

# Triumphs and Tribulations: Exploring Student Teacher Needs-Supporting and -Frustrating Experiences through Reflective Journaling

Hannah C. Parker<sup>1</sup>  
Kellie Claflin<sup>2</sup>  
Amanda M. Bowling<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

*Teacher educators are charged with the responsibility of training teachers who will be required to make numerous daily decisions. One effective method to equip teacher candidates to manage the multitude of teaching demands is through the implementation of reflective practice. This study aimed to investigate the placement experiences of The Ohio State University SBAE student teachers by examining their psychological needs and motivation. A directed content analysis approach was used to analyze guided reflective journals to capture both triumphs (needs-satisfying experiences) and tribulations (needs-frustrating experiences). Reflective journal entries were bound by thirteen SBAE student teachers over fifteen weeks in the spring of 2023. Tenets from Self-Determination Theory were used as a lens to guide the theoretical framework for this study. Findings were categorized into needs-satisfying and needs-frustrating themes. Findings highlight student teachers discuss their psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness through the lens of self-determination theory. We recommend teacher educators provide opportunities for student teachers to reflect on their psychological needs to increase self-regulation and internalization. Further, we recommend that research integrate motivational theories to explore how teacher preparation programs can support the complexities of learning to teach.*

## Introduction

Teaching is complex and demanding (Clark & Lampert, 1986) as teachers learn to teach through practice (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Teacher educators are tasked with preparing teachers who make multiple decisions every day, informed by several distinct types of knowledge (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). In teacher education programs, student teaching allows preservice teachers to continue developing their content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, skills, and teacher identity (Edgar et al., 2011; Franzak, 2002). One way to prepare teacher candidates to balance the multitude of demands they face is through reflective practice, either on action or in action (Schön, 1987). Providing preservice teachers with reflective practice tools enhances their learning experiences, as reflection is essential for learning and personal growth (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Mezirow, 1991). Prior research examined the effects of different types of reflection (Epler et al., 2013; Greiman & Covington, 2007; Lambert et al., 2014; Roberts, 2014) and the impact of reflection on metacognition (Bowling et al., 2022), with all studies underscoring the importance of reflection for educators, especially preservice teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah C. Parker is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo, 1 Grand Ave San Luis Obispo 93407, hparke07@calpoly.edu. ORCID# 0000-0002-3290-3840

<sup>2</sup> Kellie Claflin is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership at The Ohio State University, 2120 Fyffe Rd. Columbus, OH 43210, claflin.11@osu.edu. ORCID# 0000-0001-8499-1742

<sup>3</sup> Amanda M. Bowling is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership at The Ohio State University, 2120 Fyffe Rd. Columbus, OH 43210, bowling.175@osu.edu. ORCID# 0000-0002-2526-725X

Reflective practices are a tool that teacher preparation programs utilize to support educational outcomes and the needs of preservice teachers through their field placements. Reflective practices are a critical aspect of learning (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Mezirow, 1991), and learning is a complex developmental process that includes many facets. As a novice educator, developing content knowledge and pedagogy can be a daunting task. Novice educators often develop these skills through their field experience, commonly known as student teaching. During this experience, reflective practices occur for novice educators to think about the newly acquired knowledge and pedagogy in the classroom (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Additionally, reflective practices allow individuals to think beyond their worldview and critically assess their actions (Lin & Lucey, 2010). A novice educator faces the stress of balancing a new career, unplanned challenges with students, administration, parents/guardians, and lesson planning for rigorous student engagement.

Reflection is shown to provide support to preservice teachers. However, student teachers' motivation can also influence their desire to teach and their intent to remain in the profession (Sinclair, 2008). Previous literature has highlighted the importance of self-efficacy during student teaching (Swan et al., 2011; Wolf et al., 2010) and the relationship with the cooperating educator (CE; Edgar et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2014), but little is known about student teacher motivation during this period. While Sorensen et al. (2018) analyzed reflective journals for student teachers through the lens of teacher concerns, reflective journals have not been used to explore student teachers' motivation. Understanding the motivational aspects of student teachers' experiences through reflective journals will provide a deeper insight into their experiences, adding to the literature and offering concrete ideas on how mentors can support student teachers through the complex task of learning to teach. As student teachers interact with mentors and students in a complex social environment and continue to form their identities through cognitive reflective practices, this study explored the experiences of student teacher motivation through guided reflective journaling.

### Theoretical Framework

Tenets from Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2017) were used as a lens to guide the theoretical framework for this study. SDT explores human motivation through individuals intrinsic and extrinsic values during social interactions and cognitive development experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Ryan and colleagues (2021) investigated motivation through a person-centered lens, examining the understanding of an individual's sense of volition and initiative. Within the framework of SDT, six mini-theories have been developed to analyze human motivation (Ryan, 2023). For this study, we focused on the Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction (BPNS) mini theory (Ryan, 2023). Autonomy, relatedness, and competence are basic psychological needs that support or thwart motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). *Autonomy* is bound by intrinsic feelings within oneself. *Relatedness* is the feeling of being connected to others. Lastly, *competence* is expressed through feeling successful or efficacious (Ryan, 2023). Experiences that support one's fulfillment of autonomy, relatedness, and competence foster higher-quality forms of motivation and engagement in activities that enhance performance, persistence, and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Student teaching occurs in a highly social learning context involving the student teacher, university supervisor, school community, peers, and beyond (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Ryan and Deci (2010) argue that social context factors are essential in advancing or halting motivation. The facets of BPNS apply to student teaching, as the needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competency are met when student teachers follow their interests, including their values, build relationships with mentors and students, and express efficacy in content and pedagogy, while also changing their behavior as novice educators (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Autonomy can be expressed through feeling a sense of choice in our actions (Ryan & Deci, 2008). The need for competence can be expressed by feeling efficacious in interacting with social environments and having positive experiences while exploring new skills (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Lastly, the need for relatedness can be fulfilled through colleagues and peers within the university system (Wang et al., 2019). Relatedness contributes to a sense of belonging, promotes collaboration and resource sharing (Wang et al., 2019). Needs-satisfying experiences can increase student teachers' feelings of fulfillment, challenge, and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In contrast, needs-frustrating experiences can lead to maladaptive functioning, negative emotions, and stress (Bartholomew et al., 2011; Haerens et al., 2015). Kaplan and Madjar (2017) explored pre-service teachers' perceptions of their need fulfillment regarding competence and relatedness in relation to their autonomous motivation. They found positive relationships between needs support and student teacher motivation (Kaplan & Madjar, 2017). However, Kaplan & Madjar suggest further exploration into how teacher preparation programs can support student teacher needs.

### **Purpose and Research Question**

The purpose of this study was to explore The Ohio State University (OSU) SBAE student teachers' placement experience through the lens of psychological needs and motivation via guided reflective journaling of triumph (needs-satisfying) and tribulation (needs-frustrating) experiences. Two questions were established to guide this research:

1. What types of triumphs and tribulations are experienced during student teaching? (Quantitative)
2. How do student teachers discuss triumphs and tribulations through reflective journaling? (Qualitative)

### **Methods**

#### **Reflexivity and Philosophical Perspectives**

For this study, we utilized a qualitative positivist approach (Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Yin, 2018). A qualitative positivist approach leans on assumptions of nature and social reality as a source of knowledge while utilizing qualitative methodologies (Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Yin, 2018). Due to the qualitative nature of the study, we recognize the importance of establishing trustworthiness and rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In full transparency, the authors supervised the student teachers during the data collection and analysis phase of this study. We maintained a reflexive practice to ensure our biases and previous experiences did not malign the research (Malterud, 2001). To establish trustworthiness and credibility, we used raw data with thick, rich descriptions to capture an accurate representation of student teacher responses in the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, we use peer debriefing when analyzing qualitative data to enhance the accuracy of interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### **Case Study Design**

This study utilized a case study approach to identify our sample. Reflective journal entries were bound by time and place by the cohort of thirteen OSU SBAE student teachers during the spring 2023 semester who completed weekly guided reflective journal entries over fifteen weeks (Yin, 2018). In certain circumstances, when exploring a contemporary phenomenon, case study design may need to follow its own customized, systematic design procedure (Yin, 2018). Our philosophical approach guided the instrument design and data analysis using previous literature on needs-satisfying and needs-frustrating experiences. For the final analysis, 147 independent and complete entries were used to answer research question one quantitatively and question two qualitatively (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

**Guided Reflective Journal Instrument**

Student teachers completed weekly guided reflective journals through a Qualtrics survey form utilizing skip logic depending on if the student teacher sought to reflect on a triumph or tribulation. Question prompts for triumphs and tribulations were informed by SDT and guided students to reflect on a specific experience related to needs-satisfaction (triumphs) and needs-frustrations (tribulations). Student teachers responded to both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Close-ended questions were analyzed to answer research question one (quantitative) and open-ended questions were analyzed to answer research question two (qualitative). A panel of five experts including current teacher educators and graduate students in agricultural education, reviewed the instrument for face and content validity.

At the beginning of the spring semester, student teachers received a link to the Qualtrics survey and were asked to complete weekly reflections by Sunday each week. At the beginning of the survey, each student teacher was asked to enter the date, a summary of activities they participated in during the week, and a prompt asking if they wanted to reflect on a triumph or tribulation experience. Table 1 shows examples of the closed-ended questions. Table 2 shows open-ended questions.

**Table 1**

*Closed-Ended Guided Questions and Responses*

<b>Question Stem</b>	<b>Triumph Guided Response</b>	<b>Tribulation Guided Response</b>
There was an instance today where I felt (check all that apply):	Happiness Accomplished Motivated Other:	Stressed Overwhelmed Uncertain Worried I was going to fail Other:
Because I felt this way I (check all that apply):	Completed the task Was motivated to tackle another task Felt like time passed quickly as I completed the task Other:	Couldn't decide about what to do Avoided the task until the last minute Completely avoided the task Other:
The event(s) that triggered the emotion/response was (check all that apply):	Finding resources for lessons Identifying content standards Developing enabling objectives Planning teaching methods Planning activities Planning assessments Grading Other:	Finding resources for lessons Identifying content standards Developing enabling objectives Planning teaching methods Planning activities Planning assessments Grading Other:

**Table 2***Open-Ended Guided Questions and Responses*

<b>Triumph</b>	<b>Tribulation</b>
Describe in detail how you felt during the task:	Describe in detail how you felt during the task:
Discuss what helped you accomplish the task (examples might include cooperating educator, previous OSU courses, professional developments, etc.) and how they helped you accomplish the task:	Describe what made you struggle/feel negative emotions:
What advice would you give to others as they work through a similar task:	Describe what you did to delay or avoid the task:
What did you learn about yourself as you worked through this task:	How did you overcome to complete the task:
Following the reflections for this week, set one teaching goal for the coming week:	What did you learn about yourself as you worked through this task:
	Following the reflections for this week, set one teaching goal for the coming week:

**Quantitative Analysis**

The first research question sought to describe what types of triumphs and tribulations are experienced during student teaching. Frequencies were utilized to describe how often student teachers reflected on a triumph or tribulation experience and the related prompts.

**Qualitative Analysis**

To answer the second research question, how student teachers discussed triumphs and tribulations, we employed directed content analysis, which utilized a deductive coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A directed content analysis approach validates or expands on existing theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this study, we structured the analysis in SDT's basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Open-ended response data were exported from Qualtrics to an Excel file and were sorted by participants and then by weeks of the student teaching experience. The first round of qualitative analysis used a line-by-line technique to initiate codes (Charmaz, 2006). In the second round of coding, codes were collapsed into categories and sorted into themes representing needs-satisfying and needs-frustrating experiences. Categories were then placed into autonomy, competence, and relatedness –supporting or –frustrating themes. Representative quotes were used to capture participants' raw data from their journal reflections and used in the findings section. Table 3 displays an example of our coding procedure.

Table 3

*Examples of coding procedure*

Raw Reflection Extract	Initial Coding	Category	Theme
I tried not to delay or avoid this task I just could not simply connect with the content to create something I understood and was proud of. I sat and stared and looked at numerous resources for a long time. This task would have been less stress if not for the time restraint unintentionally put on it, by changing around my schedule the day of. (4, W1)	Task avoidance	Low PCK	Competency-frustration
	Frustration with content/resources	Flexibility Constraints	Autonomy-frustration
	Time constraint		
	Change of schedule		

**Findings****Research Question #1**

To address research question one, the types of triumphs and tribulations experienced during student teaching varied among participants. We utilized frequency counts of the needs-supporting and frustration experiences documented in the reflective journals. It is important to note that student teachers could document multiple triumphs and/or tribulations per week, and select multiple emotions, actions taken, and/or initiating experiences per entry. Additionally, while one entry per week was a program expectation, not all student teachers completed a reflective journal entry for each week.

The student teachers documented many triumphs ( $f = 108$ ) or needs-supporting experiences throughout student teaching (see Table 4). When the students experienced their needs being supported, they felt accomplished ( $f = 66$ ) or happiness ( $f = 48$ ). When the student teacher's needs were met, they felt they were able to complete the task at hand ( $f = 72$ ), felt like time passed quickly ( $f = 47$ ), or were motivated to tackle another task ( $f = 44$ ). The most frequent category of experience relating to supporting their needs was the "other" category ( $f = 58$ ). When analyzing the text entries provided by student teachers when "other" was selected, the most frequent needs-supporting experiences were related to building rapport and relationships with students, their role as an FFA advisor, and teacher and learner successes such as successfully managing behavior issues or their students expressing their excitement to learn. The subsequent highest needs-supporting experiences were planning teaching methods ( $f = 37$ ) and developing enabling objectives ( $f = 27$ ).

Table 4

*Frequency of Triumphs Experienced During 15-Week Student Teaching Experience (n = 13)*

	Total
<b>Triumphs: Total Entries</b>	108
<b>Triumphs: Felt Emotions</b>	
Happiness	48
Motivated	17
Accomplished	66
Other	4
<b>Triumphs: Actions Taken</b>	
Completed the task	72
Motivated to tackle another task	21
Felt like time passed quickly	44
Other	47
<b>Triumphs: Initiating Experience</b>	
Finding resources for lessons	13
Identifying content standards	5
Developing enabling objectives	5
Planning teaching methods	27
Planning activities	37
Planning assessments	16
Grading	16
Other	58

The student teachers indicated that they did experience tribulations or needs-frustrating experiences during student teaching ( $f = 39$ ; see Table 5). However, these experiences occurred at a much lesser rate when compared to the triumphs. When reviewing the weekly frequency counts, tribulations peaked at week two and remained steady until after week 12. The frequency of tribulations then decreased and remained steady through the end of student teaching. The student teachers specified that they experienced stress ( $f = 24$ ) and feeling overwhelmed ( $f = 22$ ) when their needs were frustrated. When the student teachers experienced a tribulation, they stated that they could not decide what to do ( $f = 15$ ) but also indicated that they took “other” actions ( $f = 18$ ) at a higher rate. When analyzing the text entries provided by students when “other” was selected, the most frequent actions taken were continuing with planning the lesson and attempting to complete all the tasks at once. The student teachers indicated the most frequent experiences that thwarted their needs were planning activities ( $f = 20$ ), teaching methods ( $f = 18$ ), and assessments ( $f = 14$ ). Students also specified that there were “other” tribulating experiences ( $f = 11$ ), with the most frequent text entries focused on classroom and behavior management and pacing lessons and content.

Table 5

*Frequency of Tribulations Experienced During 15-Week Student Teaching Experience (n = 13)*

	Total
<b><u>Tribulations: Total Entries</u></b>	39
<b>Tribulation: Felt Emotions</b>	
Stressed	24
Overwhelmed	22
Uncertain	7
Worried that I was going to fail	9
Other	4
<b>Tribulation: Actions Taken</b>	
Couldn't decide what to do	15
Avoided task until the last minute	8
Completely avoided the task	5
Other	18
<b>Tribulation: Initiating Experience</b>	
Finding resources for lessons	8
Identifying content standards	4
Developing enabling objectives	7
Planning teaching methods	18
Planning activities	20
Planning assessments	14
Grading	5
Other	11

### ***Research Question #2***

To address question two, how student teachers discussed triumphs and tribulations, we utilized a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) of the needs-supporting and frustration experiences documented in the reflective journals. The qualitative findings are categorized into needs-supporting and needs-frustrating themes related to SDT. The findings introduce student teachers' reflections on student teaching experiences that are either needs-supporting or needs-frustrating. Representative quotes are labeled "(student #, week #)."

### **Autonomy-Support**

Student teachers sought autonomy during their placement experience. One way student teachers sought out autonomy-support is by integrating their students' choices into the planning process. Student teachers reflected early on during their experience on how to seek student interests. Student teachers identified students' interests through various methods: informal conversations, first-day of class introductions, and questionnaires. Seeking out student interests and incorporating what students wanted to learn was associated with triumphal reflections. However, some tribulation reflections showed student teachers creating goals to gain student interests and overcome a challenging experience:

I had them fill out some open-ended questions about what they wanted to learn during my time student teaching...I was surprised by the amount of things the students wanted to learn and how fast I was able to contort lessons arounds those topics without giving up the integrity of the standards. (4, W1)

Beyond student interest, student teachers expressed the need for flexibility in planning, perseverance to overcome challenging experiences, and the opportunity to reflect on their own or with their mentors, "...the most important thing you can do is pick yourself up reflect on where you went wrong and make appropriate changes to let it never happen again," (6, W2).

### **Competency-Support**

When student teachers recognized their teaching ability, they began to identify as a teacher rather than a student. Those individuals who recognized their teaching and planning abilities in their reflections demonstrated an association with their teaching identity, for instance, "I felt more confident in my abilities to teach and plan lessons following the content standards. Furthermore, I feel a lot better about my abilities and position at the school" (1, W3).

In addition to the student teachers recognizing their ability to teach, their responses revealed they enjoyed reflecting on times when students acknowledged the student teachers' ability:

I just felt accomplished, like everything I had spent the last 3.5 years learning was finally paying off and this is just the beginning. It is nice to know that your students appreciate what they are learning because it makes all the long planning hours worth it. (10, W12)

Student teachers showed growth in their ability to reteach and modify lessons. Further, student teachers noted frustrations but understood the need to be flexible. However, toward the end of the field experience, individuals began to think more critically about why modifications to lessons are an integral part of planning:

I just felt like I needed to rush through. However, I then took some time and thought about things and this topic is a topic the students wanted to learn about so their motivation will be high, and it has been. I just felt like I needed to get through it, but plans change. (9, W3)

Participants emphasized the need for adaptability, noting that effective lesson planning must be flexible and responsive to student needs and engagement levels, given the dynamic nature of teaching.

The final findings within *competency-support* integrate sources of content and pedagogical knowledge. They acknowledged previous experiences, courses, or resources they were using to support their planning process, "I used the knowledge I had from my time as a vet assistant to develop the injection lab and resources from my farm's veterinarian for supplies" (3, W12). By drawing on their own experience, student teachers made connections to previous knowledge while reinforcing their competence.

### **Relatedness-Support**

Student teachers noted the importance of mentorship and a community of support. Various individuals provided support in different capacities. Cohort peers supported each other as they related to similar experiences. For example, student teachers noted feeling isolated but appreciated that other peers were experiencing similar challenges during their field experience. Connecting with other agriculture teachers occurred outside the classroom, with one student teacher explaining, "I attended state degree

evaluations within our district and was able to connect with several ag teachers. I felt welcomed and appreciated” (11, W3).

Encouraging conversations with student teachers’ cooperating educator (CE) was described positively. Student teachers pointed out that asking for help or bouncing ideas with their CE was nerve-racking initially. However, once the channel of communication was open, student teachers noted their fears faded.

I learned that it is okay to ask [CE] for help when I get stuck. I was nervous at first to ask her for assistance because, I am not sure why, maybe disappointment? Once I opened that channel of communication, I was able to overcome the block that interfered with my planning. (4, W2)

Finally, establishing rapport with students supports the need fulfillment for relatedness. Student teachers reflected on relationship building early into the field experience, stating, “build those relationships with students! They will respect, listen, learn, and enjoy having you as their teacher” (2, W2).

### **Autonomy-Frustration**

The lesson plan template was the most significant barrier for student teachers related to lesson planning. The lesson plan template was described as lengthy and took time away from the creative aspect of planning. Several students discussed parts that were not applicable and were pointless to fill out. Additionally, student teachers were expected to turn in lesson plans once per week. The deadline added stress, especially as their workload increased throughout the field experience. “The OSU lesson plan began to hurt the quality of my lessons. So, I stopped using [the template] and the quality of my lessons increased” (1, W9).

Beyond the lesson plan template being a constraint, students reflected on the frustration of modifying lessons at the last minute. Some students attributed this to a lack of time management or planning, while others noted they felt their lessons were originally useless.

On Friday the old saying rained true, no plan survives first contact with the enemy, the plan being my original lessons, and the enemy being confusion and implementation. I spent my lunch and second period fixing my lessons and it worked out perfectly. (6, W1)

### **Competency-Frustration**

Low efficacy was expressed in many aspects of the student teaching experience, but most prevalent in student teachers' confidence in content knowledge. Their perceived lack of content knowledge was often associated with tribulation reflections due to the pressure to turn in lesson plans, feeling like they have to “get it right” or struggling with where to find resources. “I think some days I come disappointed with myself because I struggle to take content deeper because I lack the knowledge. It makes me feel incompetent” (8, W8). Another student noted, “I felt like I didn't know what to do. I was planning a lesson that I do not have a lot of background knowledge on and was having trouble finding resources on.” (5, W4)

Beyond the low efficacy of content knowledge, student teachers connected their confidence to teach depended on external factors, mainly licensure requirements. Stress related to student teaching evaluations and test requirements added additional stress to the day-to-day expectations.

Just the amount of stress and anxiety coming from wondering whether or not I’ll be able to turn in my university licensure assessment on time, especially when you combine that with the fact that I also have my last test coming up for licensure on Tuesday. (9, W6)

## **Relatedness-Frustration**

Fear of managing student behavior was another frustrating experience for student teachers. This fear typically centered around confronting misbehavior. Additionally, student teachers reflected on the need to manage behavior “better” and set goals for future challenging experiences, “I am bad at being upfront/confrontational/direct with students. The poster projects would have been on task if I had monitored students on workdays better” (11, W11).

Outside of the classroom, students described an internal struggle with balancing life in and out of the school setting. Many reflected about feeling guilty for leaving before their CE or prioritizing something that was not school related.

“I had to leave early one night (around 5) to help my dad out on the family farm. I feel bad I had to leave before [my cooperating educator] did, but I had to help my dad because it was something he couldn’t do without me. I had everything ready for my class the next day but still felt guilty about having to leave and I’m unsure why” (6, W4).

## **Discussion**

Our findings demonstrate how student teachers within an agriculture teacher preparation program discuss their psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness through the lens of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The student teachers highlighted triumphs and tribulations, representing needs-satisfying and needs-frustrating experiences in their guided reflective journals as they grappled with learning to teach. While the findings of this study are similar to prior research in SBAE related to student teacher concerns (Sorensen et al., 2018), self-efficacy (Swan et al., 2011; Wolf et al., 2010), and the importance of relationships (Edgar et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2014), utilizing motivation as a lens provides a new perspective in understanding the experience of student teachers. While reflection entries explored a triumph or tribulation experience, they did not limit the experience to solely explore autonomy, competence or relatedness needs-support. Similar to previous research, needs-support from autonomy, competence, and relatedness occur simultaneously to increase motivation, internalization, and self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2008, Kaplan & Madjar, 2017).

Overall, the student teachers in this study reflected on many more needs-satisfying experiences that occurred often when they were able to complete tasks or felt accomplished. The reflections on needs-frustrating experiences were often due to stress or feeling overwhelmed. Planning activities comprised most of the experiences students reflected on, both needs-satisfying and needs-frustrating. Regardless of the feeling, student teachers identified planning activities beyond lecture content as time-consuming. Feelings of accomplishment were accompanied by confidence in what they had prepared for during lesson planning. In contrast, feelings of stress when planning activities were accompanied by feelings of failure in the lesson and stress when planning the next activity. Reflecting on successful and failed plans is critical for student teachers to internalize the complexities of teaching and learn to overcome the challenges they will face post-student teaching (Brooks, 2000; Mezirow, 1991). Student teachers who could reflect on a needs-frustrating experience often set attainable goals to change the process or outcome the next time they face a similar challenge (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

As student teachers reflected on triumph experiences, the main autonomy-supporting experiences were learning more about their students and their interests. Positive experiences in supporting student autonomy led to autonomy-satisfied experiences of the student teacher. Additionally, student teachers recognized the impact of reflecting on their teaching to make changes to improve their instruction. As student teachers reflected, set goals, and internalized their experiences, they self-identified as teachers by recognizing growth in their ability to teach through competency-supported experiences. Student teachers

recognized their efficacy by reflecting on changes made to their lesson plans and instruction, especially when they recognized themselves using previous knowledge and experiences. The support from their cooperating teachers, peers, and other agriculture teachers fulfilled their need for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This was especially true as they became more open with their cooperating teacher and felt that connection. The relationship student teachers were building with their students also fed into their feelings of relatedness.

Utilizing a content analysis to analyze guided reflections offers implications for future explorations of needs-satisfying and needs-frustrating experiences. Further, guiding reflection that supports student motivation and ability to reflect on their own actions and behaviors will lead to transferable skills during their early career of teaching (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). During tribulation reflections, feelings of stress and being overwhelmed consumed the student teachers. Most autonomy-based stressors were university requirements (deadlines, supervisor visits, licensure requirements, etc.) that were not part of their day-to-day teaching responsibilities (Kalan & Madjar 2017). Similarly, due to waiting on the results of state licensure requirements, like required state testing, student teachers experienced frustrations related to competency wondering if they would be successful. Low self-efficacy of content knowledge also contributed to competency frustrating feelings. Student teachers were fearful of confronting student misbehavior and set consequences which fell under relatedness. These experiences often left the student teacher feeling uncertain or fearful.

The findings of this study build upon the research on student teachers, especially around the idea of self-efficacy (Swan et al., 2011; Wolf et al., 2010), as it goes beyond their feelings of competence and/or concerns by discussing their challenges in terms of psychological needs being met or unmet. The findings showed the importance of reflective practices as participants could take a needs-frustrating experience to a needs-satisfying one through reflection. The practice of reflection itself is autonomy-supportive, as student teachers self-regulate and make sense of their experience. Utilizing best practices, like reflective journals, is not a nuanced strategy to support student teachers. However, rather than attributing frustrations and stressors to the low efficacy of a novice teacher, we can support student teachers to reflect on their own psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence to support the fulfillment of their own needs through self-regulation, goal setting, and internalization practices as they tackle the complexities of learning how to teach.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

We recommend that teacher educators, cooperating educators, and university supervisors utilize the tenets of SDT when supporting student teachers by recognizing successes and challenges through their autonomy, competency, and relatedness needs which are either supported or frustrated. We also need to help student teachers understand their psychological needs and how they relate to the learning process. To do this, we suggest including strategies for supporting student teachers' psychological needs within mentorship training for university supervisors and cooperating educators. For example, mentors should approach conversations with empathy and allow exploration of new pedagogy, model best practices, and support the growth of the individual rather than mimicking the teaching of their supervisor (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Further, before student teaching, guided reflective practices should be integrated into preservice teacher coursework and experiences. Lastly, we recommend seeking out cooperating educators who will support the student teacher through intentionally building rapport prior to the student teaching semester (Jones et al., 2014).

## Recommendations for Future Research

In studying student teachers, exploring needs-support goes beyond studying the effects of efficacy in preservice preparation. Previous students have focused on task frustration and concerns of failure. We propose that teacher preparation researchers use motivation to explore student teacher development due to the unique insights into supporting student teachers as they learn to teach. Future research should be conducted using SDT and other motivational theories to provide a better understanding of how to prepare and support student teachers. Further, we recommend exploring psychological needs support and how student teachers transfer knowledge from their preservice coursework to their student teaching placement. Beyond the student teaching semester, we are interested in exploring longitudinal outcomes of supporting psychological needs in novice teachers. We encourage motivational researchers to explore guided reflective practices within early career mentorship programs. Lastly, we recommend exploring teacher educators' beliefs about student teacher motivation to understand what mechanisms are currently in place to support student teacher's motivation.

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