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Mentoring, not Monitoring: Mediating a Whole-School Model in Supervising Preservice Teachers

This article offers a case study of a whole-school model for supervising preservice teachers that is related to the principles of professional development schools (Holmes Group, 1990) and Zeichner's (1992) notions of rethinking student teachers' practicum experience. The article draws on constructivist notions of learning to teach; in particular, reference is made to Vygotsky's (1978) sense of mediating a stimulus where in a social-cultural context a person's knowledge is created, examined, and transformed rather than simply absorbed and transmitted. The case study highlights the particular details of this whole-school model and connects these to five main empirical descriptors that were generated from data triangulated from preservice teachers' journals, evaluation forms, group meetings, and correspondence from cooperating teachers. The descriptors show how the whole-school model evolved and how the role of university facilitator shifted from monitoring to mentoring in the teacher preparation process. This change in relationship disrupted the isolating clinical model of supervision where the university facilitator and cooperating teacher, in an uneasy relationship, are perceived by preservice teachers as having power over them: "telling" the preservice teacher with little perceived opportunity for negotiation.

Cet article présente une étude de cas d'un modèle reposant sur l'intégralité d'une école et servant dans la supervision de stagiaires. Ce modèle s'apparente aux principes des écoles de développement professionnel (Holmes Group, 1990) et aux idées de Zeichner (1992) sur la façon de repenser les stages d'étudiants en pédagogie. Cet article puise dans les notions constructivistes sur l'apprentissage de l'enseignement; plus précisément, on y fait référence à la définition de "médiation d'un stimulus" de Vygotsky (1978) selon laquelle, dans un contexte socioculturel, les connaissances d'une personne sont créées, examinées et transformées plutôt que simplement absorbées et transmises. L'étude de cas souligne les caractéristiques particulières de ce modèle reposant sur l'intégralité d'une école et les lie à cinq descripteurs empiriques principaux qui ont été générés à partir de données provenant de journaux personnels des stagiaires, de formulaires d'évaluation, de réunions de groupe et de correspondance provenant d'enseignants coopérants. Les descripteurs montrent l'évolution du modèle reposant sur l'intégralité de l'école et la transition du rôle de l'évaluateur universitaire pendant les stages, rôle qui est passé de celui du moniteur à celui du mentor. Ce changement de rôle a perturbé le modèle clinique de supervision amenant l'isolement où l'évaluateur universitaire et l'enseignant coopérant, unis par des liens difficiles, sont perçus par le stagiaire comme étant des personnes qui ont de l'autorité sur lui et qui lui disent quoi faire sans lui accorder beaucoup de marge de négociation.

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Introduction

The case study reported in this article highlights an alternative model for the supervision of preservice teachers in schools. This model contrasts with the clinical supervision model by focusing on a whole-school experience in preservice teachers' field experiences. In this whole-school experience the student teachers are exposed to all facets of life in schools in order to promote an educative experience of being a teacher in a school. To facilitate this whole-school experience student teachers had time left free in their timetable to see and be involved in other peers' classes, other subject areas, with school council staff and administrative staff. The whole-school experience radically changed the relationship of the supervising university facilitator with preservice teachers and cooperating teachers. As advocated for professional development schools (PDSs, Holmes Group, 1990), this changing relationship has created the foundation for developing close partnerships between faculties of education and community schools in order to improve educational practice. This study supports the vision behind the PDS model and the subsequent development of teacher education programs in North America (Britzman, Diplo, Searle, & Pitt, 1998; Stoddart, 1993; Teitel, 1997; Zeichner, 1992). This project has evolved in response to dissatisfaction with the clinical model of supervision and from a desire to support the growth of a whole-school model that has been advocated by the University of Alberta but only supported in pockets in the school system. The key for this whole-school model is commitment to a collaborative relationship between the school administrators and teachers and the university facilitators. This collaboration involved working with each other from a sense of association rather than a sense of obligation in order to develop a teacher education process that benefited the school and the student teachers.

Drawing from Stake's (1994) description of case study methodology, this article describes a form of "instrumental case study" examining the "whole school." The article explains: (a) the general context for the supervision of preservice teachers at a large university in western Canada; (b) the critical issues embedded in preservice teacher supervision, particularly as they focus on constructivist notions of learning; (c) the notable details of this case study; and (d) empirical descriptors arising through multisource data-collection from participants in the case study. The social experience described in this case study should enable the reader to construct a sense of mentoring supervision of preservice teachers in the preservice teachers' whole-school experience of learning to teach.

Context of the Case Study

The University of Alberta teacher education program has seen substantive changes over the course of the last five years that have been responsive to developing understandings of pedagogy as well as to financial and political pressures. The University of Alberta has a large teacher education program, and students are required to select an elementary or secondary education route on entering the Faculty. In both of these routes student teachers engage in three field experiences. First of all, students have an initial field experience composed of 10 half-day visits to both secondary and elementary schools where they observe and act as a teacher-assistant learning the routines and procedures of teaching. This experience is followed by a more extensive four-week

experience in a school where the preservice teachers work with cooperating teachers, initially observing the teachers. Gradually the student teachers plan, implement, and evaluate individual and sequences of lessons under the guidance of the cooperating teacher. In their final year preservice teachers complete a nine-week field experience. In the latter two field experiences a university facilitator is assigned to supervise preservice teachers in a school.

This case study focuses on the final nine-week field experience. In this secondary field experience the preservice teachers work closely with one or two cooperating teachers and the university facilitator. For both the university facilitator and the cooperating teachers, the traditional model of supervision draws from clinical supervision (Wheeler, 1989; Zeichner, 1992). As Zeichner highlighted, this model involved "little theoretical learning and little learning of any kind, beyond mastering the routines of the cooperating teacher's classroom" (p. 296). Specifically at the University of Alberta this model, as it has been applied in the supervision of preservice teachers, has several characteristics.

1. One preservice teacher is assigned to usually one cooperating teacher and works with one university facilitator who has several preservice teachers to supervise, often in different schools.
2. The university facilitator and cooperating teacher are perceived by the preservice teacher as having power over the preservice teacher: the supervising teacher "tells" the preservice teacher, and there is little perceived opportunity for negotiation.
3. The supervision is based on a deficit model: there is something "wrong" or "lacking" in the preservice teacher that needs "fixing."
4. This approach is time-intensive for the university facilitator because in the supervising role the university facilitator needs to observe each preservice teacher teaching full classes on a weekly basis, followed by debriefing sessions.
5. Preservice teachers are generally supervised by a university facilitator and cooperating teacher from the same discipline as the preservice teacher.

Historically, although it is rarely acknowledged, this model has created many tensions between the university facilitator seen as subject area "expert" and the cooperating teacher seen as the "real" teacher. As Zeichner (1992) comments, for preservice teachers, "learning to teach and to improve one's teaching meant learning to make one's classroom practice more closely match either the practices advocated in college courses or those exhibited by cooperating teachers, and the two often conflicted" (p. 296).

In the model described above it is expected that the cooperating teacher observes the preservice teacher frequently during the first few weeks of the nine-week experience, monitoring the preservice teacher's progress closely. The university facilitator also observes the preservice teacher on a weekly basis. Often the preservice teacher is provided with extensive notes regarding his or her teaching performance and given suggestions for improvement. Both the cooperating teacher and the university facilitator would meet regularly with the preservice teacher, but did not necessarily meet with each other or in a threesome throughout the nine-week field experience.

Our general experience of this model was that a university facilitator could not develop effective and meaningful relationships with one or two preservice teachers in any one term, let alone the customary nine or more preservice teachers presently assigned to a university facilitator. And even if the university facilitator was able to fulfill the clinical supervising expectations, we felt that such a monitoring role imposed our sense of effective teaching on the student teachers. We felt, as others have commented on field experience supervision, that such monitoring forces the preservice teacher to construct herself or himself in the models of the "good teacher" perceived by the university facilitator and the ever-present monitoring of the cooperating teacher and the school community (Macdonald & Kirk, 1996; Zeichner 1992). It is no wonder that such a monitoring leads to stressful field experiences where preservice teachers construct themselves in a role of "self-martyring victims of the demands of others" (Diamond, 1991, p. 48).

Mediating and Supervising Preservice Teachers

Recent understandings about teaching and learning in teacher preparation have caused us to call into question the model described above (Britzman, 1991; Richardson, 1997; Zeichner, 1992). Traditional clinical supervision of preservice teachers rarely leads to a change in how prospective teachers teach from the way they were taught (Britzman, 1991; Lortie, 1975). Clinical supervision in subject areas reaffirms a preservice teacher's construction in the role of the subject area stereotype rather than the role of educator.

We believe that teacher preparation learning needs to be construed in terms of principles from social constructivism. Social constructivism refers to the dialectical relationship between the situated individual and the cultural milieu embedded in the larger sociohistorical context (Vygotsky, 1978). Rather than focusing on the clinical setting of the classroom as the test of a student teacher's ability to be a teacher, the whole-school experience enables the student teachers to reflect on their teaching experiences in the whole-school milieu and the experiences of their colleagues. To do this we created a reflective space for the preservice teachers in the school timetable. This reflective space allowed concerns, thoughts, and experiences to be mediated by members of the group. This *mediating* connects to Vygotsky's (1978) sense of the term in that for "higher forms of human behavior, the individual actively modifies the stimulus situation as a part of the process of responding to it" (p. 14). In this way knowledge about the teacher education process was not transmitted to the preservice teachers and cooperating teachers by the university facilitators. Instead, knowledge about the teacher education process was initially framed by the university facilitators as an alternative model; then it was created, examined, and transformed by the cooperating teachers, preservice teachers, and university facilitators.

This idea of mediating the teacher education process has prompted us to search for alternative models of mentoring preservice teachers and working collaboratively between schools and universities. By mediating we mean a process where an individual actively modifies the stimulus as a part of the process of responding to it. This focus on mediating changed our role as university facilitators. Rather than maintaining a firm hold on the power over the preservice teachers we were supervising, as university facilitators we

sought ways to empower them to construct actively their own understandings of teaching and learning, and then to share their understandings, their questions, and dilemmas in frank and comfortable conversations. Rather than telling preservice teachers what they did well and did not do well, we wished to find ways to listen and give value to the stories of their experiences. We wanted to open the discussions to all preservice teachers assigned to the school and to all the cooperating teachers. In addition, we thought it important that the cooperating teachers were involved in the same conversations as the preservice teachers and university facilitators, so that they could construct contextual and professional knowledge collaboratively as well as individually. Using a forum where collaborative discussion was valued, we provided opportunities for preservice teachers to learn from each other and from cooperating teachers representing a variety of disciplines and perspectives, rather than holding meetings with individual preservice teachers and cooperating teachers. These meetings became the mediating focus of the teacher education process.

Particular Details on the Alternative Model for the Supervision of Preservice Teachers

Two weeks before the beginning of the nine-week field experience, one of us was assigned as the university facilitator to mentor nine preservice teachers in a city high school. These preservice teachers would be teaching in a variety of disciplines, including mathematics, English, Spanish, drama, physical education, art, career and technology studies (foods and design), and chemistry/physics. The other agreed to collaborate in order to collect data for this case study.

In order to prepare for the experience, we arranged to meet with all the preservice teachers to introduce ourselves, discuss each of our expectations, and collaborate on an arrangement for facilitating the preservice teachers' final field experience. In addition we held an initial organizational meeting with the school principal and the school field experience coordinator. At both of these meetings we suggested a possible alternative approach to facilitating the field experience. This involved: (a) establishing a weekly meeting time during the day where we could meet with all the preservice teachers; (b) weekly visits to each preservice teacher's class for brief observations (15-20 minutes duration); (c) weekly contact with each of the cooperating teachers; (d) a collaborative approach to the mid-point and final evaluations of the preservice teachers' work in the school; and (e) three meetings with cooperating teachers during the nine weeks, the first before the preservice teachers began in the schools, the second and third to coincide with the mid-point and final evaluation times.

The key premise behind all these alternatives to the traditional model was creating times to mediate and respond as a group to understandings and insights gained from the previous week's experiences.

Establishing Weekly Meetings

The weekly meetings with the preservice teachers were important for several reasons. Initially, the willingness on the part of the school principal and cooperating teachers to find a time and place for these meetings acknowledged our presence in the school and the importance of our meetings with the preservice teachers. We were able to establish a friendly, trusting relationship with the preservice teachers as individuals and as a group. The meetings also pro-

vided opportunities for the preservice teachers to become acquainted with each other, share insights and resources, provide support and advice to one another, offer suggestions, and arrange times to visit each other's classes. During the weekly meetings we provided time for the preservice teachers to write in their reflective journals and to share their writings with each other. Although this was not an activity initially valued by all of them, they modeled the practice for each other. The evidence of the journal writing's worth came from the preservice teachers themselves rather than from us as facilitators.

Weekly Visits to Classrooms

Rather than spending a great deal of time observing preservice teachers in their classrooms, we observed portions of the lessons (e.g., the introduction, one activity, transitions). We advised the preservice teachers that we would not often observe an entire class (usually lasting 65 minutes) so that they would not be perturbed when we left the class early or arrived after it had begun. From an observation of 15 or 20 minutes, we explained, we were able to discern such aspects of their teaching as preparedness, relationship with students, organization, and comfort with course content. Follow-up discussions with the cooperating teachers enabled us to determine early on if there were any difficulties from their perspective and most often to confirm our own observations. Through these conversations we generated items for discussion for the next weekly meeting with the preservice teachers and established a relationship with the cooperating teachers.

Weekly Contact with Individual Cooperating Teachers

Each week after the completion of our meeting with the preservice teachers, we would spend the following two hours visiting their classrooms, observing parts of lessons they were involved in teaching. We made a point of meeting with the cooperating teachers weekly to share perceptions regarding the development of their preservice teacher, make suggestions about further possibilities for teaching experiences, and address any concerns that the cooperating teachers might have. These meetings occurred in a variety of locations—at the back of the classroom, in the hallway, in the staff room, or department offices—and took anywhere from five minutes to half an hour. In some cases we addressed issues that had arisen during our earlier meeting with the preservice teachers. These issues involved a variety of concerns such as: a preservice teacher who wanted to observe a variety of other-language classrooms; a cooperating teacher's expectations perceived by the preservice teacher to be unrealistic; and concerns regarding preservice teachers working with more than one cooperating teacher. Some of the cooperating teachers had concerns regarding the progress of their preservice teacher that they did not think were being heard or seriously addressed by the preservice teacher. These concerns involved issues of planning smooth transitions from one activity to another, creating detailed plans in time to discuss them with the cooperating teacher, and being able to relate to students in the particular class. It was important for us to listen carefully to all the concerns and positive comments of the cooperating teachers and of the preservice teachers in order to facilitate and mediate clear communication and consistent progress.

With these meetings we also encouraged the cooperating teacher to give the preservice teachers gradual control of an 80% teaching load. Cooperating teachers often mentioned the perception that “you only learn to swim by jumping in the deep end,” and voiced the opinion that student teachers should teach a 100% teaching load. However, with reasoned discussion cooperating teachers admitted that this was not the best approach to develop a positive learning environment for their students or for developing the confidence of the preservice teachers. As we explained to the cooperating teachers, the 20% of the timetable left free from formal teaching duties allowed for a whole-school experience where preservice teachers could experience other educational aspects of the school. The gradual build-up to an 80% teaching load also allowed the student teachers to play a teaching assistant’s role in some classes with the cooperating teachers. The dialogue we had with the cooperating teachers was vital in enabling the cooperating teachers to understand, and eventually support, the rationale behind the changes to the traditional field experience model.

Collaborative Approach to the Mid-Point and Final Evaluations

The process of self-assessment for the mid-point evaluation was new for both the preservice teachers and the cooperating teachers and needed a great deal of explanation and clarification. During the fourth week of the nine-week field experience, we asked the preservice teachers to complete a self-assessment using the categories defined in the evaluation form. These included: (a) Preparation, planning and organization; (b) Teaching skills and strategies; (c) Communication; (d) Management; (e) Classroom climate; and (f) Professional qualities and initiatives. We talked with the preservice teachers about the content and format of their self-assessments. We suggested that for the self-assessment, they use the informal first-person pronoun *I* and that they write about aspects of their first five weeks that showed progress as well as aspects they wished to concentrate on for the final four weeks. We encouraged them to give examples, anecdotes, and stories of their teaching experiences. We then asked that they share these with their respective cooperating teachers and have the cooperating teacher comment and sign the form, indicating that they had read the self-assessment and had discussed it with the preservice teacher. To help the students write effective and thorough (in-depth) self-assessments, we collected copies of the self-assessments and wrote extensive comments on them, offering additional suggestions and examples they could include, as well as alternative wordings for their comments. We also had the preservice teachers share their self-assessments with each other during the next weekly meeting, discussing aspects that were most helpful in representing their learning about becoming teachers.

Initially the preservice teachers were resistant to the concept of self-assessment and expressed a desire for the cooperating teacher just to complete the mid-point evaluation and tell them how to improve. Comments such as “I don’t know what to write” and “My cooperating teacher wants to do it himself” were heard in the discussion. One preservice teacher did not openly object to writing the self-assessment, but rather than writing one gave us a mid-point written by the cooperating teacher. The preservice teachers were concerned that the cooperating teachers would have power over them in the form of the

final evaluation. They were fearful of upsetting the cooperating teachers and expressed concern that, as university facilitators, we would be writing final evaluation reports in collaboration with the cooperating teachers rather than providing separate evaluation reports as had been done in the past. In a conflict with the cooperating teacher, one preservice teacher wanted to know where we would position ourselves, whose "side" we would be on. She was concerned that her cooperating teacher would write a failing report. However, through the regular meetings with the cooperating teacher and ourselves her fears were allayed, and her mid-term and final report represented professional growth that we were all able to agree on.

The cooperating teachers were also initially resistant to the self-evaluation process and perceived that their power was being usurped by either the preservice teacher or by us, the university facilitators. We continued to discuss the reasons for the process, emphasizing the need for the preservice teachers to take ownership of their learning to become teachers. We emphasized reflective practice and the need for preservice teachers to recognize their own growth and development as well as the areas they wished to focus on in future experiences. At the mid-point stage two out of nine cooperating teachers completed their own evaluation as they had done in previous years and gave these to the preservice teachers with the preservice teachers' previously completed self-assessment.

The process of writing the final evaluation began the same as the mid-point evaluation, with the preservice teacher writing extensive comments in each of the areas identified on the evaluation form. The initial writing was informal, again using the personal pronoun *I*. The preservice teachers then shared their draft evaluation forms with us. We read their comments and again wrote further suggestions for inclusion on the evaluation reports. The preservice teachers then gave their drafts to the cooperating teachers, who now had a detailed report from which to begin to build the final evaluation. We found that the preservice teachers were able to include many details of their teaching experiences and successes, as well as specific examples that demonstrated their growth. The cooperating teachers could then revise, add to, or delete sections and formalize the writing in order to prepare a succinct report rich in specific examples and details.

Group Meetings with Cooperating Teachers

The three scheduled meetings with the cooperating teachers proved to be important to the mentorship process. As the university facilitators, we initiated these groups to facilitate communication and mediation among cooperating teachers themselves and between cooperating teachers and ourselves. We also used these meetings to introduce and develop the new model of supervision with the cooperating teachers and share our views about the importance of each of our roles. We scheduled the initial meeting before the beginning of the preservice teachers' nine-week field experience in order to meet all the cooperating teachers. At this meeting we developed a working relationship with each of the cooperating teachers, discussed the model of supervision we were proposing, and invited the cooperating teachers to participate in the weekly meetings. We also used the meeting to clarify the changes to the evaluation process for the preservice teachers and to address any of the

cooperating teachers' concerns regarding the field experience supervision. We continued informal weekly meetings with the cooperating teachers, as discussed in *Weekly contact* above, and invited them to two additional formal meetings. The first of these took place half-way through the field experience, during week four, and the cooperating teachers had the opportunity to discuss the self-assessments written by the preservice teachers and to discuss any issues that might have arisen regarding the field experience. The final meeting took place during week eight and was intended to share perceptions of the entire field experience, as well as to discuss specific questions regarding the final evaluation.

The first meeting was successful in that questions of mentorship arose that the cooperating teachers were able to address with each other rather than only with the university facilitators. For example, there was considerable discussion among the teachers on when they should leave the classroom in the preservice teacher's control. This was an important development in that the control of knowledge of the teacher education program was shared between the cooperating teachers and university facilitators, and the cooperating teachers began to recognize each other as knowledgeable about teacher education.

In the final meeting we found there was still some resistance on the part of some cooperating teachers to the preservice teachers' involvement in the final evaluation, because it was a shift from the traditional evaluation developed by the cooperating teacher. During the eighth week of the field experience we held a meeting of all the cooperating teachers to discuss the approach again and to have them share their final written evaluations with each other. They were able to discuss the process with each other, working through the aspects that initially were problematic for some of them. One of the cooperating teachers commented that it seemed that the preservice teachers were always thinking of their evaluation, an aspect of this approach that we actually found particularly desirable in encouraging reflective practice and reinforcing the student teachers' ownership of their own practice. In previous years cooperating teachers commented that they simply wrote the evaluation with minimal or simply editorial input from the student teacher. Viewed pragmatically, the process of collaborative evaluating is time-consuming, and we suggested that this approach, while enabling all parties to be actively involved in the evaluation writing, was less time-intensive than sitting down to write a collaborative evaluation from a blank page. The cooperating teachers began to take ownership of the process for themselves, sharing strategies they had used not only in writing the evaluation and using the preservice teachers' self-assessments as a starting point, but also in sharing strategies for working with the preservice teachers throughout the nine weeks. For example, a concern focused on the nature of comments that should appear in the final evaluation form. In the case where preservice teachers were exemplary in their teaching experience, the cooperating teachers discussed whether the evaluative comments should reflect their *excellence*, *outstanding effort*, and *extremely valuable contribution*. We decided collaboratively that although those comments where warranted were desirable, they should be supported by specific examples of the particular type of excellence.

The data reported above are from our own personal observation and notes. To add validity to our observations we collected other forms of data, particularly from the preservice teachers and cooperating teachers in the school. In this way we have tried to show a certain degree of correspondence between our perceptions and the perceptions of others involved in the case study (Maxwell, 1992; Stake, 1994). Data were triangulated from the preservice teachers journals, evaluation forms, group meetings (final meeting that was taped and transcribed), our time logs, and an unsolicited letter written by a cooperating teacher. From a comparison of recurring points made in these data sources, the following five empirical descriptors were generated. Signed permission was given by participants to use these data to write this article.

*Indicators of Participants' Lived Experiences Arising
From Multisource Data-Collection*

School and staff support

The cooperating teachers and school administration provided vital support for both the preservice teachers and the university facilitator. Initially they attended meetings scheduled to discuss this whole-school model, provided time and space for us to meet weekly with the preservice teachers, took time to discuss their preservice teachers with us regularly, and welcomed us into the school and into the classrooms. We were introduced to the secretarial staff, given a mailbox in the general office, and welcomed in the staff room. The collaboration that was evident between cooperating teachers and university facilitators enabled the growth of a safe and trusting atmosphere where the preservice teachers' learning could be mediated and nurtured. When the preservice teachers entered the school culture they were acknowledged as teachers working with experienced teachers and experienced teacher supervisors.

However, at the school the preservice teachers' presence as teachers was not uniformly accepted. For example, the preservice teachers were not welcomed in a strike meeting held with all the staff in the school. As one preservice teacher said, "We were asked to leave. It was extremely embarrassing ... there just seemed to be a group of teachers who would not tolerate our presence ... but not *our* teachers." This experience was confusing for the preservice teachers because there was no reason for them not to be present, but they realized that on the school staff there was a group of teachers who did not see them as colleagues.

The key support for the whole-school model came from the school administration and the teachers who had volunteered to supervise the preservice teachers. This support was vital in making the time of the university facilitator in the school productive and worthwhile. Because of our experiences of supervising preservice teachers under the clinical, traditional model and this alternative model, we were able to approximate the contact time of the university facilitator with preservice teachers and cooperating teachers from time logs we kept. Comparing the traditional model with the alternative model, the two figures clearly demonstrate at a glance the differing amount of time available for contact with university facilitator. Figure 1 shows the approximate time in minutes per week spent in the school by the university facilitator (UF). Figure

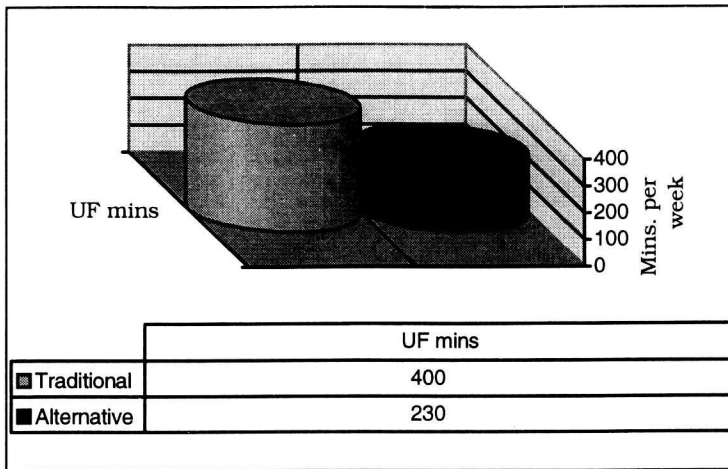


Figure 1. Approximate time spent by university facilitator (UF) in school per week in traditional and alternative models.

2 shows on a weekly basis approximately how much contact time cooperating teachers (CT) and preservice teachers (ST) had with the university facilitator.

In the alternative model the weekly meetings, the short but regular visits to the preservice teachers' classrooms, and the opportunities for informal discussions created a greater amount of time with the university facilitator (see Figure 2), albeit more of this time was spent in group meetings. Because university facilitators also met with the cooperating teachers at three scheduled meetings and the university facilitators saw cooperating teachers regularly when they visited the school, the contact time between cooperating teachers and university facilitator increased. This increased time with the university facilitator for both preservice teachers and cooperating teachers came about only because the school timetabled the meetings. This increased contact time with the university facilitator occurred despite the reduced time the university facilitator spent in the school, as Figure 1 shows. We believed that the increased and regular contact time between the university facilitator and the cooperating teachers and between the university facilitator and the student teachers allowed the trust necessary for the mediating process to develop.

Whole School-Whole Group Experience

The preservice teachers orally shared the contents of their journal entries in the weekly meetings, an activity that provided data and supported the idea of a whole-school experience rather than apprenticeship to a single teacher. These journal entries explored issues of power and control, relationship development, role identification, and management of course content. Through the weekly sharing sessions the preservice teachers came to know each other and were able to provide specific support to each other. This created a sense that this was a "whole school-whole group" experience. One preservice teacher talked about her experiences of working with four cooperating teachers and her strategies for coping effectively. Another preservice teacher was contemplating a suggestion made by her cooperating teacher to expand her experience and take the opportunity to work in a community living skills class for

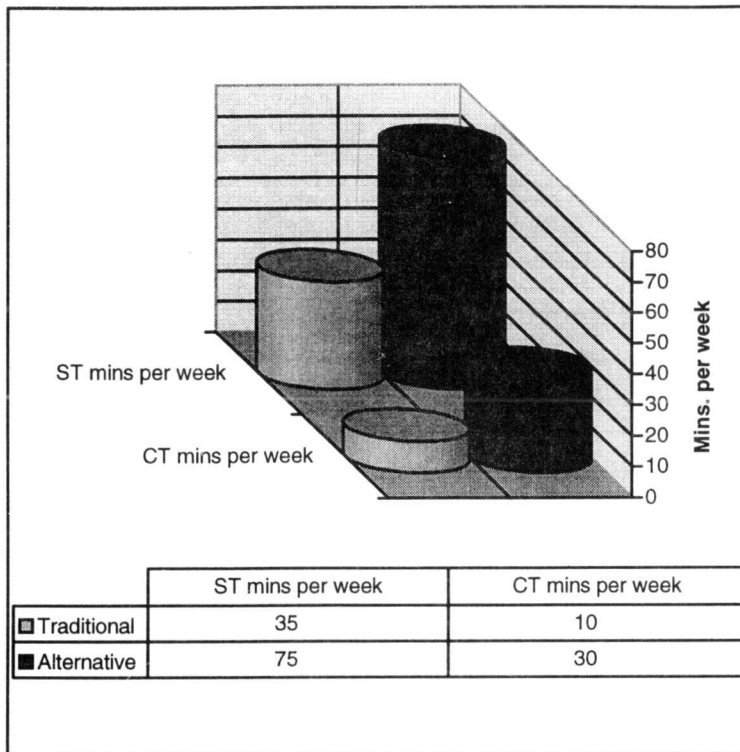


Figure 2. Approximate minutes per week spent by student teacher (ST) and cooperating teacher (CT) with university facilitator.

mentally challenged students, and she wanted to know if the group thought this would be a good idea. Also, the preservice teachers had timetabled opportunities to talk to intern teachers and other staff members such as counselors throughout their field experience.

Initially, this whole school-whole group was treated with suspicion. As one preservice teacher said, "There was a complaint that we were sticking together too much at the beginning. Then it started that we got involved in other things and it did not seem to matter." The group felt their togetherness allowed them to feel comfortable and then confident to get involved. Without the group they would have been isolated at the beginning. As another student said, "As if we would go up to a bunch of teachers, some of who are doing our evaluation and get involved in idle chitchat."

Collegial Sharing, Support, and the Development of Trust

As the preservice teachers became more comfortable with each other and trusting of the safety of the atmosphere created, they were also able to talk about struggles in their teaching experiences. For example, one preservice teacher came to the group and recounted an incident that had upset him. Students in his class had circulated a rumor about the preservice teacher's sexual orientation, intimating that he was gay. At the time, the preservice teacher was extremely uncomfortable with the rumor and was uncertain how to proceed in dealing with the story. As he said, "I do not want to make an issue

of denying it because I do not want to support the view that as a teacher my sexual orientation should matter." The other members of the group first offered comments affirming his ability as a teacher and then concluded that the rumor was a way that some high school students tried to make teachers defensive. At the next meeting the preservice teacher reported that he had ignored the situation, as his peers had suggested, and the matter had dissipated.

One preservice teacher talked about her difficulties in pleasing the cooperating teacher, considering her philosophy to be radically different from that of the cooperating teacher and seeing the difference as an almost insurmountable obstacle. She was able to express her concerns and fears of being unsuccessful in the field experience, and because of her initial openness we were able to address the issue with the cooperating teacher early in the field experience. Another of the group members was working with two cooperating teachers and talked about the difficulties of learning two sets of differing and not always compatible expectations. In each of these scenarios the group became actively involved as problem-solvers, counselors, and colleagues.

Collegial sharing and support occurred continually through the weekly formal meetings, as well as at the many informal meetings and social gatherings initiated by the preservice teachers themselves. The preservice teachers also arranged many visits to each other's classrooms to observe and give informal feedback.

Through the weekly meetings and the many interactions throughout the week when we were not present, the preservice teachers came to trust each other. Because of this trust the conversations were honest accounts of worries, difficulties, successes, and challenges. The preservice teachers were able to share their unsuccessful moments as well as their successful ones and to share in each other's experiences. They were free to develop at their own individual rates, working collaboratively rather than being isolated from their peers.

This collegial support was recognized and praised by the cooperating teachers. One teacher commented in a letter sent to the university:

I have done this [supervised preservice teachers] for twenty years and this round was unique ... The preservice teachers developed and maintained a superior rapport between themselves which consequently spilled over to the rapport they enjoyed with the rest of the staff.

Readiness to Listen and Accept Suggestions From Others

The preservice teachers stressed that talking with each other was vital. As one student teacher said,

If I started complaining about one student somebody might say "Oh, he is great in my lesson." Not working in my class, so what is working well for him in your class? Like, you would get to know colleagues well enough to share ideas.

Another student teacher explained,

Bringing the art [preservice teacher] into the drama production really helped me because in a stressful environment like that it is useful to have others in there that you can vent to. With two directors on a show you are going to get conflict and hit heads ... I get on well with my cooperating teacher but being able to talk to someone else really helped.

We encouraged all the preservice teachers to apply for preservice teacher awards, which constituted the creation of a video to accompany their résumé. The preservice teachers supported each other's efforts to prepare and practice for the videotaping and were prepared to accept feedback in order to improve their teaching practices.

When one of the group members decided in consultation with the university facilitators and cooperating teachers to withdraw from the field experience, the other preservice teachers supported him. Before deciding to withdraw, the preservice teacher had visited his colleagues' classes in comparing them realized that he was not ready to be teacher. When he withdrew he did so in a supportive environment and was able to leave recognizing not only where he had not succeeded, but also what he had learned from the experience.

A View of Teaching as Reflective, University Facilitator as Mentor

At the conclusion of the nine-week field experience the preservice teachers were not necessarily giving better teaching performances because of the whole-school experience, but they had each developed potential for ongoing growth and understanding of teaching. They were able to reflect, discuss, and self-assess, which made them aware of an increasing number of alternatives for their developing philosophy and practice. They became able to make connections between their growing stock of professional knowledge and their personal knowledge in the specific context of one school. They began to question their own assumptions, practices, and fears, as well as those of their colleagues and the system in general. Core subject-area preservice teachers noted how marginalized the option subjects were in the school academic culture, but how vital these areas were for the students' sense of meaningful learning. The option subject preservice teachers noted that the core subject areas seemed controlled and intense. The group understood why this was the case, but questioned why approaches in their subject areas had to be so diverse. As the math preservice teacher commented, "students are often bored in my classes."

An understanding developed of teaching as reflective and ongoing learning rather than as performance. The preservice teachers began to take responsibility for themselves and for their peers as they became part of the school community. The university facilitators were not perceived in the end as threatening or holding the power. Preservice teachers welcomed our presence, were willing to ask for our assistance and advice and to share their concerns and questions. They did not deny or attempt to cover up their "mistakes," but learned from them. For example, early in the field experience one preservice teacher felt uncertain of herself as a teacher, and tended to dress like a student and interact with school students in a friendly manner. She raised this issue at the weekly meeting. A discussion arose as to the desire not to be too dictatorial but also to avoid being too friendly. The concept of a teacher needing to be firm but friendly was discussed in the group, with the preservice teachers sharing examples. As Britzman (1991) noted, novice teachers feel caught between the desire to be a student's friend or comrade, while at the same time needing to be the boss, the person with authority. Following the discussion the preservice teacher started to dress more formally, the cooperating teacher noted that she started to take ownership of the classroom, giving the cooperating teacher confidence to leave the classroom in her care. Preservice teachers recognized

their difficulties in a positive light and realized that these showed progress in their teaching, which then led to ongoing professional development.

The preservice teachers also noted that our role as university facilitators was different from the role of university facilitators they had experienced in previous field experiences. The following extracts from two preservice teachers' comments show this point,

Kate: We did not feel uncomfortable, like last term, when you would think "Oh my god I have got to teach this way because you are coming in." You talked to us all one-on-one so much.

Sue: Like the students and my cooperating teacher got to know you because both of you were in and out of my class all the time. It meant that we did not feel uncomfortable at all. The students did not feel they had to be extra special at all.

Our role became one of mentoring rather than monitoring. The preservice teachers and the cooperating teachers saw us as teaching colleagues who had experience supervising preservice teachers. Rather than being seen as the outsiders who were to judge if the student teaching process was being done "correctly," our advice and ideas were sought on how to explain a concern: for example, how to explain to a student teacher a small problem about appropriate dress without making it a big issue, or how to ask the teacher to leave the classroom so that her expectations would not control the class.

As the preservice teachers' confidence grew near the end of the field experience, some tried some risky (although not always successful) teaching ideas. For example, one preservice teacher in an art class arranged for a colleague to show cultural use of tattoos. The preservice teacher then tried to get permission to give grade 12 students tattoos that could not be removed for a week. Several students wanted to get real tattoos but had never considered the implications. The preservice teacher's request was denied by the school administration, but she pursued the idea through to a discussion with the principal, who acknowledged the merit of the idea but felt that parents would not. As another example, a preservice teacher who initially was thought to lack the classroom presence needed to become a teacher broke up a quarrel between fighting ethnic groups in the school. We had counseled her about thinking and acting like a teacher, practicing body language and realizing her "new" authority. In the situation where the fight was starting she did not hesitate to act. Her previous reflections on the role of teacher had prepared her to act as a teacher to defuse the situation. As she said, "I offered the quarrelling students a way out." Her actions were commended in a letter from the principal that indicated that in the past a similar situation had necessitated calling the police. The letter symbolically acknowledged her becoming a teacher.

Conclusion

The visibility of the university facilitators in the school, through the weekly group meetings, weekly contact with cooperating teachers, visits to the staff room, mailbox, and ongoing discussions with staff and administration, was a critical factor for the success of this model. We became known and accepted in the school, an important element in being able to use our time effectively and wisely with the preservice teachers and cooperating teachers. This is in stark contrast to the traditional role of a university facilitator in schools, which has

been characterized as being fragmented with infrequent visits (Calderhead, 1988), or if done diligently often results in the supervisors being marginalized in their own institutions (Lanier & Little, 1986). The role of supervisor can also be isolating in the school culture where teachers can perceive you as "in a different camp" (DiPardo, 1993, p. 199), or as an outsider (Sick, 1998). However, as Lee (1997) notes about university supervisors in professional development schools, they start to develop a history and familiarity with the school and the teachers as they mediate the teacher education process. The teachers actively requested our return, showing a willingness to try new ideas if we continued our involvement in the school.

Communication of changing roles and perceptions of supervision were made possible by the meetings and regular informal encounters. The cooperating teacher's role as expert in the classroom and school context was established, while the university facilitator's role as expert in problem-solving, negotiating, and general teaching methods became established. In redefining the supervision roles for the field experience, the university facilitators became mediators of the teacher education process. The university facilitator's role became changed rather than reduced, and in weekly half-day visits we were able to contact most of the field experience participants regularly. The financial and human resources were being used in more productive ways than with the traditional clinical supervision model.

This alternative model of supervising has centered on belief in the need for a whole-school experience in preservice teachers' field experience. Such a focus has created dialectical relationships between preservice teachers learning to teach, cooperating teaching advising, and university facilitators mentoring. The ideas behind Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism began to evolve through a mediating process as preservice teachers and cooperating teachers shared and contributed to each other's perspectives and experiences of educational practice in the historical and cultural context of the school. Although many other tenets of Vygotskian social constructivism theory were not reported in this research, we were aware that this alternative model created the potential for a greater application of his theories. For example, Vygotskian notions of joint activity and the learners' zones of proximal development were evident when student teachers worked with their cooperating teachers in joint lessons early in the field experience and when they completed the evaluation forms together.

We believe that this whole-school model for supervising preservice teachers created an educative experience. Such an experience connects to other models of school supervision associated with professional development schools, or other similar school-university partnerships such as practice schools, partnership schools, and teaching academies (Brainard, 1989; Carnegie Forum, 1986; Goodlad, 1990; Levine 1992; Meade, 1991; Stallings & Kowalski, 1990). In this alternative model, rather than the student teachers' practice being the focus of all attention, the focus was on the teacher preparation process that enabled the most effective beginning teacher to emerge.

Unlike the clinical model, which prescribed roles for teaching and monitoring, this model enables preservice teachers to construct their own learning experiences through negotiation with the cooperating teachers, rather than

being framed into a particular way of learning to teach. This model provides opportunities for reflection on teaching practice as dialectical and open-ended. From this experience we ask, as Britzman et al. (1998) ask,

What if teacher education began from the assumption that a great deal of its work is to produce debate, multiple perspectives on events, practices, and effects, to move toward creative dialogue on practices, and to experiment with negotiation within learning to teach? (p. 20)

At the case study school, opportunities for ongoing relationships between university facilitators and cooperating teachers continue, and we were invited to return to supervise preservice teachers in subsequent terms. One cooperating teacher wrote to the field experience office acknowledging the contribution made by the university facilitators, and another has begun graduate studies focusing on teacher education. Exciting opportunities for ongoing research in aspects of teacher education present themselves when school sites are established. As advocated by the Holmes Group (1990), both cooperating teachers and university facilitators can participate in forms of research that provide powerful professional development and strong partnerships between universities and school sites. We believe that the relationships highlighted in this study, in the whole-school model for preservice teacher supervision, can lead to long-term professional development for teachers that has a positive impact on every level of educational practice.

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