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## Trust and Feedback in a Student Teaching Support System

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## Trust and Feedback in a Student Teaching Support System

### Abstract

In a preservice teacher's brief time as a student teacher, feedback between the student and his or her cooperating teacher and university supervisor is intended to be formative and allow for adjustments in pedagogy and continued development of a teaching identity. However, trust or lack of trust within this triad can influence any of the member's response to feedback. Without trust, giving or receiving feedback may break down and hinder the preservice teacher's progress. By considering three examples of student teaching experiences where the interplay of trust and feedback adversely affected a student teacher's progress, this essay argues for more intentional practices of creating trusting relationships within an education preparation program. Specifically, a teacher education program must work to develop trust within the student teaching support triad through careful screening and selecting of mentors, training university supervisors to balance formative feedback and evaluation, and providing feedback with specific action steps.

### Keywords

student teaching, preservice teachers, trust, feedback

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### Abstract

In a preservice teacher's brief time as a student teacher, feedback between the student and his or her cooperating teacher and university supervisor is intended to be formative and allow for adjustments in pedagogy and continued development of a teaching identity. However, trust or lack of trust within this triad can influence any of the members' responses to feedback. Without trust, giving or receiving feedback may break down and hinder the preservice teacher's progress. By considering three examples of student teaching experiences where the interplay of trust and feedback adversely affected a student teacher's progress, this essay argues for more intentional practices of creating trusting relationships within an education preparation program. Specifically, a teacher education program must work to develop trust within the student teaching support triad through careful screening and selecting of mentors, training university supervisors to balance formative feedback and evaluation, and providing feedback with specific action steps.

### Introduction

When I moved from my middle school English classroom into a position in Christian higher education to work with preservice teachers, my goal was to provide a foundation of trust in order to help preservice teachers form a group identity, model good teaching and student care, confront wrong beliefs, and commission the next generation of world-changers. Such goals require intentional communication and actionable feedback, and while many times these happened, there were several experiences where a student teacher did not progress. The feedback given to a

student teacher is intended to be formative and allow for adjustments in pedagogy and continued development of a teaching identity. However, trust or lack of trust within a mentoring relationship can influence any of the member's response to feedback. In their research into relational trust as a means of reforming schools, Bryk and Schneider (2002) argued that trust has many forms, and relational trust best fits the school setting. The school setting naturally leads to relational dependency, which, in turn, creates opportunities for vulnerability. Therefore, relational trust is one's discernment of roles and expectations being met. Bryk and Schneider argued trust in another person is based on observed respect for others, competence, regard for others, and integrity. Without trust, the act of giving or receiving feedback may break down and hinder the preservice teacher's progress. This essay offers reflection on a few student teachers whose growth was stopped because of trust issues, along with suggested changes that might better create trusting relationships between student teaching mentors and mentees.

### The Triad: A Student Teaching Support System

As Director of Student Teaching, I have direct contact with preservice teachers. I obtain placements for them in local schools, pair them with cooperating teachers, assign them a university supervisor, and support all three individuals, the triad, throughout the semester. The purpose of the triad is to develop a supportive learning community for student teachers whereby

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they might collaborate and grow into independent educators.

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Mentorship in the preparation of teachers has been around for millennia, and it has both fascinated and influenced my own development. One such ancient example is seen in Jesus's time spent preparing his disciples for when they would be on their own. The significance of his mentorship strikes me as similar to what teacher education programs attempt to do: prepare preservice teachers to effectively teach their own students. Specifically, I am drawn to the mentorship relationship between Jesus and Peter. Jesus's example of mentorship includes trust developed over time, clear communication, and a commitment to Peter's on-going growth. Peter would eventually be entrusted with teaching and leading countless others, thus Jesus modeled how to teach, how to care for all people, and how to be vulnerable. He explained his thinking while also confronting misguided thoughts. But, in addition to pointing out gaps in Peter's understanding, Jesus did not leave Peter in that place. He offered Peter purpose and hope for what was to come. Peter endured difficult experiences because he trusted his teacher's words and actions. Although not always perfect, Peter's response showed a vulnerability and belief that what he was taught was for his good. Similarly, in a mentoring relationship, there is a willingness and ability to

be pushed when the receiver of feedback can rely on and trust the one who is pushing.

Mentorship in student teaching is much less relational than Jesus's relationship with Peter; long-term relationships are not a natural part of preservice teacher mentoring. Yet support systems endeavor to provide layers of support to preservice teachers learning new ways of being. Our education preparation program (EPP) operates similarly to most in the United States in that there is a triad of support. Preservice teachers are paired with one, or more, cooperating teachers and complete their hours of student teaching with that mentor. Along with a cooperating teacher, the student teacher is assigned a university supervisor, either a teacher education faculty member, or a fully credentialed educator from the area, whose purpose is to support and assess the preservice teacher on behalf of the university. During the semester of student teaching, this group is asked to function like a team utilizing clear communication, encouragement, goal setting, and other supportive actions. Issues arise that test the functionality of relationships, as the triad seeks to support the student teacher's progress. As I have reflected upon this, I believe that the nature of the issues that tend to come up in the triad fall into the category of responding to feedback. Typically, whether it be the cooperating teacher's concerns with the student teacher's level of performance or the student teacher's frustration with the mentor, the issues connect to the idea of someone's lack of responsiveness to feedback. This can be evident in any one of the triad members. Add to this the reality that the student teaching experience is not long term, so a foundation of trust is often never firmly established. Therefore, a lack of trust within the triad affects the response to feedback. This insight has led to my becoming a student of my student teachers, to see what I can discern about how trust in the triad structure influences a response to feedback.

## **Other Perspectives of Trust and Feedback**

Many researchers attest to the importance of feedback and the necessary components for effective feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007;

Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Wiliam, 2013), however, in my experience, the student teaching triad does not consistently function as a truly supportive system. The balance of support and evaluation produces a complex series of observations, conversations, and assumptions that often prioritize keeping peace within the triad rather than pursuing professional growth (Basmadijan, 2011; Valencia et al. 2009). Even when one acknowledges the challenges to the triad system, how does trust influence responsiveness to feedback within a support system?

There is an unspoken expectation that each member in the triad ought to trust the others. Studies into the neuroscience of learning show the importance of learning partnerships built on trust (Hammond & Jackson, 2015). When the learner relies on and feels safe with the mentor or instructor, independent learning grows stronger. Translate that to the preservice teacher's experience. The cooperating teacher and university supervisor ought to be supporting, acknowledging, affirming, and pushing the student teacher to develop the skills and persona of a teacher.

As the Director of Student Teaching, and responsible for creating the triad, when a student teacher's progress seems stagnant, I usually discover that one's perspective of giving or receiving feedback may not line up with what the other perceives is being given or received. The varying perceptions or miscommunication may be the result of any member's concern with the evaluative nature of the experience (Ambrosetti, 2010; Basmadijan, 2011), or because revealing vulnerabilities might make one appear incompetent (Carless, 2009; Hudson, 2016). This is a challenge, because feedback during a student teaching experience is intended to be formative, and to contribute to the individual's growth as a teacher. There is an evaluative piece to the semester, so this reality might overshadow ongoing feedback for those who do not feel secure with any of the members in the triad. Any member of the triad might focus more on the final grade, or whether the preservice teacher has fulfilled the minimum requirements of credentialing.

## **Three Experiences with a Lack of Trust**

My expectation for student teachers' experiences is that they will develop confidence and competence in their own teaching ability with the support of their cooperating teacher and university supervisor. But there have been student teachers in less than ideal placements who were demoralized emotionally or professionally by the circumstances they faced during their experiences, and there were student teachers whose performances were less than proficient, no matter how ideal their placements were. As I watched and wondered, three particular student teacher stories stood out to me as examples of unresponsiveness to feedback and broken trust impacting the student teacher's progress. Names and other identifying details have been changed for this essay, but the experiences are real. In each situation, I am learning that, although student teachers are placed within support triads constructed for their benefit, nevertheless, a lack of trust can lead to a lack of responsiveness to feedback. As I present each story, I compare my observations of Jesus's mentoring relationship with Peter to the student teacher's mentoring experience as both reflect challenges with trust and feedback. Doing so, I consider what our institution has learned about building trust, and offer these lessons for reflection for other teacher educators.

### **Vignette #1: Building Trust for Student Teachers when Communication Stalls**

My first lesson occurred with a student teacher who needed to ask for help, but ultimately could not. Julia was a kind, positive, and seemingly confident young woman placed in a small-town school. Initially, there were no obvious concerns beyond those typical of novice teachers. However, as the weeks advanced, her mentors started to notice an increase in absences. Then, an email arrived in my inbox from Julia's cooperating teacher. She had had it. Added to the frustration with her absences, Julia would leave inadequate sub plans, and at least twice did not bring her the materials needed to teach the day's lesson.

Initially, the university supervisor met with Julia to problem-solve, but Julia showed no noticeable change. I came in to meet with the cooperating

teacher, and after an observation, Julia and I sat down to have a discussion. As I pieced together stories from two very different perspectives, I learned that, despite a seemingly non-threatening placement, Julia was breaking under the pressures of taking on more classroom responsibilities. She also felt a growing confusion with her cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher's feedback felt critical to her, and Julia was afraid of messing up. She literally felt sick from the stress. A cycle emerged: Julia's health issues worsened whenever the cooperating teacher asked her to take on more independent responsibilities. In her frustration, the cooperating teacher stopped providing helpful feedback, and in fact, any communication on her part was purely directive: do this, do that. There was no personal connection beyond a list of tasks. Both Julia and the cooperating teacher pulled back from each other out of distrust.

Unfortunately, because we could not perceive this as related to trust issues at the time, the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and I simply drafted a development plan and discussed it with Julia. The supervisor and I set and monitored goals and a timeline. By the end, the issues persisted, the cooperating teacher took back control of her class, and Julia did not meet the required goals.

In reflecting on Julia's situation, I saw a broken alliance within the triad. Despite our efforts to offer helpful feedback and set small goals, Julia did not seek help from her mentors, yielding a breach of trust for the cooperating teacher. Therefore, there was very little safety to be open about her fears or need for support. Hudson (2016) would say that both the cooperating teacher and preservice teacher needed time and opportunities to build trust by both practicing vulnerability. If the two had lowered their guards to give and receive feedback, perhaps there would have been less of a tenuous situation. As it was, their mutual lack of trust hindered communication and created a barrier for progress.

This happened for the apostle Peter, too, as he faced and failed the temptation to deny Jesus. One such moment revealed Peter's lack of trust in his mentor when, hours before being betrayed, Jesus gave Peter a specific command because he knew that Peter would be tested in the coming hours:

"Simon, ...Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:37-38, NIV). All the gospels testify that Peter was unsuccessful at following Jesus's directions. Soon after, Peter took things into his own hands and denied his allegiance to Jesus three times (Matthew 26:69-75). Peter's actions showed a lack of trust in Jesus's purpose which was to do God's will. He responded in his own limited understanding, and with his own plans in mind, he failed. It takes vulnerability to admit that one does not know how to proceed or how to handle a situation. If there is no trust in the relationship, then admitting uncertainty and need for help most likely will not happen.

Like Peter, who relied on his own abilities and limited understanding, rather than relying on the instructions given to him, one's pride can hinder growth. Working within a collaborative relationship entails vulnerability and a willingness to listen and receive feedback.

Knowing how important it is for student teachers and cooperating teachers to feel at ease in their working relationship, a valuable first step would be to explicitly model and practice the importance of honesty and collaboration. Prior to the student teaching semester, all members of the triad need to be supported in the building of a trusting relationship. There are many resources for developing trust available, such as interview questions, communication inventories, and more. St. Cloud State University's work with co-teaching has several seminars on relationship building, including specific activities for student teachers and cooperating teachers to complete together to open communication, discuss values, and clarify roles and responsibilities. Our institution attempts to facilitate collaboration and respectful interactions by requiring interactions, such as a meet and greet, between the triad members to start the experience off, weekly progress check-ins between student teachers and cooperating teachers, and weekly communication between supervisors and student teachers. There is a tension between assigning too many extra requirements for the triad and the responsibilities of teaching. Rather than assigning more, we continue to work at making the most of our expectations.

More work needs to be done on developing relevant questions and activities that aid in strengthening trust. For example, while we require the weekly check-ins, we ask the student teacher to prepare ahead of time with a self-assessment of a particular area of growth, which is used to jumpstart the conversation with the cooperating teacher. Using a focused prompt can lead to a more open conversation, where both members can share their perceptions, and next steps are developed together. As uncomfortable as it might be to share fears or weaknesses, expressing honest need for help is a part of professional growth and too important to keep hidden. Both Julia and her cooperating teacher felt abandoned, but neither had the context nor the support to admit it to the other. The development of a trusting relationship grows with such conversations and serves as a foundation for when challenges arise.

### **Vignette #2: Building Trust for Student Teachers with Specific Feedback**

In relationships, it is essential to correct misunderstandings. My second lesson learned comes from a situation involving Anna and a lack of specific feedback within the triad. This young woman had been flagged for several semesters as having some weaknesses due to limited classroom experience, but she had responded positively to a requirement of increased hours in a classroom, and more observations. These interventions showed sufficient growth in her teaching ability up to that point. Anna's student teaching placement was ideal: she was given the chance to work with a highly effective educator. From the outside looking in, trust was immediate and motivation seemed high.

Anna never sought out my support, as she seemed to feel safe with her cooperating teacher. In fact, when I was brought in to observe her, due to concerns about her lack of response to feedback, our post-lesson debrief was one-sided, as she politely listened but offered no commentary, despite my efforts to engage her. Based on conversations with the supervisor and cooperating teacher before and after that observation, I knew their expectations for her were reasonable and clearly communicated.

Throughout the semester, Anna planned, prepared, and taught. She enjoyed the content and was motivated to teach it. Her students participated in the tasks she assigned, but they did not respond to her management. Anna acknowledged to her mentors there was a problem with her classroom management, and she tried the strategies offered to her by her cooperating teacher and supervisor, but nothing changed in how her students responded. While she knew she was struggling with disruptive behaviors in her classes, Anna also did not recognize gaps in her understanding of essential content. So, while research supports the idea that feedback received in a trusting relationship leads to greater learning (Ambrosetti, 2010; Hudson, 2016), in Anna's situation, she was not able to respond effectively to feedback about gaps in her content knowledge and pedagogical approaches.

Other researchers show that feedback related to performance or task is effective (Hattie, & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), so what was the problem? Anna trusted her mentor, and she was offered frequent feedback on her teaching performance. Discussing the issues with the cooperating teacher and supervisor, it became more apparent that while expectations were stated by both, the feedback tended to be evaluative and not instructive. The mentors gave her areas for improvement, without checking that Anna had the skills to effectively make the adjustments. In short, Anna was getting the wrong kind of feedback for her needs. A learning partnership is not effective when evaluation is the mode of feedback (Hammond, 2015, p. 103). Although Anna trusted her mentors, the type of feedback they gave her was not helping her progress in her teaching ability. Support is best in the form of formative feedback, or next steps in development, rather than judgment (Ambrosetti, 2010). As her triad came to better understand Anna's learning needs, the cooperating teacher and supervisor drafted and presented to Anna a very specific and measurable improvement plan. For example, when Anna taught a particular area of content inaccurately, her supervisor required her to research the information, create a new lesson plan, and teach it on a particular day when Anna would again be observed. Similar tasks helped her grow significantly in response to the

specificity of her cooperating teacher's suggestions. Anna's preparation and teaching noticeably improved, and she seemed to approach each new goal with engagement. A mutually respectful relationship coupled with clear learning goals best supported Anna's learning (Davis & Dargusch, 2015). Once her support system started identifying gaps in understanding and communicating tangible steps, her growth was more evident. Such task-oriented feedback appeared to lessen the perception of judgment, particularly because it was offered by a trusted mentor. Anna responded immediately once the type of feedback changed, and she was given actionable steps.

In a mentoring relationship, identifying and calling out misunderstanding can be painful. This happened quite often in the apostle Peter's relationship with Jesus, as Peter used rash words and behaviors. In one particular exchange, Peter answered Jesus and showed an understanding of who his teacher was (Mark 8:29), but he almost immediately revealed a gap in understanding of the requirements of the Messiah.

[Jesus] spoke plainly about [his betrayal, death, and resurrection], and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." (Mark 8:32-33, NIV)

Jesus had no problem calling out wrong thinking in his friend and student, knowing that wrong thinking would limit his student's growth.

Since recognizing the power in trust paired with specific and nonjudgmental feedback, we format several assignments to include interactions that are reflective and task-oriented. One such example is the pre-observation questions student teachers complete prior to an observation. The questions include details about the level of involvement planning the lesson, what was taught before and what will come after, unique circumstances to be aware of, and one specific area to observe and offer feedback. Rather than waiting for another situation like Julia's to arise, after mid-term evaluations, we have started to have the students

work with their supervisor to identify one to two specific areas of improvement based on their evaluation, and then develop actionable tasks to be observed and assessed in the coming weeks. The problem is identified together, and the solutions are developed collaboratively.

Going forward, time used to train supervisors can be used to further train them how to balance feedback with assessment. They are in a challenging place of wanting to affirm preservice teachers, while also needing to evaluate performance. Such training will provide them with scenarios to practice giving formative feedback and tasks to hypothetical preservice teachers. A group discussion between the university faculty and supervisors about how to intentionally build and maintain a trusting relationship with student teachers while also serving as the evaluator is another important next step for our EPP.

This final vignette offers insight into those rare but significant issues arising from poor matches between cooperating teacher and student teacher. Sean's story calls teacher educators to mindfulness about how vulnerable student teachers can feel as they learn and practice so many skills under the direction of teachers who may be very different from the teacher educators who nurtured them.

### **Vignette #3: Building Trust for Student Teachers who do not Feel Safe**

Ideally, the relationships within the student teaching triad can weather miscommunication, unmet expectations, and many other challenges because there is a foundation of trust that each member is committed to the professional growth of one another. This final scenario recounts what became a distressing placement experience for Sean. Known for his hard work, passion for quality teaching and learning, and kind spirit, Sean rarely complained. When he showed up to my office one day after school, halfway through the semester, and spent two hours crying, I knew the situation was serious. In brief, his cooperating teacher had created an atmosphere of chaos, hurt, shame, and fear for both Sean and the students. Sean did everything in his power to meet unclear expectations that sometimes changed minute-to-minute. He felt unsupported by his mentor, as he



was publicly chastised in front of the children, and sometimes even sent from the room. Students received similar treatment.

Sean bore his unhappiness in silence until that day in my office, afraid of how complaining might affect his already intolerable environment, as well as his final grade. I can attest to the fact that Sean was seeing little social and academic growth in his learners, and his support triad witnessed Sean spinning his wheels, with little progress in his own skills. As the situation unfolded, we learned that Sean received mainly punitive feedback from his cooperating teacher, which lacked any affirmation of success. Sean's confidence in his abilities was nonexistent, and he could not seem to make headway. In a study conducted by Eva et al. (2012), looking at what factors play a role in responding to feedback, the researchers cited evidence that feedback strategies are not nearly as important as understanding the receiver's perception of his own competence. Because Sean felt insignificant and feared failure, feedback always had the potential of threat, and instructions were most likely never going to be met. In this case, an absence of trust and safety with the cooperating teacher kept Sean from developing his teaching ability.

Despite these challenges, once the university supervisor and I knew of Sean's dwindling confidence, we provided him with trustworthy support, including active listening, believing him when he shared about his experience, and ultimately removing him from the placement and pairing him with a trusted educator with whom he had previously worked. Sean showed resilience in the face of such difficulty, and I attribute that to the relationships he had with the university supervisor and me. Our supportive connection with him gave him a place to belong and motivated him to continue (Mansfield et al., 2016). Despite the fact that a last-minute move had its own challenges typical to those faced by most student teachers, Sean showed immediate growth, as he quickly formed relationships with his students, utilized classroom management strategies, and provided evidence of other components of effective teaching. His confidence grew dramatically with the support of trusted mentors. The young man who, in the midst of the challenging student teaching situation, said, "I

don't think I even want to go into teaching," recovered and responded to new, hard situations once he was in a safe place where his natural vulnerabilities were not used to shame him.

The apostle Peter's growth was also a result of a relationship with his teacher where he was accepted regardless of his mistakes. As the student, Peter witnessed acts of compassion shown to children, outcasts, the rich, the unclean, and powerful rulers. Peter was told harsh realities and radical ideas completely contrary to the cultural norms of his time. But that foundation of trust allowed for Peter's progress. In fact, despite many failings including the denial of his friend and Messiah, Jesus offered Peter feedback that provided a restitution of purpose. In John 21, when Jesus was with his disciples one last time after his resurrection, he questioned Peter three times about his love for Jesus. Three times Peter affirmed his devotion even though the text points out how painful this must have been for Peter's ego (John 21:15-17). After each affirmation, Jesus gave Peter the same command to care for his followers. Despite all of his failings, which, from a human perspective, were reason enough to no longer trust Peter, Jesus saw in him the potential to continue what was started. This illustrates how Jesus cultivated relationships with care, hope, and strength, enabling Peter to grow.

Student teachers also need the care and hope found in trustworthy mentors. After Sean's experience, I have worked to develop a stronger triad of trust in the selection, evaluation, and training of mentor teachers. As in Sean's situation, while the principal signed off on the placement, the administrator later told me he did not initially think the cooperating teacher would be a good mentor. Many placement coordinators face this frustrating reality.

In response to this, I utilize a succinct set of criteria, maintain recruitment partnerships, and work at building capacity in mentors. Each EPP most likely publishes a set of criteria for cooperating teachers, but I have found that if I highlight a select few, I can be much more direct with administrators. I state these in my initial communication, and in a survey to administrators, in which I ask them to rank the prospective cooperating teacher in three teaching domains:

setting instructional outcomes, creating an environment of respect and rapport, and effective communication. We do not choose teachers indicated as lacking proficiency in those domains, which allows us to better screen triad members for student teacher success. This has cut down on the number of incidences when principals simply forward my request to the entire staff, and has led to some beneficial new partnerships.

Over time, I have learned which administrators understand and value what we are doing to prepare preservice teachers, and they have become my most reliable partners. Two in particular come to mind as individuals who will work with me to find the best placements, based on strengths and passions. Their buy-in to our program has meant greater support for our students, and many jobs for our graduates.

Lastly, when a student teaching experience reveals a potential talented cooperating teacher, we work hard to build that teacher's capacity to be an effective mentor. This includes facilitating collaboration with other cooperating teachers, offering professional development opportunities, suggesting specific routines or tasks to be completed with the student teacher, or regular emails from me to check in on the cooperating teacher's concerns.

At the end of the term, I ask for the student teacher's opinion about both the cooperating teacher and supervisor. The survey I use is the same assessment tool our institution uses to evaluate the preservice teachers, but, again, I focus on the three domains of setting instructional outcomes, creating an environment of respect and rapport, and effective communication. While the student teacher's opinion never serves as the sole reason to disqualify a mentor, it is a helpful source of information in pairing preservice teachers with competent mentors. The working relationship between the triad is too important to leave to my own assumptions or a signature by administrators. Placement coordinators such as myself must be more intentional about screening and partnering with new cooperating teachers.

## Conclusion: Why is Trust Important in Developing Preservice Teachers?

Every semester I learn something new about our practices to train preservice teachers. Specifically, I see our strengths and weaknesses as an education preparation program in the development of the student teaching triad system. Each individual in the triad contributes positively or negatively to the trajectory of the student teacher. Sometimes there is little trouble and the mechanisms of the support structure seem to operate without issue. But even in those seemingly ideal situations, lessons can be learned about the significance of trust and its influence on responsiveness to feedback. The cooperating teachers and university supervisors must approach the student teacher according to his or her individual need to offer worthwhile support and lower the threat oftentimes associated with feedback (Basmadijan, 2011).

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*When preservice teachers receive feedback within a trusting support system, they are able to progress with their skills and develop a strong teaching identity, thus gaining potential to build trust with their future students. Therefore, if mentors can shed light onto how the support system works by establishing reasonable expectations for each participant's role, then the teacher candidate is better equipped to establish trust in his or her own classroom.*

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As I consider this support system and others like it, I am more convinced of this need for trust in order to receive feedback about performance. In Jesus, I observe the ways he developed Peter's trust over time. Jesus stuck with Peter, and did not just focus on Peter's actions in the moment, but rather on his ongoing development. Peter could trust his mentor to be committed to his growth

and not a one-time evaluation. Like Peter, when preservice teachers receive feedback within a trusting support system, they are able to progress with their skills and develop a strong teaching identity, thus gaining potential to build trust with their future students. Therefore, if mentors can shed light onto how the support system works by establishing reasonable expectations for each participant's role, then the teacher candidate is better equipped to establish trust in his or her own classroom. Bryk and Schneider's (2002) look at trust and school reform in urban Chicago schools suggested that members of the learning environment (e.g. teachers, administrators, students, and families) extend trust to others when perceived actions are consistent with their expectation of the person's role. However, those expectations are influenced by one's culture, context, and previous experiences. Thus, mentors ought to explicitly guide preservice teachers in how to identify expectations, understand the institution or community's beliefs, and how to navigate those by showing respect for others, being competent in their role, going above and beyond to care for others, and acting with integrity. Such training in student teaching will develop a strong teaching identity in teacher candidates beginning their careers.

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