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Supervision of Student Teachers: emerging models and innovative approaches in the USA

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ABSTRACT This article discusses the growing trend toward cooperative models of and new approaches to student teaching supervision in the United States. Although 78% of US teachers train in traditional 4-year programmes, new models are emerging to replace the traditional triad supervision format. The article explores these models through a study of some US university approaches to supervision, ways of enhancing partnerships between schools and universities, and ways of improving teacher supervision with an ancillary benefit of increasing recruitment. Teacher supervision and preparation approaches in the USA are growing toward more cooperative models between school districts and universities, with school districts offering their own in-house training and coaching models based on professional development schools. Research indicates that teacher preparation methods are slowly changing, as schools and universities realise that successful alternatives to traditional teacher preparation exist, especially in the light of the need for 2 million teachers in the United States over the next decade. Longitudinal studies and closer examinations of alternative teacher preparation will be required to assess practices and suggest improvements. While most teacher education programmes remain wedded to the traditional triad preparation and supervisory model, increasing numbers investigate ways to turn out quality teachers in record numbers. Cooperation, coaching and collaboration, along with sharing of resources, strategies and best practices represent the changing face of teacher supervision and training in the United States.

While Patty (1973) and Bowman (1979) predicted the demise of the role of the university supervisor in evaluating student teachers in the United States, the traditional triad model of student teacher, master/cooperating teacher and university supervisor remains intact in almost all US university education programmes. This prediction of a demise was based on issues related to the student teacher supervisory process, including barriers to effective supervision, incongruent role expectations and lack of communication. In addition, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education concluded in 1991 that

69% of university supervisors believe their interns are competent and prepared, while only 49% of cooperating teachers agree with that assessment (Kauffman, 1992). Although 78% of US teachers train in traditional 4-year programmes, new models are emerging to replace the traditional triad supervision format (Reforms in Preservice Programs and Teacher Certification Standards, 1996). These models can be explored through a study of some of the US university approaches to supervision, ways of enhancing partnerships between schools and universities, and ways of improving teacher supervision with an ancillary benefit of increasing recruitment.

As student teachers become certified, their feelings of preparedness must be considered in light of the available data from the US Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics (Feistritzer, 1999). The majority of public school teachers (71%) in the US reported they were very well prepared in classroom management and discipline strategies, but fewer teachers felt prepared to implement state testing requirements, instructional technology, limited English proficiency methods, and strategies for meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Given the current demand for 200,000 new teachers annually in the U.S., teacher preparedness and supervision have taken on a new urgency (Berry, 2000).

In advocating that cooperating teachers assume the role of sole supervisors in teacher intern programmes, the Holmes group (1986) and the Carnegie Task Force (1986) did not adequately address how one cooperating teacher, even working with a school team, could ensure that an intern was adequately prepared in all the areas identified by the 1999-2000 NCES report on teacher preparedness' needs (Table I).

Activity	Felt very well-prepared (%)	More than 8 hours of professional development in activity (%)
Maintain order in the classroom	71	68
Implement new methods of teaching	41	51
Implement state or district curriculum and performance standards	36	44
Use student performance assessment techniques	28	45
Address needs of students with disabilities	21	41
Integrate educational technology	20	33
Address needs of students with limited English proficiency or culturally diverse backgrounds	20	41

Table I. Teachers' feelings of preparedness.

A Clinical Master Teacher Programme

An example of one of the new US models of teacher preparedness that addresses innovative supervisory approaches and teacher preparation is the

Clinical Master Teacher Programme (CMT) at the University of Alabama. In the CMT programme, the classroom teacher is the main supervisor during interns' final internship, both at the elementary and secondary levels. Cooperating teachers must apply to supervise candidates, attend a 1-day mandatory training session conducted by the university, have at least a masters' degree, 5 years of successful teaching experience, a recommendation letter from the principal and experience supervising in the traditional triad supervisory model. The cooperating teachers within a school, usually 4-6 teachers, form a team, and all team members observe and evaluate all team interns. A university liaison is appointed to the school and attends the bi-weekly CMT meetings, as well as providing information and ensuring that the university standards of supervision are being met. The bi-weekly seminars, conducted by cooperating teachers, replace seminars traditionally held at the university (Daane, 2000).

Follow-up research conducted on the CMT programme reveals that almost all cooperating teachers easily meet programme requirements, but find evaluation and grading of interns problematic. Although master teachers are required to evaluate all interns assigned to the team and have input into the final grade of each intern, this evaluation is not happening in half the teams because of time constraints and scheduling issues. The cooperating teachers report that teamwork, programme control, and increased responsibility for interns' evaluations are all programme strengths. Interns report decreased nervousness as a result of not having to please the university supervisor, more one-on-one time with the cooperating teacher, and the consistency of having one, daily evaluator. A survey of all participants indicates that the team approach is productive, and that evaluation by the university supervisor is perceived as inconsistent and piecemeal, unrepresentative of the daily teaching habits of the intern (Daane, 2000).

Using Videoconferencing to Supervise Student Teachers

At the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), videoconferencing to supervise student teachers has been implemented to address concerns of distant locations. IUP places student teachers in more than 150 school districts from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia and from Bedford to Erie, an area of more than 60,000 square miles. In order to reduce an estimated cost of $14,000 annually to educate one intern, and ease faculty stress related to winter driving conditions and being away from campus for extended observation time, technology partnerships were formed with participating school districts (Garrett & Dudt, 1998).

With a 3-year Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant from the US Department of Education, IUP's College of Education is conducting research and evaluating videoconferencing as a means of supervising clinical experiences in teacher education and conducting all conferences. A dedicated staff of technical professionals, a

compressor/decompressor or CODEC unit, a network and a room compatible with equipment requirements are all part of the grant project. The CODEC unit digitises and compresses video and audio signals for transmission (Garrett & Dudt 1998). Support equipment includes cameras, microphones, monitors and speakers; the network requires fibre optics, ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) lines and, where available, high-speed digital carrier TI (T-one) lines.

IUP's videoconferencing project for student teachers has been initiated in three phases, with the first phase as a pilot study involving three student teachers, three cooperating teachers and two university supervisors, all of whom serve on a voluntary basis. The second phase expanded to 14 student teachers and the third phase to 24 student teachers; in each instance, a control group of interns in the traditional site-based supervision provided data as well. Project participants and an outside evaluator identified positive project factors as the time-saving elements of videoconferencing, use of innovative techniques, development of technology skills and creation of a collaborative school-university partnership (Garrett & Dudt, 1998).

In surveys conducted by two of the few US researchers on videoconferenced student teacher supervision, Garrett & Dudt (1998), university supervisors reported high levels of satisfaction with the overall videoconferencing programme, citing the quality of feedback they were able to give student teachers. While some noted inadequate audio quality in some of the transmissions and other technical difficulties, they believed the programme was worthwhile and recommended it to other supervisors. Cooperating teachers, responding to the same questionnaire given to the university supervisors, cited the availability through videoconferencing of otherwise unavailable sites, being part of an innovative project and developing technology skills as positive programme outcomes. Cooperating teachers wanted to see improvements in audio quality, scheduling and number of observations, more mobile equipment and increased time for planning the entire videoconferencing experience (Garrett & Dudt, 1998).

Student teachers began participating in the IUP videoconferencing pilot project in the spring of 1996-1997. When surveyed, they reported the availability of otherwise unavailable sites, availability of the university supervisor, participation in an innovative project, and increased comfort with technology as benefits of the programme. Student teachers noted a need for greater preplanning of the entire experience, improved scheduling of observations and meetings, and better audio quality in the video observations (Garrett & Dudt, 1998).

Overall, the IUP project directors reported these summary statements on the effectiveness of the videoconferencing of student teachers' programme, based on the respondents' reports of being highly satisfied with the programme:

- Videoconferencing for student teachers is effective.
- Videoconferencing works across settings and disciplines.

- With minimal preparation, students, cooperating teachers and university supervisors are able to use videoconferencing in the supervisory process.
- Currently available technology is sufficient to provide effective supervision of student teachers in distant locations.
- Involvement in an innovative programme and availability of otherwise inaccessible sites outweighs minor technical difficulties.
- Equipment location should not dictate usage, especially for students with special learning needs.
- A need exists for a carefully planned pre-training for and orientation to the use of videoconferencing for supervising student teachers.
- Human aspects of planning, scheduling and conferencing may be more important to the perceived quality of distant supervision than technical aspects of using the videoconferencing equipment (Garrett & Dudt, 1998).

A Model of Supervision in the Professional Development School

Another model for supervision of student teachers in the US is the coaching model, with a liaison between university education programmes and school districts with professional development centers. About 300 professional development schools (PDS) have been created in the United States since the 1980's, and the trend is growing, but currently only 10% of undergraduate teacher candidates are enrolled in a PDS (Feistritzer, 1999). Key features of professional development schools include locations in public elementary and secondary schools, work within reform efforts and grants, collaboration with colleges and universities, and practices based on pedagogical research and implementation. Based at the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching at Teachers Colleges, the Professional Schools Development Network brings together about 20 professional school partnerships. The network produces a newsletter, documents effective practices, and establishes guidelines for partnerships and policies (Reforms in Preservice Programs and Teacher Certification Standards, 1996).

Accredited by the US National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education or NCATE, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's Secondary Teacher Education Professional Development Schools Project (STEP), joins teachers from four school districts with college faculty. Each semester, six to eight student teachers work with mentor teachers in the coaching model and take pedagogy-based seminars. Cooperating teachers teach pre-practicum courses to interns and serve as mentors, while university faculty teach classes to mentors and provide professional expertise (Reforms in Preservice Programs and teacher Certification Standards, 1996).

Several school districts in Michigan work with 40 faculty from the Michigan State University College of Education to create professional development schools. Using the coaching model, the district and college faculty work together to identify best practices, provide clinical experience,

and promote effective, organisational change (Reforms in Preservice Programs and teacher Certification Standards, 1996).

At California State University Northridge (CSUN), the Accelerated Collaborative Teacher (ACT) programme, linked to a professional development school, is an intensive, 1-year credentialing programme for beginning teachers and a 2-year programme for teachers already on the job with emergency credentials. Funded by a 5-year Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project/DELTA (Design for Excellence Linking Teacher and Achievement) grant, the ACT programme operates primarily from an urban school with a professional development centre onsite. ACT students in elementary, secondary and special education are paired with coaches, teachers identified as certified, master teachers who can successfully direct and evaluate the progress of the student teacher (Burtsein, 1999).

In the ACT programme at CSUN, students in a cohort rotate through three, different modules in a calendar year, with university professors providing seminars onsite related to professional development issues, use of technology and teaching strategies. Students in specialisation areas, such as English, mathematics and social studies attend methods classes at the university, guaranteed class enrollment as a benefit of being in the ACT programme and create a professional teaching portfolio. They are also required to pass a professional education test, a test of basic skills, and an upper division writing exam, in order to receive a teaching credential (Smith, 2000).

University professors and other professionals, such as retired principals who provide seminars meet as a group on a weekly basis. They also meet regularly with university coordinators of elementary, special education and secondary education, usually with the school site liaison, to coordinate activities and share concerns. Collaboration among participating university personnel, as well as students in the cohort is emphasised as a programme feature. Programme planning, scheduling, recruitment of students, and placement of student teachers require careful oversight and a shared investment of time by all participants (Smith, 2000).

When surveyed in this alternative to traditional triad supervisory models, ACT programme participants report high levels of overall satisfaction with programme requirements and features. The camaraderie of the cohort, the intensive 1-year nature of the beginning teacher preparation programme and the innovative structure of the seminars exposes the beginning teachers to an in-depth view of many professional issues in a short amount of time (Smith, 2000).

Bank Street College's fifth-year master programme, Project Promise at Colorado State University, and George Washington University's secondary education internship programmes work with mid-career, high-quality teacher candidates in tightly structured alternative certification coursework and experiences. Faculty members mentor graduates in their early years of teaching, while candidates participate in peer coaching and instruct in several

intensively supervised teaching practicums in various settings. Teacher candidates have an opportunity to apply knowledge of cultural diversity, best teaching practices and problem-solving, as they cycle through the programmes (Berry, 2000).

Collaborative Coaching Programmes

Model teacher preparation programmes in the US, such as one at the University of Texas at El Paso, place a heavy emphasis on collaborations between the university and professional development schools, local schools committed to school improvement. Working with predominately Hispanic elementary and secondary schools, the curriculum stresses bilingual and cross-cultural education, as well as community partnerships.

Reaching out to solve teacher recruitment problems and including more voices in decision-making and problem-solving has made the UT El Paso both an award-winner and one of the best in the nation, according to the US Department of Education (2000).

Some US school districts partner with local colleges to offer dual certification in critical areas, such as maths, science, special education, ESL and computer science, with teachers credentialed in both regular education and the critical specialisation. At Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the teacher preparation curriculum also places a heavy emphasis on teacher performance and fieldwork. Students are expected to demonstrate their teaching abilities in real-time, classroom activities, and are evaluated by teams of Alverno faculty, district teachers and administrators (US Department of Education 1998a).

NOVA University, the University of Phoenix, National Louis University and a host of private institutions in the United States participate in intensive, fast-paced teacher preparation programmes that give more credit for service outside of education. Education schools of almost every ilk are looking to online and distance education as ways to solve the teacher shortage and shorten teacher preparation time. The University of Central Florida, for example, offers some of its education classes online, with one to two meetings with the instructor. Student teachers report a high degree of satisfaction with these online classes, as a way to reduce the amount of time they spend in traditional classes and increase interactions with other student teachers (Camp, 2000).

The Learning/Teaching Collaborative in Brookline, Massachusetts, started in 1987 and partners six public schools with two teacher preparation programmes.

Twice-weekly seminars for interns taught by both college and school faculty, team teaching, release time for district teachers for professional activities and research, and special education inclusion have become key components of the collaborative effort. Graduate students team with selected

district faculty for an entire school year for intensive training (Reforms in Preservice Programs and teacher Certification Standards, 1996).

Teacher experts at the US National Conference on Teacher Quality, Maryville University and Parkway South High School of St Louis, Missouri, asked a valid question related to teacher supervision: 'Can university personnel successfully collaborate with high school faculty to prepare secondary teachers?' Deciding in consultations that they could collaborate successfully, the university and high school have partnered for the last 6 years to create new teacher preparation models for English, social studies, science and mathematics. Mentoring teams composed of faculty members from the student teacher's discipline, the School of Education and the high school have responsibility for the teacher candidate from programme admission to successful exit. The teams work with an onsite coordinator at the high school to ensure placements and candidate supervision. Teacher candidates develop an action research proposal, build a portfolio, work in clinical settings throughout the programme and spend time with other teachers outside their discipline (McPartland, 2000).

Teacher Preparation Issues, Teacher Shortages and Supervision

According to the US Center for Education Information (Feistritzer, 1999), about half of enrollees in undergraduate teacher preparation programmes and one-third in post-baccalaureate programmes do their student teaching at one school, under the direction of one supervisor. The majority of undergraduates and post-baccalaureate teacher candidates have field-based experiences in a variety of demographically different schools settings.

Concern for teacher quality and student achievement in the midst of a teacher shortage raises issues about teacher preparation and supervision. Barnett Berry, Director of the Southeastern division of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, describes the problem this way:

> *By 2005, America's schools will be serving more children (54 million) than ever before, with the total number of teachers growing to over 3.5 million (up from 2.5 million in 1980). To maintain this level, we will need to recruit 200,000 teachers annually. About half of these are likely to be newly prepared teachers, and about half will be migrants or returnees from the reserve pool of teachers ... There is no question that an inability to fill teaching positions is already causing significant problems, especially in inner cities, in the South and West, and in particular subject fields. (Berry, 2000, p. 1)*

Such shortages in the US are causing many states and districts to scramble to find the teachers they need. A case in point comes from a recent report out of Kentucky, where it was discovered that 665 special education teachers are not certified in that field, and 265 of them were issued emergency or probationary certificates in 1999 alone. A recent analysis showed that during the last decade

at least 50,000 emergency or substandard licenses were issued annually by states (Berry, 2000).

Colleges that produce teachers in fields not in demand, a lack of collaboration among states in tracking teacher supply, demand and quality, and a lack of incentives for teachers in shortage areas all contribute to preparation and supervision issues in the United States. Adding to the problem is that only 60% of newly trained teacher graduates actually enter teaching jobs and 30% quit during their first 5 years of teaching. Some 41 states offer alternative certification programmes, but mentor-supervisors are difficult to find, and student teachers that take weekend or night-only truncated programmes tend to be disconnected from actual classroom practice. Short-term alternatively trained teachers are less likely to remain in teaching and have lower academic qualifications than their traditionally trained counterparts (Berry, 2000).

In contrast, countries such as Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg have long required 2-3 years of graduate-level study for prospective teachers, in addition to an undergraduate degree in the subject(s) to be taught. Education coursework includes the study of child development, pedagogy and teaching methods, together with a carefully supervised internship in a school affiliated with the university. Both France and Japan undertook major teacher education reforms in 1989 to extend both university- and school-based training. In France, all candidates complete a graduate programme in University Institutes for the Preparation of Teachers connected to nearby schools. In Japan and Chinese Taipei, new teachers complete a year of supervised internship, with a reduced teaching load and time for mentoring and study. Japanese teachers discuss teacher practices and problems with colleagues and critique demonstration lessons. In Japan and China, new teachers observe experienced teachers and discuss teaching practices with them (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future recommends that:

- alternative teacher licensure programmes, developed to address teacher shortages, be at least 9-15 months;
- include strong coursework both in subject area and pedagogy linked to the state's teaching standards;
- provide field experience under the daily supervision of a seasoned teacher;
- ensure that the teacher candidate meets state requirements for certification before teaching, including those related to teacher testing (Berry, 2000).

National Board Certification and Teacher Testing Issues

An important question in US teacher preparation is how national board certification and teacher assessment will impact teacher training programmes and the various models of teacher preparation. Currently, colleges of education require an average of 35 subject area credit hours, 25 hours of professional development courses and 14 clinical experience hours. Virtually

all of university teacher preparation programmes require a content area and/or competency test to enter the teacher preparation programme or obtain teacher certification, reflecting growing state standards and requirements (US Department of Education, 1986).

The US National Education Association, in its 2000-2001 Resolutions, stated that interns involved in clinical practice should demonstrate these abilities and practices (NEA, 2000):

- comprehensive understanding of the central, organising concepts of their discipline(s);
- knowledge of how children learn, including learning differences;
- support for intellectual, social, and personal development of individual students through providing of learning opportunities;
- use of a variety of instructional strategies to promote critical thinking, problem solving, and active learning;
- instructional strategies based on knowledge of the subject matter, the students, the community and the curricular goals;
- effective use of informal and formal assessment.

As more interns and beginning teachers in the United States become part of the certification process, they consider incentives to participate in voluntary certification by the National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). This organisation, begun in 1987, sets national certification standards for accomplished elementary, middle and high school teachers. The NBPTS has identified 30 teacher certification fields, organised around demonstrated practice presented in a portfolio of written work, videotaped teaching demonstrations and related materials, based on Five Core Propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects.
- Teachers manage and monitor students' learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2000).

Supporting NBPTS certification, The World Class Teacher Project in New Mexico, funded by a $328,000 New Mexico State Board of Education staff development grant, represents a collaboration between the state's seven colleges of education and its public schools. About 80 teachers have their $2,000 NBPTS application fees, travel, release time and other support services paid by the state. Similarly, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Washington have provided professional and economic incentives to support national board certification and reciprocal agreements with other states (Reforms in Preservice Programs and Teacher Certification Standards, 1996).

Currently, 48 states in the US require some kind of teacher testing with debates about initiating testing still occurring in Iowa and Alaska. States such

as Connecticut and Indiana lead the way in cutting-edge teacher assessments, such as the INTASC (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium), while others are piloting the TTK (Test of Teacher Knowledge). The INTASC assesses how adept novice teachers are at assessing student work samples and applying teaching techniques in a variety of settings. TTK is an open-ended response test that measures teaching knowledge and application in simulated settings, with emphasis on knowledge of child development, teaching and learning theories, and diagnostic abilities. The test offers pre- and post-programme information on teacher candidates' essential teaching knowledge and can serve as a screening device for the supervised teaching experience (Berry, 2000).

The issue of teacher testing in the United States stirs controversy in many states and educational settings, such as Massachusetts. New to teacher testing in 1998, almost 60% of Massachusetts' prospective teachers failed the first test. Only six of the state's 55 certified programmes reached the 80% pass rate required to retain accreditation. As a result of these findings, teacher preparation programmes began to teach to the test and reduced their applicant pools, in order to increase their pass rates (Flippo & Riccards, 2000). In the wake of the test results, student teacher supervision issues took a back seat to teacher testing issues.

The Future of Teacher Preparation and Supervision

With more than 300 professional development schools in the US, teacher preparation and supervision is taking a slow, but steady turn toward alternative certification models or redefinition of traditional models:

> *Some school districts have begun to create new models of induction and ongoing professional development for teachers and principals. These feature mentoring for beginners and veterans; peer observation and coaching; local study groups and networks for specific subject matter areas; teacher academies that provide ongoing seminars and courses of study tied to practice; and school-university partnerships that sponsor collaborative research, interschool visitations, and learning opportunities developed in response to teachers' and principals' felt needs ... These approaches shift from old models of 'teacher training' or 'inservicing' to a model in which teachers confront research and theory directly, are regularly engaged in evaluating their practice, and use their colleagues for mutual assistance ... This kind of learning cannot occur in college classrooms divorced from practice or in school classrooms divorced from knowledge about how to interpret practice. (Darling-Hammond, 1998, pp. 6-11)*

Examples of new modes of teacher supervision and preparation in the United States include schools such as those in Maine and Kentucky. Wells Junior High School, a professional development school associated with the University of Maine, shifted its teacher training emphasis from outside experts to in-house, staff trainers. Cooperative learning replaced traditional lectures, teachers

researched issues, and then shared their findings with colleagues. Fairdale High School in Kentucky initiated more participatory roles for teachers, who began sharing of important educational research and best practices. Teachers as reflective practitioners have become essential elements of both programmes (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Overall, teacher supervision and preparation approaches in the United States are growing toward more cooperative models between school districts and universities, with school districts offering their own in-house training and coaching models based on professional development schools. Slowly, teacher preparation methods are changing, as schools and universities realise that successful alternatives to traditional teacher preparation exist, especially in light of the need for 200,000 teachers annually over the next decade. Longitudinal studies and closer examinations of alternative teacher preparation will be required to assess practices and suggest improvements. While most teacher education programmes remain wedded to the traditional triad preparation and supervisory model, increasing numbers investigate ways to turn out quality teachers in record numbers. Cooperation, coaching and collaboration, along with sharing of resources, strategies and best practices represent the changing face of teacher supervision and training in the United States.

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