**Reconciliation Paper:**

**The Reviewers’ Requested Revisions and the Author’s Actions**

1. Reviewers: The title of the study appears to not be accurate. It ought to be singular as it is the development of one PLC.
   1. Author’s Action: I changed the title from “Developing Professional Learning Communities among Preservice Teachers” to “Developing a Professional Learning Community among Preservice Teachers.”
2. Reviewers: The literature review, based on the PLC framework put forth by Hord and Tobia (2012), needs to be more broadly represented by a discussion of the varied research using PLCs. The framework presented is a coherent framework, but does not give a complete perspective of the various research studies previously conducted in the realm of PLCs. By providing a more comprehensive background of the research helps to support the significance for this study.
   1. Author’s Action: I reworked the literature review by conducting a new search and adding two new sections: PLCs with preservice teachers and PLCs in the secondary education. Additional research about PLCs was included in the introduction and the discussion sections. I also explained the research that supports the Hord model.
3. Reviewers: The literature / theoretical framework is incomplete: Some of the theory requires elaboration in areas and tightening in others. Elaboration: required if the literature is supposed to have been based on four theoretical dimensions (“Building on the ideas of PLCs, professional capacity, teacher attrition, community of practice theory, and preservice teacher standards”). PLC literature is explored, but the other areas are not. Tighthening: On page 3, communities of practice and PLC are used interchangeably, when there are differences that deserve to be mentioned.
   1. Author’s Action: When I read the reviewers’ comments, I realized that I was being too ambitious and trying to do too much in the introduction and review of literature by mentioning four theoretical dimensions. The purpose of the study is to explore what happens when the Hord and Tobia’s model is implemented with preservice teachers. My initial connections to the four theories were beyond the scope of this paper. The conceptual framework for the study is the Hord and Tobia’s model. I tightened this section by cutting some of the text.
4. Reviewers: Describing the model as “based on the dimensions described in Hord and Tobia’s book (2012),” is insufficient for a scholarly paper. The model deserves a section on its own.
   1. Author’s Actions: In my initial submission, I tried to integrate relevant research on PLCs into the five dimensions of Hord and Tobia model and show how current research provides support. To meet the reviewers’ recommendation, I created three sections for the review of literature: PLCs with preservice teachers, PLCs in secondary schools, and an overview of the five dimensions of the Hord and Tobia model.
5. Reviewers: Was ethical approval obtained for the pilot study? If not, is it appropriate to use its data?
   1. Author’s Action: Ethical approval was obtained for the pilot and the current study. Please note that I deleted the pilot study as a way to reduce the length of the paper (refer to reviewers’ comments later in this reconciliation letter). I added a sentence in the method section stating that approval was obtained from my university and from the participants in the current study.
6. Reviewers: Findings are not necessarily supported by the data (see below).
   1. Author’s Action: I reworked the findings and discussion sections to align better to the data. According to the data, some aspects of the PLC worked well while other aspects did not.
7. Reviewers: Secondly, the methodology as a case study is not complete / inappropriate. As the author was also an actor, some principles of action research must have been in effect. Positionality alone is insufficient in addressing this situation, especially if “I provided ongoing support to the participants throughout the study” (p. 14) and “Teach lessons on PLCs, portfolio assessment, and reflection” (p. 14). This author was involved in the study.
   1. Author’s Action: I revised the methods section to indicate that action research methodology was used. I added some sentences to explain the balancing act that I had to take in my two roles as the professor and the researcher.
8. Reviewers: In the methods section, there is no mention of triangulated data, which is an important element of qualitative research. The author(s) does provide a description of the data derived from various sources, but does not specifically address the process of triangulation.
   1. Author’s Action: In my initial paper, I mentioned triangulation and the various efforts that I took to ensure trustworthiness. To address the reviewers’ recommendations, I added additional statements about the triangulation of data and the inclusion of major and minor themes.
9. Reviewers: While building learning communities is, according to recent research, beneficial to all stakeholders, this study of 20 teacher candidates does not provide the analysis needed to make it a reliable source for others to employ.
   1. Author’s Actions: (a) I included a detailed account of the steps that I took to implement the PLCs if researchers want to replicate the study in the future. (b) I used a deductive approach to analyze the data that I found. (c) I addressed validity and reliability (trustworthiness) in my qualitative research by writing, “To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher used triangulation to cross-validate the sources and find regularities in the data (Denzin, 2000). When a theme appeared at least three times in the four data sources, then it was labeled as a major theme and included in the findings section. Themes appearing once or twice were classified as minor themes. Trustworthiness was maintained when the researcher created an audit trail to record the analytical steps, techniques, and conceptual chain of logic that was followed (Drew, Hardman, & Hosp, 2008). Furthermore, he audiotaped and transcribed the interviews with the key informants, producing five hours of audiotape and 25 pages of transcription. Afterward, he member checked the data with each interviewee to ensure accuracy.”
10. Reviewers: The study does not address a true evaluation of the teacher candidate growth as opposed to teacher candidates field experiences in traditional settings.
    1. Author’s Action: I’m somewhat unclear about this recommendation, so I don’t know exactly how to respond. The study is an exploratory study to determine what happens when the PLC model is implemented with preservice teachers. I chose open-ended data collection instruments because I want to see what happens. Rather than applying a specific evaluative measure, I asked the participants to share what they were learning and experiencing. A good follow-up study would be to employ a specific evaluative measure and determine how much growth occurred.
11. Reviewers: Loucks and Hall, in their Concerns Based Adoption Model provide a framework for evaluating teacher candidate "ownership" of the educational setting and the depth to which they take responsibility for student learning. This tool and the analysis of teacher candidate writings, conversation at meetings, or with their supervisor would provide a more useful collection of data for interpretation and modification of the program described.
    1. Author’s Action: Thank you for this suggestion. I found a book in my university’s library about CBAM. Coincidentally, Shirley Hord worked on the development of this model back in the 1970s and 1980s. To implement CBAM, the change facilitator must administer paper surveys and conduct face-to-face interviews with the participants. Since my study has ended, I recommended in my limitations section that future researchers use CBAM to determine how well the participants embraced the new change. Using the instrument’s descriptors, I also retroactively determined the overall level of implementation.
12. Reviewers: The author relies heavily on quotes from other sources. I think the author needs to a) reduce the paper significantly and b) find ways to express ideas from references without filling paragraphs with direct quotes.
    1. Author’s Action: To reduce the length of the manuscript, I revised the findings sections and eliminated quotations that were duplicates. I also shortened the introduction and deleted the section describing the pilot study.
13. Reviewers: Conclusions of the study do not suggest any useful information that adds to the body of knowledge pertaining to these learning communities.
    1. Author’s Action: I revised the review of literature to highlight the three studies that pertain to PLCs and preservice teachers. None of these studies used the Hord and Tobia model. In the conclusion, I state that this model can be useful to other teacher educators who want to implement PLCs in their preparation courses. The study offers specific details that are missing in the other research for preservice teacher PLCs.
14. Reviewers: In summary, while the process in the article is valuable to share, the tightening and methodological concerns as mentioned above are required to bring the article to a level of publishing. Perhaps reframing the methodology would be important, as would be framing the article as a pedagogical piece for higher education rather than a case study.
    1. Author’s Action: I framed the article as a pedagogical piece for teacher educators in the first paragraph where I cite two leading authorities on teacher education (Ann Lieberman and Linda Darling-Hammond). Both scholars are calling for more collaboration in teacher preparation programs.
15. Reviewers: Other suggestions for improvement include: Edit for misplaced modifiers. ie: “Teachers engaged in PLCs add to their knowledge base (Andrews & Lewis, 2007), improve their delivery of instruction (Little, 2002), and, more importantly, facilitate increased student learning (Wiley, 2001).” Their in this sentence refers to PLCs rather than teachers.
    1. Author’s Actions: I reviewed the manuscript carefully looking for any grammatical errors. A trusted colleague also read the manuscript.
16. Reviewers: Refer to authors’ work in past tense (APA)
    1. Author’s Action: Done.
17. Reviewers: Be careful when paraphrasing the work of others so that translation is exact. ie: “This statement indicates that university professors can model ways for preservice teachers to build career-lasting support structures through PLCs. From the sentence before, professors were not modeling, rather they were facilitating.
    1. Author’s Action: Done. I checked the quotes that I used.
18. Reviewers: Remove first person references.
    1. Author’s Action: Done. I switched from first person to third person. I used the word “researcher” in place of the word “I.”
19. Reviewers: Provide data as an appendix, especially axial codes and classification.
    1. Author’s Action: Upon further review, my data analysis needed improvement. The constant comparative method is a better explanation of how I analyzed the data. I provided an explanation of the steps that I took to analyze the data.
20. Reviewers: The finding that “preservice teachers can develop PLCs” is not supported by this data. They can be organized into PLCs if their instructor does so, and that is evident, but it is important not to overgeneralize in a scholarly article. The data revealed more about instructional approaches than PLC development (students wanted instruction and modeling).
    1. Author’s Action: I changed my wording to state that in qualitative studies the reader must decide if the findings are applicable to his/her context. I also stated in the conclusion section that some aspects worked well and quite a few didn’t. If researchers replicate the study in the future, then suggestions are made for implementing PLCs more successfully. To me, many parts of the PLCs may not have worked, but two findings are important. The participants appreciated the support, and the participants valued talking about their teaching. In my professional opinion, these two findings justify further exploration of this PLC idea.
21. Reviewers: Participants problematized each category. Aspects in the discussion are not supported by the data provided. Perhaps including the codes and categories would help the reader see the outcome more clearly.
    1. Author’s Action: I reworked the discussion section to make a stronger connection with the data and the findings.
22. Reviewer 1: The purpose of the proposed article is to examine preservice teachers’ use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within the context of a semester-long class. Since few studies explore the use of PLCs at the preservice level, this research fills a gap in the literature. The findings from this qualitative study show that preservice teachers benefited from the conversations related to pedagogy and emotional support. Though there were significant challenges, such as preservice teachers’ desire to focus on self, difficulties in voicing authentic feedback, and time constraints, this study still provides data on a tool that could be useful in developing collaborative practices benefiting teacher retention and reflection.
    1. Author’s Action: Thank you.
23. Reviewer 1: I believe this article should be accepted with revisions required. The literature review, based on the PLC framework put forth by Hord and Tobia (2012), needs to be more broadly represented by a discussion of the varied research using PLCs. The framework presented is a coherent framework, but does not give a complete perspective of the various research studies previously conducted in the realm of PLCs. By providing a more comprehensive background of the research helps to support the significance for this study.
    1. Author’s Action: I reworked the literature review by conducting a new search and adding a new section to the paper that focused on the three empirical studies pertaining to preservice teachers and PLCs. This new section includes a dissertation that was completed in 2003 and two published journal articles. Research about PLCs was also included in two additional sections: the introduction and the discussion.
24. Reviewer 1: Also, in the methods section, there is no mention of triangulated data which is an important element of qualitative research. The author(s) does provide a description of the data derived from various sources, but does not specifically address the process of triangulation.
    1. Author’s Action: In my initial paper, I mentioned triangulation and the various efforts that I took to ensure trustworthiness. To address the reviewers’ recommendations, I added additional statements about the triangulation of data and the inclusion of major and minor themes.
25. Reviewer 1: This study analyzes PLCs as a possible method for advancing preservice teachers’ collaboration, analysis of practice, and discussion of student learning. The article adds to the field by offering PLCs as a practice that benefits beginning stages of teacher development with the hope that this type of supportive collaboration will become a part of teachers' future experiences.
    1. Author’s Action: Thank you.

**End of Reconciliation Paper**