

Evaluating Clinical Educator's Training and Support on the Use of the Candidate  
PreService Assessment of Student Teaching

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Cato College of Education  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
2022 SoTL Grant Submission  
November 2022

## **Abstract**

In the shift to practice-based preparation, it appears that clinical educators (CEs), mentor teachers to student teaching candidates, have been left behind and may be unprepared for their important role (Hoffman et al., 2015). Clinical educators play an important role in teacher preparation during field experiences in preservice teacher education. Providing training for CEs that leads to greater enactment of teaching practices may improve preservice teachers' (PSTs') perceptions of having participated in high-quality preparation for teaching (Lafferty, 2018). Additionally, PSTs have reported feeling more prepared in some domains of instruction when CEs modeled more effective teaching and offered coaching in the form of stronger instructional support (Matsko et al., 2020).

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a training for CEs to build: a) CE knowledge in the areas of assessing PSTs pedagogical and dispositional behaviors and b) CE skills to support their PSTs development in these areas. The CE training will cover content on the PreCPAST/CPAST instrument and on coaching strategies (feedback and crucial conversations, relationships). The researchers are interested in how to best prepare CEs to work with student teaching candidates around giving feedback, connecting theory to practice, and utilizing the student teacher instrument to observe and evaluate their student teacher. Challenges for education preparation programs (EPPs) developing teachers include addressing the concerns of new teachers who often feel ill-prepared to teach and may leave, or consider leaving, the teaching profession early in their career (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

**Budget Request Page**

**January 15, 2023 - June 30, 2023**

***BUDGET: Request by budget category. Joint proposers must select one PI to be the lead and one department to receive this allocation.***

**Lead Principal Investigator: Tisha Perkins Greene**

**Principal Investigator 800#: 800011758**

**Title of Project:** Evaluating Clinical Educator’s Training and Support on the Use of the Candidate PreService Assessment of Student Teaching

**Allocate operating budget to Department of: School & Community Partnerships**

<b>Fiscal Year One (January 15, 2023 to June 30, 2023)</b>		
<b>Faculty Stipend</b>	<b>Paid directly from Academic Affairs fund on May 15, 2023</b>	<b>\$1925</b>
<b>911250</b>	<b>Graduate Student Salaries</b>	<b>\$2056</b>
<b>911300</b>	<b>Special Pay to Faculty other than Grantee</b>	
<b>915000</b>	<b>Student (Undergraduate or Graduate) Temporary Wages</b>	
<b>915900</b>	<b>Non-student Temporary Wages</b>	
<b>920000</b>	<b>Honorarium (Individual(s) not with UNCC)</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>

<b>921160</b>	<b>Subject Incentive Fee</b>	
<b>925000</b>	<b>Domestic Travel</b>	
<b>926000</b>	<b>Foreign Travel</b>	
<b>928000</b>	<b>Communication and/or Printing</b>	
<b>930000</b>	<b>Supplies</b>	
<b>942000</b>	<b>Computing Equipment</b>	
<b>944000</b>	<b>Educational Equipment</b>	
<b>951000</b>	<b>Other Contracted Services</b>	
<b>Total Amount Requested</b>		<b>\$6981</b>

## **Budget Narrative**

To complete the research study and proposed project, the investigators are requesting a total of \$6,981 in financial support. The project will take place during the 2023 with data collection occurring in spring and continuing into fall 2023. Funding is requested to support participant incentives for spring 2023 data collection as well as summer 2023 data analysis. The results of this study will inform the training and support provided to future cohorts of clinical educators (CEs) who host and mentor student teaching candidates during their yearlong internship and student teaching internship semesters. The research team plans to disseminate the results of this study at a national conference (ex: The American Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators [AACTE]) in spring 2024 and submit a manuscript for publication during the 2024-2025 academic year.

### **Faculty Stipend (\$1925)**

A Stipend of \$1925 will be requested in May of 2023 for Co-PI, Ann Jolly. The Co-PI was heavily involved in writing the IRB proposal (fall 2022). The Co-PI will participate in the research study by supporting the training of clinical educators, sending the informed consent forms and surveys via qualtrics, and leading a focus group. The Co-PI will participate in the dissemination of the data both through the manuscript and presentation at a national conference in spring 2024.

### **Graduate Student Salary (\$2056)**

A graduate student will be hired for one month in the summer of 2023 (June or July) for twenty hours per week to analyze the quantitative (survey/PreCPAST) and qualitative (focus group/survey) data. The graduate student will work closely with the PI and Co-PIs to evaluate, analyze, and categorize the data. The graduate assistant will work directly out of the Office of School & Community Partnerships within the Cato College of Education.

### **Honorarium - Individuals not with Charlotte (\$3,000)**

The researchers are requesting 30 - \$100 honorariums for the clinical educators (CEs) who will participate in a 4 hour training on Saturday, January 7, 2023 as part of the study. The training will occur in the Cato College of Education from 9 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. The PI and Co-PIs will provide

the training which will focus on use of the PreCPAST instrument, effective feedback to students, coaching student interns, and building relationships. CEs who provide consent and complete the surveys will be included in the study and will also be invited to participate in focus groups to gather additional data.



November 23, 2022

Dear SoTL Committee Members,

I am pleased to offer my support for the SoTL grant proposal, “Evaluating Clinical Educator’s Training and Support on the Use of the Candidate Preservice Assessment of Student Teaching”, submitted by Drs. Tisha Greene, Anne Cash, and Ann Jolly. This grant aligns with the university’s strategic plan goal C2.1 - “Strengthen the university’s connections to and support for K-12 schools to score our region and build our pipeline”, as well as our College’s strategic plan goal 4 - “The Cato College of Education will engage community partners in mutually beneficial programs that enhance the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region”.

In Fall 2019, the Cato College of Education implemented a new tool to evaluate our pre-service teacher candidates’ growth during their student teaching semester- the Candidate Preservice Assessment of Student Teaching (CPAST). The Pre-Candidate Preservice Assessment of Student Teaching (PreCPAST) is now being used with teacher candidates during their yearlong internship semester. The proposed study will provide the College with important information regarding specific ongoing training and support for Clinical Educators (aka, Mentor Teachers) as they mentor student teachers during their Yearlong Internship. This research project will provide valuable information about the support and training needed by Clinical Educators (CEs) to assist them in providing improved mentoring and supervision for their student teachers.

This proposed project supports both the university and college strategic plan goals and will provide our college and the nation with valuable data about the use of the CPAST instrument and the training and support needed for CE’s and student teachers. I look forward to the results of this research project and the impact it will have on our future teachers.

Sincerely,

Malcolm B. Butler, Ph.D.  
Dean and Professor of Science Education

## Project Narrative

### PROJECT NARRATIVE

#### A. Specific Aims

##### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a training for clinical educators (CEs) to build a) knowledge in the areas of measuring preservice student teachers' (PSTs) pedagogical and dispositional behaviors and b) skills to support their PSTs' development in these areas. The CE training will cover content on the PreCPAST/CPAST instrument and coaching (feedback and crucial conversations, relationships).

##### 2. Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the effectiveness of using the Pre-Candidate Assessment of Student Teaching (PreCPAST) instrument for providing feedback to preservice student teachers (PSTs) on an observation, observation artifacts, and professional dispositions.
2. To evaluate how prepared clinical educators feel to provide feedback to their interns based on PreCPAST training.
3. To utilize the results of the study to inform training and support provided to clinical educators in future semesters.
4. Disseminate the findings of this study to the broader teacher preparation community.

##### 3. Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. Between CEs who participate in training and those who do not, what differences do we see at the end of the YLI, and at the end of student teaching, in CE:
  - Knowledge of how to assess candidates using the PreCPAST/CPAST;



- Efficacy for coaching (perceived preparedness for giving feedback, perceived preparedness for engaging in critical conversations, access to resources to support coaching);
  - Relationships with PSTs; and
  - Topics covered through coaching conversations.
2. Between candidates assigned to CEs who participate in training and those assigned to CEs who do not, what differences do we see at the end of the YLI, and then at the end of student teaching, in candidates’
- Observed practice on the CCAST;
  - Beliefs and mindsets;
  - Perceived relationships and support received from CEs; and
  - Perceived topics covered through coaching conversations.

#### 4. Rationale

One way to support developing teachers and build teacher practice is to conduct observations which include feedback to the PST, which is a form of professional development (Kraft et al., 2018). Feedback has been identified as an effective practice to support the implementation of the new behavior and is an important part of the observation cycle within coaching (Joyce & Showers, 1981). For this reason, observation tools have been developed for PSTs in order to assess and coach the highest impact teaching behaviors. Examples of this are the PreCPAST and CCAST forms which identify important pedagogy and dispositions for the PST and serves as a formative and summative assessment for PSTs (The Ohio State University, 2021).

The PreCPAST and CCAST forms are comparable, varying primarily by the time within the program that they are used. Preservice teacher (PST) candidates completing their Yearlong

Internship (YLI) semester, prior to the student teaching semester are assessed using the PreCPAST; while candidates completing their student teaching semester are assessed using the CPAST. Although the PreCPAST and CPAST have been identified as valid and reliable observation tools, there is currently little literature related to the impact related to use of the instrument for PSTs. By understanding the training required for CEs to effectively utilize the instruments and evaluating the impact of the coaching and feedback provided to PSTs, this study may help to improve the supervision practices of our PSTs and inform the practices of other educator preparation programs.

## 5. Impact

The goal of this research project is to inform the practices of training, coaching, and supporting CEs and PSTs. The researchers plan to make recommendations on the use of the PreCPAST instrument, training to CEs, and support and coaching to PSTs based on the data collected through surveys and focus group interviews during the study.

## B. Literature Review

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) strive to develop quality educators to teach students and lead school buildings to positively impact student achievement (Corcoran, 2017). CEs serve an important role in mentoring PSTs to meet these goals, and the quality and focus of the coaching they provide are related to the strength of the impact that they have on developing the PST (Kraft et al., 2018). However, in the midst of ongoing improvements to educator preparation, it appears that CEs may have been left behind and may be unprepared for their important role in the process (Hoffman et al., 2015). New CEs report challenges when learning to mentor that include establishing relationships with teachers, learning to ask questions to promote reflection and problem-solving, and connecting theory to practice (Gardiner & Weisling,

2018; Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). The feedback provided by CEs can be infrequent or low quality (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Clarke et al., 2014), as CEs typically lack specific preparation for coaching PSTs (Bullough et al., 2002; Hoffman et al., 2015). Researchers are therefore interested in how to best prepare CEs to work with PSTs around giving feedback, connecting theory to practice, and utilizing the student teacher instrument to observe and evaluate the PST.

Examples of frameworks designed to better support CEs have begun to surface in recent years, particularly internationally (Beutel et al., 2017; Hobson & Maxwell, 2020; Hobson et al., 2020; Yilmaz & Bikmaz, 2021). Providing training for CEs that leads to greater enactment of teaching practices may improve PSTs perceptions of having participated in high-quality preparation for teaching (Lafferty, 2018). Additionally, PSTs feel better prepared in some domains of instruction when CEs modeled more effective teaching and offered coaching in the form of stronger instructional support (Matsko et al., 2020). However, empirical research to examine the influence of CE training on CEs' knowledge and skills, or on their assigned PSTs' practice, is limited. The current study is designed to address these gaps.

### C. Methods

This study is designed to better determine CEs' understanding and use of the Pre-Candidate Preservice Assessment of Student Teaching (PreCPAST) and Candidate Preservice Assessment of Student Teaching (CPAST) forms. These forms are used to conduct observations and provide feedback to teacher candidates. The forms identify important pedagogy and dispositions for the developing teacher and serves as a formative and summative assessment for candidates (The Ohio State University, 2021). See study attachments for further descriptions of these tools.

While all CEs receive basic information about the PreCPAST and CPAST prior to mentoring PSTs, the treatment group in the current study will receive more extensive training on use of the PreCPAST and CPAST than the comparison group.

SOTL funding is requested to support CE training and data collection in Spring 2023. Of approximately 130 CEs, 50-65 of them will be randomly invited and up to 30 of those interested will be randomly selected to participate in specialized training (treatment). The CEs in the treatment group will participate in training related to use of the PreCPAST, providing effective feedback and coaching their candidate, and having a crucial conversation. Training will be over the course of approximately 4 hours and conducted in person. CEs in the comparison group will engage with a virtual training for about 90 minutes that covers some but not all of the same content. CEs will complete surveys prior to and following completion of the training to determine their calibration with the PreCPAST and perceived efficacy for coaching a teacher candidate during the YLI. Informed consent will be attached to the first survey.

All CEs will work with PSTs in Spring 2023. CEs will engage with their assigned PSTs and observe them teaching, utilizing the PreCPAST instrument midway through and at the end of the Spring 2023 semester. At the end of the semester, all CEs will take another survey about their calibration with the PreCPAST, perceived efficacy for coaching, perceived relationship with their assigned candidate, and topics addressed during coaching. In April/May 2023, a random sample of CEs (approximately 20) will also be invited to participate in a virtual focus group. Focus groups for the treatment and comparison CEs will be conducted separately. Focus group questions will be centered around the coaching process, the relationship between the CE and teacher candidate, and motivation to be a CE. The focus group will be recorded.

Data will also be collected from CEs' assigned PSTs. Data will include surveys addressing their perceived efficacy for teaching at the beginning and end of Spring 2023. PSTs will be observed by their CEs using the PreCPAST, as explained above. PSTs simultaneously rate themselves on the same tool. All data will be collected by the College Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA) and shared in a de-identified format with the research team. In addition, a random sample of PSTs (approximately 20) will be invited to participate in a virtual focus group. As with the CEs, focus group questions will be centered around the coaching process and the relationship between the CE and teacher candidate.

The methods described above detail activities for Spring 2023. Funding is sought to support these activities as well as analysis of collected data to be conducted in early Summer 2023. Beyond the funded work, the research team intends to collect follow-up data on both CEs and PSTs in Fall 2023 as well. This will include CE- and PST-assigned scores from three administrations of the CPAST during the student teaching semester. CEs will also be asked to complete a survey at the end of Fall 2023 assessing their calibration with the CPAST (a modification of the PreCPAST), perceived efficacy for coaching, perceived relationship with their assigned candidate, and topics addressed during coaching. PSTs will complete a third administration of a survey addressing their perceived efficacy for teaching as well as an exit survey detailing their perceptions about their preparation experiences. Finally, those CEs and PSTs who participated in a focus group at the end of the first semester will be invited back to participate in a virtual focus group at the end of Fall 2023.

#### D. Evaluation

Descriptive analysis (e.g. mean scores, standard deviations, range, correlations, ANOVA) will be applied to survey and observational data. Associations across measures and differences between treatment and comparison groups will be examined using regression, missing data procedures, and multilevel modeling procedures as applicable.

Focus group responses will be analyzed as part of the qualitative data of the study. The investigators will look for patterns, trends, and CE/student teacher perceptions from the midpoint focus groups to the exit focus groups.

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
<p>1. Between CEs who participate in training and those who do not, what differences do we see at the end of the YLI, and then at the end of student teaching, in CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Knowledge assessing candidates using the PreCPAST/CPAST;</li><li>● Efficacy for coaching;</li><li>● Relationships with candidates; and</li><li>● Topics covered through coaching conversations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Pre Survey</li><li>● Post Survey</li><li>● Focus Groups</li></ul>
<p>2. Between candidates assigned to CEs who participate in training and those assigned to CEs who do not, what differences do we see at the end of the YLI, and then at the end of student teaching, in candidates’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Observed practice on the CPAST;</li><li>● Beliefs and mindsets;</li><li>● Perceived relationships and support received from CEs; and</li><li>● Perceived topics covered through coaching conversations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Beliefs &amp; Mindsets Survey</li><li>● Focus Groups</li></ul>

#### E. Knowledge Dissemination

The research team plans to disseminate the results of this study at a national conference (ex: The American Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators [AACTE] or the Association

of Teacher Educators) in spring 2024 and submit a manuscript for publication during the 2024-2025 academic year. Possible outlets include *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *The International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, *The Teacher Educator*, or *Action in Teacher Education*.

F. Human Subjects

The researchers submitted an IRB application for the work proposed above and it was approved on November 3, 2022. The assigned protocol number is: IRB-22-1103. A Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant would make it possible to incentivize CEs to participate in the specialized training and to respond to the requested surveys. We believe this would support participation of a large enough sample to draw meaningful findings from the data.

G. Extramural Funding

We have not sought extramural funding for this work at this time; however, parking and refreshments for the Saturday training will be paid out of funds from the Office of School and Community Partnerships.

H. Timeline

When	What
Dec-Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CE recruitment and selection.</li> <li>● Email Tx group with Qualtrics link to informed consent for tx group and CE Survey 1.</li> <li>● Email all other CEs with link to informed consent for comparison group and CE survey 1.</li> <li>● Follow-up emails to remind CEs to complete CE survey 1.</li> </ul>
Jan. 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CE Treatment Training</li> <li>● CE Survey 2 for treatment group - either during training or emailed afterwards</li> </ul>
Early Spring 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CE Virtual Training for Comparison Group</li> <li>● YLI S1 happens - PreCPAST collected on 2 occasions</li> <li>● CE Survey 3 emailed to all consented CEs</li> <li>● TBMS 2 sent to all candidates</li> </ul>

Mar - April '23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invite consented CEs to participate in focus groups (use blind copy for email).</li> <li>● Schedule CE focus groups</li> <li>● Invite candidates to participate in focus groups.</li> </ul>
April '23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct CE focus groups on Zoom - record with closed captioning. Individuals can choose whether to have cameras on or off.</li> <li>● Conduct candidate focus groups on Zoom.</li> </ul>
Summer 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus group data transcribed by RT/GA</li> <li>● Preliminary descriptive analysis of quantitative data</li> </ul>



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