it.
Sue: Okay but you should.
Scott: Of whether they were signed or not.
Sue: Because if a parent will say, you know let’s just say that you’re failing a child and the parent will come in and say, “Well I never knew this,” and you can say, “Here, you’ve signed two Fs.”
Scott: And you have them.
Sue: And you’ve signed them. I don’t keep the papers any longer but I have verification that they saw.
Scott: Then you can show that this is what I did to show that you signed.
Sue: That’s right. Uh huh.
Scott: Interesting things that will help in the future.

This advice was coded as T₂S, Teacher 2—since Sue was referring to a class of situations, certainly beyond just her own class, and Solicited—a reaction to what Scott had said.

Advice Examples from New Cooperating Teachers

Ida, a second grade teacher, had 20 years of experience, but Ilene was her first student teacher. Their meetings typically started out with some issues that Ida had in mind and then proceeded to planning. Ida freely shared her years of experience, often supporting her advice with examples, role-playing student responses, and then repeating the advice. The following advice occurred during planning.

Ilene: And then there’s the word search puzzle.
Ida: And word search puzzles throughout the week, here you have a couple of them to do.
Ilene: They’re going to do it here on Wednesday and then I’ll have them exchange them on Thursday and do the page.
Ida: That’s a good idea. And you have to be careful. Some of these little boys don’t like to finish those word search puzzles.
Ilene: I know, I saw.
Ida: And then you say “Are you finished,” and then “Oh yes! I’m finished.” And then you say the next day, “Well, let’s trade our papers,” and he says “Oh, I don’t have mine,” or “I’m not finished,” or “I took mine home,” so it’s probably best to collect them if you’re going to do it the next day to save yourself a lot of stress. Just collect them because they do get them mixed with other papers and take them home and then you don’t have them.

This advice was coded as T₁,SP, that is, Teacher 1—because of the elaboration providing a rationale for the recommended action, and SP—as the advice was solicited from a continued discussion of a lesson plan.

During another meeting Ida was discussing time issues, pacing issues, and what to do if some children finish before others. She then continued:

Ida: Because if you give them too long a time that’s when they’re going to, you know when the noise is starting they’re not working and it gets worse and worse and as I said before walking up and down as they’re working through the, through the rows and that will keep them quiet too. They know they have to work because you’re right there. Any time that you sit at your desk, and it’s not you or me, it can be anybody, you’re at your desk and that’s when they choose to misbehave. I don’t know what it is about
Ilene: You’re still in the same room but they
Ida: I know you’re still here but if you’re at your desk working on something they won’t let you do it. They’re going to talk while you’re at your desk. So a lot of times you can’t do things, even though they have their work that they’re going to do you can’t really sit and do things at your desk or sit and do things at the table or cut things or do anything because they, you lose them for some reason, it won’t work. When you’re not watching they don’t want to work. And that’s not all of them, you have some of them that do pay attention to what they’re doing and they’re good workers but the most, for the most part they won’t. So anyway try and just watch them again this week and as I told you last week, when you make a rule that you decide, “today I want you to work quietly for fifteen minutes. This is what I’ve asked. This is what I want,” insist on it because they will try to break you down every time. They will try every way to not do what you ask them to do but you have to stop and say no. “Now remember, I said this is what I want,” insist on it because they will try to break you down every time. They will try every way to not do what you ask them to do but you have to stop and say no. “Now remember, I said this is what I want, this is what I want you to do.” Like down in the library, how many times do we have to say to them, “No, sit down keep your feet on the floor”? Unfortunately you can’t say it once and have them do it, you have to repeat it over and over again, and when you see them breaking the rule, stop. “What did I ask you to do,” and go over the rule again until they know “boy, when Ms Bauer says something she really means it. She keeps after me until, until I do what I’m asked to do.”

This advice was classified as T₂, U; Teacher 2—because of its applicability to more than just
Ida’s class and Unsolicited since it was an issue that Ida brought up for discussion that at the time was not related to a particular lesson plan nor elicited by a question from Ilene.

Ida did enjoy working with her first student teacher. Apparently, it was a very good experience for them both. The last taped meeting occurred during the last week of student teaching. At one point during the meeting both Ida and Ilene began to cry because each had enjoyed the experience and they would miss each other. They turned off the tape and restarted it a few minutes later.

A second inexperienced cooperating teacher, Kay, had been teaching for 6 years, all in the third grade. Her first student teacher was Kitty. Kitty had done some very creative work on the design of a unit on fairy tales. Kay and Kitty were reviewing the plans for this unit. Kay provided the following advice:

Kay: Okay, you have down here to tell students that you are going to read them a fairy tale and have them listen to how the story begins. I thought if you begin instead of telling, that (you could) ask them what they already know about fairy tales, what elements do they already know, what kinds of characters will they find, how do they usually begin, how do they usually end. Cause most of them will know already, how they begin, how they end.

Kitty: Okay.

Kay: Okay, you have down here to tell students that you are going to read them a fairy tale and have them listen to how the story begins. I thought if you begin instead of telling, that (you could) ask them what they already know about fairy tales, what elements do they already know, what kinds of characters will they find, how do they usually begin, how do they usually end. Cause most of them will know already, how they begin, how they end.

Kitty: Okay.

Kay: Okay.

Kitty: I'd leave alot more time to be able to write it. It would be nice to have more than a half hour, like an hour one day and then an hour the next day.

Kay: Do it. Try the extra time. Don't be locked in. It's your time!

Kay continued along this line encouraging Kitty to build that time into her plans. This advice was coded as T,S; Teacher level 2—because of the future implication and S—solicited, since it was a response to Kitty's comment.

The length and depth of cooperating teacher/student teacher meetings varied considerably. The longest was over 30 minutes while the shortest lasted 2 minutes. The number of coded advice statements for any one meeting ranged from 1 to 28. The overall results of coding for the nine categories are reported separately for each New (N) and Experienced (E) cooperating teacher in Table 1. The nine categories were formed by considering three context categories (Solicited, Solicited/Plan, and Unsolicited) for Teacher advice level one (T,). Teacher advice level two (T,2) and Unsolicited (U). Teachers are labeled A, B, C, and D. After each teacher, in parenthesis, is the number of meetings that teacher recorded.

There was a total of 210 advice statements. Of that total 94 (44.8%) were categorized as Teacher advice and 116 (55.2%) as Consultant advice. Of the 94 Teacher advice statements, 79 (84%) were categorized as T,1, the first elaboration level, and 15 (16%) as T,2, the second elaboration level. With regard to antecedents eliciting the advice: 116 (55.2%) were categorized as S—solicited by student teacher question or comment; 78 (37.1%) as SP—solicited by
Table 1

Numbers of Advice Statements Coded in Each of the Nine Categories for Each New and Each Experienced Cooperating Teacher

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<td>47</td>
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Note. NA = New cooperating teacher "A" who had three meetings, and EB = Experienced cooperating teacher "B" who had four meetings.

direct review and continued discussion of the student teacher’s lesson plans; and 16 (7.6%) as U—unsolicited.

New cooperating teachers had a total of 76 advice statements, or 6.9 per meeting, while the Experienced cooperating teachers had 134 advice statements, or 9.6 per meeting. Of the 76 advice statements for New cooperating teachers, 37 (48.7%) were categorized as Teacher advice and 39 (51.3%) were categorized as Consultant advice. Of the 134 advice statements for Experienced cooperating teachers, 57 (42.5%) were categorized as Teacher advice and 77 (57.5%) were categorized as Consultant advice. Thus, while Experienced cooperating teachers may have provided more advice statements than New cooperating teachers, these groups were essentially similar regarding percentages of Teacher and Consultant advice. Such was also the case for levels of Teacher coded advice. Of the 57 Teacher advice statements for Experienced cooperating teachers, 49 (86%) were categorized as Level 1 advice and 7 (14%) were categorized as Level 2 advice. While the breakdown of the 37 Teacher advice statements for New cooperating teachers was 30 (81.1%) for Level 1 and 7 (18.9%) for Level 2.

A further breakdown of the antecedent situations eliciting advice is depicted in Table 2. This table depicts the percentage of advice statements coded in Solicited, Solicited/Plan and Unsolicited antecedent situations separately, for both Teacher and Consultant categories.

For example, of the New group’s 76 advice statements, 26.3% were coded Teacher advice—Solicited, that is, elaborated advice in response to a student teacher question or comment. The data were similar for the Experienced cooperating teachers in that 26.9% of their 134 advice statements were coded as Teacher advice—Solicited. Overall, the data indicate relatively small percentages of Unsolicited advice in both groups, whether coded as Teacher or Consultant.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study involved an investigation of the advice that cooperating teachers give to student teachers. In particular we analyzed protocols for evidence of Teacher advice vs Consultant advice. Overall, 45% of advice statements were coded Teacher, which meant that they were accompanied by at least some explanation/rationale for the recommended action. Of course this meant that 55% of advice statements were coded Consultant and not accompanied by an explanation/rationale. Should this be a matter of concern?
Table 2

Percentages of New and Experienced Cooperating Teacher Advice Statements Coded in Teacher/Consultant Categories and the Antecedent Categories Solicited, Solicited/Plan and Unsolicited

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Teacher advice</th>
<th>Consultant advice</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New cooperating teachers</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced cooperating teachers</td>
<td>26.9</td>
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</table>

it the case that cooperating teachers are giving advice without any concern for its meaning to student teachers? It should be said that much consultant advice occurred during planning meetings and when the cooperating teacher had been reviewing the student teacher’s plans. In these contexts advice was not only specific to the present lesson plan and present students but also related to specific materials, how they could be used in class and other logistical matters. Much of this advice, unaccompanied by a rationale though it may have been, seemed entirely appropriate. In addition, there may have been an understanding that existed between the cooperating teacher and student teacher that gave more meaning to the advice, and we would not be able to pick this up. This is likely to have been the case for those cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs that had regular team planning meetings (e.g., Jan & Julie, and Pat & Polly) where well established routines could be recommended and employed with little or no need of explanation.

It is also likely that there were some consultant advice statements for which an elaboration or an example had been given in a previous meeting. As a case in point, advice such as “always have extra things for students to do if you finish earlier than expected, or if some students finish ahead of others,” was very common. Five of the teachers brought this up in at least one meeting and two of the Experienced cooperating teachers mentioned it in all their meetings. For these Experienced teachers the statements were coded as consultant advice since it was primarily concerned with a particular student or class and did not include any elaboration. However, the frequent nature of this advice, brought up in a variety of contexts, is likely to have served as teacher advice, and perhaps promoted transfer, even if no elaboration was provided in a particular meeting.

There were two levels of Teacher advice, T_1 — advice with rationale/explanation only, and T_2 — advice with rationale/explanation and reference to future cases. While we believed that all advice coded Teacher would promote some transfer and reflectivity, T_2 level advice would most likely have more impact in this regard. There were 15 T_2 advice statements coded, representing 16% of Teacher advice and 7% of all advice. Is this enough? Should there have been more? It is difficult to say. It is doubtful that the cooperating teachers were deliberately using T_2 type advice. In other words, the cooperating teachers did not plan in advance to relate a present case to a class of cases, nor was it evident that they were deliberately planning to use advice-strategies. On the other hand, T_1 type advice is likely to have been more purposeful, at least in the sense that cooperating teachers did want student teachers to understand why actions were recommended and did not want to give advice that would be followed mindlessly.

We have to keep in mind, of course, that cooperating teachers could have provided advice in other contexts that were not taped, but in the meetings we analyzed cooperating teachers as a rule did not encourage student teachers to compare a present case with past cases, did not encourage them to reflect on alternative strategies, or on how this particular context would relate to others, nor did they have student teachers reflect on ethical/moral implications of their teaching. Ben-Peretz and Rumney (1991) found similar results in their study of the interactions between student teachers and cooperating teachers. It may be the case that such advice is
unlikely to occur without a systematic program where it is encouraged and where the cooperating teachers have special training in how to carry it out.

In a study investigating university supervisor interactions with student teachers Zeichner and Liston (1985) found 19.6% of discourse in supervisory conferences related to reflective teaching. This was in a program which emphasized reflectivity. One of the categories included in their Reflective Teaching index was Justificatory discourse, or the reason and rationales for pedagogical decisions and actions. While this category in their study accounted for 11.3% of all discourse, it accounted for over 50% of all Reflective Teaching discourse. This category corresponds closely to the Teacher advice categories that we used with cooperating teachers. Therefore, even though classic examples of advice to promote reflectivity and mindfulness were rare, much of the Teacher advice in this study would be considered reflective teaching discourse using a rationale similar to Zeichner and Liston (1985).

It may be important to encourage cooperating teachers to use more T2 advice, that is, advice with rationale/explanation and reference to future cases. What with the increased emphasis on the world of practice and the proliferation of case based approaches, T2 advice could help novice teachers (or preservice participants) learn more from individual cases and, as Shulman puts it, to help provide a “syntax of the landscape.” It is not necessarily the case that the advice should tell novices what was common among cases; rather, as in the prior explanation of advice strategies, it could encourage the novice to look for particular relationships.

A second dimension, solicited-unsolicited, was also used in coding protocols. Overall, 92.3% of advice was either solicited by a student teacher question or comment or by continued discussion of lesson plans, leaving a relatively small percentage, 7.6%, as unsolicited. Most of the Solicited (S) and Solicited Plan (SP) advice occurred, not surprisingly, during planning meetings. In these meetings the cooperating teacher had often read the student teacher’s lesson plans and had them in front of her while the discussion ensued. Particularly interesting about these meetings is that they are potentially rich sources of information of teacher knowledge. Typically, the cooperating teacher was reviewing content, making judgments about the adequacy of specific content, making judgments regarding the capability of the student teacher to carry out these plans, recalling similar experiences teaching this content with other classes and more recent teaching experiences with the present class, and integrating all of this when providing advice to the student teacher. This was often “on the fly” so to speak. In addition these meetings were dense, with little if any down time. It was not unusual for the conversation to range back and forth to different subject matter and different lessons. To summarize, while there was considerable teacher advice, most of it was T1, that is, with an elaboration/explanation. Advice that appeared to be directly aimed at affecting the behavior of student teachers in future cases was less common, and very rare was advice specifically geared towards promoting critical reflectivity. Also, most advice was practical and was related to topics presently under discussion.

While this was not an expert/novice study per se, there were differences between the Experienced and New groups more in how they carried out the tasks rather than in the categorized advice itself. While all in the New group were experienced teachers (mean = 12.3 years), this was their first student teacher. Two of these teachers expressed concern regarding how to carry out the study, and indeed they had trouble in conforming to the instructions. One of these teachers seemed uncomfortable during her first taped meeting with her cooperating teacher, while the other had only one very brief meeting. The Experienced group had no concerns and reported no trouble at all. Meetings with their student teachers went rather smoothly. In other words, it was apparent that Experienced cooperating teachers had a “how to work with student teachers” scheme that included what should take place at meetings between the two of them. Not unlike the well documented tasks and procedures of experienced teachers (e.g., Berliner, 1986), working with student teachers was considerably routinized. The addition of research procedures did not interfere at all with what they were used to doing. Since New cooperating teachers were constructing such a scheme the research procedures were not handled as smoothly.
While this study investigated the advice that cooperating teachers give to student teachers and while we do encourage cooperating teachers to give more T3 advice we would like to provide some additional advice regarding studies of cognition and verbal behavior.

In one meeting an Experienced cooperating teacher and her student teacher discussed a “classic” example of an arrangement that should promote positive transfer. The cooperating teacher asked the student teacher if there were any issues she wanted to discuss. The student teacher reported what she had seen while spending time in other classes. This kind of arrangement has been included in some student teaching programs to promote inquiry and reflectivity (e.g., Zeichner & Liston, 1987). The student teacher seemed most interested in how other teachers handled routine procedures. She specifically mentioned such things as: how to handle students at such varied skill levels, how to work with individual students and keep the other students busy, how to deal with mainstreaming, and how to handle interference from another class when no walls separate classes. She was impressed by how some teachers handled these problems and wondered how she would be able to do in her own class. Interestingly, the cooperating teacher did not offer advice nor were there any other comments or questions that could be classified as promoting reflectivity or mindfulness. Instead, she agreed with the student teacher’s opinion of the expertise of those other teachers and recommended that she observe other teachers’ skills in handling similar situations. Both authors felt that this cooperating teacher missed an opportunity to encourage reflectivity on the part of the student teacher. However, while there was no specific “classic” advice here, this was most likely an excellent situation for promoting transfer. Indeed the arrangements would probably be the condition that accounts for most of the transfer and/or reflectivity.

We found similar results in a study investigating the verbal behaviors that preceptors (experienced physicians) use with residents (novice physicians). That is, there was considerable Teacher verbal behavior but relatively little Teacher verbal behavior deliberately aimed at promoting higher levels of reflectivity and transfer (Taylor, Dunn, & Lipsky, in press). However, even if cooperating teachers (and preceptors for that matter) are not too adept at giving advice, either by statement or question, that promotes reflectivity and possible transfer, the situations in the lives of early professionals may elicit these cognitive processes. Just making provisions for cooperating teachers to meet with student teachers periodically to discuss planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and so on, will most likely promote some transfer, reflectivity and mindfulness regardless of specific attempts on the part of cooperating teachers to promote these processes. Anything the cooperating teacher might say will be like icing on the cake.

However, after student teaching these situations occur only rarely. Contrast this with the experiences of new doctors. During their 3 or 4 years of residency they will be reviewing cases with a more experienced professional on a daily basis. Regardless of the individual teaching and mentoring skill of preceptors, and regardless of whether they use advice strategies and or encourage reflectivity, the vast amount of questioning and case review that occurs is likely to promote transfer. If a particular preceptor is also highly skilled using various teaching and questioning strategies, so much the better. Of course, the activities in the medical profession are markedly different and we will never be able to lift models and procedures from one profession to another directly. However, it certainly seems that if new teachers had a forum to review and discuss teaching issues on a regular basis with an experienced teacher after student teaching, that positive transfer would be enhanced. While such recommendations are not uncommon, we would like to add our support to this important but difficult to accomplish idea.

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