Reimagining Primary Teacher Preparation in Moçambique: Literacy Mentoring in Hybrid Spaces as a Transformative Practice

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Abstract
In this article, we describe our collaborative work with the Moçambique Ministry of Education in re-imagining primary literacy teacher preparation through an initiative that promotes closer personal (literacy focused) relationships between preservice teachers (formandos) and primary-aged students during the formando's preparation program. Our work seeks to disrupt traditional notions of Moçambique teacher preparation, which are mostly didactic and disconnected from community-based interactions with children. We are working to move toward ideologies that recognize and draw on children's cultural and linguistic resources. Our collaboratively designed literacy methodologies call for building personal relationships, engaging in responsive teaching, promoting translanguaging, encouraging children to take the lead in their own literacies, and drawing on community resources in our work with formandos. This report will focus on a description of the literacy mentoring program we are enacting and the results of a feasibility study at the Instituto de Formação de Professores de Chitima. We will summarize the mentoring program and the findings from research, discuss our successes and challenges and the ways in which this initiative has the potential to reframe the current mode for academic coursework in primary teacher preparation, and our next steps in Moçambique. This collaborative model stands to inform a re-imagining of teacher preparation that is situated locally and grounded in practice.

Keywords
Primary teacher preparation; Literacy mentoring; Hybrid spaces; Transformative practice; Mozambique

Introduction

"The child I am working with cannot speak Portuguese," stated one of the formandos (a preservice teacher) in a group debriefing, following one of the literacy mentoring sessions at the Chitima Instituto de Formação (IFP) in Chitima, Moçambique. The facilitator of the debriefing (Elsa, author #1) paused, looked

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around the room at the twenty-eight preservice teachers in the debriefing session, and asked, "How many of you spoke Portuguese when you entered primary school? Raise your hand." Not a single formando in the room raised their hand. After another pause, the facilitator stated: "So, we have a challenge." Then smiling, she asked, "What shall we do?"

The teachers in this vignette are engaged in a reflective moment and space. The teacher educator engages the preservice teachers in problem posing around the work they do with their children to better support literacy and language learning. This kind of reflection will become the basis for growing their practices in the short term around language challenges, and, in the long term, around a stance toward their own professional learning. There is no script to follow. There are no certainties. There are only possibilities to be imagined, "tried out," and refined. This conversation captures the essence of thoughtfully adaptive teaching (Duffy, Miller, Parsons, & Meloth, 2009) and practice-based inquiry (Sailors & Hoffman, in press) in Moçambique and perhaps other places in the world.

The notion of children coming to school speaking a language other than the one used as the medium of learning and teaching in communities like Chitima is not unusual. In fact, there are 17 Bantu languages spoken in the Republic of Moçambique in addition to the official language of Portuguese. Only 10% of people in the country speak the official language (Portuguese) as their first language (it represents the ninth largest language group). While many people in Moçambique are multilingual, only 50% of the population speaks Portuguese. A large country of 30 million people, the vast majority of people live in the rural areas (69%) and complete an average of nine years of schooling (UNESCO, 2016). Although the government launched a bilingual program in the early 2000s, it has taken a while for it to be enacted around the country. In 2014 it was reported that 373 schools in the country were enacting bilingual education (JICA, 2015). The learner-to-teacher ratio in the primary grades in Moçambique is 55:1.

Teaching in Moçambique comes with its own challenges. Up through 2009, Moçambique was forced to employ unqualified teachers, but with the short-term programs introduced ("10+1", where teachers who graduated from at least 10th grade spend one year at a teacher education center and then receive their qualifications to teach), the number of unqualified teachers has fallen dramatically—from 40% in 2005 to 10% in 2014 (JICA, 2015). While the majority of the Mozambican teachers reported they enjoy their profession, some stated that they were not satisfied with their working conditions mainly due to their low salaries, delays getting paid, lack of prestige, and lack of a career plan. Further, teachers noted that they work under precarious infrastructure, sometimes in improvised classrooms that lack learning materials.

While there are various models of teacher preparation in Moçambique, we focus on the model that is supported by Chitima IFP: the "10+3" model. Under this model, students spend their first two years in coursework (with practicum experiences woven throughout) and the last year in a clinical/student teaching experience. The curriculum consists of five pedagogic areas: "communication and social science," "mathematics and natural science," "practical activities and techniques," "science of education," and "teaching practice." The teacher education program spans 110 weeks; students in the 10+3 programs clock 3,840 hours in their coursework and 420 hours in practicum experiences (JICA, 2015).

In this article (co-authored by our tri-national team that includes teacher educators at the site, program staff, and international advisers, all of whom worked directly on the project), we critically examine the introduction of mentoring in a hybrid space as a transformative practice. Our goal in this study was to understand both the successes and challenges of implementation and the actions we took to respond to those challenges. We sought to answer the following research questions: (a) How does the engagement in a hybrid space of literacy mentoring in one preservice teacher preparation program enhance the learning of preservice teachers through reflection? (b) How does the engagement in this hybrid space of literacy mentoring influence the work of the teacher educators in their academic program? And, (c) what are the characteristics of the hybrid space that are core to its success and may be important to consider in future program expansion?

We collaboratively built on the existing structures and practices at one public IFP in Moçambique (Chitima IFP) in order to test the feasibility of the creation of hybrid spaces for mentoring in teacher preparation. Building on local initiatives and drawing from the international literature on field experiences in teacher preparation, we collaboratively designed and enacted the BETTER literacy mentoring program at Chitima IFP. The program is centered on the premise that these hybrid spaces bridge the gap between academic coursework and traditional practicum experiences in order to move the instruction of the beginning teachers toward more innovative practices. In the case of this work, supported by the Ministry of Education and the BETTER project, we were attempting to increase the general use of participatory methodologies as part of teacher preparation.

We begin this article with a broad consideration of the international research on the role of hybrid spaces in literacy teacher preparation. We then offer a contextualization of the site (Chitima IFP) and the overarching program (BETTER) in which it was situated. We position this work in a design-development framework, with the goal of using research to identify design principles for the creation of hybrid spaces in teacher preparation programs in countries like Moçambique.

From practicum experiences to hybrid spaces

Planning and engaging in preservice teacher education often involve a delicate balancing of goals. On the one hand, the goal is to prepare new teachers to step in and smoothly take on the role of teaching in schools as it currently exists . On the other hand, the goal is to use teacher preparation to introduce new and innovative practices into schools. In an ideal context, where learners are achieving at high levels, the emphasis on preparing teachers to step in may outweigh the need to prepare teachers to introduce new practices that disrupt the status quo (that is, teach in ways that interrupt lecture-like teaching). Following this transformative goal, the emphasis on teacher preparation may focus more on the innovative practices that can be introduced into the schools through new teachers.

Approaching teacher preparation is fairly straightforward when the goal is to replicate what is already there. Preservice teachers have already spent years in schools as students engaged with this kind of teaching (Lortie, 1975). The apprenticeship of observation, coined by Lortie, refers to the knowledge of teaching preservice teachers already have based on thousands of hours of work in classrooms as a student (Borg, 2004). With a little training and a lot of apprenticeship in classrooms, “good

students" can quickly be turned into "good teachers."

However, preparing preservice teachers to bring innovative practices into schools is a different matter. Educators around the world have struggled with this challenge (White & Forgasz, 2016). There is the initial challenge of helping preservice teachers discern those aspects of their practice what they internalized as "teaching" through their personal experiences. Once preservice teachers are aware of those internalized practices, they must learn the innovative practices and how to use them in classrooms in ways that are different from what they experienced. The typical space used for this kind of work is in academic coursework during teacher preparation programs and practicum experiences (Hoffman et al., in press). However, when preservice teachers do not see practices enacted in schools that align with the innovative practices introduced in their program, they may resort to the traditional practices (Sydnor, 2017). Britzman (1991) warned that an uncritical increase in practicum experiences may actually negate the effects of the preparation offered in coursework and further reinforce the models of traditional teaching that preservice teachers then take forward into their teaching. McDonald et. al. (2014) argued for the reconsideration of the role of coursework and field experiences and how they are to be used to prepare teachers to teach in innovative ways. The creation of hybrid spaces in preservice teacher preparation is one such way to support beginning teachers as they learn to implement those innovative practices that they do not see in their practicum experiences. We summarize the literature on mentoring experiences as hybrid spaces in the next section.

Transforming teacher preparation: Hybrid spaces in preservice teacher preparation

Hybrid spaces for practice are typically outside of the traditional classroom but engaging with new ways of working in schools (Hoffman, Mosley Wetzel, & DeJulio, 2018; Zeichner, 2010; Zeichner & McDonald, 2011). This is "real" teaching but not under the complex conditions of existing classrooms. These hybrid spaces are the bridge into classroom teaching. These hybrid spaces are also powerful for teacher educators to interact with preservice teachers around specific teaching practices and in context of reflection as a tool for learning. These conversations, as with the conversation described in the opening paragraph, can travel back into the academic courses and help connect theory to teaching practices (Hoffman et al., in press).

One body of research into using hybrid spaces to transform teaching has focused on the power of what is called "tutoring" in the literature—that is, preservice teachers working with children in a one-on-one or small group setting. These tutoring experiences are carried out under the careful guidance of a teacher educator and are a way to introduce new practices into the teaching repertoire of beginning teachers. These experiences have proven to be promising in moving preservice teachers toward innovation in their teaching as there is substantial evidence in recent research to document a positive impact of these experiences on the growth of preservice teachers. In fact, research has indicated that these hybrid spaces enhanced beginning teachers' pedagogical knowledge and impacted their roles and beliefs about teaching. They were also spaces where preservice teachers learned to build and value relationships with children and families and reject deficit ideas about children (Hoffman et al., in press). There is also growing evidence that preservice teachers do take forward those practices they learned in the hybrid spaces of tutoring into their first years of teaching (Hoffman et al., in press).

To be clear, not all work in hybrid spaces is designed to transform teaching. There are many tutoring programs that have the goal of simplifying the tasks of teaching literacy outside of the classroom in order for the preservice teacher to step into existing practices in the classroom more easily. We are focused specifically on the use of hybrid spaces as a pathway for preservice teachers to use practices that are different than those currently in place. This is what makes them transformative. While the literature is clear on the benefits of these hybrid spaces, the literature remains unclear on the ways in which the tutorial experiences influence preservice teachers in international contexts like Moçambique.

Features of tutoring programs

In a review of the literature on tutoring, Hoffman et al. (in press) identified some of the mediating factors and program features that are associated with the growth of preservice teachers in learning to teach.

First, *relationships* are a key component of the tutoring experience, for the preservice teacher and the learner with whom the teacher is working. The relationship between the tutor and the learner builds over time. Positive relationships lead learners to take risks in their learning and preservice to take risks in their teaching.

Second, *structure* is a key component of the tutoring experience. There must be a balance between having a plan for work and the expectation that this plan can be modified and reshaped in response to the learner. In other words, there must be a structure for tutoring, but it must also be flexible enough to accommodate the instructional needs of the learners who are being tutored.

Third, *reflection* is a key component in tutoring. Preservice teachers must be able to reflect on their teaching and learning, both individually and collaboratively. These reflections should take place with their peers and the teacher educator who teaches their courses and coaches them during the tutoring experience.

Fourth, *community* matters in tutoring. As is true of learning in a classroom, learning in teacher preparation must be interactive. Preservice teachers must have opportunities to (a) observe their peers teach, (b) co-teach with their peers, and (c) coach and be coached by others, including teacher educators with responsibilities in the academic program.

Fifth, *content* developed in academic courses must be closely tied to tutoring experiences. Preservice teachers must be encouraged to look for and try out the experience in the tutorial setting with the experiences in practicum settings.

Sixth, *continuous and complementary* tutoring experiences can build on each other. Research suggests that there are positive effects associated with expanding the tutoring experiences over the course of the preparation program. Successful tutoring programs often expand the number of learners that preservice teachers work with from one to several learners. These programs also offer opportunities for preservice teachers to co-teach/tutor with their peers.

Finally, *teacher educators* play a critical role in supporting the learning of preservice teachers during a tutoring experience. Not only do teacher educators provide feedback on teaching, they can also “step into” and actively participate in a tutoring session should the need arise. Teacher educators can teach traditional practices by modeling innovative practices during tutoring. The observations made in tutoring can also be used by the teacher educator to make connections to the content that is offered in academic courses.

Hybrid spaces: Moving from tutoring to mentoring

Similarly, the most recent review of this literature encourages the field to take up the word "mentoring" (rather than tutoring) in designing, enacting, and describing these hybrid spaces of learning to teach innovative practices not observed in practicum experiences (Hoffman et al., in press). In many ways, the word "tutoring" carries a connotation of "something that is done to those falling behind." Hoffman and his colleague use the term "mentoring" to be more conceptually aligned to the work of teacher educators. Jacobi (1991) noted that mentoring relationships focus on five basic components. Mentoring relationships focus on building achievement and providing emotional and psychological support. They benefit both the mentor and the protégé. They are personal. And, they allow more experienced people to share knowledge with less-experienced people (p. 513). To that end, we use the term "mentoring" to refer to our work in Moçambique and to the program that is the focus of this paper.

Exploring literacy mentoring at Chitima IFP

As described earlier, our work in the preparation of primary teachers in Moçambique has focused on connecting the literacy mentoring as a hybrid space to the broader construct of participatory methodologies in teaching and teacher education (Sitoe, Hoffman, Sailors, & Majuisse, 2018). The Moçambique Ministry of Education is interested in promoting more participatory and less didactic methodologies in classroom teaching. There is professional development work going on with these methodologies with classroom teachers. There are also efforts to be more inclusive of these methodologies in the teacher preparation programs. The Ministry has been active in promoting the use of these methodologies by the teacher educators in their preparation programs—the explicit goal is for these methods to become part of the preservice teacher's practices (called formandos in Moçambique) as they move into classrooms. In traditional practicum placements, however, formandos may not see these new methodologies employed fully or regularly. As the research would suggest, under these conditions, formandos may revert to both what they see in the schools in which they are working and what they experienced themselves as students in classrooms. The research would suggest that by inserting opportunities to practice these participatory methodologies in hybrid spaces, the transition to effective teaching will be smoother and more effective.

Chitima IFP is one of 27 public, teacher preparation programs in Moçambique. Located in the western province of Tete (the province that borders Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Zambia), Chitima is approximately 140 km from the capital city of the province and 120 kilometers from one of the largest dams on the continent (Cahora Bassa). Recently named as the administrative capital of the Cahora-Bassa District, Chitima boasts a population of approximately 20,000 people in the immediate area. The climate is semi-arid with two seasons (rainy and dry). The community is supported by a few government offices, a rural hospital, a petrol station, and a teacher preparation center, known as the Chitima IFP.

Established in 2009, there are currently 220 students at Chitima IPF. Fifty-five percent of students are male and 45% are female. Over one-fourth (27%) of the students at the IFP draw from outside of the province. At the time of this study, all administrators at the school were male. The 24 teacher educators at this site provide for a student-to-instructor ratio of 9:1. Of the teaching faculty at Chitima IFP, female

instructors represent only 10% of the teaching population. Students who attend the institute have at least 10 years of school and are at the IFP for three years. In their first two years, students take coursework and engage in practicum experiences. In their third year, students complete a clinical (student) teaching experience.

Chitima, like the other IFPs in the country, has a fully operational annex school serving primary grade students on the same campus as the IFP. These primary schools have full-time faculty and serve the local community. The annex schools operate under the same leadership as the head of the teacher preparation institute. These annex schools are special in terms of their proximity to the teacher preparation institute, but they are just one in a network of area primary schools that cooperate with each teacher preparation institute. Mentoring has been a key feature of the relationship between the annex school and the Institute since their foundation. In most cases, the mentoring involves new formandos paired with elementary students for mostly informal interactions. They may spend lunches together or meet in the play areas to offer support. Typically, the instructional side of this mentoring experience and the direct connections to academic coursework have been limited.

Located on the same campus as Chitima IFP is the annex school known as Chitima Primary School. Chitima Primary houses grades 1-7 and serves approximately 320 learners. There are 19 classroom teachers in the school. Children who attend the school draw from the immediate area surrounding Chitima IFP campus. Children attend one of two sessions: the morning classes serve the lower primary grade children (grades 1-5) and the afternoon session serves the upper primary grade children (grades 6-7).

Chitima is one of four IFPs across Moçambique participating in the Better Education through Teacher Training and Empowerment for Results (BETTER) program, undertaken in partnership with Moçambique Ministry of Education and with financial support from the Government of Canada (via Global Affairs Canada). Implementing partners are two non-governmental organizations: CODE (Canada) and Associação Progresso (Moçambique). International literacy advisors support the project. Implemented since 2015, the ultimate goal of BETTER is to improve the quality of education for primary learners by improving the quality of teacher education in Moçambique. BETTER aims to promote and implement participatory methodologies and promote gender equality in the project IFPs and primary schools, strengthen teachers' practices to teach language and literacy, improve coaching for aspiring teachers during their practicum experiences, strengthen school management in practicum schools, and improve the quality and quantity of materials to support language and literacy instruction. Chitima IFP was selected to participate in the BETTER because the project aimed to include an IFP delivering the 10+3 program in the Tete province; as such, Chitima serves as the representation in the Central Region of the country. Chitima IFP is the only IFP in Tete that offers the 10+3 program.

Methods

Our research followed design-development principles (Barab & Squire 2004; Richey, Klein & Nelson, 2004; Van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney, & Nieveen, 2006). We began with a mentoring plan based on the research literature. We modified the plan along the way based on challenges and opportunities that appeared during the study. Our methods followed general principles of interpretive research as applied to design development research.

Participants

There were several types of participants in this study. There were 48 formandos who served in the role of mentors. These were formandos working in the second year of their preparation program. The group was roughly half female and half male. These formandos were approximately one third of the total number of formandos in their second year of the program. This group was used because they were all placed at Chitima Primary for their practicum placement, while the other second-year formandos were placed in primary schools away from the IFP campus.

There were several teacher educators who collaborated in the program and administrators who collaborated in the effort. Finally, there were 50 primary grade students who participated in the mentoring experience. The primary students were selected by the pedagogical director of the annex school—the students she chose were in need of extra support in language and literacy. The parent council assisted in the organization of the program at the school level, including the identification of student participants. The students represented first through sixth grade.

Procedures

Grouping. At the start of the study, approximately one-half of the formandos were in field experiences in the morning with the other half in field experiences during the second half of the day. We used these groupings to organize the mentoring program. For the first phase of the program (June through August) the formandos in Group 1 mentored their primary grade student(s) on two mornings a week and went to their field experiences in the afternoon. Formandos in Group 2 mentored their primary grade students(s) on two afternoons each week and went to their field-experience placements in the morning. During the second phase (August through September) the formandos were back on campus full time and the mentoring times were combined into one mentoring period, once a week.

Preparation. The preparation of the formandos in the methodologies was conducted over a two-week period in late May. A materials center was organized that contained all the support materials to be used by the mentors. The formandos participated in two full-day preparation workshops, two weeks of mentoring sessions with their partners, and group reflection sessions. During the workshops, the formandos were introduced to the various components of mentoring, the logistics of borrowing materials, and building relationships with the children they would mentor.

Materials. The mentoring materials included a supply of raw materials (e.g., blank paper, color markers) and a collection of books. The books were of two types: One group of books were from trade books written in Portuguese; these could be used in read alouds. The second group of books were shorter and more accessible for the students to read together with their mentors. For each mentoring session, formandos were responsible for keeping their plans and reflective notes in a notebook.

Mentoring Schedule and Location. There was one hour set aside for work in this mentoring program. The first 45 minutes involved direct work with the primary grade students. We attempted to match one preservice teacher and one primary student. In some cases, though, a preservice teacher ended up with two students. When students or formandos were absent, the pairs were temporarily recombined. A special area next to the annex school was set aside for the mentoring program. The 15-minute debriefing sessions that occurred after each session were held in a classroom just across from the primary school in the IFP. One teacher educator took the lead in supervising the mentoring sessions and guiding the debriefing.

Mentoring Framework. The mentoring framework for teaching literacy is not a methodology; rather, it is a set of literacy practices that engage learners in reading, writing, and design work that is meaningful to the learners (Schutz & Hoffman, 2017). Literacy, in this model, is framed as a tool. The mentors are responsible for engaging the learners and directly supporting the use of strategies to achieve the learners' goals. All of the instruction and the materials used were in Portuguese. The 45-minute mentoring time period was divided between the activities described in **Figure 1** sources (see **Figure 1** at the end of this article).

Measures and data collection

To answer our research questions, we collected a variety of data during two different time periods. Our data included observations, interviews, focus groups, and artifacts. We collected this data during the months of May and September, 2018. We (authors) served as members of the research team. **Figure 2** documents our data sources (see **Figure 2** at the end of this article). In the section below, we describe each of our data sources and the nature of data collection.

Observations of mentoring. Given that school and teacher change is about the degree to which teachers and schools adopt educational innovations, we specifically centered our work on the degree of implementation of the interventions using the Concerns Based Adoption Model, or CBAM (Hall & Hord, 1987). The CBAM has been used widely over the past three decades in international settings to guide educational reform and to monitor the fidelity of implementation in research studies. We borrowed from one of the three components, the Innovation Configuration (IC), which is a systematic way of documenting the observable differences in how innovations are being used.

We designed our IC with the critical features of the program in mind. The features of the IC are organized around (a) logistics, (b) relationships, (c) engagement with mentoring components, and (d) reflections. We operationalized each of these features, identifying the aspects that constitute each one. For example, we considered routines, preparedness, and materials to be essential aspects of the "logistics" feature. In order to document the variation in the features, we created categories, using a scale of either 1, 2, or 3. We considered a "1" to be "unexpected," a "2" to be "expected," and a "3" to be "optimal" implementation. We wrote descriptions of each category; the document we created can be found in **Appendix A**. We employed this rubric in September 2018 and collected observational data on five randomly selected mentoring pairs.

Focus groups. We engaged our participants as members of focus groups, encouraging them to respond using the language with which they were most comfortable; encouraging participants to use their language of choice was also a part of our efforts to decolonize our research (Ndimande, 2012). These focus groups included (a) school administrators, (b) formadores (instructors at the IFP), (c) community members, (d) formandos, and (e) children. We followed the focus group protocol, which can be found in **Appendix B**.

Artifacts. As part of our ongoing efforts to engage from a design-development perspective, we collected artifacts (products created during mentoring and video clips) throughout the implementation of the program. We used these artifacts to help us uncover the understandings that the formandos had about each of the components. While we did not analyze the artifacts for this study, we did ask the formandos and children to bring their artifacts with them to the focus group. In the cases of the children, they used the artifacts to share what their favorite parts of mentoring were when working with their formando.

Data analysis

In order to answer our research question, we engaged in thematic coding and analysis of our data (Ayres, 2008). As a descriptive strategy for data analysis, we approached our data first with a list of themes that we would expect to find in the data. These themes were ones that drew from our beginning conceptual model, our review of the literature, and our professional experiences that varied across team members (p. 867). Our initial entry into data analysis occurred after each collection of our various types of data. This was an important part of our coding process. For example, as we completed each round of focus groups, we met as a team to debrief. In these debriefings, we discussed "big ideas" that we heard the participants discuss. For example, in our first sets of focus groups (in May), we heard (repeatedly) that there were challenges associated with the materials. In fact, several formandos stated they wished they "had more titles for read alouds," as they "like reading books to the children" but "have run out of titles the children like." As a result of our debriefings (and ongoing conversations throughout the data collection process), we began to identify the themes that would become our entry point into our coding process.

As the themes began to emerge in one data source, we used our other sources (focus group conversations, artifacts, and observations) to confirm. For example, in the above example (lack of materials), not only did the formandos state the need for more reading materials, the coordinator echoed this concern (the need for additional titles as well as more copies of the titles they have that were "popular" during mentoring). We used the reading logs to confirm this theme of "we need more materials." The reading logs substantiated the theme as it was obvious that there were titles that stayed "out" throughout the entire mentoring period. Throughout our iterative process of theme identification and coding, we triangulated the themes across data points and sources.

Findings

We organize this section largely around answers to our research questions. We have attempted to (re)present our data as it appeared in our coding process (associated with one of our four research questions). However, there is overlap among the data because of the nature of the program (e.g., formandos discussing how the learners impacted their personal learning). We have attempted to present our findings (below) so that the themes we present build on other themes.

Implementation of mentoring

In the spirit of CBAM, and to help us contextualize the remainder of our findings, we first present our findings related to the degree to which the program was implemented at Chitima IFP. Based on our observational data and artifacts, it was apparent that the program had been implemented with a high degree of integrity. In fact, there were no aspects of the program that received a rating of "unexpected." Specifically, the vast majority of the aspects we documented received a rating of "expected," which meant that many aspects of mentoring were adopted. Quite a few received a rating of "optimal," which meant that we found evidence of adaptations and innovations in the program itself. For example, we noted in our observations that the program was very well organized—the materials were neatly stored and were carefully protected in a locked room; we labeled this "expected." Upon closer inspection, we noticed that not only were the baskets clearly labeled with the names of the formandos and the children with whom they were working, the IFP had purchased more baskets (between our data collection time periods) to accommodate all children and formandos; we labeled this as "optimal."

We noted other accommodations the IFP had made to the program, and we labeled those "optimal." For example, Elsa observed that formandos were struggling to find time to plan, so the leadership team (led by the coordinator) made the decision to bring the formandos together two hours before their mentoring session with children to plan. During these planning sessions, they had access to the coordinator, the other two language formadores who worked with them, the program coordinator, and each other. It was, perhaps, these very accommodations that led to other findings that we describe below.

Finally, in addition to documenting that all aspects of the program were either "expected" or "optimal," each aspect was mentioned various times by the formandos with whom we spoke during both data collection time periods.

General appreciations

Through our thematic coding, we found that people held a general set of appreciations about the program. These appreciations centered on the way the participants felt about the program, and the valuing participants placed on the program and their commitment to the program. While we illustrate the various ways in which valuing became evident, the overall valuing can be summed up by the comment made by one of the children who attended mentoring: When asked what she liked about mentoring, one first grader said, "I want to go to the mentoring because it's really nice there."

We heard from many of the participants that there were challenges associated with implementing the program and with the program itself. One of the challenges they talked about was the irregular attendance of some of the children in the program. Many of the children lived far distances from the school and children were sometimes late or did not come to mentoring at all. Another challenge the program faced was the inability to send the materials home. The formandos were especially aware of this challenge as they reported that they had to tell the children that it was not possible to take the books home because there were not enough to go around. However, the administration and community were dedicated to overcoming some of the challenges of the program because they "valued" it. For example, to help with the issue of attendance, the directors said, "We are committed to continuing. We will identify challenges and work together to solve those so that the initiative can continue."

Several of the people we talked to admitted that the annex school should not be the only one in the area with the program. In fact, many parents in the district (as is common around the country) pay for extra "tutoring" for their children. With this program, not only are the formandos benefiting from the practicum experience, they are also offering services for the children and now the "families do not have to pay." While the need to have mentoring at all practicum schools came up in each of our focus groups, it was the community members we spoke to who were most adamant about the program being "implemented at other schools in the district." They were clear that "all parents … want this program for their children."

Finally, it was apparent that the program offered unanticipated affordances to the formandos, which were recognized by the formandos and the coordinator. While we expected the responses related to increased motivation to read to come from children, we did not expect to hear this from the formandos. In fact, one preservice teacher told us, "I used to not like to read. Now I read all the time." When we asked her to elaborate, she said told us that as she is planning for her session, she "must read the book" in order to be prepared. As such, she has found herself reading more of the picture books for the children since they are "nice books." The coordinator, who also serves as the

"dorm mother," echoed this, saying that she often sees this preservice teacher (and others like her) "reading books." With a smile, she added that "When the girls pack their things to go home for the holiday, I'm sure we'll find many books in their rooms."

Impact on formandos

In addition to these general appreciations, the participants indicated that there were several ways in which the program impacted the formandos. The first centered on the affordance the program offered to building relationships with children. Many of them reminded us of the Ministry policy ("one formando, one child") and pointed out that mentoring offered them the opportunity to see what the policy looks like when it is enacted. And, furthermore, they said they could see the formandos building stronger relationships with children—both those they mentored and those they worked with in their practicum schools. One formando in particular, admitted that he often found himself frustrated in his practicum school because he did not have a relationship with the children in his assigned classroom. As a result, he found himself raising his voice with them. Once he started working with his child in mentoring and he learned how to talk with a child, how to get and keep the child's attention, he was able to transfer that new knowledge back into his practicum classroom. As a result, he says he has "stronger relationships" with the children there.

Likewise, there was an improved confidence that the formandos had in themselves as beginning teachers. Not only were the formandos more confident with the children they mentored, they were also more confident in their practicum courses. They said they could "talk more confidently with the children" there and that they could now see themselves as teachers. The formadores who worked with them in their practicum experiences echoed their self-observations. And, the administrators also saw a large shift in the way some of the formandos are now working with children. The school director reported that the "formandos feel more confident with and have more compassion in working with children."

As a result of mentoring and the careful and deliberate conversations between the coordinator and the formandos in the debriefings, all groups at least mentioned the role mentoring played in improving the instruction of the formandos in their practicum experiences. For example, one formanda told us that in the past she really did not know how she was to teach reading in her practicum course. She was struggling to make the connection between what she was learning in her coursework and how to enact the content into her practicum classroom. This formanda attributed the work she did in mentoring to giving her methods to enact in her classroom, especially when it comes to reading texts with children.

Impact on children and beliefs about children

In addition to documenting the impact on formandos, many of the professionals and community members we talked with told us that the program had an impact on the children who participated in the program. Their comments centered mainly on improving the academic achievement of the children. They told us stories of children who could not read (and were seemingly disinterested in learning to read), but under the careful guidance of the formandos, began to "pick up" on reading. For example, there was one child in mentoring whose parent worked at the IFP. She reportedly struggled with teaching him to read—he was not doing well in school and when she attempted to work with him at home, he "resisted" everything she tried. Once his mentor in the program "turned him on to" reading, he has been "all smiles" at home when she asks him if he wants to read. She says

she sees him benefiting at school, as a result, and that his classroom teacher has remarked on the progress he has made since he started working with his formando. He told us, too, that he "loved to read now" and "loved his mentor."

The second impact we documented was highly aligned with the academic achievement of the children—that of increased confidence in the children. One grandparent told us that her grandchild "now speaks up in class" when the teacher calls on him. One formanda told us that her child was "very, very shy and withdrawn" at the start. The formanda reported that "now the child is different… she is reading a little." Furthermore, when working with her child during the guided reading component of mentoring, the child, "show[ed] and [grew in] confidence and [said], 'I can read.'" Likewise, the participants described an increase in children's motivation to attend school. For example, the president of the local school council told us that his child "no longer runs away from school" because "the child can now see the importance of reading and writing… [he draws and colors] plus [he writes and so] he's motivated to participate." The same grandmother as above told us she thinks the children have changed their attitude toward school as "it's like they are hugged and cared for…."

Finally, there were huge shifts in how the formandos thought about the reading and writing issues the children demonstrated—they see them more now as structural issues as opposed to issues deriving from a "problem with the child." One formando told us that the "mentoring initiative should have started a long time ago, most of the problems in Moçambique would not be there… in the first days [the child] was not participating. It was very difficult but with these strategies, the child changed completely. The issue is with instruction, not children." Likewise, the grandmother also felt that the program was "the way to the future" when she said, "We could not speak or read or write that's why we're so poor, but my grandchildren have to go to school, have to be educated. They are our future. I hope I can live enough for him to help me. He [her grandchild] will be the caretaker for the future."

Discussion

Our work in this study focused primarily on preservice teacher learning through the reflection in hybrid spaces. The findings of this study can be connected only to other contexts similar to the one at Chitima. The opening vignette of the preservice teachers challenged by language variation is just one example of this kind of reflection that was used to grow practices. The preservice teachers learned to value the relationships they created with their mentees (Assaf & López, 2015). This was, perhaps, due to the preservice teachers developing emotional attachments to their students, leading the mentors to take on an increased sense of responsibility toward student learning (Hendricks, McGee, & Mittag, 2000).

The preservice teachers moved from a stance of judgement (i.e., right and wrong) to adapt their teaching in the moment to support the growth of strategies from a developmental perspective. The preservice teachers became thoughtful in integrating their practices and used the reflective space with their teacher educators and colleagues to refine their own teaching, as has been done in other studies (Davis, Key, & Peterson, 2017; Dutro & Cartun, 2016).

The participatory and practice-based strategies used in the mentoring were not typical of instruction in the classrooms in which the preservice teachers were working. Their discussions often centered on how this kind of participatory and reflective teaching could become part of their future (Hoffman et al., in

press). This is support for learning to teach that can be useful as a strategy to promote transformative teaching in schools. The findings from our work in Moçambique are certainly in line with findings from previous research in mentoring that has been conducted in mostly the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. There are great benefits to having hybrid spaces for promoting innovative practices introduced in initial teacher preparation. The findings extend the previous work in other countries as a function of the context for education in an emerging economy, where there are strong traditions of top-down structures for the improvement of teaching. The ministry of education in Moçambique has been promoting the use of participatory methodologies in classrooms with only limited success. Through the local work in hybrid spaces, future teachers and the teacher preparation programs can become allies in the transformation of teaching in classrooms.

Moving forward

We are encouraged by the evidence gathered that suggests that these kinds of mentoring experiences can play a powerful role in the introduction of transformative methodologies into teaching. There are several lessons that we take away from this experience to guide expansion to other sites.

Expanding the reach of the mentoring program

Scaling up to all formandos. We reached only 1/3 of the second-year formandos at Chitima. We must plan in ways that will allow us to engage with all of the formandos. This will include not only curricular changes at the IFP (so that the program is written into the curriculum) but also at the national level. Our plan is to move this mentoring experience into the first-year experience and use the second-year formandos as mentors and models for the new formandos each year. In doing so, we not only reach the total number of formandos but we also reach more children from the annex school. Eventually, the plan is to start a mentoring program at each of the practicum schools, allowing for off-site support of children in their language and literacy development and support for communities throughout the district. This will require conversations with those who set policy for the IFPs and their curriculum.

Improving connections to academic coursework. The mentoring program was offered during a period when there were no formal academic classes in session at the IFP, as the formandos were all in their practicum experiences. By moving the mentoring to the first year, we will ensure that teacher educators can be engaged directly with the mentoring and begin to build important connections to their courses.

Measuring the impact

There were several additional datasets that we would have liked to collect and analyze. We did not have any measures of the progress of the primary students in the program. Since the formandos had many claims to make regarding the positive impact, it would have been beneficial for us to systematically include this kind of data collection in future efforts.

Additionally, (and as mentioned before), we heard reports that the formandos who worked in the mentoring program scored higher on their Portuguese language tests than students who did not participate in the program. We were heartened by these reports, but not surprised. However, we were unable to gather the data that would allow us to statistically test this observation. We will do so in the future.

Growing the program

Enhancing resources. There is a limited supply of books for both the read alouds and guided reading experiences. Book development specific to these uses would enhance the

effectiveness of the program and the range of students we can work with in the future.

Expanding the mentoring framework. We began with a very limited set of instructional options for the formandos. Many of the formandos were asking for additional work with letters and words. While this model is meant to complement and not replace the adopted curriculum, we could certainly look to expand to include closer work with words and inquiry using informational texts.

Enriching with multi-lingual opportunities. Moçambique is growing in its attention to multilingual settings. In bilingual schools that are engaging with both Portuguese and local languages, this framework could be easily adapted for support of first- and second-language acquisition. However, in doing so, we would need to consider the types of materials that are available in the local languages. As of now, those are very limited. Perhaps one way of addressing this is to work with the formandos to create books with children during the mentoring; those books can become a source of reading for others in the future.

Providing models. Any extension of this work could benefit a great deal from the opportunity for expansion sites to both observe and participate in these mentoring experiences.

We think of this final point, in particular, with reference to expanding this kind of work to teacher preparation programs even outside of the Moçambique context. Improving initial teacher preparation is a potential leveraging point for improvement in educational systems around the globe. The work of forming design principles for mentoring work in hybrid spaces will need to be developed in each context. There is no simple transfer to follow with fidelity; rather, principles need to be discovered and adapted to each setting.

Conclusion

So often, it seems, our teacher preparation programs are providing formandos the answers to questions they don't have. In the opening of this article we reported a comment that a preservice teacher shared in a debriefing session: "My child can't speak Portuguese." This comment came from a place of frustration for the preservice teacher based on the work he had just completed with a child. The teacher educator guiding the discussion didn't dismiss the question. She didn't judge the frustration. She didn't give an answer. She beautifully reframed the statement into a problem-posingscenario. First, she reminded them of their own experiences in school. Second, she offered to engage with them in how to address the challenge. This is the power of working in hybrid spaces in teacher preparation. This conversation goes back to the methods courses of the formandos and makes the curriculum there relevant to the future teachers—specifically as it relates to how they approach the challenges they will surely face.

Figures

Figure 1: Components of Literacy Mentoring Program at Chitima IFP

Component	Description
Beautiful Book (Roser et al., 2014)	In this activity, the formandos guided their students in moving from a focus word, to the creation of an image, to the labeling of the image, to the recording of a sentence dictated by the student that reflected the image. Over time, these Beautiful Book pages were collected and bound into a book form for the student to revisit in subsequent sessions.
Read Aloud (Hoffman & Mosley Wetzel, 2017)	The preservice teacher would engage with his/her student in an interactive read aloud of a trade book. The preservice teacher had selected the book from the collection and prepared to teach to promote vocabulary and comprehension
Guided Reading (Hoffman & Mosley Wetzel, 2017)	The preservice teacher supported his/her student in the reading of a 'guided reading' book from the collection. These books were highly accessible texts. The preservice teacher used supports such as echo reading and choral reading to insure success
Sentence Work (Hoffman & Mosley Wetzel, 2017)	The preservice teacher took one sentence from either the beautiful book story or the guided reading book. The sentence was written and then cut up into words. Together the preservice teacher and the student composed novel sentences using these words.
Song or Poem (Hoffman & Mosley Wetzel, 2017)	The last activity for each session involved the reading of a poem or song prepared by the preservice teacher in written form. The pair would read and sing as they engaged with the text to close the session.
Take-Home (Sailors et al., 2014)	On leaving, the preservice teacher would give the child the 'word' that they had used in their beautiful book story to take home and share.

Figure 2: Data sources

Data source	Description and number of individuals	Data collection time period
Observations: • 2 Planning sessions • 10 Mentoring sessions • 10 Debriefing sessions	Designed and used an Innovation configuration: BETTER Mentoring Implementation Rubric (see **Appendix A**); collected digital images during mentoring	May and September
Focus groups: School administrators (n=4)	School administrators included the director of the IFP, the pedagogical director at the IFP, the pedagogical director at the annex school, and the BETTER coordinator (who is also a formador at the IFP)	May and September
Focus groups: Formadores (n=3)	Faculty at Chitima IFP who have been directly involved in the literacy mentoring program	May and September
Focus groups: Community members (n=8)	Parents, grandparents, business owners, and members of the School Governing Board	September only
Focus groups: Formandos (n=15)	Those who participated in mentoring	May and September
Focus groups: Children (n=5)	Those who participated in mentoring	September only
Artifacts (all collected digitally): From workshops—images of formandos learning the components of mentoring	Collected digital images of work of formandos during their initial and follow up preparation workshops	May and September
Artifacts (all collected digitally): From mentoring	In all, we gathered images before, during, and following mentoring from each of the components, including (a) Pages from beautiful books; (b) Sentence/word work; (c) Poems and songs; (d) Book logs (book titles the formandos were using during mentoring, both for guided reading and read alouds); and (e) Attendance records for formandos and children.	May and September

Appendices

Appendix A: BETTER Mentoring Implementation Rubric

Formando: _____ Mentee: _____ Grade: _____ Date:_____

	Logistics (Routines and materials)		
	Unexpected = 1	Expected = 2	Optimal = 3
1.	Materials are not all present or they do not appear to be cared for properly.	Materials are prepared and in basket at onset of mentoring. Materials appear to be adequately cared for.	All materials are not only in the basket at onset of mentoring, but they are organized in such a way that children (and mentor) can find what they need easily. Materials are in excellent condition, indicating the value placed upon them by the mentor and children.
2.	Mentor is either late or does not have materials set up in anticipation of the child, thus the child must wait for the mentor to begin.	Mentor arrives just before the child but may/not have materials set up prior to sitting down with child.	Mentor and materials are situated and waiting for the child to arrive into the space.
3.	There is no evidence of a written plan or the plan is not prepared in advance.	The written plan is prepared to guide the mentoring session.	The plan is prepared (before mentoring) and aligned with the materials.
4.	Not many of the children and formandos appear to know the routine of mentoring	For the most part, the children and formandos appear to know the routine of mentoring (e.g., sitting down together, moving through routines).	All of the children and formandos appear to know and actively participate in the routine of mentoring (e.g., sitting down together, moving through routines).
5.	Some or all of the formadores are not present during mentoring and/or the reflection.	The formadores are present during mentoring and/or the reflection.	The formadores are present during mentoring and reflection and they are actively engaged with the formandos (during both mentoring and reflection).
	Relationships		
	Unexpected = 1	Expected = 2	Optimal = 3
6.	The relationship appears strained or uncomfortable. There is very little personal relationship.	The relationship between the child and the mentor is good. They sit near to each other and interact comfortably.	The relationship appears to be one built around smiles, encouragement, and appears to be warm. The child appears to trust the mentor; they appear to like being together.
	Engagement with Components		
	Unexpected = 1	Expected = 2	Optimal = 3
7.	Not all of the components are present in the lesson and/or not all procedures are completed.	All components are present in the lesson. Nearly all the procedures of each component are completed.	All components are present in the lesson and all are completed. There is a sense of "enjoyment" on the part of the mentor and the child (e.g., high engagement from both of them).

	The materials are ill-prepared (e.g., not colorful) and/or do not appear to be interesting to the child.	The materials are neat orderly and child pays attention during the lesson.	The materials are very well prepared and are grounded in the interest of the child (as evident in the engagement of the child with the materials).
	Reflections		
	Unexpected = 1	Expected = 2	Optimal = 3
8.	There are no written notes or the notes are haphazardly recorded.	The formando brings written notes to the reflection (e.g., notes taken during mentoring) and is prepared to discuss them.	The written notes are detailed and indicative of careful observations during mentoring. The formando is prepared to talk about the main points.
9.	Only a few of the formandos are present for the reflection; only a few are actively participating in the conversation.	Most of the formandos are somewhat engaged in the group reflection (e.g., most may be listening but only a few are actively contributing).	Many of the formandos participate actively in the reflection (e.g., nearly all are listening and offering insight into the conversation).
10.	There are no connections made between mentoring and the academic coursework of the formandos.	There are some connections made to the coursework but those connections are either loosely made or are not elaborated on.	There are very direct connections made between mentoring and the academic coursework of the formandos. There are conversations around those connections that enhance both the academic coursework and the mentoring experiences.
11.	The reflections only center on the children who are in mentoring and do not extend past those children.	The reflections center on the children who attend mentoring and/or to other children in the classroom where the formandos are doing their practicum, but the connections do not extend to the families and communities of the children.	The conversations during the reflection encourage the formandos to not only think about the children they mentor, but also make explicit connections to the families and community of the children in ways that help the formandos grow in their valuing and appreciation of those families.

Comments:

Appendix B: Better Education through Teacher Training and Empowerment for Results (BETTER) Focus Group and Interview scripts

Thank you for agreeing to talk with us about the BETTER program. We are here to talk with you specifically about the mentoring component of the program at Chitima IFP. Please feel free to respond openly. Please feel free to respond using the language you are most comfortable using.

What is your name?

What is your affiliation with mentoring?

What general thoughts do you have about mentoring?

We noticed some innovations to the program since we were last here (e.g., planning time in the morning). Please tell us about those changes.

What do you value about mentoring?

What are some ways mentoring can be improved?

What else would like to tell us about mentoring?

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