

January 2012

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### Recommended Citation

Byers-Kirsch, Jan and Jeffery Petersen, Naomi (2012) "Student Teacher Field Supervisors Articulate Their Roles," *Northwest Journal of Teacher Education*: Vol. 10 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15760/nwjte.2012.10.1.13>

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## **Student Teacher Field Supervisors Articulate Their Roles**

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### **Abstract**

*The importance of field supervision of student teacher candidates is well-recognized. However, the role of the supervisor is often unarticulated and ambiguous, left to the field supervisor and the candidate to delineate and define. The individual practices of field supervisors are often idiosyncratic representations of the goals of the specific teacher preparation program, or simply based on personal knowledge and experience. What are those supervisory practices, and are there differences based on the supervisors' professional backgrounds? Based on survey responses from field supervisors at one university, this qualitative investigation suggests supervisors' professional backgrounds and affiliations with teacher preparation programs do influence how supervisors assist new teachers develop as professionals. Former teachers tend to focus on practical and concrete aspects of teaching while university faculty and former teacher-administrators strive to connect classroom teaching to state mandates and teacher preparation program-identified curricular concerns. Field supervisors represent teacher preparation programs in schools and classrooms, but teacher preparation program faculty may not be fully aware of how they are being represented and what lessons supervisors are sharing with candidates and cooperating teachers.*

### **Student Teacher Field Supervisors Articulate Their Role**

University field supervisors help student teachers mediate theory and practice, yet little is known about how supervisors themselves make this connection, and it is clear that their ideologies vary greatly and may lack congruence with the teacher education program. Such variance complicates efforts to establish any causal relationship between teacher preparation programs and candidate success once certified. This is an ongoing study of the interactions among candidates, supervisors, and cooperating teachers and how these interactions align with goals and assumptions of policy makers and faculty regarding what “highly qualified” teachers know and do. There is a need for reliable instruments to collect data and find correlations between candidate preparation and student teaching performance.

There are many assumptions about the role of the supervisor yet these assumptions are neither consistent within the literature nor are they based upon a broad understanding of how supervisors themselves interpret their responsibilities. According to the National Research Council (2010), the primary reason for field supervision is to ensure that student teachers apply the knowledge they have learned from their university preparation to classrooms in which they are placed. For example, the teacher preparation program itself may expect supervisors to encourage reflective practice and offer critique and feedback in regard to student teachers' practices while creating a supportive environment for the student teacher (Bates, Ramirez, & Drita, 2009). Alternately, the standards-based rigor of many evaluation tools is having an impact on the degree to which supervisors are able to draw from the “teachable moments” within

classrooms. The often narrow restrictions of many standards-based checklists force supervisors to evaluate teaching using defined criteria in ways that reinforce the notion of teaching as the culmination of a set of patterns and responses. This view has limited the teaching and modeling of the process that we value for our teacher candidates, which involves paying attention to the students as individual learners with unique views, learning needs, and perspectives on the world, and helping our teacher candidates to become critical thinkers with a multicultural awareness (Bates & Burbank, 2008). Student teachers prioritize practical, hands-on knowledge they gain from the classroom experiences and their cooperating teacher, as well as the support they receive from their supervisor, while minimizing ways in which understanding gained from educational theory increases the depth of their classroom practice (Caires & Almeida, 2007). In addition, many cooperating K-12 teachers dismiss the value of a strong theoretical background (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009), which supports candidates' inability in some cases to analyze and solve complex situations. The field supervisor is challenged with balancing the requirements of the teacher preparation program and the priorities of candidates and K-12 classrooms.

University-based teacher preparation programs rely on supervisors to mentor student teachers as they synthesize the theoretical and philosophical bases of educational practice and pedagogy with the realities of classroom structures and school, district, state, and federal mandates. As a result, the role of the supervisor becomes even more crucial to teacher development. By surveying and interviewing field supervisors regarding their habits and logic for any actions related to the student teaching placement, the researchers see correlations between their approach and their professional experience, as well as some connections to the goals and philosophy of the teacher preparation program.

The researchers in this study surveyed the field supervisors at a comprehensive university of 10,000 students to discover: 1) how supervisors interpret their roles; 2) how supervisors enact their responsibilities; 3) how supervisors understand and align their practices with the program mandates; and, 4) how supervisors assess and evaluate their own performance. The data collected will contribute to improving their Teacher Certification Program (TCP) design and alignment, and provide valuable insight into determining an effective supervision model.

Although there is occasional mention of supervisors' affiliation with the university (National Research Council, 2010), there is minimal discussion of other relationships. When collaboration is discussed, the focus is on the candidate or cooperating teacher and not on the teaching program (Bates, et al., 2009). Therefore, the alignment of supervision with preparation program content is unlikely because supervisors rarely participate in meaningful professional development activities, instead relying upon personal experience and generally focusing on documentation procedures and administrative deadlines. In addition, little is known about supervisors' education and professional expertise or their mentoring ability (National Research Council, 2010). An inquiry into their actual practice will contribute to the dearth of literature and perhaps a greater integration of supervisors into the teacher preparation program.

### **Literature Review**

A review of literature shows two cogent areas of research study: (a) teacher preparation and (b) candidate supervision, which will be discussed separately but within which there is unavoidable overlap. Teacher preparation research focuses more on the evaluation and measurement of student teachers' specific standards, knowledge, and skills. The candidate supervision research focuses more on the candidate, the supervisor's role, the candidate's

relationship with the cooperating teacher and supervisor, and pedagogical best practices.

### **Teacher Preparation**

An entire chapter (Clift & Brady, 2006) in the landmark report *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, Eds., 2006) is a review of over a hundred empirical studies of congruence between methods courses and field experience. Several parts are pertinent to this study including identifying the researchers' relationship with the participants, the importance of collaborating with disinterested parties and describing the demographics of the participants.

One analysis of teacher preparation (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009) recommended reorganizing the curriculum around a set of core practices and then helping novices develop professional knowledge and skill, as well as an emerging professional identity around these practices. The practices of teaching would provide the basis of the professional curriculum, while the knowledge and skill required to enact these practices constitute the undergirding framework. This vision has a different emphasis from programs with a more idealistic approach, in which philosophical values or social goals are at the center. With a set of practices identified as the outcomes of foundations and methods course, field work becomes an opportunity to experiment with such practices. When they are attempting such practices, pre-service teachers benefit from feedback from their cooperating teachers and university supervisors already proficient in the complex nature of the practice itself. This relationship will also require that university faculty learn about and access pre-service teachers' experiences in the field. This may demand that faculty at times teach in the context of K-12.

Results of another study (Scheeler, Bruno, Grubb, & Seavey, 2009) suggest that using immediate feedback to promote the acquisition of evidence-based teaching skills is an effective and efficient technique for teacher educators to use. Using evidence-based practice is important but can be exceedingly difficult, especially when the person who has the most to gain from the change (classroom student) is not the person who is asked to do it (teacher candidate). If teachers experience difficulty changing behavior when they are in-service teachers in school settings, it is essential to make sure that they continue to use the evidence-based techniques they learn in university classrooms in the next setting in order to decrease the need to change. In order to do this, teacher educators may need to make curriculum modifications to ensure that the ability to make generalizations is included in coursework and fieldwork. However, a positive effect of this modification could be that teacher educators will be modeling an evidence-based practice for the pre-service teachers to use with their own students who have the most to gain from the change. A second implication of this study is that teacher educators and school district personnel should be encouraged to collaborate more so there can be a smooth transition from one setting to the next. If teacher educators are aware of practices used and valued in schools, they can use this knowledge in their teaching through examples, case studies, etc. If school administrators are aware of specific evidence-based practices that are being taught in university settings, they are in a better position to provide in-class performance feedback to sustain new learning. A seamless continuation of evidence-based teaching techniques from one setting to the next should result in positive consequences for students, teachers, and school administrators.

The impact of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation on education is far-reaching. In addition to defining standards of performance for children and teachers in K-12 schools, teacher education programs are equally responsible for documenting their teacher candidates' abilities to

meet the criteria from a range of evaluation standards. On the positive side, the NCLB standards have challenged colleges of education to identify “success” in their students’ performance through demonstrable measures related to instruction, classroom climate, professionalism, and curriculum development. Whereas previous evidence of success may have been in the form of anecdotal narrations and portfolio documentation, current measures are designed to specify and enumerate performance against relatively defined criteria (Bates & Burbank, 2008). This process has provided a guide for teacher education programs to use when supervising student teachers in the field and ensures attention to issues of classroom and student diversity.

One positive outcome of the attention to standards was an increased focus on student assessment in the content of the feedback, with less focus on isolated issues of pedagogy or management. Additionally, for a supervisor, the structure and guidelines of evaluation criteria provide a framework for providing fairly specific feedback. However, supervisor feedback in final evaluations resulted in less recognition of the individuality of the student teacher, but instead focused on global evaluation criteria, regardless of particular situations or learning needs. These outcomes suggest a need for additional attention in teacher education on the preparation and support of supervisors for the challenge of working in today’s political climate. Teacher preparation programs must also recognize that developmental differences across supervisors will impact the degree to which they are bound by fairly structured evaluation tools. For the supervisors in this study, the formalized standards of the midterm and final evaluations offered a safety net or safeguard when providing summative feedback, thereby reinforcing teacher candidates’ trust in and reliance upon standardized measures that appear to supersede the nuanced needs of students and classrooms. A range of evaluation and feedback strategies must be used to find the balance in preparing student teachers in this situation of high accountability. The supervisor’s role has value as it addresses both the reality of the teaching experience and the individuality of the student teacher’s learning needs. It is the responsibility of teacher preparation programs to ensure that these strategies are explored and occur in supervision to the benefit of programs and student teachers.

According to Marzano (2011), expertise does not happen by chance; it requires deliberate practice. For teacher candidates, this involves a common language of instruction, a focus on specific strategies, tracking teacher progress, and opportunities to observe and discuss expertise, all of which can occur in the university classroom and be extended into supervision.

### **Candidate Supervision**

Within the community of supervisors, the assessment dialogue can focus on two aspects: making explicit the tacit knowledge embedded in judgments on professional competence in teaching; and “sharing” supervisory practices (Tang, 2008). Supervisors can engage in professional dialogue by sharing ways in which they form judgments on performances with given pieces of evidence (e.g. video-taped lessons, lesson plans and other artifacts of teaching). The facets of judgments include their interpretation of assessment criteria, inference of competence from evidence of student-teachers’ teaching performance, appraisal of holistic richness of performance with consideration of contextual variation, comparison of performance with criteria, and so on. Making explicit the tacit knowledge embedded in these facets of judgments helps construct shared notions of quality among supervisors, which might address, to a certain extent, the consistency concern in summative assessment. Besides making explicit their judgments, supervisors can also exchange views on how post-observation conferences can be

structured to facilitate learning.

Feedback on newly acquired skills should be immediate rather than delayed as well as specific, positive, and when needed, corrective (Scheeler, 2008). Providing immediate feedback is particularly useful because it stops the learner from practicing errors and provides information so the learner can correctly perform the skill in the very next learning trial, thus making it an effective as well as efficient technique. In a finite time frame, usually one semester for a specific college course, more efficient learning allows for more time to practice newly acquired skills. Supervisors should also provide feedback that is positive, focuses on specific teaching behaviors, and provides clear and concise directions for desired behavior change. If supervisors use immediate feedback with pre-service teachers, the result is more efficient acquisition of new behaviors as well as having the benefit of more careful and efficient supervision.

On the whole, student teachers' assertions indicate that the most prized features are related to the way supervisors' act and interact with their trainees in terms of involvement, proximity, respect and support ensured. The importance of those aspects remains firm since the beginning to the end of the practicum when it comes to the cooperating teacher, and grows in insignificance in the case of the university supervisor (Caires & Almeida, 2007). In particular, the university supervisor's (inter)personal characteristics, influences considerably the student teachers' valuing of the supervisor from the beginning to the end of the teaching practice, increasing more than 50% in terms of its initial prevalence. The conjecture about these expressive differences lead the researchers to two conclusions: First, that, from the beginning, the more time spent (currently and alongside the teaching practice) in the company of the cooperating teacher leads student teachers to believe that the time spent is a critical element for the supervision relationship to succeed. Contrastingly, in terms of time spent with the university supervisor, that might be perceived as a secondary aspect, once the contact with him/her is (and will be) more sporadic. In that sense, it may give rise to the expectation of a more distant and impersonal relationship, more formal and task oriented. The second assumption implies that the growing contact and familiarity with the university supervisor increases the student teachers' awareness and/or susceptibility to the influence of the university supervisor's (inter)personal characteristics, and to greater praise and significance in terms of the student teachers' guidance and back-up. Whereas the comments about the university supervisor mainly allude to the academic's scientific competence and expertise, the comments related to the cooperating teacher mainly focus on the exemplary way he/she carried out the numerous challenges enclosed by the teaching profession (high enthusiasm, sense of professionalism, creativity, innovation), the deep knowledge and experience regarding the schools' concrete realities and the large accomplishments resulting from his/her professional performance.

In one study (Oh, Ankers, Llamas & Tomyoy, 2005), teachers reported that student teaching helped them the most in terms of classroom management skills, followed by teaching techniques. The personal aspect of teaching as defined by their confidence level in classroom teaching increased significantly with higher levels of supervision. It may be possible that this increase in confidence may have an effect on the other aspects of teaching that were measured. Among those who had student teaching, the amount of direct supervision they received during student teaching was significantly associated with the teachers' desires to remain in teaching. There was a direct relationship between the amount of supervision received and the percentages of teachers that indicated they received help through student teaching in personal/professional aspects as well as in the areas of classroom teaching. This seems to imply that the more supervision is provided, the more effective the student teaching program would be. Although

teaching skills were not measured, teachers in this study seem to indicate a strong relationship between the frequency of supervision during student teaching and various aspects of classroom teaching. The greatest increase in the percent occurred between weekly and bimonthly/monthly supervision, which may suggest that all credentialing programs consider providing a minimum of weekly supervision, according to the study's researchers.

The university supervisor and cooperating teachers in another study (Fernandez & Erbilgin, 2009) demonstrated different approaches to the supervision of the student teachers. The university supervisor engaged in analysis of conference communications and practices aligned with educative supervision. The supervisor tended to use open-ended questioning related to observed classroom experiences and delved into the student teachers' thinking, particularly related to mathematics pedagogy and mathematics, in order to help them learn from experiences in the student teachers' classrooms. The supervisor helped them connect ideas from their mathematics education program to their classroom practice. On the other hand, the cooperating teachers tended toward a more evaluative supervision approach. Their evaluations (i.e., assessing communications) were primarily positive and affirmed to the student teachers what the cooperating teachers thought was being done well. At times, they gave direct suggestions in areas they judged the student teachers could do differently. The student teachers in this study liked their cooperating teachers' supervision approaches (i.e., primarily positive evaluations). In addition, the student teachers appreciated when their supervisor engaged them in reflection by asking them open-ended questions and by forming discourse communities where the student teachers are at the center of the sense making process for their teaching practice. The researchers think that assessments and suggestions made by supervisors may be valuable for student teachers' growth. However, depending on how and to what extent these types of communications are used, the researchers feel such supervision might be one of the contributing factors for student teachers completing their student teaching experience thinking that they do not have any areas to improve. The researchers suggest that student teachers should be members of discourse communities where they actively, critically, and collaboratively examine their teaching practices. From this perspective, the researchers believe that educative supervision might be an effective supervision approach to educate reflective teachers who strive to grow continuously and do not view student teaching as an end point to their professional development.

Teacher education programs may begin revamping what seems to be a defective system by producing teachers who, at the end of their teacher training, are prepared to meet the continual challenge of working with today's students (Kent and Simpson, 2009). Teacher education candidates should be provided with a comprehensive induction program that emphasizes, through various field experiences, methods of exemplary practice for meeting the needs of all students, which includes those who are behaviorally or academically challenging. Providing committed teacher candidates with prospects for intense reflection along with university supervisors' active participation will likely produce novice teachers who are better prepared when first entering the classroom. Also, it is to be expected that candidates who are involved in a professional learning community of candidates like themselves, facilitated by dedicated university supervisors, will remain dedicated to demonstrating consistent, high-quality educational practices and instructional methods on a long-term basis.

## Methodology and Design

### Context

The university in this study has a unique role in teacher preparation. It is in the top 10 institutions of higher education nationwide in producing teacher candidates, graduating 500 candidates a year. However, less than 10% of the student teachers are placed in the valley surrounding the university due to the limited size of the school districts. The remaining candidates student-teach in school districts located around six centers in the state. Student teaching occurs in the last quarter of the candidate's program and no other classes may be taken concurrently while student teaching. Thus, many students return to their home town to complete student teaching. The field supervisors live and work in the same communities, and rarely come to the main university campus or know the university faculty who teach the courses. This situation leads to lack of communication and collaboration between faculty who prepare the candidates and field supervisors.

The 24 field supervisors live and work in the same communities, rarely come to the main university campus and may not know the university faculty who teach the courses or be familiar with the foundations and methods courses. Most work part time with contracts for each term; a few have yearly contracts and may teach as well as supervise; three are tenure-track faculty who serve as regional contacts in addition to teaching some courses. The research team members conducting this study are faculty, one serving as the Director of the Field Experiences, which is responsible for employing and managing the 24 field supervisors, and one as an instructor of foundations courses in the professional education program. Thus the study could be considered a descriptive self-study with rigorous methods to prevent bias and protect anonymity.

### Participants

The teacher candidates are placed and supervised by 24 field supervisors who were invited to participate in an anonymous online Qualtrics survey about their perceptions and role in supervision, beginning with an informed consent agreement. The researchers used university email addresses to provide a link to the Qualtrics survey. Seventeen participants responded to the survey. Participants were sent two reminder emails to respond to the survey, which remained available for about a month.

### Instruments and Data Collection

The survey instrument, entitled *Field Supervisor Study Questionnaire Survey* (Appendix A), had 14 multiple-choice demographic questions about the participants' education and experience, and 18 open-ended questions about their role as a field supervisor. The responses were coded for anonymity.

### Data Analysis

Responses from the field supervisors were downloaded, disaggregated, and analyzed for commonalities and relationship to the topics. The responses were then categorized into topics and categories: Demographic Summary and Summary of Responses to Questions, which will be summarized and discussed in the Results and Conclusions. The Demographic Summary



compared the supervisors' educational specialization and experience with their rank in the university system. The topics for the Summary of Responses to Questions are as follows:

1. Changing role of supervision
2. Components in role of supervision role
3. Relationship with candidates
4. Relationship with cooperating teachers
5. Relationship with university faculty
6. How to determine success as a supervisor
- 7.

## Results and Conclusions

### Demographic Summary

The field supervisors' undergraduate degrees were fairly evenly divided between elementary and secondary content areas. The majority of advanced degrees were in administration, followed by curriculum and instruction.

Table 1

#### *Specialty and Rank*

Specialty Area and Degree	Tenure Track (n=2)	Lecturer (annual) (n=6)	Adjunct (quarter) (n=9)	Total (n=17)
Elementary	0	3	2	5
Secondary	0	2	1	3
Both E & S	2	1	6	9
Administration	1	5	2	8
Curriculum and Instruction	0	0	5	5
Content Area	1	1	2	4

The tenure-track supervisors had fewer years in K-12 and more years in higher education teaching and supervision than did the adjunct supervisors. The mean number of years in K-12 teaching was 15 years, and the mean for administration was 10 years. The mean number of years in higher education supervision was 9 years.

Table 2

*Experience and Rank*

Years of K-12 and University Experience	Tenure Track (n=2)	Lecturer (annual) (n=6)	Adjunct (quarter) (n=9)	Total (n=17)
Mean years of K-12 teaching	15	19	13	15
Mean years of K-12 administration	3 (n=1)	10 (n=5)	10 (n=5)	10 (n=11)
Mean years of university teaching	12	6 (n=4)	5 (n=6)	6 (n=12)
Mean # candidates taught	10	2 (n=2)	3 (n=4)	3 (n=8)
Mean years of university supervision	10	9	8	9
Mean # of candidates supervised	10	8	7	7

**Summary of Responses to Questions about Role of Supervision**

The responses to the open-ended questions involving the supervisors' role are categorized into six general topics with individual responses grouped by commonality and relationship to the topics as shown below. The summary of responses is followed by a question that was posed and some of the respondents' quotations related to the topic stated.

Together the comments suggest a range of concerns about their role in the context of the teacher preparation sequence if not in the context of the teacher preparation program's goals. Because responses were voluntarily expressed, the content reveals what is of most concern, and the omission of some topics also reveals the degree of interest or value that the supervisors place on their roles that may differ from the perspectives of the stakeholders.

1. Changing role of supervision
  - a. Requirements have changed dramatically so must make adjustments.
  - b. Communication with cooperating teacher is critical to candidate success.
  - c. Be a better listener instead of the expert with the answers.
  - d. Student teachers must be more accountable and responsible than before.
  - e. Supervisor has a more positive effect on student teacher preparation.
  - f. Engaging with and being a valued resource for candidates is important.
  - g. Must teach candidates about classroom management and assessment.

*Question #1: How do you view your role as a university field supervisor?*

- A. "I see the role of the field supervisor as twofold: to supervise and to evaluate. Supervision is supporting the teacher candidate improve classroom teaching and student learning in the classroom. Evaluation is summative, where the supervisor has to make judgments of the candidate's competence and ability for teaching, student learning, disposition, and all aspects of being a professional teacher."
  - B. "The field supervisor is the liaison for the university, the student, and the school district. It is our role to work with the students and prepare them for the teaching profession. It is our role to work with the school district in ensuring that we adhere to their guidelines and be proactive in dealing with negative situations. Finally, it is our role to ensure that the students are positive role models for the university during their student teaching experience."
2. Components in role of supervision role
- a. Supervise and observe.
  - b. Evaluate and recommend.
  - c. Consult and solve problems.
  - d. Mentor and encourage.
  - e. Set clear expectations for performance.
  - f. Facilitate candidate growth to meet goals.
  - g. Provide a realistic picture of what is required of teachers.
  - h. Improve teaching and learning.
  - i. Share a passion for teaching.
  - j. Build relationships with schools.

*Question #1: How do you view your role as a university field supervisor?*

- A. "I am the facilitator of success for student teachers."
  - B. "Observe and give feedback. Share expertise from years of supervising teachers in the public school system. Support university and state criteria. Demand excellence-demand professionalism. Help 'weed out' those not capable to meet criteria/requirements."
3. Relationship with candidates
- a. Treat candidates as individuals with respect and professionalism.
  - b. Develop a rapport and build trust; get to know candidates personally.
  - c. Be an advocate for candidate; demonstrate understanding and support.
  - d. Communicate often providing honest feedback with suggestions for improvement.
  - e. Encourage introspection and reflection and allow time for sharing.
  - f. Focus on continual improvement while validating experiences, ideas and efforts.
  - g. Model passion, positive attitude and willingness to listen with patience.
  - h. Be accessible, approachable and personally committed to candidate success.

*Question #3: In your role as a field supervisor, how do you bond with the candidates?*

- A. "I spend time getting to know each of my candidates. I want to know a little of their educational background, their family life, and where they would like to teach. I also like to find out where they see themselves in 5 years and what their post-graduate plans are. I communicate a lot with my candidates as well."
- B. "Age, experience in the classroom and as an administrator at both the building and district level allows me to speak with a degree of wisdom and understanding as I relate to my teacher candidates. Most of them appreciate my years of

experience as a teacher and a principal as I know what it is like from a practical sense and not a theoretical and book sense of the realities of a classroom.”

*Question #12: How do you think your candidates would describe you as a supervisor?*

- A. “I would hope that they first will say that I have a passion for teaching and student learning. I would like them to say that I am honest in my feedback to them. I would like them to say that I supported them and helped them grow as professional teachers. Finally, I would like them to say that they could easily talk to me and that I am a professional.”
  - B. “According to my evaluations, most of my student teachers think I am knowledgeable and very supportive. They say I put them at ease, am very patient and offer a lot of good suggestions.”
4. Relationship with cooperating teachers
- a. Communication with cooperating teachers is critical to candidate success.
  - b. Make personal contact, discuss expectations, set goals and communicate weekly.
  - c. Be accessible and approachable; treat them with respect and honor input.
  - d. Form a partnership to help candidate be successful.
  - e. Ensure positive outcome in the case of a weak or unsuccessful candidate.

*Question #5: Describe your communication and professional contact with the K-12 Cooperating Teachers.*

- A. “I make myself available to mentors as well in the same way as I do for students. I give them respect and honor since we are guests in the classrooms. I partner with them in deciding upon a student’s strengths and weaknesses each visit.”
  - B. “The contact with the cooperating teachers is very minimal unless there is a problem. Usually I ask the teachers as well as the building administrators how things are going with the student teacher and in the majority of instances; they are pleased to have the teacher candidate in their building.”
5. Relationship with university faculty
- a. Minimal contact or interaction with faculty.
  - b. Hope faculty view supervisors as professional, hard-working, and committed to improving teacher quality and candidate success.
  - c. Hope faculty respect supervisor knowledge and professional skills.

*Question #14: How do you think the university faculty sees you?*

- A. “I would like the university faculty to see me as a professional teacher who believes that teaching is the world’s most important work. I work to put the strongest teacher candidate in the classrooms as representatives of CWU and the teaching profession.”
  - B. “I am based at a Center, so not sure...Probably as a non-entity. It would be very interesting if you asked how the supervisors view the university faculty.”
6. How to determine success as a supervisor
- a. Candidates successfully and effectively complete student teaching.
  - b. Effectively assist struggling candidates to become successful.
  - c. Assist in creating dynamic and caring teachers.
  - d. Feedback received from candidates and cooperating teacher.
  - e. Candidates are hired after graduation.

*Question 15: How do you know if you have accomplished your purposes and succeeded as a field supervisor?*

- A. "I know I have been successful as a supervisor when the candidate successfully and effectively implements the teaching cycle and is able to participate in other professional activities, and is able to have a life. I know because I hear it from the Cooperating Teacher and administrator. I also know that I am successful as a field supervisor when I am able to help a struggling candidate to improve and reach their goal as a teacher."
- B. "If someone walking by the classroom glanced into the room and thought they were seeing and hearing the regular classroom teacher, then I have done my job. If the students sitting at the desks in that classroom are engaged in their learning, and if the student teacher is excited about his/her lesson, then I have done my job. If I have helped to create a dynamic and caring teacher, then I have done my job."

Supervisors' personal responses and these threads of commonalities support what was found in the literature review. Communication and building rapport with both candidates and cooperating teachers are crucial components for candidate success. Generally, field supervisors highly value their role in supporting teacher candidates success during student teaching and feel they offer something unique being practitioners that university faculty do not.

### **Discussion and Implications for Practice**

The majority of field supervisors are practitioners in this case study who retired from public schools as teachers and administrators with a clinical rather than theoretical or research background, and their approach differs from university faculty. Their philosophy is based on personal experience rather than current research on best practices. Most of the field supervisors see their role as a mentor, consultant and facilitator, and forming a positive, supportive relationship with the candidate appears to supersede all other concerns as that theme was reiterated throughout the responses. They feel they have been successful as a supervisor if the candidate is successful in student teaching, graduates and is hired. Their relationship with faculty is ambiguous; they are not sure how faculty members view their efforts, and they want to be respected as professionals. Some supervisors do not feel faculty members are adequately preparing candidates for the classroom. They see themselves as partners with cooperating teachers. The supervisors' emphasis is on the candidates' need for dispositions and skills for classroom survival for improving instructional practice, rather than theoretical constructs, which they believe candidates learned in their university courses.

### **Conclusions**

The significance of these findings corroborates some of the previous research on field supervision as well as providing suggestions for program improvement and continuity between faculty and supervisors within the university. In an informal survey of our colleagues from 12 universities in our state, we found commonalities in their approach to field supervision. The majority of the other universities' field supervisors are composed of adjunct, non-tenure track faculty or lecturers, and typically they are retired professionals from the public schools. This study considered how teacher preparation programs, as represented by student teacher supervisors, support both teachers' and supervisors' on-going, reflective practices and professional growth. The qualitative evidence gathered in this study has direct bearing on how teacher preparation programs can more effectively utilize the skills, knowledge, and expertise

supervisors bring to the education process. Clearly there is a need for greater collaboration between faculty in the Teacher Preparation Program and the field supervisors. More specifically, retired teacher administrators may need encouragement to reframe their own reflective practices to better consider, weigh, and balance the (at times conflicting) requirements of the TPP with expectations of the teacher candidates. Ultimately, improving teacher preparation requires that we reflect upon, assess, and evaluate the success of every element of the education, training, and indoctrination process.

Given the national concern for quality teacher preparation, the researchers are in the process of collaborating with several other regional comprehensive universities in other states that are conducting similar studies in order to identify any widespread trends and to see if the conclusions of this study are applicable elsewhere. This phase of the inquiry will prompt discussion of the same topics with the intent to assist other teacher preparation programs trying to align field supervision with the program curriculum.

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## Appendix A: Field Supervisor Study Questionnaire Survey

Introduction

The purpose of this survey is to ascertain how you interpret your role as a university field supervisor for student teachers and what that role looks like in the schools. There is very little research available in the review of literature that discusses the role of the university supervisor. We would like to contribute to the field of knowledge as well as establish consensus for program improvement and data for external evaluation. Thank you for taking time to assist us by completing the survey and submitting it via Qualtrics. You will be sent a summary of the results.

Dr. Jan Byers-Kirsch and Dr. Naomi Jeffery Petersen

Gender:	Male	Female			
Undergraduate Degree Specialty:	Elementary	Secondary	Both		
Graduate Degree:	Administration	Curriculum and Instruction	Academic Area		
University Contract:	Tenure-Track	Lecturer/Supervisor (yearly)	Supervisor (quarterly)		
Course load:	Full-time (annually)	Part-time (quarterly)			
Candidates Taught Quarterly:	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	<40
Candidates Supervised Quarterly:	1-5	6-10	11-15	<15	
Years in University Teaching:	1-5	6-10	11-20	<20	
Years in University Supervising:	1-5	5-10	15 or more		
Years in K-12 Teaching:	1-5	5-10	15 or more		
Years in K-12 Administration:	1-5	5-10	15 or more		

1. How do you view your role as a university field supervisor?
2. If you have taught university courses, what are they and how do they impact your role as a field supervisor?
3. In your role as a field supervisor, how do you bond with the candidates?
4. Describe your communication and professional contact with the candidates.
5. Describe your communication and professional contact with the K-12 Cooperating Teachers.
6. Describe how you work with anyone else in the schools in order to support the candidates and Cooperating Teachers.
7. How many times a quarter do you visit your student teachers, and how many visits do you feel is an effective number?
8. Describe your visits with candidates in the schools.
9. Why would you decide to make an additional visit with a student teacher?
10. How do additional visits impact your goals as a supervisor?
11. Describe the activities, including advising and follow up, accomplished in these additional visits.
12. How do think your candidates would describe you as a supervisor?
13. How do you think the K-12 Cooperating Teachers see you as a supervisor?
14. How do you think university faculty sees you?



15. What allows you to feel you have accomplished your purposes and succeeded as a field supervisor?
16. How have your philosophy and role changed since you first became a field supervisor?