From “Outsider” to “Bridge”: The Changing Role of University Supervision in an Urban Teacher Residency Program

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<td>Manuscript ID:</td>
<td>UATE-2013-0090.R4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manuscript Type:</td>
<td>Original Article</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keywords:</td>
<td>supervision, field placements, urban teacher residencies, teacher education, field intensive</td>
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study investigated a faculty liaison (FL) model, an alternative to traditional field supervision implemented in an urban teacher residency (UTR) program. In the FL model, professors teaching in the UTR program were assigned to school sites rather than individual teacher candidates to observe and provide feedback, evaluate teacher candidate performance, and connect coursework and classroom practice. Results indicate strong support for the continuation of the FL model in lieu of traditional supervision. Specifically, the FL model supported teacher candidate learning, both in the field and in university coursework; and enhanced school-university collaboration. The authors provide an analysis into the FL model and recommendations for integrating full time faculty into school-based portions of teacher education.
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From “Outsider” to “Bridge”: The Changing Role of University Supervision in an Urban Teacher Residency Program

Colleges of Education often exempt full time faculty from teacher candidates’ field experiences, viewing supervision as low status work (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Fulwiler, 1996; Zeichner, 2010). As a result, adjunct faculty frequently supervise teacher candidates even though they often lack a deep understanding of course and program expectations (Cuenca, Schmeichel, Butler, Dinkelman, & Nichols, 2011; Rogers & Keil, 2007; Slick, 1998; Zeichner, 2005). Indeed, Slick (1998) and Cuenca et al. (2011) separately refer to supervisors as “outsiders” who fail to impact teacher candidate learning in substantive ways. Cuenca et al. (2011) suggest the common practice of utilizing adjuncts instead of faculty implies that field-based teacher education is “second-rate” work (p. 1068). This notion stands in stark contrast to reform efforts that call to increase teacher candidate and faculty time in field placements (Beck & Kosink, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner, 2010).

Viewing the university supervisor as “an outsider” has been a prevalent problem in our urban teacher residency (UTR) program, a teacher preparation initiative that includes a year-long field placement with a mentor teacher and graduate coursework leading to certification. The program typically assigned responsibility for supervision to adjunct faculty, typically retired teachers. Consistent with literature, (Beck & Kosink, 2002; Cucena et al., 2011; Wilson, 2006; Zeichner, 2010), program data indicated inconsistent quality of supervision that typically failed to foster robust learning.

In spring of 2010 during a meeting in which priorities were identified, the UTR leadership, comprising school and university personnel, determined that
supervision was a consistent program weakness that needed to be addressed.

In response to these conditions, a subgroup met and created a “faculty liaison” role, for the UTR program. The program assigned faculty liaisons (FLs) to schools rather than to individual teacher candidates (called “residents”). FLs observed, provided feedback, and evaluated resident performance, as well as connected coursework and classroom practice. FLs spent, on average, two days in the school per month fall through spring.

The purpose of this study is to understand the benefits and limitations of the faculty liaison model in order to evaluate its effectiveness and determine if it should be continued. Specifically, this study seeks to interpret 1) how residents, mentors, school-based professional development coaches and faculty liaisons perceive the FL role, 2) if the FL model is more supportive of resident learning than traditional supervision, 3) what factors contribute to and detract from the efficacy of this model, and 4) if this model has an impact on the school-university partnership.

While the context of this study is an urban teacher residency program, by examining an alternative model of supervision that more deeply embeds university faculty into field placements, this study also seeks to contribute to teacher education programs by providing a model that has the potential to improve teacher candidate learning and enhance school-university collaboration in any setting.

**Literature Review**

A call to reform university supervision is prevalent in teacher education research (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Cucena et al., 2011; Fulwiler, 1996; Rogers & Keil, 2007; Slick, 1998; Valencia, Grossman, Martin & Place, 2009; Wilson, 2006;
Zeichner, 2005; 2010). Yet, Rogers and Keil (2007) note little change in the nature of supervision over the last 35 years. Literature indicates low faculty involvement or investment in field based teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner, 2010) and the overutilization of adjuncts as supervisors (Cuenca et al., 2011; Rogers & Keil, 2007). The following sections describe some of the challenges associated with adjunct and full time faculty supervision in field placements; and discuss the importance of revising traditional supervision within the context of field intensive teacher preparation. An example of restructured field supervision that involves full time faculty is also provided, which informed the development of the FL model described in this study.

**Challenges**

Literature indicates that adjuncts often do not fully understand program expectations and may lack knowledge of current educational theories and practices (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Cuenca et al., 2011; Rogers & Keil, 2007; Slick, 1998; Zeichner, 2005). Even when supervisors possess knowledge of coursework, they tend to support their decisions and recommendations with prior teaching experiences, even if their prior experiences and feedback conflict with course expectations (Valencia et al., 2009). Furthermore, discourse between teacher candidates and supervisors tends to lack pedagogical depth (Rogers & Keil, 2007; Valencia et al., 2009) because programs afford supervisors limited number of visits and therefore do not offer opportunity to develop relationships with teacher candidates (Fulwiler, 1996; Slick, 1998). As a result, conversations tend to be superficial and focused on management as opposed to teaching and learning (Slick, 1998; Valencia et al., 2009).
Additionally, adjunct supervisors communicate concern regarding the value of their role as it pertains to teacher candidate learning (Cucena et al., 2011; Slick 1998), and lament the peripheral role they play (Fulwiler, 1996; Slick 1998).

Literature advocates greater full time faculty involvement in field placements in order to bridge the pervasive theory-practice divide that hinders teacher candidate, and ultimately, student learning (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner, 2010). However, full time faculty tend to diminish the importance of supervision due to competing priorities pertaining to promotion and tenure, teaching load, and other college and university commitments such as mentoring, administration and committee work (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). Indeed, within the structure of institutional rewards, tenure and tenure track faculty often perceive supervision as a low-status role (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Cucena et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Fulwiler, 1996).

**Full Time Faculty Engagement in Field Experiences**

The low status of field supervision coupled with faculty's distant involvement with teacher candidate learning in schools gives cause for concern, particularly when the field of teacher education is moving towards more field intensive preparation. Even in professional development schools, established to bridge school and university experiences, a significant disconnect often exists between field-based and on-campus learning (Gorodetsky, Barak & Hadari, 2007; Teitel, 1999). Specifically, cooperating teachers tend to know little about the courses their student teachers are taking (Zeichner, 2010). Simultaneously, university faculty are typically unaware of the practices that are enacted in partnering schools (Bullough et al.,
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1997; Zeichner, 2010). In response, research calls for the development of new, more collaborative faculty roles that increase faculty’s presence in schools and responsibility for teacher candidate learning in their field placements (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Cucena et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010; Wilson, 2006; Zeichner, 2010).

In one such example, Beck and Kosnik (2002) implemented an alternative model to traditional supervision. In the “professors in the practicum” model full time faculty teaching in an urban teacher preparation program undertook a supervisory role in order to support a more integrated set of experiences between the school and university and to strengthen school-university partnerships. Faculty supervised, but did not evaluate, teacher candidates. The program assigned university faculty to one or more schools in which to supervise teacher candidates, who were placed in groups of five or more in local schools. Faculty connected school experiences and university coursework; communicated university expectations; worked to build trust and, when needed, mediated relationships; and provided pedagogical recommendations. The study reported that the model strengthened commitment to the partnership, improved the practicum experience, and enhanced on-campus teaching. University faculty noted that the model placed high demands on time and that their academic community did not legitimize their in-school work. Beck and Kosnik noted that these challenges may limit transferability to other institutions, but contended the benefits outweigh the limitations. As such, they
decided to continue with the model yet stated that stronger support from the university was needed.

### Methodology

#### UTR Program

The UTR was a partnership among a university, educational management organization (EMO), and a large metropolitan midwestern public school system. The one-year program included a year-long clinical placement (residency) with carefully selected mentor teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse K-8 public schools ("training academies").

The university provided coursework leading to certification and a Master of Arts in Teaching degree. From June through August residents took university coursework for six hours each day five days a week. Residents worked with a mentor teacher in training academies Monday-Thursday and took coursework on Fridays throughout the academic year. Mentors received initial and ongoing professional development to guide their work with residents. To further support mentors and residents, each training academy had a professional development coach (PDC). The EMO hired PDCs who were also school district employees. PDCs provided ongoing coaching and feedback to mentors and residents, and coordinated professional development for mentors and residents. When residents competed the program, the school district hired them to teach in high need schools.

#### Faculty Liaisons

FLs augmented traditional supervision by building relationships at the school sites, connecting coursework with field experiences, and clarifying course and
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program expectations. Unlike Beck and Kosnik’s model, FLs evaluated residents’
clinical experiences, but did so collaboratively with mentors and PDCs.

Wenger’s (1998) description of boundary spanning, in particular brokering
and creating boundary objects, informed the development of the FL model.
Boundary spanning consists of membership, and physical presence, in more than
one intersecting community (i.e. FLs role as university teaching faculty and school-
based liaison in the UTR program). The act of boundary spanning can enhance
continuity; a gap previously identified in the school and university portions of the
UTR. Boundary spanning also provides the context to create new relationships that
can promote brokering, “the translating, coordination, and alignment between
perspectives (Wenger, 1998, p. 109).” To this end, placing FLs in single schools to
work with professional development coaches, mentors and residents could
contribute to exchanging of multiple perspectives and connecting school and
university practices.

Boundary objects refer to the creation or revision of artifacts, documents and
tools made possible by the relationships and insights gained by spanning
boundaries. As such, boundary objects have the potential to help bridge
perspectives. To this end, FL presence in schools could influence assignments and
school and university experiences; the creation and modification of documents and
processes employed to support residents, mentors and professional development
coaches in the schools; and the development and refinement of the FL model. In
short, by designing a role spanning the school and university portion of the
residency program, the program designers planned for the FL role to enhance
resident learning and program continuity.

FLs in this study were time faculty teaching in the K-8 UTR program. Four faculty members volunteered (two clinical and two untenured, tenure track) to be liaisons and indicated their willingness to implement and help refine the FL model. Each had prior experience supervising student teachers in the traditional university supervision model. The FL roles and responsibilities for clinical and tenure track faculty were the same. FLs replaced traditional supervisors in the UTR during the year this study occurred.

There were six K-8 training academies hosting between two to eight residents. Three FLs were matched with one school each, working with five to eight residents. Each FL received the load equivalent of one course release for their work. The fourth FL worked with three schools. One school had seven residents and the other two schools had a total of five residents. The fourth liaison received the load equivalent of teaching two classes. Members of the UTR leadership team designed the FL role to go beyond providing feedback, and to draw upon boundary spanning potential to simultaneously learn in and from the school setting in order to improve residents’ learning in both the school and university, enhance university instruction, and refine the UTR program. By placing FLs at single sites in multiple classrooms, we anticipated that they would be more likely to build contextual knowledge and relationships that would enhance resident learning and the school-university partnership.

FLs spent, on average, a half-day a week or two full days per month in the training academies. During this time, FLs checked in with PDCs to obtain updates on
residents’ performance, school professional development initiatives, or any other pertinent information that would support residents’ development or inform FLs ongoing work in training academies. FLs either observed residents’ lessons and provided feedback, or did quick “check in” with residents they were not observing on that visit. FLs sought to provide resident feedback with mentors present whenever possible, and feedback was always emailed to mentors. FLs discussed coursework and university requirements with residents, mentors, and PDCs; and to clarified questions and helped connect the university and school experiences. FLs met monthly to share experiences and practices, review and clarify expectations, align evaluations and practices, problem solve, and discuss upcoming assignments or program due dates.

In accordance with College of Education goals for field-intensive work, FLs developed a list of required and optional work over the course of the academic year. FLs generated the list to capture their range of work and to help future FLs consider ways engage with school partners that were relevant, and reflected their disciplinary expertise. (see Appendix A for FL required and optional roles taken from the Faculty Liaison Handbook).

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants included four PDCs, four FLs, 17 mentor teachers, 19 residents from the 2011-12 academic year, and 12 residents from the 2010-11 academic year to provide a perspective on traditional supervision. Two of the faculty liaisons were participant-researchers in this study. All PDCs and 12 mentors previously worked with supervisors. All PDCs, FLs and current residents volunteered to participate.
Seventeen of 19 mentors volunteered. An email was sent to 18 former residents requesting participation in an open-response survey, the total number of residents for whom investigators could get current email addresses.

**Sources of Data/Instrumentation**

Data collection occurred March through June of 2012. Data sources included open-response anonymous electronic questionnaires and structured individual interviews. We designed open-response surveys and interviews to solicit participants' insights into the similarities and differences between traditional supervision and the FL role—and the benefits and limitation of both roles; the type of work FLs conducted and its impact; and if the FL model should be continued, modified or eliminated.

Open-response questionnaires were administered to current residents (after final evaluations), mentors, and former residents. An electronic format was used to maintain anonymity. In the spring, a link to the questionnaire was emailed to each participant. Questionnaires for current and former residents, and mentors are in Appendices B-D.

We conducted structured individual interviews (Seidman, 1998) with each FL (see Appendix E for interview protocol) and PDC (see Appendix F for interview protocol) in the spring after FLs worked in schools for seven to eight months. FL interviews averaged 45 minutes and PDC interviews ranged from 25 to 40 minutes. The two FL researchers did not interview the PDC with whom they worked, but did interview each other following the structured interview protocol. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. To increase credibility (Glesne, 2005) we sent
each interview participant their transcript and asked them to review the document and provide feedback.

Data analysis occurred through content and comparative analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). We framed the data analysis with the study purpose: how the role was perceived by the various participants, how the role was enacted, benefits and limitation of the FL role, how the FL and supervisor role compared in regards to resident learning, and what/if any impact the FL role had on the school-university partnership. Each researcher independently reviewed all data, constructing independent open codes by comparing incidents and concepts and naming similar phenomenon with the same term (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). We then met to review, discuss and modify initial open codes by referring back to the transcripts, questionnaires and research questions in order to reach consensus on the term applied to the phenomenon. To this end, open codes such as “time”, “trust”, “commitment”, “joint commitment”, “investment”, “distributed responsibilities”, “clarification”, “connection”, “rigor”, and “relationships” were established (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Through ongoing comparative analysis looking for conceptual and experiential similarities and differences represented in the data, we grouped codes into larger concepts from which the following interpretive themes were derived (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994): “A Triangle of Support”: Rigor, Relationships & Investment; “A Bridge between the University and Classroom”: Clarifying and Connecting Learning Experiences”; and “A Far More Hands on and Collaborative Role”: Mutual Engagement.
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To increase trustworthiness, we conducted member checks with a colleague and participants who had experience with the area being explored (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). We shared our analyses and interpretations with the Urban Teacher Residency director who attended FL meetings and closely observed the model. We also tested our analyses and interpretations with FLs who were not research participants and each PDC (PDCs worked most closely with FLs during the current year and supervisors in prior years). PDCs express concerns for mentors' time and not all mentors had experience with both FLs and supervisors, for those reasons member checks with mentors did not occur. To this end, findings were outlined and emailed with requests for feedback, and an offer was made to send the full manuscript.

Results

“A Triangle of Support”: Rigor, Relationships & Investment

Residents spent four days a week in training academies during the academic year. Program expectations for residents included implementing differentiated, rigorous student-centered learning; using formative data to inform instruction; and building collaborative classroom communities. Training academies were in high need settings and residents were going to continue to teach in high need settings as teachers of record. To help them develop their practice, residents received daily coaching and feedback from mentor teachers. Additionally, PDCs provided coaching and feedback at a minimum of once a week. Traditional supervision and the FL role were both intended to provide feedback to help support residents’ development.
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However, data indicate a stark difference between supervisors and FLs in terms of the caliber of feedback provided and relationships established.

Data from open-ended questionnaires indicate eight of the 12 former residents stated that they did not value or typically implement supervisors’ feedback for reasons pertaining to relationships, program knowledge, and rigor. To begin, four residents described superficial relationships with supervisors in which “trust” and “rapport” were absent. These former residents made statements reflecting the following former resident’s opinion, “My supervisor did not really know me...Thus, whatever feedback she offered seemed uninformed or superficial.” Seven former residents maintained that supervisors were “disconnected from the UTR program.” They repeatedly made statements such as “My supervisor didn’t really grasp the UTR program and expectations” and “My supervisor had limited knowledge of my university coursework, and limited knowledge of the community in which I was teaching.” As a result, they responded that feedback did not “align with my goals” or reflect course and program expectations. Eight former residents described supervision as “redundant” and a “waste of time” because feedback was not as robust as what mentors and PDCs provided. Three former residents wrote that they enjoyed talking with their supervisors but that feedback was more emotionally supportive than informative to development. Three noted that supervisors contributed to their professional growth through feedback and discussions based on content and pedagogy.

When PDCs described prior experiences with supervisors in individual interviews, each PDC described frustration with the way supervision was
implemented and did not view supervision as consistently contributing to residents’ readiness to teach in high poverty, high need schools. PDCs reported having a strong level of commitment to residents’ growth. PDCs stated that they knew how challenging residents’ first year of teaching would be and felt a strong sense of “urgency” for improving residents’ practice. PDCs said that while some supervisors “were effective” most did not consistently share their sense of urgency, investment, or expectations. Similarly, one mentor stated, “supervisors are outsiders dropping in and out” while another wrote that the supervisory role pertained to “compliance and certification paperwork.”

In contrast, 16 of 19 current residents stated that FLs’ contributed to their professional development. Sixteen residents explained that FLs’ feedback directly supported their professional development and made statements such as “[FL] was supportive and gave me good feedback” and “gave me productive and meaningful feedback.” One resident reflected, “My liaison was tough, fair, and pushed me to be the best resident I could be.” Two responded that feedback and interactions with FLs were positive, but not as instrumental when compared to their daily interactions with PDCs and mentors. One explained, “It was definitely worthwhile getting an extra set of eyes on my practice. However, the meetings were not long enough to have a huge impact.” Fourteen residents described relationships with FLs as spanning training academies and the university. In their open-response surveys, these residents applied the terms “trust” and “support” when they describes aspects that facilitated their learning. For example one resident explained, “I trust [FL’s]
input. I do believe that part of that trust was built because she was also a professor that I had access to in class and outside of class throughout the year."

When comparing experiences between supervisors and FLs, each PDC noted that FLs demonstrated greater investment in resident learning. In individual interviews, each PDC discussed FL investment in residents’ development and hypothesized that FLs dual role of UTR professor and supervisor contributed to greater investment in residents’ development. Reflective of her colleagues’ statements, one PDC explained, “Liaisons shows greater investment in making sure residents are as well prepared as they possibly can be…. I didn’t feel supervisors were as invested in the outcomes of the residents.” Similarly, another PDC noted, “In my past experience with supervisors, ‘My work is my work, your work is your work’...It was so valuable to have this other person who is also invested in this resident.”

Each PDC and 16 of 17 mentors responded that FLs contributed to residents’ growth by providing a perspective that augmented mentors’ and PDCs’ feedback. One PDC explained:

FL gives another set of eyes on residents’ practice and performance that’s not here every day. Someone with an outside perspective but who is on the same page... It ends up that there’s a triangle of support between the mentor, the PDC, and the FL.

When describing FL feedback mentors made statement such as “[FL] push[ed] residents’ practice” and “[FL] makes suggestions that I may not have thought of or seen.” One mentor stated, “FLs are active participants in the mentoring process that
help residents feel supported from all angles. Multiple voices and perspectives help residents.” Another mentor stated, “[FL] is another active mind seeking to help the resident reach their potential.” Yet, one mentor stated that the FL was not helpful and gave feedback conflicting with the mentor’s stance. One resident also responded that the FL did not contribute to his/her development. Questionnaires included no identifying data, and it is uncertain if the resident and mentor indicating a lack of contribution were paired or not.

Data from FLs’ interviews revealed that the dual role of professor and liaison provided more depth and breadth of knowledge from which they could draw to provide more substantive feedback than they could as supervisors. As FL’s worked with residents on campus an in their training academies, they explained they were able to build more sustained relationships with residents, get to know residents’ needs and goals, and draw from field and campus observations to inform their feedback in order to increase residents’ instructional rigor. Furthermore, because FL’s were well aware that residents received extensive feedback and support from mentors and PDC’s, FL’s said that they sought to ensure that feedback augmented what residents’ received from mentors and PDC. FLs also stated that they sought to understand professional development priorities and mentors’ strengths and goals, and incorporate their course knowledge and context expertise.

“A Bridge between the University and Classroom”: Clarifying and Connecting Learning Experiences

Mentors’ open-response surveys and PDCs’ interview data described their confusion in past years about course and program expectations, and referred to their limited capacity to support the university experience at the training
academies. Data indicate that FLs helped clarify and connect learning experiences in both training academies in university coursework in ways that they had not experienced with a traditional supervisory model.

Twelve of the 17 mentors explained the clarification and connection between school and university experiences and expectations were important roles and/or beneficial FL roles. Mentor responses referred to how “important it was to have the FL as a connection between [university] and the training sites,” that “FL are able to answer questions about the classes residents are taking and what the university expects from them,” and how “[FL] helped clarify what classes the resident was taking and how we could connect to them. We never had that before.” This clarity not only included insights into individual classes, but also a better understanding of the sequence of coursework. Mentors’ statements indicated that understanding the scope and sequence of the university curriculum let them know, “If residents had been exposed to certain things yet or when it was coming,” and subsequently helped mentors determine “how to help [residents] do high quality work.” As one mentor stated, the “FL was a bridge between [the university] and the classroom.” A bridge, that another mentor noted, helped her/him “connect back to university coursework” in planning and discussions with residents. Similarly, each PDC said that FLs were more apt and able, than supervisors, to help residents understand the connection between what was learned on campus and observed in practice. As one PDC stated, “[FL] helps residents make connections where they did not see them.”

When listing benefits and most important roles in open-response surveys, 12 of 19 residents identified connecting school and university experiences. Residents
responded that FLs provided feedback and insights on how to “improve my practice based on the foundation laid at [university],” “clarified the connection between what I was learning at [university] with what I was experiencing at my training academy,” and that “I was able to connect our discussions in class to my actual practice.” As one current resident reflected:

> It was good to have my teaching observed with an academic viewpoint with full knowledge of the theories and concepts I was looking at and discussing in my coursework. It helped me to discuss and coalesce learning from the classroom for use in the classroom (emphasis in original).

Furthermore, when former residents, who had traditional supervision, responded to the questionnaire item soliciting the potential benefits and limitations of having a professor undertake a supervisory role, each replied it would be beneficial. Nine of 12 former residents identified the potential for a stronger connection and integration between coursework and classroom experiences and expectations, and the development of a more holistic picture of the resident drawn from school and university interactions. One former resident explained, “This model could play a role in strengthening professors ability to recognize authentic needs.” While another former resident wrote, “There can be a disconnect between what is being taught at [university] in any given week, and what the reality on the ground is...Professors are simply talking in perfect world scenarios.”

One FL explained how her knowledge of a resident’s class provided a basis for helping a resident understand the nuances of how theory and practice intersect:
Residents can learn about guided reading and you can have a mentor who’s doing guided reading...Guided reading is such that lots of people have different interpretations of how it’s executed, but there are some things that are always at the heart. So sometimes residents will think what I learned about guided reading at [university] and what I’m seeing at my mentor site are totally vastly different things. And it’s like, “Well no, let’s look at the essence. Here’s the essence and here are some pieces where we can look at are the intersections. This is one way of looking at it, here’s another way of looking at it, but let’s focus on the essence.” So sometimes making those connections where the connections don’t appear to be as clear to a novice.

Interview data indicates that FLs’ sustained time in the training academies, in which they were in multiple classrooms, helped them build a knowledge of school-based practices that they could capitalize upon to connect theory and practice. For example, at times FLs noticed that a particular practice or concept taught in university coursework was not implemented in a classroom because of grade level, content area, or other reasons. When this occurred FLs coordinated with mentors and PDC to schedule and/or recommend observations in other rooms to ensure residents had a fuller breadth of experiences.

Each FL noted that observing residents’ successes and challenges provided insights they were able to draw upon to revise assignments and class discussions. One FL elaborated:

We discussed group work in class. From my observations, I knew that many did not implement group work correctly...I brought in resources for
cooperative learning and we practiced doing group roles in all of our group work. This helped them to see that cooperative learning needs to be taught step by step in order to help students to be successful.

Furthermore, FLs said that time spent in classrooms improved their university teaching. For example, each collected samples of student work to use in class to ground concepts in actual practice. Each FL also recalled observing elementary students’ engagement with concepts or content and later referring to those concrete (but anonymous) examples in subsequent classes. As one FL stated, “Because I understand the [school] context, I can integrate it better into my teaching.”

“A Far More Hands on and Collaborative Role”: Mutual Engagement

FL interviews and document review indicates that each FL established predictable patterns for their visits to school sites. For example, one FL was at the school for a half day every Tuesday, while one went every other Thursday. Another set up a Google Calendar to schedule visits in accordance with mentor, PDC, and residents’ needs. PDC and mentor data indicates that there was greater consistency in FL visits, whereas supervisors’ visits appeared to be more ad hoc. It appears the predictable schedule facilitated regular and ongoing dialogue. Each FL explained, and each PDC affirmed, that the predictable and regular schedules were necessary to build and sustain relationships with mentors and PDCs; and to develop a nuanced understanding of the classrooms and training academies with which they worked.

Each PDC independently used the term “collaborative” with respect to the FL role and made comments such as, “We collaborate...that never happened before” and “It’s a partnership and not just, ‘I’m here to do this one thing and then I got to
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go’.” and “We have mutual support and shared responsibility for residents’ professional development.” Seven of 19 mentors described similar experiences in open-ended surveys referring to FLs as “collaborators” and “thought partners”. One mentor explained, “I feel more of a connection to [liaison]. With the supervisor, it felt like the relationship was only between resident and supervisor and was purely evaluative. The FL is a far more hands on and collaborative role.” Another mentor wrote, “There’s a deeper level of involvement and commitment than with supervisors.”

The concept of “trust” was frequently mentioned in PDC and mentor data. Each PDC described how “trusting relationships” were established with FLs that created a context in which authentic collaboration and problem solving could occur. Thirteen of 19 mentors described the salience of trust, either that FLs built trust with residents that fostered resident learning or that FLs established open, respectful relationships with them that made them more comfortable to reach out for ideas, resources, or to “brainstorm.” Each FL also explained that she had a collaborative and comprehensive conceptualization of their role, that she was there to work with and support mentors, PDCs and residents, and that relationship building with mentors and PDCs was an essential part of their work.

Mentors and PDCs also described a more engaged stance to the school based work than what they previously experienced. Ten of 19 mentors explained that FLs provided support for them that went beyond the work with residents such as facilitating professional connections, regularly working with groups of students, procuring resources, and brainstorming around mentors’ content area and
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pedagogic goals. PDCs stated that FLs procured resources PDCs could use on site for resident and mentor development, collaborated on site based professional development and university course design, provided research, and brainstormed ideas for site improvement such as inquiry-based science or strengthening the middle school model. Consistently, each PDC described the FL role as an improvement, in part, because FLs undertook more expansive and collaborative role “as opposed to the supervisor who feels plopped in for a really narrow purpose.”

FLs also stated they benefitted from this collaboration. Each FL said she enjoyed drawing upon her expertise to help mentors and PDCs address questions or challenges and contribute to the school as a whole. FLs explained that they also benefitted from PDCs’ and mentors’ knowledge. Three FLs attended professional development sessions PDCs and/or mentors conducted. One FL and mentor established standing appointments around innovative technology use in the classroom so that the FL could learn from this mentor’s extensive knowledge base.

Two of the FLs who were tenure track faculty began to explore collaborative research projects with mentors or PDCs. These FLs said that they were concerned that time in the field as FLs would detract from research opportunities, but found that as relationships were established, interest and opportunity appeared to open. FLs explained the role was more comprehensive, but more meaningful than traditional supervision. As one FL summarized, “the FL role is an expanded role from supervision. It’s not just supporting residents, but it’s also supporting an entire site, which would really reflect supporting a partnership.”
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Each FL explained that load allocation was equitable and being placed at one school to work with all residents as opposed to multiple sites allowed her to work with school constituents at greater depth. Each FL also stated that she appreciated the sense of being on a team, rather than the sense of being “disconnected” often felt in traditional supervision. Each FL explicated that she felt a greater sense of camaraderie and professional collaboration that made her want to engage more comprehensively, these aspects coupled with fair load allocation were key factors in why each FL stated they would continue in the role if it were to be maintained.

Discussion

Participants in this study explained that embedding university faculty in school contexts in lieu of traditional supervision more extensively supported resident learning both in the field and in university coursework. Furthermore the FL role contributed to collaborative relationships between school and campus-based teacher educators that had previously been lacking. FLs explicated that the work was more complex, but that it was also more rewarding. The following discussion analyzes why the FL role was more conducive to learning and collaboration and provides insights to promote full time faculty engagement in field-based teacher education.

To begin, FLs worked with stakeholders in one school over the course of an academic year. This provided sustained time to understand school and classroom contexts, and develop collaborative relationships with mentors and PDCs at much greater depth than if FLs were traveling to multiple sites. Furthermore, FLs dual role, campus and field-based teacher educators, provided increased opportunities to
develop deeper relationships with residents and insights into their needs. FLs were therefore able to coalesce and focus their time and energy to contribute more extensively to resident learning and engage with school-based teacher educators. As such, the FL role reflects research calling for faculty’s increased presence in partner schools, collaboration with school-based teacher educators, and responsibility for teacher candidate learning in field settings (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Cucena et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; NCATE, 2010; Wilson, 2006; Zeichner, 2010).

In prior supervisory experiences, survey and interview data indicate that mentors and PDCs felt that there was a lack of parity and investment in residents’ learning. As such, they perceived that they carried most of the responsibility for residents’ growth. In contrast, FLs expanded residents’ opportunities to learn through the interplay of multiple perspectives and the distributed expertise. Importantly, when field and campus-based teacher educators have a shared understanding of each other’s work, they can jointly work to reveal the complexities of practice and ways in which theory and practice intersect. Such alignment has been shown to make a substantive difference in teacher candidate learning, but is also rare in practice (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hammerness et al., 2005; Wang, Spalding, Odell, Klecka & Lin, 2010; Zeichner, 2010).

Embedding university faculty in school settings does not mean that collaboration or improved learning will occur (Wang et al, 2010). Data indicated that PDCs, mentors and residents valued FLs’ perspective (content and teacher education knowledge) but also wanted them to build trust, collaborate, and be supportive. Such findings reflect social learning theories (John-Steiner, 2000;
Wenger, 1998), as it appeared that dispositions of trust, joint commitment, complementary expertise, and mutual engagement were necessary to foster successful learning conditions. To this end, it is important to note that the FL role entails both affective and intellectual dimensions.

Furthermore, engaged faculty roles can help overcome the lack of connection and the fragmentation typically experienced in teacher education programs (Wang et al., 2010; Zeichner, 2010). Mentors, PDCs, current residents, and FLs unanimously stated that the FL role should be maintained. FLs stated that they felt that the FL provided the time, space and context to more holistically and comprehensively support resident learning both in the field and on-campus. FLs also stated that they felt that connecting with all stakeholders at one school enabled them have a more dynamic and engaged role in the field than they previously experienced as supervisors.

Data indicate that the FL role was expanded through collaboration with mentors and PDCs that went beyond a focus on resident development. In each training academy, PDCs, some mentors, and FLs learned with and from each other’s expertise in a range of ways including jointly addressing classroom or school challenges or goals, or collaborating around areas of interest and learning with and from each other’s expertise. Indeed, mentors and PDCs recommendations for change included bringing FLs into schools more frequently and capitalizing more extensively on their expertise. Such engagement can serve to flatten traditional hierarchies (John-Steiner, 2000) that too often exist between schools and
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universities and foster greater collaborative depth, as well as set a foundation for ongoing and expanding collaboration.

The FL model was influenced by the professors in the practicum model (Beck & Kosnik, 2002) and demonstrated similar positive results. Despite positive outcomes, Beck and Kosnick were uncertain of their model's sustainability. Specifically, faculty indicated that the model was time consuming, that they were not adequately compensated for their work, and that the university did not value their investment in field-based learning. As Beck and Kosnik (2002) noted, the negative impact reduces the likelihood of sustainability and reliability. In this manner, Beck and Kosnik's (2002) findings reflect the pervasive academic cultures that devalue full time faculty’s work in school settings as teacher educators (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 2010).

In the FL model presented in this study, the college of education counted FL work as teaching load with one school (five to eight residents) equating to teaching one university class. FLs did indicate that the work required a great deal of involvement and investment, but that they felt personally rewarded and fairly compensated. Indeed, each FL planned to continue in the role if it was maintained. Researchers have stated that that full time faculty need to be rewarded through teaching load reductions or service credit for their engagement in field-based portions of teacher education, and without adequate compensation the status quo of faculty disinvestment will be maintained (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Goodlad, 1990; Slick, 1998; Zeichner, 2010).
Currently, there is a press for field experiences to be the central focus of teacher education (Ball & Forzani, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Lampert, 2010; NACATE, 2010). In this shifting context, colleges and universities should no longer maintain the status quo in which supervision is considered low status and full time faculty refrain from school-based teacher education. To maximize teacher candidate learning in field placements, it is imperative to rethink how full time faculty’s roles and relationships in school-based teacher education are constructed (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Goodlad, 2004; NCATE; 2010; Zeicher, 2010), and to ensure sustainability. While Rogers and Keil (2007) lament that little has changed in the nature of supervision in the last 35 years, this study presents a sustainable model for improving teacher candidate learning and school-university collaboration. If teacher education is to respond to calls for robust field intensive teacher education, bridging the traditional school-university divide through sustainable models is not only imperative but also requires the development of and inquiry into such models. Not doing so will perpetuate what Valencia and colleagues note as “lost opportunities for learning (2009, p. 318).”
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References


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Appendix A

Faculty Liaison FAQ: UTR Partnership

At the Site:
- One formal observation with feedback at least once each lead teach (fall, winter, spring), using Danielson aligned observational tool
- Weekly or bimonthly observations with feedback, using any observational and feedback tool
- Regular check ins with PDC (ideally at each visit or via virtual communication)
- Quick check ins with residents and mentors (ideally at each visit)
- Provide support/problem solve with residents, PDCs and mentors when issues arise
- Contribute to residents’ remediation plans
- Assist residents, mentors and PDC’s with university coursework (clarifying key assignments, course sequences, etc.) and program expectations
- Competency Appraisal meetings (fall, spring)—summative evaluation

Outside of classroom time:
- Review lesson observations done by mentor and/or PDC
- Prepare Competency Appraisals
- Review student work; give input on lesson plans
- Locate resources for residents, mentors, PDCs (when requested)
- Coordinate with other instructors in the UTR program
- Meet monthly with FL Team

Liaisons Professional Development
- Monthly FL meetings

Work connected back to university
- Revising curriculum to connect theory and practice
- Bringing contextualized site-based knowledge back to university that can contribute to course and program re-design
- Building site-based relationships for field-intensive preparation

Optional roles
- Watch and respond to resident videos (when requested)
- Informing school sites about practices occurring in other school settings
- Connecting residents with other residents at different sites
- Providing feedback and suggestions to improve partnership
- Providing research or other resources to residents, mentors and/or PDCs
- Engaging in research with school sites
- Contributing to and/or attend school sites PD initiatives
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Appendix B

Current Resident Questionnaire

1. How often did your liaison visit?
2. What other communication did you have (phone, email, etc.)? How often?
3. What did you typically do when you met?
4. What were the most important roles and/or tasks of the liaison?
5. Were there roles or tasks you felt were unnecessary?
6. Did your liaison impact your development as a resident? If so, how and in what ways? If not, why not?
7. Are there other ways the liaison could have supported your development?
8. What were the benefits of working with your liaison?
9. What were the drawbacks?
10. To what extent did you feel that your liaisons’ advice & expectations were aligned to those of the training academy?
11. What qualities do you think are most important in a liaison?
12. If we bring in new liaisons next year, what advice or suggestions do you have in terms of supporting your learning and development?
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Appendix C

Former Resident Questionnaire

1. How often did your supervisor visit?
2. What other communication did you have (phone, email, etc.)? How often?
3. What did you typically do when you met?
4. What were the most important roles and/or tasks of the supervisor?
5. Were there roles or tasks you felt were unnecessary?
6. Did your supervisor impact your development as a resident? If so, how and in what ways? If not, why not?
7. What were the benefits of working with your supervisor?
8. What were the drawbacks?
9. To what extent did you feel that your supervisor’s advice & expectations were aligned to those of the training academy?
10. This year, we implemented a new model in which full time faculty teaching in the NLU-AUSL program also serve as site-based liaisons in lieu of supervisors. Liaisons collaborate with MRCs and mentors to support and evaluate residents. For example, a liaison may teach reading methods to residents and be the liaison (replacing supervisors) at a training academy. What are your thoughts on the benefits and drawbacks of this model?
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Appendix D

Mentor Questionnaire

1. Have you worked with a traditional supervisor? If so, please respond to the following:
   a. In what ways do you see the role of the liaison being similar and/or different from a traditional supervisor’s role?
   b. What are the benefits of the liaison role in comparison to the traditional supervisor?
   c. What are the drawbacks?
2. What are the most important roles and/or tasks of the liaison?
3. Were there unnecessary roles or tasks?
4. Has the liaison done anything to support you as a mentor?
5. Does the liaison’s work with residents supporting their learning and practice? If so, how and in what ways? If not, why not?
6. Were there any challenges (expected and/or unexpected) as they pertain to the faculty liaison role?
7. Would you recommend maintaining the liaison role next year? Why/why not?
8. Do you suggest any changes for the role?
Appendix E

Faculty Liaison Interview Protocol

1. What drew you to become a liaison?
2. Have you been a traditional supervisor?
   a. In what ways do you see the role of the liaison being similar or different from that of supervisor?
3. How would you define the role of the faculty liaison?
4. What are the most important roles and/or tasks of the liaison?
5. Were there unnecessary roles or tasks?
6. Were there roles or tasks that you felt were particularly valuable?
7. Are there roles you didn't have but would consider valuable?
8. Describe a typical visit to a training academy.
9. Approximately how much time per week did you spend on this role (average)? Was the time allotted adequate to do the tasks required?
10. Describe some of the work you do outside of your visits.
11. In what ways do you feel your work with residents supported their learning and practice? If so, how and in what ways? If not, why not? Is that similar to or different from your prior supervisory work?
12. In what ways do you work with MRCs? Is that similar to or different from your prior supervisory work?
13. In what ways did you work with mentors? Is that similar to or different from your prior supervisory work?
14. What, if any, unexpected roles or tasks did you undertake?
15. Were there any challenges (expected and/or unexpected) as they pertain to the FL role? Prompt if needed
16. Has being a liaison impacted the coursework you teach at NLU?
17. Were you able to bring your own areas of expertise to your work as a liaison?
   If so, what? If not, why not?
18. What have been your most important insights about being a liaison in a training academy?
19. What advice would you give to others who are interested in becoming a faculty liaison?
20. Would you recommend maintaining the liaison role next year? Why/why not?
21. Do you recommend changes to the role?
22. Would you want to be a FL again next year? Why or why not? What would you similarly and differently?
Appendix F

PDC Interviews

1. Did you work with a supervisor previously as a PDC?
   a. In what ways do you see the role of the liaison being similar or different from the supervisor?
   b. Ask about benefits and drawbacks to the role
2. How often do you meet with the liaison for your site?
3. What other communication do you have (phone, email) and how often?
4. What do you typically do when you meet?
5. What are the most important roles and/or tasks of the liaison?
6. Were there unnecessary roles or tasks?
7. Has the liaison done anything to support you as a PDC? If PDC worked with supervisors, ask: Is that similar to or different from your work with supervisors?
8. Can you describe how the liaison at your site worked with residents?
9. Can you describe how the liaison at your site worked with mentors?
10. If PDC worked with supervisors in the past ask: Do you think the liaison added value to residents’ learning in ways beyond what a supervisor would?
11. Would you recommend maintaining the liaison role next year? Why/why not?
12. Do you recommend changes to the role?
13. If we move forward with new liaisons next year, what advice or suggestions do you have in terms of supporting your role and a mentor and residents’ learning?