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SUPERVISORS' ROLES AND VOICES:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FOUR UNIVERSITY
SUPERVISORS' WORK WITH PRESERVICE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

by

Linda DuBois Davey

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Leslie R. Williams, Sponsor
Professor Celia Genishi

Approved by the Committee on
the Degree of Doctor of Education

Date OCT 8 2001

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education in
Teachers College, Columbia University

2001

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ABSTRACT

SUPERVISORS' ROLES AND VOICES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FOUR UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS' WORK WITH PRESERVICE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Linda DuBois Davey

Within the usual field experience triad of student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor, it is the supervisory role that has received least attention. The university supervisor is infrequently central to studies, and in previous research, much remains unknown about who supervisors are, what they do, or what their influences may be on student teachers' learning. This gap is particularly salient given the fact that it is only the university supervisor who, research indicates, gives critical feedback to the student teacher. Additionally, differences in supervision as they address the ages of children taught is rarely differentiated in the literature.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the backgrounds, beliefs, practices, reflections, and recommendations of four university supervisors of preservice student teachers as they each worked with a student teacher in two different elementary grade placements to determine how these supervisors defined their roles and responsibilities, what their focus was in post-observation conferences, and in what ways, if any, their practices differed in grade placements below and above third grade. An interview and two post-observation conferences were videotaped, and each supervisor reflectively reviewed one of her conferences. "Style and approach" and "focus" of supervision were coded across the two post-observation conferences. From

analysis of this and other data, several themes emerged. Supervisors tended to loosely follow the clinical supervision model in practice while espousing the collaborative approach. They focused most frequently on issues of student teacher reflection, lesson planning, and children's learning. They did not articulate how they differentiated supervisory practice along children's developmental levels, although they incorporated such awareness into practice.

Recommendations for teacher education included further articulation of early childhood education within elementary education student teaching, opportunities for supervisors to observe other supervisors in practice, encouragement of cognitive dissonance during student teaching to enhance learning, extension of university mentoring into first-year teaching, and a new title for supervisors. Further recommendations noted the need for more research on supervision of preservice student teachers that includes perspectives and voices of supervisors, and research on the knowledge, practices, and dispositions that student teachers display outside the planned lesson format.

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that the events of September 11, 2001, will eventually enlarge your humanity and not diminish it.

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L. D. D.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This study explored how four university supervisors of preservice elementary student teachers performed and thought about their work. From both observation of practice and reflection on that practice, supervisors' roles and responsibilities, as well as their attitudes toward that work, were examined.

The focus, the format, even the very need for teacher education, have increasingly come into question in recent years. School reform movements, motivated by the overwhelming public impression of school failure, have sought ways to improve schooling by examining existing practices, including the ways we educate our teachers (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986, 1990, 1995).

While most of these reform movements have called for increased field experience for students during their initial preparation (Berliner, 1985; Cruickshank & Armaline, 1986), there have been questions raised concerning the effectiveness of field experience and lack of a clear framework or set of goals to guide that experience (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). Considering the importance given to field experience, especially student teaching, and how frequently it has been studied, surprisingly little is actually known about the student teaching experience itself or the way it may influence how a student learns to teach (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 1983, 1990; Glickman & Bey, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Within the usual field experience triad of student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor, it is the supervisory role that has perhaps received the least attention (Griffin & Edwards, 1981; Waite, 1994; Zimpher, 1987). Even in the most recent *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Sikula, Buttery, & Guyton, 1996, pp. 178-179), the university supervisor, as a specific topic, received little more than a single page; and almost all of the research quoted was more than 10 years old.

Rationale

The university supervisor is infrequently central to studies (Griffin & Edwards, 1981), and much remains unknown about what supervisors do or what their influences may be on student teachers' learning (Borko & Mayfield, 1995). This gap is particularly salient given the fact that it has been generally indicated in the research that within the practicum triad, it is only the university supervisor who gives critical feedback to the student (Friebus, 1977; Zimpher, deVoss, & Nott, 1980); and findings suggest that intensive "clinical guidance" in learning to teach is extremely important to the effectiveness of beginning teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995).

Concurrent with these concerns is the rapid increase in our understanding of the importance of the early childhood years, which are generally agreed to extend through the third grade of elementary school. Little actual research of practicum supervision in early childhood teacher education per se has been reported. Although Saracho (1993) theorizes that the general knowledge on practice should be applicable to early childhood teacher education, since field experiences and student teaching seem to have

a universal quality to them, there has been increasing concern that "early childhood teachers may have an even greater influence on their pupils than do teachers of any other level" (Spodek & Saracho, 1990, p. viii).

Katz and Goffin (1990), for example, point out that the characteristics of young children require major teaching competencies in interactive skills. Such focus, they state, requires, among other things, specific feedback from supervisors of student teachers. Considering the fact that the typical elementary teaching credential, covering pre-kindergarten through grade 6, entitles holders to teach in schools where the population is heavily weighted to the early childhood years (usually defined as birth through age 8), it is notable that the literature on elementary teacher education really does not address the needs of the young child in any meaningful way.

Most of the reforms coming out of the early 1980s urged changes in the way we educate teachers at all levels, including the way we frame field experience. It seems unlikely that these reforms can influence the probability that student teaching will actually be teacher education, as has been proposed, unless more attention is paid to the process of university supervision.

Waite (1994) suggests that research is needed to address how supervision is understood. Borko and Mayfield (1995) urge teacher education programs to rethink the role of the university supervisor since "student teaching in general, and guided teaching relationships in particular, are critical sites for the implementation of any educational reform agenda" (p. 502), a notion Dewey (1904, 1964) himself advocated. McIntyre, Byrd, and Foxx (1996) encourage teacher educators to improve the questions they ask to validate what they do in field experience. Most telling perhaps is the fact that we are still asking today the same questions that puzzled Wilhelms six decades ago: What is supervision? What is supervision for? (Bolin, 1987).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the voices of four university supervisors of elementary education preservice student teachers as they went about their work. It examined the beliefs, practices, reflections, and recommendations these supervisors express about their roles, responsibilities, and focus as they each worked with a student in two different elementary grade placements within their one semester student teaching experience, and it attempted to determine if these supervisors differed in their approach to placements above and below third grade. These concerns were represented in three research questions that guided the study:

1. How do four university supervisors of elementary student teachers define their roles and responsibilities in the education of preservice teachers?
2. What is the focus of supervisory practice for each of the four supervisors?
3. In what ways, if any, do the practices of these supervisors differ as they work with a student teacher in third grade placements and below as compared to their work with the same student teacher in placements above third grade?

Definitions

Several of the terms used repeatedly in this paper have multiple meanings within the field. Sometimes the applications are more general than would be helpful in clarifying the paper's focus. For this reason the following definitions have been used:

1. "Supervisor" is narrowly defined here to mean the university faculty person who oversees and evaluates the student teaching experience of students enrolled in an elementary teacher education program. Such definition

excludes both in-service supervision of staff and supervision duties assigned to others, such as the cooperating teacher, whether such duties are being semantically discussed or arise from a particular program organization that ties both roles to a single person. Literature that does not make distinctions and seems important to a clear understanding of the field was included. It should also be clarified that a common definition of supervision in general is lacking within the field (Alfonso & Firth, 1990; Bolin, 1987).

2. "Student teaching" or "practicum" is used to indicate the culminating field experience of the teacher education sequence, and does not refer to those classroom experiences normally described as either early field experience or participant-observation.
3. "Cooperating teacher" indicates the classroom teacher to whose class the student teacher is assigned and whose duties entail those usually associated with the role rather than any alternative conceptions. References within the literature referring to the supervising teacher are presumed to refer to the cooperating teacher.
4. "Triad" is used when referring to the three traditional roles of student teacher, university supervisor, and cooperating teacher whose intersecting relationships usually define the typical student teaching experience. "Dyad" is used when describing experiences between the supervisor and the student teacher, unless otherwise noted.
5. The "voice" of the supervisor is defined to mean that in this study, the university supervisor is given the opportunity to be heard in her own words as much as possible. Frequently within the literature, actions of supervisors and interpretations about those actions are reported on by third persons. By

soliciting first-person accounts and reflections from supervisors themselves, it is hoped that a more authentic representation of supervision is portrayed and explored.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Somewhere between the dream of education and the nightmare of its daily grind, we lose and find teacher education. (Britzman, 2000, p. 201)

It is lamentable that within teacher education literature, research specific to preservice supervision has been sporadic, with many areas left uncovered. (Glickman & Bey, 1990). Kato (1993) tells us that “articles presenting findings based on empirical research on teacher education have not been focused on university supervisors of student teachers to any significant degree” (p. 2). At the same time, it is difficult to untangle literature meaningful to this study from universal statements about the larger field of supervision, since there is no single definition of a supervisor (Alfonzo & Firth, 1990; Bolin, 1987). Holland (1998) reports that “as a practice with no statement of standards, supervision is characterized by processes and techniques that reflect both practical expediency and intellectual anarchy” (p. 397). After limiting the definition of supervision for the purposes of this study, this review of the literature addresses three general areas: the history of supervision in pre-service teacher education, a theoretical framework for supervision, and research on the university supervisor.

As a field of practice, supervision “remains one that is full of controversy and uncertainty” (Harris, 1998, p. 1) and by its nature extends far beyond the scope of this

review. Attempting to keep the discussion limited to those aspects of the literature that are relevant to pre-service field supervision in teacher education can be a frustrating experience. Without a single definition, it is unwise to expect reliable universal statements about approaches, attitudes, and outcomes that cross different supervisory positions. Nor can generalizations easily be made from a history of the research, since there have been too few replicated or longitudinal studies to warrant such statements. Additionally, supervision is rarely observed except by those who are actually involved in the process (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982).

This study examined how university supervisors view their roles, their responsibilities, and the focus of their work with preservice elementary education student teachers and whether any differences emerged from an analysis of how they supervise student teachers in placements below third grade as compared to those above third grade. The following literature review presents both an overview of the field and a specific sampling of recent literature which underlie the rationale for this study.

One quickly discovers that the word *supervision* is most often used in the general literature to connote supervision in public schools (in-service supervision of teachers) or even supervision of employees not related to the education field. While some of this work may obviously be applied to pre-service teacher education, it most often speaks to issues that touch only tangentially on teacher education and/or overlooks the unique qualities of the student teacher-supervisor relationship.

Conversely, when one examines teacher education literature for information on pre-service supervision, literature exclusive to supervision is limited. Instead, a range of work is uncovered that in many cases only touches upon the specific topic. In the case of general supervision literature, this lack of attention to the pre-service education of teachers is in some ways understandable because issues of supervision cut across so

many disciplines and subjects and because it can be utilized for very different reasons. It is not as clear, however, why there has been such oversight within the teacher education literature, although Schoonmaker, Sawyer, and Brainard (1998) suggest that pressure on teacher educators for promotion, tenure, and status within the academy has channeled research into what many consider more “legitimate” areas of scholarship: “Flight from those areas most closely aligned with practice has robbed field-based studies such as teacher preparation and supervision of intellectual energy and focus” (p. 113).

However, during field experience, and student teaching in particular, what some would call “the central issue” for teacher education unfolds in some unique ways. As students begin to apply their theoretical frameworks and individual philosophies in real classrooms with individual children, they explore the ethereal but nonetheless critical connections between theory and practice--or what Freire (1993) referred to as *praxis*.

It is within field work, and most dramatically in student teaching, that pre-service teachers begin to reflectively construct their approach to practice. The current practice-theory debate explores these constructs as emanating from a bottom-up perspective of practice to theory or vice versa. Williams (1996), in reviewing the literature pertinent to such a discussion, infers that it would be difficult not to conclude that pre-service students begin their theory building on a complex foundation that connects their individual life views and experiences. Yet she questions whether the bottom-up or top-down view can truly exist in isolation “or whether they are a unitary, fundamentally transactional process”(p. 166). She discusses findings that highlight the critical significance of the underlying beliefs that students bring with them (Pajares, 1992, and others) and the power of shared conversation in enabling academic knowledge to become apparent in practice (Kontos & Johnson, 1990).

Williams (1996) reports that although "dilemmas of real world teaching" (p. 166) were found to favorably impact on teaching behaviors (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994; Raines, 1991), they seem to confound easy transfer from conceptual dialogue into practice. A closer examination of the process of supervision within student teaching may reveal additional potential for such social construction of knowledge that can help bridge this transfer. While Williams reminds us of the concerns that have been raised about the apparent perception in many studies that good practice necessitates changing the student's initial beliefs, there would seem to be an equally significant problem. Are students' inherent beliefs about good practice that are congruent with the program of preparation equally at risk of being washed out during initial practice?

In tandem with this concern, Ben-Peretz (2001) reminds us that student teachers, like teachers, might not be fully aware of the realities of their teaching actions. "These blind spots might create dissonance between their declared beliefs and their actual practice" (p. 53). The supervisor of student teachers would seem to be well placed to provide support during critical periods in the transfer of beliefs to practice as well as with collaborative encouragement of the reflective analysis that could help students articulate their beliefs and understandings about such transfer.

Historical Perspectives on Supervision in Pre-Service Teacher Education

In order to trace the development of supervision, it is important to keep in mind that in the United States, the history of instructional supervision has had a direct correlation to periods of organization and instructional management (Glickman & Bey, 1990). Bolin (1987) refers to the writings of Philbrick and Edison in the late 19th century for examples of early definitions of supervision. While in these definitions we

see no allusion to pre-service teacher education and an emphasis instead on the roles of inspector and critic, within a very few years descriptions of supervision in teacher-education model schools appeared, including reference to weekly discussions of lessons (Hughes, 1982). The supervisor's role, as outlined by the Oswego school, included elements of critique but also of modeling, positive encouragement, and sensitivity to the obtrusiveness inherent in the supervisory position (Dearborn, 1925).

In 1920, the National Association of Supervisors of Student Teaching was founded. Through meetings and publications, this organization debated optimal practices in clinical experience in teacher education and in this way has significantly impacted the field (Hughes, 1982). However, many would consider the Flowers report of 1948 as a more significant development in the evolution of field practice (Conant, 1963). Created to study the standards for student teaching, the Flowers committee, among other things, outlined this set of principles to guide laboratory experiences:

1. The contributions of laboratory experience are: (1) an opportunity to implement theory, (2) helps the student see the need for further study and (3) the opportunity to explore with the student his/her functioning in teacher-learning situations.
2. The experiences should be planned in terms of the needs of the student.
3. Guided contact with a variety of individuals is important in laboratory experiences.
4. The student should have the opportunity to participate in all important phases of a teacher's activities.
5. Laboratory experiences should be developed cooperatively by students and advisors.
6. The experiences should be integrated with the rest of the education program.
7. Evaluation of laboratory experience should be broad based and functional.

8. Physical facilities should be adequate to provide a broad range of experiences.
9. The laboratory experiences should be developed to recognize the continuity of pre-service and in-service education. (in Hughes, 1982, p. 14)

As the demand for teachers grew during the 1950s and 1960s, the use of public schools for practice teaching became the norm, and more formal agreements between school districts and education schools were created (Hughes, 1982). In 1961, the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEPS) of the National Education Association published recommendations, including guidelines for student teaching (Lindsey, 1961).

Among their proposals was the belief that student teaching should be expertly supervised by both representatives from the college and the field situation. This was further fleshed out in Conant's (1963) report, *The Education of American Teachers*, where, among other things, he called for improving the selection and status of both the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. In terms of the supervisor, who he termed a "clinical professor," Conant envisioned "a master of teaching methods and materials; he must also be up to date on advances in the educational sciences and how to apply this knowledge to the concrete work in which his student teacher is involved" (p. 62).

Conant argued that supervisors, while having the salary and status of other professors, should contribute to the education school by their skills in practice and supervision rather than through scholarship, but it was Andrews (1964) who clearly formulated the specific roles both connecting and separating the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. His dual supervision model prescribed that the supervisor work "primarily through the classroom teacher, meanwhile observing the

student teacher a few times, holding follow-up conferences, running the campus seminar, and deciding on the final grade" (p. 55).

It is this model which has continued to dominate our conception of the student teaching "triad" and which has, through its lived realities, created some intrinsic frustrations for the university supervisor as exemplified by such works as *Supervision: A Reluctant Profession* (Mosher & Purpel, 1972), *Supervisors and Teaching: A Private Cold War* (Blumberg, 1974), and *A Beggar in Both Worlds: A Supervisor in the Schools and the University* (Fulwiler, 1996). Several scholars have attempted to improve the process of supervision by describing the conceptual frameworks involved.

Theoretical Frameworks

As recently as 1990, Guyton and McIntyre deplored the lack of a theoretical framework or common objectives for the development and implementation of field experience in teacher education. This observation was reaffirmed by Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik's 1990 study of teacher education programs throughout the country and is reflected in the wider view of the supervision field as well. Bolin (1987) reminds us that philosophical differences about the nature and purpose of supervision have continued unabated through the years, stating in 1988 that scholars in the field, "almost without exception," are concerned about a lack of theoretical perspective in supervision (p. 305). This need for a stronger theoretical base upon which to build supervisory practice was long called for with little direct results (Rorer, 1942; Shores, 1967; Wilson et al., 1969).

Defining the field's parameters and roles has been problematic for many reasons, but it is compounded by the fact that supervisors themselves are very much practice-

oriented, which is to say they are less concerned with the theoretical underpinnings of their work. Glanz (1995) laments, "Most articles in major publications that supervisors subscribe to, such as *Educational Leadership*, *NASSP Bulletin*, *NAESP Bulletin*, and the *Journal of School Leadership*, are highly prescriptive; only a few deal with theoretical postulates" (p. 103).

For supervisors of student teachers, at least, the problem may lie in the very words we label them by. Alfonzo (1998) reminds us that the question has been raised as to whether supervision of student teachers should actually be viewed as *teaching* rather than *supervision* (p. 339). While the distinction seems to have received only passing discussion, perhaps the ineffective fit of "supervision of student teaching" to the larger field of supervision could help explain the obvious lack of attention to the unique process of student teacher supervision that can be observed in most major works within the field. (The first edition of *A Handbook of Research on School Supervision*, for example, was published in 1998. Of 1,273 pages, only 20 were devoted to supervision in teacher education.) That being said, we must draw from the theoretical frameworks that do currently exist.

While individuals have frequently framed their views of supervision idiosyncratically--Cogan, clinical; Glickman, developmental; Gitlin, horizontal; Eisner, artistic; Sergiovanni, practical mindshapes; Smyth, collaborative and critical; and Flinders, culturally responsive (Holland, 1989; Short, 1995)--a number of approaches to the practice of supervision have been expressed triadically, and in several cases make use of some of the same theoretical perspectives.

Glickman (1985) labels his orientations *experimentalism*, *essentialism*, and *existentialism*. May and Zimpher (1986), on the other hand, use the terms *positivist*, *phenomenological*, and *critical*, while Holland (1988) refers to *empirical*,

interpretative, and *critical inquiry*. Bolin (1987) separates definitional frameworks into the *scientific*, the *developmental*, and the *democratic*. Within these orientations, the focus of inquiry can vary considerably.

Orientations that categorize themselves as scientific, positivist, empirical, or experimental, for example, usually postulate that the focus of work with teachers should be scientifically-derived elements, behaviors, and competencies about instruction. Common assumptions are that outside forces determine standards, that there are established practices to which to conform, and that mandates are handed down by those in authority. Predetermined guidelines and a hierarchical view presuppose that the supervisor is the conveyor of essential wisdom to the supervisee and can do so in an efficient and effective manner.

Another viewpoint reflected in several orientations situates the individual teacher as the focus of supervision rather than a system, and sees knowledge not as handed down but as co-constructed in the process of working together. This orientation sees the supervisee as an active participant in framing her or his own growth and encourages interaction and communication as well as sensitivity and insight. The approach has been described as "emancipatory" and "demystifying" (Soltis, 1984) as it seeks to bring issues to conscious consideration.

Still another orientation frees the supervisor from usual methods of supervision as it encourages the two people involved to experiment in mutually acceptable ways to improve classroom instruction (Glickman & Bey, 1990). Soltis (1984) describes this orientation as "inquiry into human intersubjective meaning so that we can understand how education initiates us into culture" (p. 9), a view that would seem to fit the Vygotskian perspective of learning as well (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978).

Regardless of the framework utilized, however, there is limited understanding of how supervisors influence change in student teaching behaviors (McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996). The current move away from quantitative models toward a more naturalistic inquiry that values knowledge of interpersonal relationships may help us unravel the complexities of supervision, and thereby enhance our understanding of the processes involved as well as clarify interpretive analysis.

In the meantime, a brief description of some conceptual frameworks can help us begin to investigate the supervision of student teachers. Duffy (1995) states that there are two paradigms of supervision in the field of education. The first, clinical supervision, is primarily espoused in the literature and has given birth to many varied conceptions. The second is supervisor-as-inspector or performance evaluation, which is primarily practiced in the schools. Included next is a review of the clinical supervision model and two variations in this approach, developmental supervision, and horizontal evaluation. A brief review of both adult developmental theory and sociocultural theory is also included as a way to frame supervision within a larger context. Due to the complex, overlapping nature of much of what has been written in the field, these categories are not intended to be mutually exclusive. Frequently, they reflect aspects of more than one of the perspectives described earlier; and some, like clinical supervision, have been interpreted by different criteria at different times. Tracy (1998) notes that definitional criteria in the field of instructional supervision even extend to questions of whether varieties of research and practice should be classified as *models* or *approaches* (p. 80). Schoonmaker et al. (1998) refer to gray areas as “the untidy complexity of the field” (p. 122) and state that nowhere are such “complexities and contradictions ... more apparent than they are in studies of the clinical supervision model” (p. 123).

Clinical Supervision

Glickman and Bey (1990) report that the model referred to in most research studies of direct supervision (those that focus on direct, one-to-one instructional work with teachers) is some version or variant of clinical supervision. Although there is no standard definition of what clinical supervision is, the term is generally agreed to have been coined by Cogan in 1973 to describe a type of supervision that invites teachers to be active participants in their own evaluation and improved performance (Spellman & Jacko, 1988). This marks a turning away from the practice of administrative monitoring (Waite, 1992).

The method originally proposed an eight-step plan, which seems to have been most frequently reduced to a five-stage sequence composed of pre-observation conference, observation, analysis and strategy, supervisory conference, and post-conference analysis (Goldhammer et al., 1980), with behavioral content varying according to the mutually identified purpose (Caruso & Fawcett, 1986). These steps were taken as a "how to" format initially and later began to be utilized as a philosophical approach (Spellman & Jacko, 1988). Generally, discussions about clinical supervision utilize the same five-step sequence (Acheson & Gall, 1987; Glickman, 1985; Goldhammer, 1966; Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1980), but some have been critical of this adherence to a mechanistic approach and argue that clinical supervision is not a format but a concept (Garman, 1986; Smyth, 1989).

Cogan's original view advocated a focus on the procedural goals of supervision, such as collegial supervisory relationships and the rational analysis of behavior. It also encouraged collaboration and direct observation as a way to achieve these goals, but the objectives of his model tend to be of a rather amorphous and ambiguous nature (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982), inviting conflicting styles and interpretations or even "lock-step" imitation. While Cogan wrote at a time when most educational inquiry was

grounded in what Schon (1983) called the traditional rational-technical approach to theory and practice, and his own stated intention implied an empirical orientation seeking a behavioral change, the ensuing paradigm shift that acknowledged and encouraged more interpretive methods has been discernible in much subsequent practice of Cogan's model and even within interpretations of Cogan's own work (Holland, 1988).

In addition, Cogan's work stands out in that it marks the introduction of *analysis* to the work of supervision and in this way it breaks from previous approaches that were based on *inspection* (Sullivan, 1980). Schoonmaker et al. (1998) remind us that while much has been written concerning this model, a great deal of it tends to be speculative, theoretical, or conceptual, with little actual research to support its potential. Nonetheless, the basic tenets of clinical supervision (the face-to-face format, the emphasis on collaborative analysis, rational reflection and collegiality, and a modified five-step approach) still tend to be reflected in most of the supervisory processes that take place in field placements today.

Developmental Supervision

Another model evolving from the work on clinical supervision is Glickman's developmental supervision model (Glickman, 1981, 1990; Glickman & Gordon, 1987). Glickman sees his approach as a tool for promoting teacher thinking by adapting the approach of the supervisor to each teacher's conceptual level. It extends the tasks of supervisors to include, among other things, shared governance and action research (Waite, 1992). It also presents a model that supervisors can utilize in order to diagnose stages of the conceptual thought and commitment of each individual teacher in the attempt to improve instruction.

It does this through three approaches: the directive, collaborative, and non-directive. When the supervisor uses a directive orientation, tasks are defined, standards are set, and actions that fit these standards are reinforced. By making suggestions in a non-confrontational manner, the supervisor may help her/his behavior seem less controlling. The collaborative orientation can be seen in supervisors who listen, problem solve with the supervisee, and negotiate outcomes so that agreement for future direction is reached in mutually acceptable ways. While the non-directive approach encourages individual responsibility for growth and development in the supervisee, a supervisor using this orientation attempts to facilitate growth through encouragement, clarification, and, again, listening. These orientations are non-competitive in terms of validity; each is part of a continuum, and usage should be determined through the assessment of the developmental characteristics of the teacher involved and then matched to the appropriate supervisory approach (Caruso & Fawcett, 1986).

Supervisors using Glickman's model can choose one strategy over the other by determining two developmental characteristics in supervisees: level of job commitment (drawing from literature on adult development and teacher career development), and the ability to think abstractly (derived from cognitive theory) (Burden, 1986). A supervisor can work well with the non-directive style if a student functions at a high level on both. Conversely, a teacher who functions low in both these areas would benefit most from the directive approach, while a supervisee high in one and low in the other works most effectively with a collaborative style of supervision, according to Glickman.

Acknowledging that this model articulates better with inservice teacher supervision than with preservice student supervision, it does, nonetheless, promote a

recognition of developmental differences that can also be applied to student teachers. If we can accept the fact that each individual is different, sometimes in important ways, then we can also recognize the importance of supporting each person's development differently and planning for ways to do this most effectively.

Although this model represents progress in the field, it still does not address the complexities of schooling, nor the contextual or situational factors that are so important to an understanding of the interacting forces at play in the learning process (Waite, 1992).

Horizontal Evaluation

In responding to what he perceived of as competency-based models of supervision utilizing “vertical” ranking of student teachers from best to worst, Gitlin (1981) proposed an approach that aimed at evaluating the individual growth and development of the teacher that he calls *horizontal*. Rather than focus on the technical aspects of teaching, this approach offers supervisors a process for feedback that aims (1) to illuminate the relationship between intent and practice, and (2) to help student teachers expand and question the goals that guide their practice. Gitlin points out that when supervisors confine the scope of their feedback strictly to the congruence between the student teacher’s stated intent and actual practice, they may miss opportunities for expanding the student’s understandings into concerns about intent and practice the student teacher may be neglecting. Intents, says Gitlin, may not always be justified, especially as they reflect the ethical, moral, and political implications of teaching. Addressing only discrepancies between intent and practice may not “help student teachers expand the educational framework that would guide their practice and aid in the investigation of further ways to link theory and practice” (p. 49). When used in a comparative analysis of case studies, horizontal evaluation was determined to have

the potential to “go beyond an exchange of ‘tricks of the trade’ by helping student teachers develop a framework to reflect on practice and understand, in a more complete way, their influence on students” (Gitlin, Ogawa, & Rose, 1984, p. 52).

Gitlin proposes that the supervisor use both the planning session, lesson observation, and the critique period as opportunities to help student teachers reflect on the relationship of goals to practice through questioning and reflection. Three strategies are offered to accomplish this:

- (1) Use a historical perspective. This approach encourages a student to view goals within a larger framework to see if they fit his or her “personal rationale” and to then consider what implications this might have for practice.
- (2) Provide alternatives to the student teacher’s practice. Supervisors should utilize examples from intent and/or practice to expand thinking about possibilities by questioning rationale or suggesting modifications of intent. The unique aspect of this strategy is that it clarifies “the relationship between intent and practice instead of simply suggesting different ways to approach practice” (p. 49).
- (3) Use language analysis. When supervisors help students unpack the understandings that their language conveys through questioning strategies, they help illuminate for the student teacher how the “use of particular language may influence the rationale for various intents and practices” (p. 49).

Gitlin also outlined three techniques to help student teachers re-think and modify intents:

- (1) Interrelationship between categories of intents. Student teachers, for example, may have stated long-term goals that are incongruent with specific short-term intents represented in their practice. Foregrounding issues of incongruence for the student can stimulate further analysis of intents.
- (2) Relatedness of intent within a category. Supervisors may be able to pick up inconsistencies within either short-term or long-term goals and, by questioning students about such contradictions, can encourage rethinking and modification of intents.
- (3) Dilemma. In this technique, the supervisor poses a dilemma that contrasts one of the student teacher's intents with a rationale for an opposing or different intent. The purpose is not to get the student to accept the conflicting intent, but rather to help the student re-think, defend, and understand the philosophical, ethical, and political implications embedded in a particular intent, as well as how political, ethical, and moral issues are reflected in practice generally.

The horizontal approach is also intended to be used as an evaluative tool. Students' growth can be assessed by their ability to clearly state goals that not only represent a broad scope of educational issues, but that also reflect the student's understanding of what is possible. The supervisor is guided in this model to evaluate student teachers on their ability to actualize intents in practice and to be self-critical. It is difficult to learn how to step back from practice and view actions in relation to the classroom. It is more difficult still to take these observations and analyze them critically. Supervisors who probe student teachers' thinking as they relate their goals to practice facilitate reflection on practice in a way that can impact teaching.

This approach encourages critical thinking and reflections on practice that are also represented in the later work of Schon (1983), Zeichner and Liston (1987), Garman (1986), Smyth (1988, 1989), and Bowers and Flinders (1991). Common to all these approaches is the belief that teachers grow professionally in correlation to their ability to learn through experience and that this is most effectively evoked by learning to critically reflect on their own actions.

Of clinical supervision, developmental supervision, and horizontal evaluation, the last is the least frequently cited in the literature, and the only one that directs itself specifically to issues of supervision of student teachers. Its emphasis on specific questioning strategies aimed at promoting critical thinking as student teachers begin to link theory to practice also sets it apart from the other two models discussed.

Adult Developmental Theory

Unlike the first three perspectives, which specifically set out to explain the process of supervision, adult learning theory is of a broader scale and is applied to supervision, thereby informing our perspective by explaining the supervisory process through a framework outside itself. Adult learning theory is helpful in provoking our thinking about the possibilities inherent within supervision. In the last few decades, teacher educators have turned to these theories for insight into teacher development and ways to support teacher growth.

Two broad categories of literature can be identified here. The first is focused on the adult life cycle. It is based on the works of such theorists as Erikson (1968) and Levinson (1978) as they point to implications for school practitioners (Arin-Krupp, 1981). The second involves cognitive-developmental stage theories, such as those of Kohlberg (1984) and Loevinger (1976), and relates such theory to teachers' cognitive development (Glassberg, 1980; Oja, 1981).

Inherent in our understanding of adult development is the recognition of the existence of major transitional periods in which some existing life structures are replaced by evolving new ones. As adults negotiate this process, they tend to reflect on existing structures, tap into and explore other possibilities, and make choices that will determine and shape new life structures (Cross, 1981). Two aspects of this process should inform our approach to teacher education. First is the understanding that life forces outside the classroom can affect the learning process and the ability of adults to respond to new challenges. Adult educators who are sensitive to individual needs may then utilize these periods by designing experiences that promote an active transition to a new life stage. These theories view the teacher as an individual, changing over time, with varying needs and concerns at particular times (Burden, 1986). Those working with adults are urged to make use of this information when planning intervention and support strategies.

Examples of works applying such theoretical underpinning to studies of members of the field experience triad include Thies-Sprinthall (1980), Grimmitt (1983), and Caruso and Fawcett (1996). Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) summarize the differences in learning characteristics between adults and children. These correspond to the five factors reported by Caruso and Fawcett (1986) that can affect adult learning: (1) self-knowledge and self-concept; (2) life experiences; (3) the need for independence, interdependence, and motivation; (4) orientation to learning; and (5) life stage and life transitions. While here again the intervening contribution of context has not been well explored, especially in terms of what Bowers and Flinders (1990) term *culturally responsive supervision*, adult learning theory offers the field of supervision another lens with which to view the growth of teachers, student teachers, and their supervisors.

Caruso and Fawcett also look at stages of supervisor development that would incorporate knowledge of adult development. Those stages were identified as beginning, extending, and maturing. In the beginning stage, supervisors are focused on personal concerns of job performance and try to fit into the role as they perceive it. In the extending phase, they are able to recognize that their expectations do not always match results, and concern becomes centered on others. In the mature phase, supervisors know and evaluate themselves. They are more open to recognizing the expertise of those they supervise, and, according to Caruso and Fawcett, at this stage, supervisors possess a well-defined philosophical frame of reference.

The Sociocultural Approach

Another framework that is beginning to influence the research on teacher education is the sociocultural approach. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, applied Marxist social theory to individual psychology. His work focused on the social origins and cultural roots of development within the individual, assuming that "action is mediated and cannot be separated from the milieu in which it is carried out" (Wertsch, 1991, p. 18). This approach is usually identified with the assumption that human environments are intimately connected to the most basic distinguishing qualities of human psychological processes, the achievement of prior generations. It has been characterized by three themes: (1) mind is best understood by how it changes; (2) higher mental functions have their origin in social activity; and (3) higher mental functions are mediated by tools and signs (Hausfather, 1996).

This sociocultural perspective has much in common with recent developments in cognitive science, such as "situated learning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and "distributed cognition" (Cole & Engestrom, 1993). This resonance with contemporary educational research should not, however, overshadow the long existing implications of Deweyan

thought, exemplified in *Education and Experience* (1938, 1963), that reflect a similar perspective. Here Dewey (1963) alluded to the importance of a sociocultural perspective when he observed that "previous experiences have changed the objective conditions under which subsequent experiences take place" (p. 39).

This context for development is further described in terms of a range of potential within each individual, called by Vygotsky the *zone of proximal development*. Potential ability is seen to be greater than actual ability when learning is facilitated, or mediated, by someone with greater expertise (Wertsch, 1991). Of mediating tools, Vygotsky identifies language as most important. If we are to act in relation to our environment, it is necessary to know where to place ourselves in the sociocultural context. Such identification allows us to make sense of our environment and orient ourselves accordingly. For Vygotsky, there are an active child, an active environment, and a culture replete with its own history through which the child and environment interact.

The sociocultural approach to cognitive development unfortunately stands in stark contrast to much in contemporary schooling. The reconceptualists and the social constructivists are attempting to rectify this through introduction of new vision into educational practice. Schools of education are espousing a critical need to prepare new teachers who will not merely "transmit" current practice but who will become change agents within their classrooms and communities. Recognizing the resistance of classroom practice to change, sociocultural theory reminds us that while schools do come with their own culture and history, they still are social constructions.

To prepare teachers to be agents of such change, tenets of sociocultural theory might prove especially effective. Britzman (1986), for example, notes that the teachers she interviewed often shared feelings of inadequacy as they began to teach, thinking

that it was a failing not to have all the answers or to ask others for advice and help, a finding also supported by Nias (1987). Britzman's teachers described their frustrations as they worked through the unanticipated disequilibrium on their own, and their insights are supportive of Schwab, Jackson, and Schuler's (1986) contention that such a lack of social support may be one of the major influences of teacher burnout. Bullough (1987) infers that the way we educate teachers may, in fact, encourage them to identify isolation as autonomy.

The modeling of collaboration and the creation of space for student participation in interpersonal joint activity within the teacher education program seems to hold much promise, especially, it would seem, in preservice supervision. In considering the work of Vygotsky as it can inform our understanding of the social construction of knowledge, it would seem that student teaching, the place where theory and practice intersect meaningfully in teacher development usually for the first time, would begin to receive some distinct attention. Likewise, the supervisor of student teachers, who holds a rather unique position with regard to the student teacher's zone of proximal development (ZPD), should begin to demand more critical examination in the research.

While Vygotsky's work mainly concentrated on children, a few isolated works in the field have begun to apply his theories to adult learning and, in a limited fashion, to teacher education. Tharp and Gallimore (1988), in explaining a model of the four-stage progression through the zone of proximal development, make the point that adults utilize the same processes of self- and other-assistance in the ZPD, and that this should be considered in the creation of teacher education programs. They recommend discourse or instructional conversation as the medium of teaching education, and in fact, of all teaching. Although they point out that the words *instruction* and *conversation* seem to contradict each other, it is in the resolution of such conflict, they

say, that teaching happens (p. 111). In typical classroom practices of directing and assessing, which Gallimore and Tharp (1990) call *the recitation script*, we see similarities to common supervisory practices that use direction and evaluation instead of assistance, joint productive activity, or the building of common meanings. Instead, say the authors, supervisory authority should be used to "create new activity settings in which joint productive activity will produce the assistance that will increase the competency of the supervisee" (p. 189).

Tharp and Gallimore further point out that detecting the level of in-flight performance of learners is difficult to do in large groups. Although they here are referring to the size of typical American classrooms, it is possible to relate such a concept to the student teaching experience and the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Within the usual teacher education sequence, supervision of student teaching would seem a natural forum for individual tutorials and therefore the possibility of the guided assistance and joint productive activity of which Tharp and Gallimore speak. In assessing the possibilities of achieving true reform in schools, these authors stress the fact that teachers need to acquire the complex social behaviors necessary to assist children's performance through the ZPD but cannot do so without performance assistance for themselves. Modeling and feedback, if framed productively, can help teachers experience the value of assisted learning as it differs from the concept, so familiar in our schools, that one needs to learn on one's own (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Lipman (1996) is another author writing from the Vygotskian perspective who has brought teacher education into the discussion, if only in a fleeting reference. In the afterword of his work, *Natasha: Vygotskian Dialogues*, he briefly alludes to the fact that the features of his program of philosophy for children are also important when

they are applied to teacher education. "To prepare a teacher with a style and mode of teaching that advances the program's educational goals, a specific model of teacher training (very different from the traditional one) must be designed" (p. 124). While Lipman offers no concrete advice for such preparation, he invites reflection on such a model.

Moll (1990) reminds us that "the power of Vygotsky's ideas is that they represent a theory of possibilities" (p. 15). Educational settings are social creations and can be socially changed. The larger picture regarding the influence of social interaction on knowledge acquisition holds great possibility for future inquiry into possible influences of supervisors in ways not yet outlined. Williams, in her 1996 review and commentary of how pre-service and in-service teachers theorize about their practice, certainly offers insight that can be extrapolated into an interest for renewed examination of the possibilities inherent in university supervision of student teachers.

Hausfather (1996) reveals that little research has attended to Vygotskian implications for teacher education. Echoing Williams, he states, "As teacher educators we must first understand the interaction of the social context with cognitive development" (p. 9). This resonates with Dewey's ideas on the relationship of theory to practice. Writing in 1904, Dewey implied a circle of learning that should course between the two, informing, shaping, and reshaping both as they meet, intersect, and move on in a continuous reframing of implicit and explicit theories.

There has been little research, however, into the application of Vygotsky's approach to any specific aspect of teacher education (Hausfather, 1996; Manning & Payne 1993). One recent exception is the work of Samaras and Gismondi (1998). These authors investigated a Vygotskian-designed, socio-cultural context for preparing and supporting early childhood and elementary education preservice teachers in which

they hypothesized that “learning to teach requires more than time and practice. It requires supported experiences--both successful and unsuccessful ones” (p. 715). They describe a deliberative, reflective teacher education program that puts much emphasis on promoting thinking about teaching and learning using peer and cooperating teacher support systems. Students are asked to critically examine their actions in context as well as within dilemmas of practicum. This is accomplished through journals and a two semester field experience sequence where students were grouped in pairs or other “audience relationships” (dyads, small groups, practicum school cohorts, practicum seminar). Such relationships offered peer and cooperating teacher formative assessment and a social, technical, and reflective support network within authentic settings for problem-based learning through others (p. 720).

Findings were grouped into categories that characterized participants’ perceptions and included situated learning, partnership/ownership, and feedback/free reign. Situated learning, the authors conclude, can help preservice teachers understand planning, perspective taking, social negotiation, and a sense of ownership as they express and sort out disappointments, confusion, and the connections they are making between theory and practice. However, their findings indicate that preservice teachers could not always rely on their cooperating teachers’ support, especially in a scaffolding sense, and that practicum experiences need to include formative assessments within the student teachers’ ZPD, and not be reduced to a series of tasks that they are moved through.

Samaras and Gismondi (1998) also indicated findings in the area of professional and survival skills. The skills identified by the authors--(1) collaboration (particularly for coping and persisting in a difficult situation), (2) negotiation, and (3) reflection--need more careful investigation to best prepare preservice teachers for working in

schools. They relate this finding to the work of Goodman and Fish (1997), who found that learning to negotiate and collaborate, especially with those who are in power or who have different perspectives, was critical to teacher development. While teacher educators seek out the best for their students in terms of cooperating teachers, field placements, and schools, the reality is that they are not always available in the numbers needed. If we truly expect students to question their thinking about their own practice as well as how children learn, and perhaps attempt to depart from current practice, these authors conclude, then teacher education programs must prepare students to explain and defend their practices with tools of negotiation. They suggest the need for further research and understanding “about sociocultural models in teacher education and in a Vygotskian approach to mentoring” (p. 730).

Research and Commentary on the University Supervisor

Having reviewed the literature pertaining to theoretical approaches to preservice supervision, it is important to consider studies that deal with the supervisor of field placements and specifically with those concentrating on the supervisor of student teachers. The university supervisor of elementary education student teachers is a difficult entity to isolate in the literature. Supervision crosses many boundaries even within the education field, and a clear demarcation between supervision of inservice teachers and that of preservice teachers, or between elementary and secondary programs, is not always clearly made by authors, nor is the pool from which the supervisors are drawn always made clear. Yet the university supervisor of elementary student teachers may hold a unique enough position in the field of teacher education that such distinction in the literature could prove to be of value.

Christensen (1988) speaks of the "almost nonexistent research base for supervisory processes in student teaching" (p. 275). Holland (1998) notes that the research reveals that "supervision is paradoxically multitheoretical and atheoretical at one and the same time" (p. 397). Harris (1998) reminds us that the field of supervision "remains one that is full of controversy and uncertainty" (p. 1), while McIntyre and Byrd (1998) lament that "research on supervision in teacher education has not been conducted in a systematic fashion" (p. 423). Glickman and Bey (1990) note that supervision in pre-service teacher education is "substantially" less represented in the literature than in-service education. The following section is organized to examine the literature with regard to the pool from which we draw preservice supervisors, the pertinent research related to university supervisors of preservice student teachers, and a discussion of the elementary education supervisor role with regard to grade placement.

Types of Field Placement Supervisors

It is recognized that supervisors of student teachers are traditionally drawn from four sources: full time faculty of the program, graduate students who supervise as part of their program requirements, cooperating teachers serving dual-roles, and experienced professionals who serve as adjunct faculty. Slick (1998b) reminds us that none of these educators are traditionally "afforded status or offered support in defining or enacting their roles" (p. 822), and that even when a full-time faculty member supervises student teachers, they are typically given this role as an add-on to a full teaching load.

Research comparing the value of one source for supervisory personnel over the other is certainly difficult to find, and many studies fail even to identify one source over the other for the reader. This absence of detail seems to support the belief that supervision of student teachers is not a highly valued part of teacher education, a view

expressed most poignantly by Bowman (1979) when he wrote that it “ represents a needless drain upon dwindling resources” (p. 29). He reported that faculty members, especially those already tenured, are generally reluctant to supervise students and are content to pass the work on to others with peripheral relationships to the university. Slick (1995) points to the conflicts reflected in such attitudes when she calls field experiences “the most maligned and the most valued part of teacher education” (p. 8). She then goes on to say:

Theoreticians and practitioners agree that quality field experiences produce quality beginning teachers. Conversely, field experiences that limit preservice teachers to constrictive roles produce beginning teachers without a vision, predestined to spend years engaging in robotic actions that provide their students with less than the best. Unfortunately, university-based teacher educators have only themselves to blame. Their reluctance to make personal and professional commitments to the demands of field experience have resulted in shallow field experiences that are field experiences only in name. Teaching is a demanding complex activity that requires deliberate thought based upon careful analysis of situational variables. The only places that can offer preservice teachers the opportunity to develop these analytical skills are field experience sites. (p. 8)

While Slick’s comments are not referenced to specific research findings of who should be supervising field placements, her preferences seem clear: university-based educators (who we might assume should be the tenured or tenure-track faculty). Examples of such preference are not uncommon in the literature. Bowman (1979), for example, questions the interest in supervision among graduate students generally, using as a yardstick the fact that since few of their dissertations involve the subject, their interest and enthusiasm are probably nominal.

Johnson (1990) cites the pressures cooperating teachers feel in terms of responsibilities to their classrooms, to preparation, and to teaching as the main reason they shun volunteering as cooperating teachers. Such pressures, it could be noted,

might also be expected to impact on the time, energy, and freedom those cooperating teachers who *do* choose to supervise student teachers are able to share.

Having more impact on the field, however, was the report of the Holmes Group (1986), *Tomorrow's Teachers*. Within the goals it laid out for redefining education faculty, the Holmes Group effectively threw its weight with cooperating teachers as supervisors of field placement by the way it framed its discussion of goals as they relate those who should be responsible for preparing teachers. While never actually referring to supervision, the Holmes consortium called for “university-based faculty” and “school-based faculty” to provide most of the formal instruction and clinical supervision required (p. 90).

Practicing (my emphasis) school teachers are selected as clinical faculty on the basis of an exemplary record of teaching practice and attainment of professional career status in teacher education. Ordinarily, part of the professional assignment for clinical faculty is given to teaching pupils in school, while the remainder is given to work with academic faculty and students in teacher education. (p. 91)

This study examines the fourth source of field placement supervisors: university-based faculty serving as adjuncts and drawn from the professional community. In terms of their usefulness over other sources, Feiman-Nemser and Buchman (1987) state that

As an outsider to the setting, the university supervisor can help the student teacher to relate the specifics of the classroom to the larger frames of reference such as disciplinary knowledge, societal mandates, research on teaching, [and] a broad view of learning to teach. (p. 272)

Traditionally, university supervisors are selected on the basis of past exemplary practice, but are most often not practicing classroom teachers. This affords them the opportunity to supervise a group of student teachers, visit classrooms during the regular school day around the needs of the student teacher, and teach a seminar class made up

of their own student teachers. They will be referred to in this study as *university supervisors*.

Overview of the Research on University Supervision

In examining the existing literature, several issues seem to emerge. The first is that the voice of the university supervisor has been infrequently represented except as examples of the researcher's perceptions. Bolin's (1988a, 1990) two-part study of one student teacher's field experience, for example, draws from supervisory experiences and shares implications for the practice of supervision from a third-person perspective. First-person studies have begun to appear with more regularity in recent years, and two early examples are Richardson-Koehler (1988) and Rust (1988). Richardson-Koehler utilizes the first-person format to examine wider implications of barriers to supervision within student teaching, while Rust provides a reflective examination of her work with student teachers as interpreted through their journal writing. More recently, several others have examined their own practice, adding additional first-person accounts of supervisory practice to the research base. Most of these, however, are university-based, and may not be as representative of the larger body of supervisors who practice generally.

Estabrook and Goldsberry (1995), for example, present the reflections of a supervisor alongside observations on those reflections by her graduate coordinator. Weaver and Stanulis (1996) write together as a university supervisor and cooperating teacher team about their experiences with one student teacher, and Fulwiler (1996) explores her beliefs about her own supervision of student teachers and in the process thoughtfully questions herself and the field. Krajewski and Jones (1997) reflect as supervisors sharing perceptions across two cultures, while in a slightly different vein, Bolin (1988b) explores 10 scholars' views of scholarship within the supervision field,

and Ralph (1994) explains a model program and utilizes examples from his own experience. Slick (1998a, 1998b) explores the role of a university supervisor as she relates to other members of her triad.

Additionally, the university supervisor is infrequently central to studies (Griffin & Edwards, 1981). While supervision is explored in many studies as a part of a larger focus on the student teaching experience, few of these studies can be construed as positioning their primary lens on this triad member. Borko and Mayfield (1995) is an example of a study that examines the process of university supervision by focusing on all three members involved. Slick (1997, 1998a, 1998b) does present the supervisor's view as a primary focus, but within the competing framework of triad interactions and perspectives.

Background Data. Rust (1988) tells us that “like teaching, supervisory interaction appears to be shaped by biography” (p. 57), but another problem observed in studies of supervisors is that background information is not always clearly identified. Biography, in terms of the supervisors they represent within the data, is often given little attention. Even when some background is provided, clear patterns seem elusive. Sometimes, the university supervisor is identified as the cooperating teacher, playing a dual role. Other times, the job is performed by a changing contingent of graduate students. In some education schools, all full-time faculty supervise student teachers, while in many others, supervisors are adjuncts peripheral to the education program who are drawn from some arm of the teaching field. Comparing data across such studies may not provide complete realities in terms of what the participants bring to their practice.

Many studies give no indication of the pool of personnel from which they draw, and only a handful include enough data to allow the reader to construct a view of

supervisors that includes specifics on education and professional experience, including years and grade level taught. Exceptions seem to occur with most regularity in studies that pull from work with graduate students (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Rust, 1988; Slick, 1997, 1998a, 1998b), but a few exist outside this cohort (Fulwiller, 1996; Hoover et al., 1988; Zeichner, 1988). Most data, however, are generally quantified by category, so comparisons cannot be made easily among and between individuals.

Lacking such background data, it can be difficult to critically analyze the actions of supervisors described. In exploring biography as it relates to supervisory interactions, four types of information would seem important: (1) educational background, (2) employment history, (3) years of previous classroom teaching experience, *including grade levels*, and (4) the number of years supervising. A supervisor who comes to the job with extensive educational background in supervision may interact differently from one who does not. In the same vein, a supervisor with 20 years of teaching experience may bring something different from that of a supervisor who has had three years' experience, and a teacher who is supervising a student in a sixth grade placement or a kindergarten classroom may bring different strengths to the role, depending upon the grades they have previously taught. A general review of the literature suggests that this type of information is not readily discernible with any regularity, and Slick (1997) notes such omissions when she states, "Few educators or researchers have addressed the supervisor's experience in determining her role" (p. 715). An overview of the data that do exist follows.

Griffin and Edwards (1981) claim only wide variations of backgrounds in terms of both experience and expertise when looking at those in supervisory roles, while Lamb and Montague (1982) report that student teachers themselves actually perceived little difference in the effectiveness of supervisors who were graduate students as

opposed to faculty, or between those who had substantial experience and those who did not. Lanier (1984) did identify some background information of supervisors with relation to both preservice and inservice education. Her findings in this vein indicate that supervisors, of all school of education faculty, were the only group to describe themselves as teacher educators, tended to be middle-aged males who had prior experience teaching full-time in the elementary or secondary school, and displayed attitudes that were interpreted as supportive of the status quo.

In her study of preservice supervisors, Rust (1988) used interviews and journals to explore her participants' thinking about practice. She included data on gender, years of teaching, and training in supervision and reported that "both experience and ability to reflect on and talk about teaching appear to be significant predictors of supervisory practice" (p. 57). Christensen (1988) includes several areas of background data, including years of teaching experience, general levels of teaching, and educational level, but these data were reported in overall terms and were not matched to individuals. Borko and Mayfield (1995) share that three doctoral students performed as supervisors in their study, and tell us their gender, educational degrees, and number of years they taught at the elementary or secondary level. None of these studies give any information on the specific grades taught.

Kato (1993) includes background information on the gender, titles, highest degree earned, supervisory experience, teaching level of credentials held, and administrative experience of the 384 supervisors who responded to her questionnaire. While the data are enlightening in many ways, some gaps are evident. For example, reported information on teaching experience in grades K-12 was limited to public schools, and grade level experience once again was limited to elementary, middle or junior high, and high school. Although 21% reported no teaching experience in public

schools, those numbers could indicate either a very rich teaching background in private schools or no teaching experience at all. While 64% are reported as having teaching experience at the elementary level, we have no way of knowing, for example, if individual respondents taught 3 years in three different grades (or three different levels) or 25 years in one grade. As organized and presented, the data imply that by simply totaling years in the classroom across large numbers of people, we will know something worthwhile about the people who perform the work of university supervision.

On a final note, it is worth observing that in their chapter on supervision in teacher education for the first *Handbook of Research on School Supervision*, McIntyre and Byrd (1998) discuss the 1991 report of a survey of 228 cooperating teachers by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE). Data are included on the gender, age, ethnicity, teaching experience, and education of cooperating teachers, but it is noteworthy that a corresponding survey of such information on university supervisors was not included.

Aspects of the University Supervisor's Work. In terms of the work of the university supervisor, it is important to note that how supervision *is being* conducted has not been as big a question for researchers as is the question of how it *should be* conducted. Studies that examine model or pilot programs (Cohn & Gellman, 1988; Moore, 1988; O'Donoghue & Brooker, 1996; Wolfe et al., 1989) are represented more frequently than are those that examine existing practice. Furthermore, the existing literature often is imprecise in labeling aspects of university supervision. In Barbour's (1971) study titled *Levels of Thinking in Supervisory Conferences*, for example, the conferring parties are actually cooperating teachers and their student teachers. This section will review literature that limits itself to the post-observation conference,

especially those examples in the literature that describe the work of university supervisors as defining in this study, and to approaches to supervision that are variously labeled, among other things, as role, approach, style, and focus. Although this study separates style and approach from focus, they are treated together here because labels within the literature frequently overlap.

The Post-Observation Conference. The post-observation conference is frequently the aspect of the supervisory process explored. One early study is that of Barbour (1971), and although the author explores his subject from the frame of reference of cooperating teachers, it is included here as an anchor to the development of studies of this sort. Although some initial investigations into the dynamics of supervisory conferences are reflected in doctoral dissertations done at Teachers College in the 1960s, other serious focus on the topic was limited before Barbour.

This study coded levels of thinking in supervisory conferences and reported little higher-level thinking exhibited. The author suggests that higher levels of thinking would encourage more substantial outcomes in conferences and that student teachers would reciprocate with higher levels of thinking if it was modeled more frequently by supervisors. Barbour recommended intensive inservice education that would help supervisors learn and practice protocols that could help them initiate, maintain, and encourage higher and more creative levels of thinking within their conferences with student teachers.

Major drawbacks of the study's design, from my perspective, included the fact that the dyads were asked to choose "recent" lessons or activities to analyze, that the conferences lasted from 6 to 21 minutes, and that they took place at the end of the semester. How much higher level thinking, or vitality of any sort, it might be asked, can take place in a 6-minute conference that is not situated in current practice, but

instead is reflected back on just as the student teacher is heading out the door and the cooperating teacher is bringing her teaching year to a close?

Issues pertaining to personal alignments between and among triad members were raised in Boydell (1986). While research on naturally occurring groups indicates that both adults and children prefer the psychological intimacy that comes with pairing, teacher education has carved out a dynamic that creates triangular relationships during student teaching placements. These triad members, adds Boydell (1986), also tend to be strangers “who differ in backgrounds, perspectives, and expectations, and these differences can lead to conflict” (p. 116). She questions how effective supervisors can actually be in these circumstances. Griffin (1983) notes, in fact, that where expectations were unclear as to teaching practice, participants were observed to substitute frequent and intense demonstrations of personal regard. Findings of such behavior are echoed in Terrell, Tregaskis, and Boydell’s 1985 study (as cited in Boydell, 1986), where it was reported that supervisors are generally unwilling to say or do anything that might prejudice their relationship with the classroom teacher and that their efforts at maintaining a satisfactory personal relationship with the teacher may come at the cost of the intellectual level of their interactions.

Koehler (1984) finds that supervisors report their major concern to be a breakdown in communication among triad members, and Slick (1997), in noting the complicated nature of the “power dynamics and communication struggles” arising from conflicting role obligations among triad members, reminds us that not much has been accomplished to remedy this concern (p. 724). It would seem that such issues could produce a powerful undercurrent impacting interactions that take place within the post-observations conference, even if the cooperating teacher is not physically present.

Three studies in the same year (1988) focus on the supervisory discourse taking place within conference feedback. The first two analyze different aspects of supervisory feedback data using variations of the same procedure (Weller, 1971). The third examines problems that seem to plague traditional internship programs and undermine their effectiveness before considering how the supervisory relationship might be reconceptualized to facilitate interns' growth as teachers. These studies will be discussed in order.

In 1988, Christensen undertook a study of the feedback student teachers receive in post-observation conferences with university supervisors and compared it to O'Neal's study of such feedback given by cooperating teachers. Student teachers in this study were majoring in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and special education and experience of supervisors was noted in all of these levels, with the exception of early childhood. Supervisors had from 4 to 10 years' teaching experience, and seven of the nine either had or were in the process of earning a Ph.D. degree and averaged 5 or more years supervising. These supervisors also met monthly for discussion, inservice, and planning. The nine supervisor subjects audiotaped at least two of their conferences, wrote reactions to the conference, and participated in two 20-minute interviews. Conference feedback was coded into process and content categories as well as numbers of lines spoken in each category. Process data were used to understand both the nature of exchanges (whether supervisors gave support, prompted critical thinking, connected teaching to learning, and included supportive evidence, for example) and types of comments (gives directions, questions, evaluates, reviews, offers alternatives, explains, offers acknowledgement, suggests, and other). Content data looked at areas of teaching, organization of student teaching, and items related to neither.

Results indicated a good match between participants' descriptions of feedback and actual feedback, and that supervisors, perhaps because of their experience, were less directive in their style, encouraged students to talk more, and helped them to approach teaching as a decision-making process more than did O'Neal's sample. Supervisor comments tended to be most frequently evaluative and that the nature of these evaluative exchanges prompted critical thinking most often. Ninety-four percent of the topics discussed were coded as relating to teaching. Christensen recommended careful selection of supervisors and further focus on their professional development.

Zeichner et al. (1988) also looked at types of discourse within the conference. They compare such discourse across two types of teacher education programs, one identified as "inquiry-oriented" and the other "traditional-craft," to see if program goals and structure influence the form and substance of discussion. This study also taped conferences, which ranged in length from 7 to 41 minutes, and analyzed segments of these tapes through "thought units." Areas coded here were more substance specific than were Christensen's, and findings indicated many similarities between the programs under study in both form and substance of supervisory discourse. Factual discourse was found to predominate at both sites, and emphasis was more consistently placed on procedures of teaching than on content of lessons. No background information on individual supervisors was given. Although supervisors in this study were initially identified only as "volunteers from the 11 members of the clinical staff" (p. 351), the authors mention in their findings that that while faculty conducted supervision at one site and graduate students did so at the other, this did not seem to make a difference, at least in terms of the type of talk that dominated. They do, however, note that such differences were modified by the fact that both programs followed the typical and dominant model of student teaching structure and

organization, and that neither institution did anything to alter the generally low status of supervisors. A shift to more inquiry-oriented environments as sites for placement was recommended.

Hoover, O'Shea, and Carroll (1988) examine whether discourse is identified by either a direct or indirect style and argue that the type of discourse used might increase the supervisor's influence. Since the university supervisor traditionally enters a setting that "belongs to" the school district, giving feedback to the intern can be awkward to do without implicating the skills of the cooperating teacher. As student teachers are socialized by cooperating teachers, they frequently "become aligned with the dominant thinking within the field placement," even when such thinking conflicts with the university's program of teacher education. In this way, "supervisors tend to become the 'odd man out' as the influence of the directing teacher takes hold and surpasses that of the university supervisor" (p. 23). This echoes Boydell's (1986) concerns about the nature of triadic relationship. Using a model of a helping relationship that includes skill in attending, responding, and facilitating, the authors present a case for improving interpersonal communication skills that will be helpful in working through stressful interactions with student teachers.

Additional studies have examined still other aspects of the conference in efforts to shed light on the dynamic involved. Zahorik (1988) looks for an active or reactive stance within conferencing behaviors of supervisors, while O'Shea, Hoover, and Carroll (1988), as well as Waite (1992b), seek out conference phases. Schmidt and Knowles (1995) examine feelings of failure as experienced by student teachers and seek out alternative supervisory behaviors that might lead to successful outcomes for student teachers.

Focus, Role, Style, and Approach of University Supervision. A frustrating aspect of reviewing literature on supervision of student teachers is that the words *focus*, *role*, *style*, and *approach* are often used by different authors with individually nuanced interpretations. Whether an author explores a general model that guides the way a supervisor approaches her work or, instead, examines the types of activities that make up that work is frequently ambiguous in the literature in terms of which of these words is called into play. One author will use the word *focus*, for example, to mean the first definition, while another uses it in reference to the latter. Occasionally, findings are reported within categories that overlap. In this section, I review literature, beyond and integrated with that already discussed, in ways that cut across both concepts in order to avoid the confusion that separating them entails.

Schoonmaker et al. (1998) report that much of the research on role and function in recent decades has revolved around specific forms of supervision, including clinical (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969) and developmental (Glickman, 1981). The model that supports a supervisor's thinking, whether tacit or not, influences the way supervision is approached and the role is enacted. Since literature on clinical supervision has dominated the field, we should expect to see some of the principles promoted within clinical supervision underpinning supervisory practice. However, unless a model is specifically articulated within a teacher education program, supervisor responsibilities connected to a program model can remain uncertain.

Many studies that focus on areas of supervisory feedback to student teachers during post-observation conferences create their own categories that are not always easily compared. Some seem to concentrate on variations of categorized areas like lesson planning and objectives, procedures, and curriculum content or easily quantified areas like teacher-talk time and interaction analysis, among others, as was the case with

Christensen (1988) and Zeichner et al. (1988). For some, including the previous two as well as Zahorik (1988) and Borko and Mayfield (1995), for example, this is a dominant focus of their inquiry. But in other instances, like Rust (1988), it is an important, though not singular, identifier.

In the work of Borko and Mayfield (1995), while the authors do explore the focus of supervisors, they do so within the context of gathering data on all triad members. Among other data sources, the authors observed one conference between each student teacher-supervisor dyad and one between each student teacher-cooperating teacher dyad and interviewed each member of the triad as a way to elicit goals for and reactions to the conference. Coding schemes included categories of claims (knowledge or beliefs) and processes (what the supervisor looked for and processes involved in guided teaching techniques). Within the area of processes, topics were coded as pedagogy, students, paperwork, and other. The three graduate students who were participants in the study varied in their professional experience. One taught elementary school for 17 years, one taught junior high and high school for 6 years, and the last had 1 year's experience teaching Spanish in elementary school.

The authors point out that teachers come to understand new practice by integrating it with existing belief systems while at the same time challenging these belief systems (McDiarmid, 1990). For the supervisors, findings indicated many similarities in the topics addressed. No specific tabulations are offered as a way to enumerate results, and findings are presented in very general and somewhat amorphous light. In terms of pedagogy, classroom management was discussed by these participants most often. Lesson plans, behavioral objectives, and providing for individual differences also were frequently addressed. The topic of students was mentioned primarily as supervisors addressed issues of providing for individual

differences and whether lesson objectives were achieved. Specific children were mentioned only if they stood out for some reason directly related to the lesson or behavioral problems. Topics coded as paperwork were one of the most prominent themes and included many of the requirements for lesson plans and journals that need to be shuffled between supervisor and student teacher, but the authors also note that paperwork itself created its own focus, in this case because some of the forms were related to grades. In the cross-conference analysis, the supervisors' positive tone was particularly prominent. When asked about the specific topics they discussed in the conferences, supervisors at first reported general satisfaction with their conference interactions, but when probed further, reported that (1) they would have liked to have explored the issues in more depth with the student teachers, and (2) they would have liked the student teachers to react differently to their questions. The authors present as one explanation the possibility that supervisors do not hold high expectations for their impact on students, and as another, that supervisors are highly motivated to avoid confrontations. They did not push into sensitive areas and judged their work successful if they were able to maintain a friendly and supportive atmosphere, an issue also raised by Clark (1984).

Borko and Mayfield additionally note that the structural constraints on university supervision are powerful and inevitable. There is no way they can be as frequently present as cooperating teachers; nor is it possible for them to engage in the ongoing conversations that can take place between cooperating teachers and student teachers. The authors suggest using the limited time supervisors have in classrooms to help cooperating teachers become teacher educators and to guide student teachers into integrating theory and research into practice. Another suggestion is to prepare university supervisors for new roles that involve theory and research more directly.

Griffin and Edwards (1981) cite a lack of clarity in the role of university supervisors in terms of whether they should be teachers, mediators, guides, translators of policy, or role models. Bernard (1979) separates supervision into the roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant. Zahorik (1988) divides work focus into goals that deal with behavior, ideas, and people. Koehler (1984) finds that supervisors identified four primary functions in their role as teacher educators: (1) to serve as a liaison, (2) to establish expectations for students, (3) to provide clinical support, and (4) teaching. Clinician and liaison are roles that are seen as central to supervisors' work.

Kato (1993) expands Koehler's four roles into 10 (liaison, clinician, researcher, methods teacher, seminar teacher, consultant, evaluator, self-evaluator, and committee member, both inside and outside the department). Using questionnaires based on a 5-point Likert scale, she collected 384 responses that indicated, among other information, how important supervisors rated each role. Respondents selected clinician, evaluator, and self-evaluator as the top three roles, in descending order, but since the researcher did not weight the ranges of importance of supervisory roles, results do not indicate which of the 10 roles respondents would have considered most important. Results also indicated that supervisors desire more training and more experience.

One study dealing specifically with style in supervision is found in Norris (1991). The author's premise is that "style, in large measure, determines the supervisor's actual view of teaching" (p. 128). She discusses the concept of style on both the emotional and cognitive level and encourages supervisors to be sensitive to the individual styles of those they supervise, to the extent that it is possible, while at the same time attempting to understand their own cognitive style of functioning. "Only as

we free our own thinking,” concludes Norris, “can we help others become all they are capable of being” (p. 133).

The need for models of supervision in practice is of concern for some of the research (Krajewski & Jones, 1997; Rust, 1988), and the question of training appropriate for the supervision of student teachers has also been addressed (Bolin, 1988; Fulwiler, 1996; Rust, 1988).

The Elementary Education Supervisor and Grade Placement

Although a common practice in elementary teacher education programs is the requirement for student teaching experience in more than one grade placement, there is little in the literature as to how, if at all, these experiences should be structured to take advantage of the variety in placements. In exploring the historical origins of student teaching, Hughes (1982) refers to the Oswego schools (Dearborn, 1925) as “perhaps the most carefully planned programs of practice teaching” (p. 7) and observes that each student teacher went from grade to grade, observing for 2 weeks and practicing for 2 weeks in each grade before being given their own class without a regular teacher. But such detail about grade placement is weak at best in most of the literature and almost invisible in guiding the university supervision of elementary student teachers in different placements.

Most guidelines for teacher education generally follow, albeit with some variation, the direction taken by the Flowers report (1948), which urged guided contact with a variety of individuals. However, they do not go much further in identifying or justifying this practice, nor, in fact, are multiple field placements a universal component of teacher education programs. Where a variety of grade placements is

required during student teaching, the reasoning behind such practice and the expectations unique to each placement are difficult to decipher.

In 1948, Flowers et al. reported that few policies regulating field experience were self-imposed. Two current organizations setting standards for the profession are the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Association for Teacher Educators. While comprehensive in their approach to guidelines, there is still much latitude allowed for individual diversity among programs and, as Guyton and McIntyre (1990) point out, "Little is known about the effectiveness of the various models nor the delivery of field experience programs. All too often, models for student teaching and school experience are developed out of convenience or tradition" (p. 517).

Some research studies have attempted to identify whether contextual considerations are affected by particular teaching behaviors. The work of Gage (1978) and McDonald and Elias (1976), for example, highlights interaction effects for different grade levels and subject areas. Howey (1996) points to the "number of preservice programs that superficially engage students in a large number of disparate and unconnected ideas and practices" (p. 150). Metcalf (1993) examines the effectiveness of a variety of laboratory experiences, and Gliessman (1984) explores how variables introduced into laboratory contexts can lead to change in teacher behavior, concluding that the field has not sufficiently examined how complex teaching skills are encouraged. Many researchers have formulated stages through which student teachers pass (Calderhood, 1987; Sacks & Harrington, 1982) but do not connect these stages specifically to the influences of one placement over another.

Feiman-Nemser (1983) encourages researchers to attend more closely to the content and context of field experiences--but generally such views tend to address themselves to more complex ecological issues that transcend differences in grade level

alone. In a review of state standards relating to professional field experience, Morris, Pannell, and Houston (1985) found that all states required student teaching and regulations as to grade level were among those commonly included in such requirements, but the justification for many existing variations among programs is questionable, according to Guyton and McIntyre (1990). This issue seems to echo a concern articulated by Morris et al. (1985) that existing standards "have been derived primarily from practice and not research" (p. 76).

Recent literature would seem to support the value of multiple field placements. McIntyre, Byrd, and Foxx (1996), for example, assert that the "placement of the prospective teacher for both early field experience and student teaching is a crucial stage in teacher preparation" (p. 173) and suggest that by increasing the number and variety of sites, the impact of any one context may be diluted. Black and Aamon (1992) offer the example of one program that places student teachers in five different sites during a two-year period. While the teacher education program described is not unique in its requirements for different grade, socioeconomic, and culturally diverse placements, the discussion of the merits of such issues and the complexities of implementation and assessment of students in such programs has not been widely explored.

In terms of supervision of preservice teachers, McIntyre and Byrd (1990) relate that in studies connecting supervision processes with outcomes, "the substance of supervision, the what that goes with the how, is not a component of the research" (p. 528). Zeichner (1987) states that

It is hoped that research on field experience will give more attention in the future to the complex and multidimensional nature of these experiences and that this ecological approach to the study of field experiences will stimulate discussion and debate over which particular curricular and

contextual dimensions of programs will help us more closely realize our goals for teacher development. (p. 114)

In many teacher education programs, the student teaching experience includes more than one grade placement. As such, this practice seems to be an underexplored contextual variable in the development of teachers. More specifically, the question of how, if at all, university supervisors react to this variable has not been considered. What can be observed about supervisory behavior in terms of multiple placements? In programs where the university supervisor works with a student teacher in more than one grade placement, do supervisory practices differ from placement to placement in terms of the grade level?

This is an infrequent line of research, even within the general literature on practice. An interesting study close to this line of inquiry was *Positive Transfer: How an Elementary Perspective can Transform the Secondary Foreign Language Classroom* by Knight et al. (1998). This study finds that knowledge of how elementary children develop, coupled with experience in both learning and practicing methods of teaching elementary children, can inform the teaching practice of secondary teachers. In another study, Goldstein (1997) explores the competing professional paradigms of early childhood education and elementary education as she recounts the experiences of one teacher's work with young primary school children. As teacher reform efforts struggle to untangle the many variables that impact on the preparation of teachers, an exploration of this facet of the practicum and the supervisory processes that might be connected to it could prove helpful.

Summary

The literature on supervision is rather like a maze in which one can get rapidly lost. The purpose of this review was to delimit some parameters of the research in order to get a clearer view of one particular aspect of the field, that of university supervisors of elementary education student teachers. However, even the stringent boundaries attempted here do not easily map out a clear picture. Terms, as mentioned earlier, are not always clearly defined in the field, and when attempts are made to narrow these definitions, generalizations become difficult.

Since recent research has "exploded the myths that any teaching is as effective as any other" (Darling-Hammond, 1990), and Eisner (1992) tells us that knowledge is not power until it is applied, it may be that the words of Schwartz (1996) take on more importance:

If we expect teachers in training to use the knowledge available in preparation programs, we must supervise them carefully during the induction period, point out helpful pedagogical methods, and show them how to incorporate new knowledge and ideas into their practice. (p. 11)

Overall, well defined, replicated research central to supervision of preservice elementary student teachers continues to be sparse and should be more adequately represented in the literature. Most noticeably absent are the voices of supervisor-practitioners themselves, who seem to be so rarely consulted in any meaningful way. Perhaps they are disinterested, as some report, in examining their practice, but perhaps their silence is more the result of their not being invited to the research table. Schwartz (1996) notes, "The field of teacher education is undergoing massive transitions and is experiencing major controversies. Now and for the next few years, what teachers educators do and say will define the field for the next quarter century" (p. 7).

Perhaps now, more than ever, this invitation should be extended. This study attempts to do just this by giving voice to four supervisors as they go about their work. It is an in-depth exploration of their beliefs and practices, reflections, and recommendations as they arise by way of interviews, transcriptions of videotaped observations of their interactions with a student teacher, and reflections on their practice. It further attempts to discern if differences are apparent in the way student teachers are supervised in two different grade placements.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Our methodological concepts influence our perception. Thereafter, cognitive maps help[us] find our way in the territories we wish to explore. Those with different maps tend to take different roads. (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, p. 9)

This was a qualitative study exploring the voices of four university supervisors as they each worked with a pre-service elementary education student teacher in two different grade placements over the course of one semester. The term *voice* is applied loosely here, for the study also included my own interpretations of those voices imposed within a particular framework. While the supervisors' voices were, therefore, not fully emergent within such a template, they were presented and "heard" as individuals throughout the study as much as possible. They are neither interpreted through the eyes of other triad members, nor has their individuality been lost in the accumulation of data.

To accomplish this, I examined the beliefs, practices, reflections, and recommendations these supervisors displayed, discussed, and reflected upon through interviews and their observed interactions with student teachers. I also examined whether their supervisory practices differed as they worked with students above and below the third grade. In as many ways as possible, the intent was to have their voices

come through, so that the individual subjects would become real and valid to the reader.

In order to accomplish these goals, an exploratory case study method was utilized to investigate the phenomena in question. This chapter presents the study design, an overview of the researcher's role in the study, description of the procedure and the instruments used in the collection of data, and description of the method of data analysis.

Study Design

This study of four university supervisors of elementary pre-service student teachers was comprised of a four-part sequence of activities with each participant: an initial interview, a first post-conference observation, a second post-conference observation, and a final meeting where a videotape of one of the post-observation conferences was reviewed and reflected upon by the university supervisor. After the data had been collected and analyzed, a narrative portrait of each supervisor was developed, presented to each participant for a "member check" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), and then revised based upon their input. A cross-case analysis was then done in light of the research questions.

Sample

A purposeful sampling of four university supervisors was selected from the adjunct faculty of a large private university in a suburb of New York City. From a pool of professionals who were supervising preservice elementary education student teachers, four supervisors were chosen who met the following criteria: (1) they agreed to be included in the study, (2) they were supervising a student teacher who agreed to

be included in the study, and (3) they were not supervising or teaching early childhood teacher education students specifically. This latter stipulation was meant to offer a cleaner view of a typical elementary education viewpoint. Representatives from both the undergraduate and graduate pre-service programs were sought, and the final sample included three supervisors of undergraduate preservice students and one supervisor who worked with a graduate preservice student. For the purposes of this study, the participating supervisors will be called Amelia, Mary, Bonnie, and Marion. Of these four, Marion worked with the graduate student.

Setting

The university chosen for the study operates a large NCATE-accredited school of education on both the undergraduate and graduate level. Students who are working toward a pre-kindergarten through 6th grade credential from the state are required to do field work as part of all child development and methods courses, and they culminate their programs with one full-semester student teaching experience. That semester is equally divided between two different grade placements, one above and one below third grade. Each university supervisor teaches a seminar class for all her/his supervisees once a week and visits them in the field at least three times over the semester. Each visit is preceded by a pre-conference session that allows the supervisor to learn of the student's plans and dialogue constructively, and is followed by a post-observation meeting where the observation is discussed. Each observation is also followed up by the supervisor's written summary. The format most often followed in this program has strong elements of clinical supervision; however it can be viewed as eclectic in the way individual supervisors approach their roles.

The school of education recognizes and supports the development of supervisory personnel in several ways. The Director of Field Placement puts much time and effort

into helping supervisors feel a part of the school of education's mission, and the school clearly views the supervisor as a teacher-educator, while seeking ways to recognize and strengthen this view in more tangible ways. Although the supervisors in the elementary education program tend, for the most part, to be adjuncts, the department in which this study was done provides regular meetings, in-service workshops, speakers, and several luncheons during the year where they can meet and talk with full-time faculty. Handbooks and other written materials pertinent to developments in the field are distributed regularly. Such practices are aimed at helping to keep supervisors informed, seek their input, and help them see themselves as members of a supervisory cohort, as well as of the department.

Each student teacher comes to campus one afternoon a week and attends a seminar class with her/his supervisor followed by a class taught by a full-time member of the department in which classroom teaching behavior is analyzed. The department encourages the supervisor and the analysis instructor to confer over the semester about the student teachers they share, but the average supervisor is still well aware of her/his adjunct status.

Informed Consent

After the four main participants agreed to be part of the study, I met with each one individually in order that the study and their roles in the study could be explained more fully and so they could read, discuss, and sign the consent letter. As each student teacher agreed to participate (a total of four), I gave the same type of individual explanation, and the signed consent letters were secured. I took care to identify the study as outside the expected student teaching responsibilities and unconnected to a course grade in any way. I contacted the cooperating teachers for each grade placement (a total of eight) to inform them about the study, and I made the request to

observe and record a supervised lesson by the student teacher. After this, I secured a signed letter of consent from each cooperating teacher as well. I informed all participants of their right to raise questions or to withdraw from the study at any time (see Appendix A). The selection of the four supervisor participants was not finalized until I was certain that each university supervisor would have the participation of one student teacher and the two cooperating teachers involved and that all letters had been signed.

The Researcher's Role

In interpretative research of this nature, knowledge of the researcher's background and experience can be considered a useful and positive element of the study (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). In attempting such openness in this qualitative process, the following information is included:

I am a faculty member of the department in which the research took place. The supervisors had all had occasion to meet and talk with me in the past, and many were aware of my interest in and many years of experience with the supervision of student teachers. I regularly teach one section of the "Analysis" class that accompanies student teaching, and this has given me the opportunity to become involved in dialogue with several of the supervisors. I believe that this background was an asset in establishing my credibility with the supervisors who participated in this study.

During the course of the data collection, I sought out opportunities for the participants to express themselves in as many aspects of the study as were possible. While this entailed trying to develop an open, trusting relationship with the supervisors

involved, such a role also required me to attempt to challenge the subjects' beliefs as I examined the strength and consistency of their stated views.

It was also important for me to assure each student teacher that her performance would not be called into question in any way beyond the normal expectations, nor would my presence and observations impact grades in any way. Further, I introduced myself to the classrooms where observations took place as well as to the cooperating teachers involved, and tried to make my observations as unobtrusive as possible.

In order to assure that the voices of the supervisors were clearly heard, I made every attempt to test "participant confirmation" (Carr & Kemmis, 1983) by offering the supervisors regular opportunities to read, evaluate, comment on, and make changes to my description of the data. I made myself available to attend student teacher observations, to meet and confer with the supervisors, and to exchange written materials in as convenient a way as possible for the supervisors. In all cases, permission was sought and granted by the appropriate Institutional Review Board to study human subjects, and all pertinent procedures were followed as required.

Procedures

Multiple data collection procedures were utilized in this study. These procedures were developed and refined during a pilot study and in large part consisted of interviews, observations, videotaped lessons, and videotaped post-observation conferences, as well as a reflective analysis by each supervisor of one of her own videotaped sessions. Field notes, a researcher journal, and supplementary data such as lesson plans and supervisor handbooks were used to add to the richness of each portrait.

Pilot Study

In anticipation of this study, three pilot studies were completed following Glesne and Peshkin (1992):

- In the first pilot study, a focused baseline interview was conducted in the spring of 1997, in which two supervisors were interviewed at the same school of education that hosted this study. An interview protocol was developed as an initial format, but the interviews themselves were kept open and as informal as possible so that the supervisors would feel more like colleagues than subjects of a study. The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and, in one case, returned to the subject for verification. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes, and subsequently, the respondents were asked for their perspectives on the interview process itself. From this pilot, I became aware of how eager these supervisors were to talk about their work, and I was surprised, to some extent, by the depth of their reflections. In addition, I recognized that the tape recorder needed to be tested beforehand in the actual acoustical setting, since outside noises and a computer's motor interfered with the recording and made one audiotape impossible to transcribe. One other finding was that some questions needed to be rewritten so that attempted "feedback loops" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) would not lead to repetition.
- The second pilot study consisted of a videotaped observation of one supervisor, also in the spring of 1997. This pilot illuminated how cumbersome the inclusion of a third party could be for the participants in terms of scheduling, and consequently, two changes were made. First, the three observations originally planned were reduced to two, keeping one observation in each placement. The second problem was my initial request to be included in the preconference meeting. While I felt it important to be

familiar with the student teacher's plans as well as the supervisor's perceptions and feedback, my participation became a stumbling block for the subjects because of the spontaneity that was a part of their dialogues. Upon analysis, it became apparent that the information gathered could be gained as effectively by asking for a record of the meeting, either in the form of a tape-recording or notes, and following Yin (1994), this alternative was pursued in keeping with the perception that participants' needs should be taken into consideration. In a few instances, unforeseen complications resulted in this information's being transferred through phone calls or e-mail.

- A third pilot study was completed when I invited the supervisor to revisit the videotape of one of her student teacher's observed lessons and the accompanying post-conference meeting. Here the focus was on reflection and dialogue, and the outcome most pertinent to the present study was the enthusiastic response I found in the supervisor to this type of activity. The insights I gained were an asset in designing the context and form of the supervisory self-analysis and dialogue. A protocol was not used in the pilot, but one grew out of my experiences in working through this pilot study and was included in this study.

Collected data also included several documents and other artifacts tangential to the university supervisor's work, and each proved their ability to enrich the pool of data. The initial coding categories that were attempted with data collected from the post-observation conferences tended to work well and were used in the actual study as well.

Data Collection

Since this study strove to provide meaning regarding what supervision of preservice student teachers is like from a supervisory perspective, a thick description of experience that explored the complexities of the supervisor's role was generated (Geertz, 1973). This was accomplished through a variety of procedures that are described here.

Each participant cycled through a four-part data collection process. This began with a face-to-face audiotaped interview with each individual and was followed by two site visits where the student teacher's lesson, and the post-observation conference that followed it, was observed and videotaped. (In one case, the student teacher's classroom work could not be recorded due to school policy, and data were collected through field notes. Since the lesson itself was not a primary source of documentation in this study and was utilized only as a way to review information being discussed in the ensuing conference, this was not an insurmountable problem.) A final meeting with each supervisor completed the process by having the participants choose one of their two observations to review and discuss during an audiotaped session with me.

Multiple sources of evidence were selected for use in this study following Yin's (1994) discussion of the advantage they offer in developing "converging lines of inquiry" in the process of triangulation (p. 92). Such an approach was also in keeping with Guba and Lincoln's (1989) rationale for empowering all parties, since it offered participants several opportunities to become active in the constructive process of the study. Data were collected primarily through audio or videotaped interviews and observations and were augmented by data from meetings, field notes, and a journal kept by the researcher. Such a diversity of data sources offered views of the supervisors from many perspectives and in varied settings.

Data Collection Methods. Three primary methods were used for data collection in this study: interviews, observations and a final review of one videotaped conference observation. By encouraging supervisors to talk about their work in depth and by observing them in their actual work with student teachers, portraits of the individuals emerged in three ways: as they viewed themselves and university supervision in general, as I viewed them and their views, and as these two realities shaped each other by means of what Glesne (1999) refers to as *intersubjectivity*. This interplay between researcher and participant involves the influence of ongoing negotiation, over time, of the subjectivities involved and, as such, was an embedded component of the interpretation of data.

By observing each supervisor as she worked with a single student in both grade placements over the one-semester experience, supervisory practice was compared as it crossed grade levels. Protocols, as described by Creswell (1994), were developed for the face-to-face interviews, for coding the post-observation conferences, and for the reviews of the videotape of the post-observation conference.

Interviews. Focused baseline interviews of the four participants, previously piloted with university supervisors and revised, were conducted. Following Glesne and Peshkin's (1992) advice on design, questions were formulated to (1) fit the topic, (2) illuminate the phenomenon of inquiry, and (3) be anchored in the cultural reality of the respondents. They were examined for subjectivity and then offered to a "facilitator" for a second opinion on format, design, and researcher subjectivity. Probes about prevailing practices attempted to uncover each supervisor's views on the most critical areas of the student teaching experience and how she approached her work with students (see Appendix B).

These interviews lasted between one to two hours, depending on the supervisor, and were intended to shed light on participant backgrounds, views of teaching, perceptions about learning in children and adults, their personal goals for supervision of student teachers, and their reasons for pursuing this type of work, plus the rewards, drawbacks, and difficulties associated with supervision. Each supervisor was encouraged to explore her approach to supervision from a philosophical as well as a practical basis and assess her own strengths and weaknesses in her work with student teachers. Systematic suggestions for improvement to the field of supervision in general were also elicited. The interviews were used in answering all three research questions.

Observations. Observations were useful to this study in that they provided firsthand experience as compared to the “secondhand account of the world” represented by interview data (Merriam, 1988). Two student teacher observations and post-observation conferences for each supervisor were observed by the researcher, once for a placement above third grade and once in a placement in a third grade or below. In all cases, the post-observation meetings between the student teacher and the supervisor were videotaped. The student teacher's work with children typically spanned about one-half hour, and the post-observation conferences between supervisor and student teacher were usually completed within about 30-45 minutes. Field notes taken on-site supplemented each of the recorded observations. These conferences were coded using protocols for their style and approach of supervision as well as for their focus (see Appendixes C and D, respectively).

Review of One Videotaped Post-Observation Conference. Each supervisor chose one of her two post-observation conferences to review and discuss. After they had watched the videotape, participants were free to discuss any aspects of it that interested them, and I used probes contingent upon their comments to push their reflections as

they emerged. The protocol for this aspect of the data collection is found in Appendix E.

Collection of Supporting Data. Several other sources of data collection supplemented the three primary sources described. They were utilized as they applied to each individual participant and to that supervisor's experience with her student teacher.

Researcher Journal. Merriam (1988) describes the usefulness of observer comments that provide an "introspective record" of experiences in the field (p. 98). To this end, an ongoing journal describing the researcher's thoughts and actions as the study progressed was utilized as a way of recording evolving problem solving, insights, and questions. Spradley (1979) termed such opportunities for analysis and interpretation *think papers*, and much of the focus of my researcher journal entries served this purpose. It also provided supportive documentation of some of the events that took place and was used as a way to monitor researcher subjectivity, as described by Glesne (1999).

Field Notes. At each of the observation sites, field notes were taken. Following Glesne and Peshkin (1992), I attempted in these field notes to be as descriptive and objective as possible so that the records would be helpful with analysis at a later date. Field notes and the researcher journal were recorded and filed separately.

Other Supporting Documents. Supporting documents and artifacts in the form of lesson plans, children's work, pertinent handbooks, university information sheets, and the like were collected as they seemed appropriate. They were referred to from time to time as the portraits were being constructed and again as they were analyzed.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data was done simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation, and narrative report writing, so as to focus and shape the study as it proceeded (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Such constant analysis was an aid in the reduction of data, or what Tesch (1990) has termed *de-contextualization*, and was helpful in the emergence of a deeper, more cohesive interpretation. To this end, the interviews and videotaped observations were transcribed, read several times, and organized by a variety of themes, including two coding schemes. All discourse was coded except that which was irrelevant.

As data were coded, words or passages that were coded according to these themes were boldfaced, and the code corresponding to each statement was handwritten in the margin. Each area thus coded was duplicated and filed, both according to the individual participant and to the theme. If a comment or action seemed relevant but did not fit an existing theme or code, it was boldfaced and filed under a general "unthemed" category and revisited periodically for review. This spatial format offered a systematic approach whereby patterns, categories, and themes became clearer, were examined as discrete units, and could be analyzed by individual cases and across cases.

These analytic files and rudimentary coding schemes helped establish boundaries and both refine the direction and control the volume of data. They were also helpful in the consolidation and interpretation of the data. However, not all data were organized exclusively into coded schemes or themes. Each supervisor's views were also explored for the story they contained. Such individual elements of a portrait were felt to be essential to consider in attempting to understand the nature of the supervisors' individual approaches to working with student teachers, their journeys as educators, and their own recommendations to the field. Data informing such elements of each

participant's story that fell outside the coded themes were also boldfaced, copied, and filed separately according to the name of each participant.

Interviews, audiotapes and videotapes were transcribed and analyzed by use of what Miles and Huberman (1984) refer to as data display, or the use of visual representation of data to assist in meaning making. Field notes, researcher journal entries, and the video records of each student teacher's lessons were examined to clarify any researcher ambiguities that arose. Patterns within these data were sought, and simple frequency counts were employed where useful. From a sample of unstructured data collected from one of the transcriptions, the initial coding schemes were tried and refined. The researcher identified words, behaviors, or other indicators that revealed the supervisor's and/or the researcher's perceptions of the role and focus of the supervisor's approach to working with student teachers. Other data were boldfaced where a theme or research question became apparent when they were periodically explored. Multiple copies of the data so boldfaced by theme were collected into appropriate files as these themes took shape.

Supervisors' roles could have been organized according to many descriptors, but this study employed those of *clinician*, *collaborator*, and *assessor*, as adapted from a dissertation by Kato (1995). These have been termed "Style and Approach" codes in this study and have been identified as "1A," "1B," and "1C" in reference to Research Question 1 (RQ1) (see Appendix C).

To classify the focus of supervisory practice, and working from terms acquired through a number of sources, eight different areas that could be addressed in a post-observation conference were delineated. In this study, these areas are referred to as the "Focus" codes and labeled "2S" through "2Z." The number "2" indicates the second coding scheme and refers to the second research question (RQ2). The letters "S"

through "Z" have been used to make working with the two coding schemes less confusing. These eight areas, termed "Focus" codes in this study, include *behavior management, time management, lesson planning, people skills, student teacher reflection, curriculum, child development, and children's learning* (see Appendix D).

All interviews were read, chunked into categories corresponding to coding descriptors, and arranged into evolving data displays (Miles & Huberman, 1984). These coding schemes included complex in-process transcriptions, post-it notes, and a variety of category identifiers grouped by color codes, cut and paste sets, graphs, maps, etc. Since analysis was an ongoing process, the data displays not only took many forms and names as the study progressed, but they helped to aggregate the data, isolate patterns, and aid the process of data reduction (Tesch, 1990). The remaining data for each portrait were then read and coded, and the working narrative was written. The post-observation conference transcriptions were re-read at least three times, each time on a clean copy, and each reading was separated from the preceding one by at least three weeks in order to bring a fresh eye to the task. Every reading included a re-coding of the data by the researcher. Additionally, the transcription of one supervisor's post-observation conference was read and coded by a colleague before results were analyzed, in an effort to improve internal validity through peer examination (Merriam, 1988).

After this process was completed, inconsistencies among codings were explored, and where they appeared, a further reading and analysis was completed. When the researcher was satisfied that the codings were uniform for each participant and across participants' data, coding results were then tabulated for each post-observation conference and arranged in further visual displays. This was accomplished through the

use of bolding, color coding by research question, and “cut and paste.” Finally, these data were displayed graphically.

Supervisors were not expected to be easily categorized exclusively as one of the first three style and approach codes; rather, the pilot study indicated responses that were strongly indicative of one orientation over the others. Similarly, within the second classification (the coding of the supervisor's focus), the intent was not to classify a participant as one or the other, but rather to see where the emphasis was most frequently placed--and to note if one or more areas were overlooked.

The style and approach categories were used, for example, to discern if a supervisor seemed more interested in helping the student teacher to refine the technical skills of teaching, to become more professional in her practice, as well as to be more critical and self-reflective, or if the supervisor perceived her role in terms of its evaluative nature. The first two of these approaches, *clinician* and *collaborator*, embody tacit images of the student teacher similar to those outlined by Schoonmaker, Sawyer, and Brainard (1998) as "teacher as worker to be trained," as "professional to be enlightened," and as "deliberative practitioner to be supported." The third code of *assessor* was added because of the common understanding within the field that embedded within the university supervisor's role is the responsibility as gatekeeper to the profession. While it was expected that supervisors would not easily identify themselves in this role, and in fact might consciously recoil from this label, the implicit pressures attached to such an understanding seemed worth exploring to see if they were apparent within the data.

Comments made in the post-observation conference were examined to see if they could be coded into one of the three style and approach codes. When in the pilot study, for example, the supervisor said, "I've just got a couple of questions, comments, that I'd

like you to comment on ... to help you out," she was coded as acting as a *clinician*. When she said, "It was like you planted that child!" it was much more clearly *collaborative* in tone and was coded as such. Similarly, in the pilot analysis, when the same supervisor said, "I think you did a fine job," she was *assessing* the student's performance. While positive in nature, such comments clearly infer the evaluative nature of the supervisor's work.

The second set of codes was used to identify the focus of supervisory efforts. When a supervisor asked in the pilot study, "What were your goals for this lesson?" she was obviously interested in the student's *planning* skills, and was coded as "2U." When she asked, "How do you know whether you met your goals?" she was classified as encouraging the student to *reflect* on her own practice. This was therefore coded as "2W." Similarly, when the supervisor commented that there had been "good pick up on the child's question," this was coded as "2Z," or *children's learning*. In many cases, within one conversational chunk, supervisors' comments spanned more than one code and more than one research question. In these cases, the comments were given multiple codings.

While the two coding systems were utilized in answering Research Questions #1 and #2, they were not the sole source of data that contributed to the analysis. Information appropriate to these questions that appeared in the interviews, the researcher journal, and the field notes were boldfaced and included in the data displays and analysis.

In the case of the third research question, a coding system seemed too narrow for the purposes of the study. Instead, data supportive to this question were boldfaced and chunked during reading and returned to as connection-making emerged in data analysis.

In this teacher education program, each student teacher had two field placements over the course of the semester; one above third grade and one in third grade or below. This division in placements was utilized as a prime, though not exclusive, opportunity to examine patterns of behaviors that differed, depending upon the grade level of placement. The researcher remained open to any possibilities for analysis that emerged.

The use of several dissimilar methods of collecting and analyzing data allows the researcher to draw upon a combination of techniques and attempt to relate them in the study of the same unit. Such triangulation “strengthens reliability as well as internal validity” (Merriam, 1988, p. 172). In this study, data were collected through interviews, observation, the supervisors’ reflections on a review of a videotape, field notes, the researcher’s journal, and collection of supporting documents. Triangulation of data, therefore, took place on an ongoing basis, with intersecting layers of data added as each phase took place and as “converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 1994, p. 92) developed. The use of multiple methods of collecting data was meant not only to insure validity in the technological sense, but was aimed at helping to achieve a more “holistic understanding” with “plausible explanations” about the phenomena in question (Mathison, 1988, p. 17). Member checks were accomplished by offering participants the opportunity to review data on an ongoing basis and as portraits were completed. Additionally, general researcher field notes, journal entries, and other collected artifacts were analyzed for ways they could add to each layer of data analysis as the study proceeded.

Connections made through coding categories used in the pilot study remained remarkably useful in the analysis of these data. "Explanation building" (Yin, 1989)

enabled the researcher to explore links and to build an explanation of the data. Such explanation building formed the basis of the narrative section of this study.

Internal validity was encouraged by the amount of time spent with the respondents, the triangulation of data sources, perspectives, and methods employed (including observation, interview and reflective data), the use of repeated member checks, and alertness to bias and subjectivity.

Transcription Symbols

The following transcription symbols were employed in this study:

- ... is used to indicate a pause in the transcription.
- ?! is used to help convey the quality of an utterance.
- // indicates an inaudible segment of the tape.
- Yes* words will be put in italics if they carried particular emphasis as they were spoken.
- () indicates a description of the context.
- [] fills in a missing word or indicates a speaker's pause.
- US refers to the supervisor.
- ST denotes the student teacher.
- CT refers to the cooperating teacher.
- R is used for the researcher.
- she Since all the people involved in this study are women, the personal pronoun *she* is used to refer to the ST, CT, and US.
- I Interview
- Ob#1 First transcribed post-observation conference
- Ob#2 Second transcribed post-observation conference
- RV US's review of the video of one of the post-observation conferences

RJ Researcher Journal
FN Field Notes
S1 Amelia
S2 Mary
S3 Bonnie
S4 Marion

Chapter IV

SUPERVISOR PORTRAITS

In an earlier chapter, it was noted that specific data on supervisors of student teachers are extremely limited. Questions of educational and professional background, as well as philosophies, beliefs, and styles of individual supervisors, are rarely represented in the literature. For this reason, the data collected from this research have been used to construct, as clearly as possible, a portrait containing these elements for each individual. Each portrait is first organized by the four data collection categories: the interview, the first and second post-observation conference, and the participant's review of one of her observation conferences. These are followed by a case analysis and a summary of the researcher's view of the supervisor. Some of my views on the cooperating teacher and the student teacher have been included where they help explain the supervisor more fully. Excerpts from the researcher's journal are threaded into the narrative throughout, and supervisor comments that have been included were selected because they were most representative of the data in general. In Chapter V, a cross-case analysis is presented in which the study's three research questions are specifically addressed in light of the data represented by these portraits.

Supervisor #1: Amelia

Interview

Whenever I see Amelia, she is smiling. It seems as natural a posture for her as walking, and as she enters for the interview, I note that a smile is breaking through her thoughts. Her short, curly hair and glasses frame a face that is eager and earnest--and warm. My immediate reaction is that I think I would have liked her to be my teacher. She seems safe, and like her outfit, comfortably professional. As she begins to talk about herself and her background, I sense that she is just a little uncomfortable being the center of attention (S1, R J, 3/10).

Background. Amelia has been retired from teaching about 9 years. She began by sharing the fact that she never wanted to be a teacher. Her undergraduate degree was in sociology and anthropology, and she only became interested in teaching after becoming a parent. "I'd said I would never want to teach but I had one child ... and I really felt like I wanted to know more about children ... and I started taking courses in teaching" (S1, I, 3/10, p. 1). Although she said she was considered a good student as a child and received lots of praise from teachers, she felt that the experience couldn't have been all that positive because she so adamantly didn't *want* to be a teacher.

Her master's program was an initial teacher credentialing program that she did as a part-time student, and what stands out most dramatically was the influence of one particular professor. Amelia referred to her several times over the course of the interview, feeling that this professor's influence, more than any other factor, was responsible for her own sensitivity in working with children. She noted that the person has continued to be an inspiration all through the years. "She helped me really *see* children," and her philosophy was "my bible" (S1, I, 3/10, p. 3). It should be noted that Amelia did not have a "student teaching" experience. Licensing standards at the

time allowed her to substitute two years of substitute work for student teaching, and she asserted that she did not “feel any different because of it” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 4). If anything, she seemed convinced that it made her more sensitive to her student teachers’ stress.

While she remembered a few “hands-on” activities from education classes, memories of the rest of her professional education were hazy; and today, her beliefs about teacher education seem to be embedded in her personal philosophy that success is the result of individual effort. She did allow that it is important to be exposed to educational philosophy and to learn attitudes about children. When pressed about her education school experience, she stated:

The program really gave us a philosophy of education ... the methods courses don’t really stand out. Any weaknesses I felt as a new teacher I ascribed to my own failings, not the Ed School. I had to count on myself.
(S1, I, 3/10, p. 5)

Amelia’s teaching experience was unique. She was part of a team that created a multiage classroom for grades 4, 5, and 6; and for about 20 years of her professional life, she was engaged in this collaborative venture. She was obviously both proud of this work and convinced of the effectiveness of team teaching. “We really got to know them [the children]” in the three years, she commented (S1, I, 3/10, p. 8). Her teaching improved over the years, according to Amelia, because of learning from others ... and practice. It should be noted that Amelia continued going to school throughout her years of teaching. She earned another master’s degree in nutrition and took enough administrative coursework to qualify for an administrative credential, though she never got to the point where she wanted to leave the classroom totally.

During her teaching career, Amelia was frequently a cooperating teacher, but admitted that she sometimes worried about not having enough time to critique STs

(student teachers) properly. In defense of herself, she added, “There were three teachers in the multiage class, and we shared the responsibility ... since we conferenced with each child individually every week, we could judge how the STs were doing by what was going on with the children” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 9).

Supervision. Amelia began supervising about a year after she retired when she was approached by a professor at the university whose children she had taught. “She said they needed me--and another friend who works here asked me too” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 12). When asked why she came out of retirement to supervise STs, Amelia responded, “I like having something to do that I enjoy doing”(S1, I, 3/10, p. 13). In terms of what was needed to do the job, she replied, “Being with [observing and reflecting on] children” and “knowledge of the subject areas” that will be taught by the ST (S1, I, 3/10, p. 15).

Although the university has an orientation program for supervisors and schedules regular meetings over the course of the year, Amelia confessed to still feeling unsure of exactly how others in her position were approaching their responsibilities. When asked how she learned to supervise, she answered,

I think like I learned how to teach. I think I got better as I went along [pause]. Oh, I asked a few people, other supervisors, you know, how many times? what do you do? [pause]. I must have had a million questions. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 14)

If she were in a bind, Amelia reflected that the director of field placement was always approachable and a wonderful source of information and help, but she also conveyed her own perception that she should have *known* how to do the job she was hired to do.

Her approach to supervision seems guided by many of the principles she deems important for working with children.

I’m warm. I mean I start out by saying my job is to help them be a good teacher. I encourage them to take risks—to start with something easier in

the beginning but make sure they tackle things that are hard for them while they have somebody in view. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 16)

Although she said that she doesn't follow any theoretical model, Amelia approaches each student rather consistently with a preconference meeting, whether in person or on the phone, where she "looks over" their plans. "I meet with them--not very long because I don't want to say, 'Don't do this' or [influence them to] 'change the plan'" (S1, I, 3/10, p. 14). The format of the lesson plan is not important to this supervisor, although she does want to see something in writing. She is most anxious to learn, she said, what the ST "hopes to have as an outcome" as a guide to determining whether the ST "knows if it is working or not working" (S1, I, 3/10, p. 14).

In discussing some of the more important aspects of her approach to supervision, Amelia alluded to the following:

- I try to be all round to them [to reach all areas] ... and because each lesson is done by a different person, each is a whole different situation. However, I think *interpersonal skills* are probably one of the most important things I look for. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 17)
- On evaluations, students always tell me that ... my management skills help them. I don't ever even really realize that I'm giving it, but it comes up regularly that I mention kinds of things to help. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 16)
- I make sure of involvement for *all* in the classroom and [give suggestions for] individual children. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 16)
- She judges how well the ST is doing not just by "how exciting they are to the children—but that they are really *teaching* them something and not just *entertaining* them" (S1, I, 3/10, p. 17).
- I tell them that they don't need to know everything. All you need is an attitude which is open to finding out. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 10)
- I work hard on the aspect of continued learning since I learned so many things through teaching. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 11)

- I tell them ... to take risks—it's their first chance to try all the theories they've learned—with someone who can guide them. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 15)
- I watch the children and what they are doing. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 18)
- She helps students focus on the fact that just because the children can do the planned activity doesn't automatically mean they learned anything. She also looks to how much help the child needs to accomplish the task (“whether instructions need to be given ninety-two times,” S1, I, 3/10, p. 18) and watches how tuned in the ST is to the children's need for modeling.
- She wants to know “whether the ST notices the *learning*, you know, and what they are doing about it—Do they recognize that there are things left to teach tomorrow because not everybody in the class got it?” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 18).

In terms of problems she perceived in the university supervision of STs, Amelia reflected on several aspects of the job. Interestingly, all the problems mentioned focused on herself except one: STs who announce they don't like certain subjects. (Even this circled back to her, however, as she worried what more she could do to help them.) In reference to her own performance, Amelia targeted two areas: her ability to see enough of their teaching to clearly determine, in her own mind, future success in the classroom, and her difficulty with confronting a reluctant student who needs guidance. She noted, “I try to bring it up [a problem] as a general topic—in the seminar” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 18). It was clear from her responses that she felt the burden of her role as the profession's “gatekeeper” and that she felt that interpersonal methods of giving advice and constructive critique were preferred to negative comments on written evaluations. Additionally, this supervisor responded that she had no different expectations of the two placements except that the student would be expected to handle more responsibility in her second placement.

Amelia was clear in her belief that the university supervisor served a unique function during the ST's field work for a number of reasons:

- USs (university supervisors) are a vital alternative to supervision by CTs (cooperating teachers). The ST tends to follow the lead of the CT (who frequently encourages such behavior). Since student teaching is the only opportunity the student has to “create” themselves as a teacher by reflecting on how what they believe is interfaced with what they do, they should not be merely reflecting someone else's view of teaching.
- CTs have a job to do and responsibility for the children on a continuum. Sometimes CTs are content with having the ST do things like spelling tests and the next lesson in the curriculum. It is up to the US to encourage STs to find “other kinds of things outside the usual routines of the classroom,” so that they can “show their skills as a teacher” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 15). Even if the model was exemplary, Amelia seemed to feel that the ST's teaching skills would be best tested and stretched by having her discover her own strengths and weaknesses through experimentation, supported by feedback from someone unconnected to responsibility for the classroom. Without a university supervisor, she was uncertain whether this would happen in most classrooms.

In summing up her views about the importance of university supervision, Amelia added that in terms of the student teaching triad, the US is the “gelling material” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 19); and while she sees that function as very important to teacher development, she is not sure if anybody else sees it that way. Amelia was asked how her job could be improved. Once again, she fell back to the view that people who try harder and push themselves get better as they go, but did offer the thought that seeing someone do

the job would have been an asset. “I think it might have been helpful to follow ... to go with somebody for the first year. When you are with somebody who is doing it, you see what they do, find out what you like and what you don’t [and choose] what fits. It would help you to be objective for sure” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 14).

Commentary. Amelia appeared to approach the interview with some tentativeness. This sense was reinforced many times throughout the process when, after giving me her opinion, she followed it with “Do you agree?” or “What do you think?” I didn’t feel that this indicated a lack of conviction for her beliefs or practices, but rather an eagerness to learn from others; and this motif was very consistent with all she had said about how she herself approached learning and expertise. I also reflected on the fact that such responses might be an outgrowth of her many years working collaboratively. I noted the following in my researcher journal:

In reading through the data, I was struck by how frequently Amelia seems to seek affirmation of what she does. After picking up on this fact, I reread the data again and quite a different possibility popped out when I connected it to her years in a team teaching situation. Having many years of experience myself as a team teacher, making this connection prompted me to reflect on how such collaborative work had changed me in many ways. I have clear memories of how my own experiences with such teamwork depended upon and blossomed through the willingness of all members of the team to consider another perspective to their own. Where my own experiences had been most successful, I know that the problem-solving, planning, and evaluation had worked because of our emphasis on collaborative thinking, not just action. As I think about it now, I have, in fact, come to come to seek out such alternatives to my own thinking in all of my lived experiences. This certainly adds a new dimension to my interpretation of Amelia. She taught with two other teachers, by all accounts very successfully, for 20 years. How could that not affect the way she approaches life? (S1, RJ, 6/27)

Noting more than once that no one had ever asked her to think about some of these issues before, Amelia nonetheless seemed to have a good grip on the major emphasis of her personal philosophy. I also noted that her style of dealing with STs is

congruent in many ways to her philosophy of teaching children and that she expected the same effort of herself in dealing with both STs and children. Her manner was frank and attentive throughout the interview; but even though I heard her confidence in the approach that she chose to use, as well as in the developmental areas she accented as important, I sensed her doubt that any of her decisions, in their small way, would impact the larger picture of the field of university supervision. This resonated with my experience that such disequilibrium in teachers impacts on the theory-to-practice continuum in teaching.

Post-Observation Conference #1

This observation took place in a public school kindergarten with a largely minority population. It was the ST's (Nancy) second observation by Amelia. The atmosphere in the classroom was relaxed when we entered, and the CT acted as Nancy's aide throughout the lesson. It was clear that the CT and ST were at ease with one another. The lesson's stated objective was children's recognition of the upper and lower case "Pp."

As the lesson began, Nancy introduced the letter phonetically, and with a chart board, encouraged children to offer words with that initial consonant, which she wrote down. After this, she read the book *Popcorn*, moved to the actual popping of corn, and culminated her lesson with the children's gluing the popcorn onto paper that had been previously outlined boldly with an upper and lower case example of the letter being taught. While the lesson involved several transitions of both activity and placement, it was noted that Nancy was prepared and organized with her materials, and the lesson flowed smoothly with the help of the CT (S1, Ob#1, FN, 3/10).

As the children were dismissed, Amelia began the conference in the classroom by encouraging the student to reflect on the lesson and then moved to Nancy's thoughts

on what she had learned that could be applied to future teaching. Both participants seemed to concentrate on the technicalities of the lesson at first. As Nancy began, Amelia offered much affirmation, and when Nancy mentioned some changes she would make in the future, Amelia elaborated on what the ST had said:

- N. So I was thinking that maybe I could do something next time like have them actually write it out on their own time or go over some P words.
- A. They had good preparation so maybe if you could have left a paper ... you could have had two P's written on it. Is that what you are saying? (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 1)

And again:

- N. It's hard for them [the upper and lower case] ... so I figured I'd just write it at the bottom so they could see it.
- A. Right. So the main thing you're looking for was more hands-on participation for them, although you did give it to them before we came. (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 2)

Amelia let the ST lead the discussion, giving many affirmations and compliments that referenced particular points:

- “You stopped for a lot of questions [and helped them] ... anticipate what was going to happen next in the story” (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 2).
- When Nancy says, “I wanted them to make sure that they understood what I was saying to them,” Amelia responds, “... and that's wonderful!” (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 2).

Amelia then moved to a discussion of Nancy's affect with the children. “There was laughter, and that was good, right? [pause] You smiling ... you *have* to be smiling for children. I think that's a really big part of it,” she stated before addressing the needs of individual children with... “Now, Nelson...”

Nelson's name was heard frequently during the lesson. His movement, poking, and comments frequently required the ST to direct her attention to him. It was clear

that Nelson's English skills are either very limited or non-existent, and Nancy made repeated attempts to use her own limited Spanish in her efforts to keep him on task. After a period of time, the CT sat down next to the child to limit the distractions with one-to-one interaction. I wondered what happened with this child on an everyday basis and reflected my concerns in my Researcher Journal:

I can't help noticing that one child, Nelson, is out of his seat, touching children, and otherwise distracted through much of the lesson. He seems to have no ability to follow what is being said and is only able to participate when he can follow along with a physical activity (watching popcorn pop or eating popcorn, for example)... While at least a few other children in the room speak Spanish, and may even be limited in their command of English, Nelson alone seems incapable of understanding much in English beyond simple commands (if that)!... How can he be expected to sit and listen to what he doesn't understand *all day*? How can continuous directions to "sit" keep him from being bored and frustrated? What steps are being taken to help this child not merely behave mindlessly, but to *learn*?... The CT does not seem at all troubled by the way Nancy deals with the child, and I presume that the ST's approach is congruent with the usual classroom model. Although the CT sits with him for part of the ST's lesson, this can't happen frequently, especially in the absence of the ST. What is the *plan* for this child, beyond trying to keep him from distracting behavior? (S1, Ob#1, RJ, 3/16)

As Amelia steered the discussion to what the ST knows about this particular child and what steps she has taken to address his needs, I note that Nancy tends to skirt issues that Amelia brings up, adamantly clinging to her own perceptions of the situation (RJ, 3/16). She attempts to probe the ST's actions:

- A. Now, when you tell him to "sit" in Spanish, he doesn't always do that, right?
- N. No. I tell him [in Spanish to sit] ... and he doesn't do it, so I'll say it again in English, "sit," and then I'll tell him over again to sit. [pause] He knows. If he doesn't do it ... it's just because he doesn't want to listen. He's *Nelson*!
- A. So what else can you do with him? Because he hears that ["sit"] all the time and I think it's really good that you try to speak Spanish with

him [pause] but it isn't always effective. In other words, he still seems to do what he wants....

- N. ... He does what he wants, so you have to tell him.
- A. Is there any chance to meet with him alone? ... You know, to help him to ...
- N. ... They actually had someone. [pause] Well, there's another boy in the class, and I don't like to do this because it's not his responsibility to translate, but I don't mind because the other kids like to learn Spanish. He likes to talk to him and tell us what he said. (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 3)

The supervisor persisted for some minutes with this line of questioning, trying to get the student to see the problem from the child's perspective, and perhaps come up with an alternative way of dealing with (or preventing) Nelson's behavior. Nancy, however, continued to perceive it only as a reluctance on the child's part to conform, and instead concentrated on how she is helping him learn English:

- N. He knows some words. [pause] He plays like he doesn't know, but he knows.
- A. ... Maybe [you can tell] ... this other little boy other kinds of things to say so that [Nelson] doesn't have to be told to "sit down" so much. [pause] In other words, a discussion with him maybe where someone interprets for you. You know what I am trying to say?
- N. Right. Jason's pretty good.... He's fluent in Spanish, fluent in English.... He'll say something to me [in Spanish] because [he knows] I understand a little. [pause] Nelson thinks I know a lot, so he just goes off and I'm like "Okay ... wait. I don't understand." So I ask Jason, and I tell [Nelson] to say it again. He'll say it again and Jason tells me what he said. (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 4)

Nancy diverted the conversation from the issue of how to find a way to meet Nelson's needs by focusing on how she works Spanish into her teaching. Having made several attempts to get the student to reflect more deeply on this one child, with limited success, Amelia moved on. She kept bringing up Nelson from time to time, however,

not quite giving up on her goal of having Nancy explore the developmental issues involved and her responsibility for trying to meet his needs. “They were fully involved..., you know, with the exception of Nelson” (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 5).

In further conversation, the supervisor points out how skillfully the student integrated other subjects into the lesson and adds a suggestion for furthering the children’s understanding. Amelia brings the conference to its conclusion by touching upon the needs of kindergarten children in some of the following remarks:

- They were really excited. One of the things you can see in a kindergarten especially is you really need two people ... maybe there’s a parent who could come in or an older child (from an upper grade).... (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 6)
- Your directions were very clear.... (Amelia makes particular reference to the activities as well as to how the ST made explicit her expectations for movement to and from the water fountain.) (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 6)
- They must move.... All the movement is important.... (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 7)

In closing, Amelia asked Nancy once more if she had any further thoughts she would like to discuss and then ended with, “How do you judge that it was good in terms of the children?” and Nancy answered, “Their reaction and participation....” (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 8). Amelia then teased the factor of the children’s learning from this response by adding, “Okay. So they definitely were able to answer and when they got to practice with the letter P, they made the connection with popcorn” (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 8).

Commentary. Nancy seems at ease with the mentoring process, but equally at ease with her own competence. While she defers to Amelia at times, she tends to hold to her own opinions and is frequently reluctant to see things from the perspective of another. Amelia seems to agree in most respects with Nancy’s view of her lesson, and

except for the discussion of Nelson, seems to compliment the student's work while offering "extending" possibilities.

Post-Observation Conference #2

This was the last observation Amelia did of Nancy. It took place in the same school in a sixth grade class. If anything, Nancy seemed even more assured of her competence, almost unconcerned that we were in the room or that she was being videotaped. We were observing a science lesson where the children were expected to measure astrological distances by converting AUs (astronomical units) in order to plot the distance of planets from the sun and other planets. As they did the conversion mathematically, they worked in teams to illustrate the distance on a "tape" (15 feet of paper). Nancy introduced the lesson by reading the directions to them from a handout that each child had before them. There were no other visuals for them to follow, nor did she make an obvious attempt to assess understanding before asking children to choose partners and begin work. While the ST seemed well prepared and the children were involved and interested in the project, there was some confusion and time loss noted as they attempted to follow the directions (S1, Ob#2, FN, 4/30).

As Amelia began the conference, Nancy did not wait for prompting but took the lead in reflecting on her lesson: "I don't think this was a good one. For some reason it didn't work out" (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 1). As Amelia tried to lead the ST to examine why the lesson might not have worked as planned, and directed the conversation to the possible need for further review, Nancy systematically negated everything that Amelia presented:

- A. Some of the things they didn't know too well before they started. Do you think it might have been [stretched to] two or three lessons...?

- N. ...I *would* say yes, but this is all review.... This is stuff they know. It's not like anything hard. [pause] Like, they know the work and to follow the rules, because we've gone over it.... They know how to multiply decimals because they have been dividing decimals.
- A. Right. Well, you know, we *have* talked about modeling....
- N. ...Right.
- A. And they may know all the steps but really need to do a little review so they may work through the problems better....
- N. ...One little girl over there (points to area where child had been working) is in resource and there's another little girl who was in the group working in the back [of the room] ... were the only two who I can honestly say probably didn't know ... but the rest of them knew. Like when I came back to Natasha.
- A. She had gotten it mixed up because she counted the spaces wrong. If you only have to move the decimal one place, why would you move it two? (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 2)

This conversation went back and forth, with Nancy insisting that the children did not need more direction and giving examples of other similar work they had done in the past. Amelia began to say, "Right" repeatedly after a while, but tried returning to her observation that the children might have performed better with clearer direction and some modeling before beginning the task. When she did not seem to get anywhere, Amelia switched to a more collaborative stance, picking up on Nancy's comment that the partners children chose added to her problem: "Yes, that's always difficult ... who they pick as partners" (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 2). This led the way to introducing several points of agreement, after which she brought the conversation back to critical reflection again: "Sometimes we are more critical the second time we do things. Is there anything you would do differently if you did it again?" (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 4). When she got no response from Nancy immediately, Amelia answered the question herself, "...I was thinking [pause] maybe if you really didn't want them to get to the tape until

they got ... [the math] right, then you could have had them come to you, [and] show you the multiplication before getting the actual ruler.” Nancy agreed but added, “I thought about that after I started” (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 4).

As Amelia elaborated on her reasons for the suggestion, Nancy’s comments became untypically short. In this sequence, it is *she* who said no more than “Right” and “Oh yeah” for an extended period and most of the supervisor’s comments were coded “A.” The supervisor then quickly summed up what she had been explaining by reminding the ST of the importance of clarity in directions given to children but did not wait for a response. Instead, she tacked on a positive comment about a new student, and in so doing shifted the focus of the conference away from the process of the lesson and on to individual children and learning. When Amelia noted that many children seemed to have trouble starting their maps with Earth and then returning to plot Mercury and the others, she asked the ST if she would change the sequence if she were to do the lesson in the future and ask children to work from the planet closest to the sun to the furthest; that is, begin with Mercury rather than Earth. Again, Nancy resisted even contemplating the alternative strategy:

I don’t know how else I would explain it. Some of them understood it and some of them didn’t ... the text started with Earth because it’s their home, I guess, and they’re used to going forward. But I explained to them it’s not a matter of what *order* you do it in, long as the measurement is right [pause] I mean, I don’t know how else to *explain* it. I told them make sure you’re measuring from the sun. Like I *said* it at least five times. (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 6)

Amelia allowed Nancy to continue voicing her frustration at the children’s *unwillingness* to follow her directions; and by encouraging her verbal reflection here by keeping her own responses brief and affirming, the dance changed lead again. While she never seemed to get Nancy to the point of verbally acknowledging how the

lesson might be improved (as the supervisor saw it), she kept gently prodding her to acknowledge that in the future she may want to think of alternative approaches. They arrived back at a collaborative stance, and Nancy then incorporated the supervisor's idea into her own:

- N. ...I guess it was easier to do the tens.
- A. That's the kind of guidance I mean.
- N. Yeah. That's why it's kind of ridiculous for them to start with it.... It was kind of confusing (that the book said to start the Earth).
- A. Yes, it probably would have been easier and caused less confusion (to start with Mercury) ... and you should feel free to change any thing like that that you see.
- N. But in a way, it's kind of a good thing ... because one boy, he started doing it. He started with Earth and he knew he had to get the math correct in order for them all to come out in order. So when he did get it right, he realized, "Oh, wow, they're in order," and if they know this at the beginning, they'll just plot it out.... I was thinking about it when I was at home. Why *would* they start with Earth? It doesn't seem to make sense. Maybe that's the reason?
- A. Well, anyway, in your teaching you should think it out. You will decide which will be the most helpful way for the students to learn. You can change it if you find in the middle of a lesson that it really isn't working. You have that flexibility, you know.
- N. I think I might do it that way, in order.
- A. You might continue to think about whatever way you think is best.... (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 8)

Amelia seemed to recognize the consensus and moved on once again to learning:

"Now, as far as evaluating children's learning, [pause] do you think they got the point?" (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 8). When Nancy answered affirmatively, Amelia did not push her on the issue, but moved on to Nancy's evaluation of her teaching.

- A. How would you evaluate your teaching?

N. I think I would like more order. It was not as organized as it might have been. I would have done what you said ... make sure I gave them better directions and went over the sheet to be sure they understood first ... and given out the tapes when they had finished the math part and the color coding. Then it would have worked out a lot better.... (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 8)

While Nancy had resisted virtually all of the supervisor's previous attempts to see alternatives to her approach to the lesson, she then, surprisingly, incorporated the previous suggestions into her self-evaluation, indicating that at the very least, she had heard Amelia. The ST then brought up the fact that the children took more time on the assignment than expected, "for whatever reason" (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 8), and Amelia picked up on this, asking if Nancy should have planned for more time. In a lengthy explanation, the ST elaborated on her thinking:

This should have been a snap for them, but *for some reason* it wasn't and the reason that it wasn't was because they were talking and worried about drawing out pictures (coloring the planets) instead of doing the plotting stuff on the tape, and that's probably my fault because I shouldn't have given them the tape. And a lot of them *did* finish! ... I could have had them work alone and told them, you know, "Work on it by yourself and when you're finished, I'll come around and I'll see who's finished...." Those who were finished could have done something else. [pause] ... like there's a lot of things I would have done differently.... (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 9)

Amelia accepted this reflection and chose not to dwell here on further issues of planning, possibly because the ST seems to have reflected on several ways the lesson could have been strengthened. Instead, the supervisor begins to bring the conference to closure by telling the student, "I think this was a terrific idea for a lesson and ... I know as you're doing it there's a lot of learning you're going through" (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 9). They end on a positive, collaborative note:

N. This was fun! They love doing anything that has art in it and where they can move around, not sit in their seats.

A. Something more *hands-on*. Yes!

N. Yeah! (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 10)

Commentary. Amelia seemed either less willing to confront Nancy's thinking here or knows the students' personal style well enough to recognize that Nancy needs space and time to open up her thinking. While she continued to bring up issues she chose as important to the students' growth as a teacher and tried to get the ST to reflect on them, perhaps she recognized and adapted to Nancy's unwillingness to "rethink" herself too quickly. (This seemed to resonate with the image of the teacher as "deliberative practitioner to be supported," described in Schoonmaker et al., 1998). For whatever reason, Amelia's approach to Nancy seemed to "fit" the ST.

After allowing the ST to take the lead, she introduced suggestions--and moved back to a position of agreement and affirmation whenever the ST seemed unable (or unwilling) to hear her, before introducing suggestions again. Near the end of the conference, Amelia offered Nancy a chance to arrive at some synthesis through reflection and then closed the encounter with an affirmation (S1, Ob#2, RJ, 4/30).

While it seems clear that Nancy is intent on discounting the US's suggestions through most of the conference, the reasons why she then turns around and includes these suggestions in her own later reflections is less than clear. Perhaps her bravado and her apparent comfort level with the process are really more wishful thinking than they appear. If so, perhaps she is unable to deal with any information that challenges her confidence early in the process, but when she is feeling more affirmed by the end of the conference, is able to be more open to Amelia's suggestions. While I tend to think this is the explanation, is it just as plausible that she is repeating the US's ideas because they are "expected"? (S1, Ob#1, RJ, 5/6).

There are other questions that caused me to do much reflection. Subsequent reading of the data added more layers to the process:

After a first reading of the data, Nancy seemed very reflective. I was impressed by her ability to have a quick, confident “answer” for Amelia in most instances. On further reading, however, I am less sure. Her quick responses may be more indicative of a “surface” response than of deep thought. She seems particularly uneasy accepting the suggestions of others, but the US has picked up on this and responds to this need. (S1, Ob#1, RJ, 10/4)

Amelia fed back some of the reflective information that Nancy missed (by congratulating her for doing a mini-lesson on the board when she realized that many children were having a similar problem, for example, and by noting how effective she was at giving individual help while walking around the room), and in many ways conformed her approach to Nancy as an individual. Amelia consistently changed her approach depending on the ST’s stance. In taking such cues from Nancy, she may have been able to get more of her message across. It crossed my mind that given a different type of supervisor, this ST could have been even more reluctant to reflect. Another point I noted is that Nancy presents herself as a particularly confident ST. How does this affect the process of supervision?

Review of Video of First Observed Lesson and Conference

Amelia chose to review the video of Nancy’s first of the two observations and conferences that were included in this study. While she seemed eager to revisit her practice, her first reaction to the video was a comment about her appearance (a common reaction of first time viewers). Then she turned to looking for cues about her performance objectively: “Well, I think I was trying to listen very carefully. I remember being distracted by the camera [pause] but I was trying to wipe it out” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 1). Another comment that was made almost immediately concerned how “dominant” Nancy looked in the classroom.

Her next response was to her own frustration in dealing with the issue of Nelson:

I knew what I was trying to get to was for her to develop a relationship with Nelson ... and somehow I couldn't do it. She always kept giving me answers that kept me away and I tried a few times.... I'm not satisfied with how I discussed Nelson. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 1)

When I asked her why she didn't tackle the problem more directly, Amelia answered, "I wanted her to figure it out.... I just couldn't get to it, I guess" (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 2). This seemed to bother her quite a bit as she returned to this at a later time: "Usually I can get through, but I heard myself floundering, [pause] trying" (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 3).

As Amelia continued to reflect on this point, she was able to move beyond it by pointing out the fragility of the relationship between US and ST and her own reluctance to push the student to grow in ways that might undermine her self-confidence. It was clear that Amelia was glad to see herself actually doing what she would have planned to do (even considering her initial disappointment with her approach to Nancy about Nelson), and this was a very positive aspect of this part of the data collection. "That's where you have to be careful not to hurt a strength that she has" (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 3). There were several other areas where Amelia happily affirmed her own actions and words to the ST:

- It's very important to me that when children get something wrong the first time that they get another chance to succeed. And, you know, I'm glad I saw myself trying to get this across to Nancy. I know I tried to do this in my own work with children, but I'm glad to see that I thought of it here, that I really was doing it [pause] and I think I got that point across well! (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 3)
- I encouraged her contributions to the conference ... by praising her suggestions ... and by reinforcing the ideas she came up with to incorporate into her future teaching. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 11)
- I notice I was very careful in trying not to say something which would threaten her.... I don't threaten, no matter who. I don't think that's correct. I try to find a way for them to see that they're on their way. I want them to know, "Here's another chance to succeed. You can do

it!” If I judge something in their teaching as poorly done, I’ll try to remind them of the goal they were working on and help them work toward a way that would be more successful, a different way. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 7)

- I think I listened to her ... and I do in seminar too, I think. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 12)

Amelia also was quick to pick up on areas she would wish to improve in her own supervisory repertoire. As she reflected on her work with Nancy, she commented:

- I really should have given her more possible suggestions for Nelson ... to get her to focus on what happens when you are saying the same things over and over to a child. That was a point I wish I had made stronger; that you have to look for a way to help the child not *need* such repetition. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 2)
- Maybe her personal style was too strong for me. Maybe she was too sure of herself. I only see that now, ... I usually can get through to a student but I heard myself floundering, ... trying. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 3)
- I would have encouraged her to sing more as they were popping the corn. It was so important, and when she mentioned it and I didn’t pick up on it, that annoyed me. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 11)

Overall, however, Amelia was pleased with the conference and with her style of supervision. She felt it was easy to assess many of Nancy’s strengths:

- Certain things popped out at me right away, like her command in the room, her handling the children with confidence. I noted her sense of humor, smiling. Those things [pause] you just *see* them. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 10)
- She uses her voice well. Their faces were rapt. They looked at her as if she were just *wonderful* to be with and they really shared verbally and emotionally with her! (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 13)

Amelia obviously felt strongly about Nancy’s promise as a teacher: “She’s a good, thinking person. I think she is highly motivated. She will do well” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 11).

In terms of the Style and Approach codings, Amelia was asked whether she considered herself more of a clinician, a collaborator, or an assessor. She answered that “I feel that here I’m more of a clinician” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 8). She also shared that she didn’t feel she focused more on any one area of teacher development or skill. Instead, she shared that she focused on what the individual ST brought to the situation. She did admit that she would be concerned that each ST has a “purpose” that is planned to accomplish some learning goal, “that the teaching is going somewhere.... I like when they are able to reflect on what has happened educationally, and whether they were able to get at what they sought out to do. [For example] in this case, how many really were able to write or sound out the letter ‘p’” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 9). As she elaborated on this, her concerns as she supervised STs came down to two areas: the ST’s understanding of children and whether children are learning. This seemed consistent with all the data I have collected on her.

Perhaps most interesting was the conflict between how Amelia described her approach to differences in the two grade placements and how she actually differed from the stated approach in practice. In her initial interview, Amelia had responded that the only difference she planned for and took note of between the two placements was the emphasis on increased responsibility for teaching in the second placement. Yet, in reality, Amelia had a strong “agenda” when it came to the teaching of younger children. This became apparent in the review session as well. While she was clear that going from one grade placement to another was unsettling for students generally, she expressed strongly that STs needed to be aware of the fact that young children’s learning is frequently hidden, and can be lost, in the “fun”:

Whether or not they pick up on it, they need to see the development [that takes place in the early years]. Often they think, “I don’t have to prepare a lot of thinking skills or academic work ... and I don’t have to delve too

deeply into content. They may see all the fun as *easy* stuff ... and miss the teaching skills that are needed to get them [the children] learning.... It's really [important] to understand that little children have different developmental needs and they need to follow definite steps in helping them learn. (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 13)

When asked later in the review, however, if she felt that she looks for something different in the two placements, Amelia repeated her earlier statement. "I don't think there is any difference. I want to see the same things in kindergarten or in second grade as I see in fifth or sixth" (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 14). Perhaps Amelia sees the two placements as similar because she has so internalized the importance of children's developmental needs that they have become one with her image of good teaching. This could explain the inconsistency.

It also seemed at first that she was having difficulty going through this process without feedback from me. Several times, Amelia turned to me after voicing a reflection about her supervision and said, "What do you think?" It caused me to note in my Researcher Journal the following:

While I had anticipated this reaction, having encountered such difficulty in my pilot study, I nonetheless find it uncomfortable to be observing and recording without the interactive give and take of discussion. Perhaps this is because feedback is so rare for supervisors and that knowledge is difficult for me to dismiss. (S1, RV, RJ, 5/7)

Reviewing the data at a later date, however, I had further thoughts on the issue and recorded this entry in my Researcher Journal:

My own discomfort aside, Amelia's reaction could also be the result of the natural flow of her reflective process. She was a team teacher for many years, and it would not be unusual for her to seek out the reaction of those around her in an educational discussion. (S1, RV, RJ, 8/20)

Analysis of Portrait #1

Style and Approach Codes. While Amelia did make several comments that were coded “1C” (*Assessor*), the preponderance of her interactions with the ST were classified “1A” (*Clinician*) and “1B” (*Collaborator*), with the *Clinician* codings appearing over twice as often as those coded as *Collaborator* (see Table 1). Although the codings were mixed throughout the transcripts, it is noteworthy that there were fewer *Assessor* comments in the last post-observation conference. Comments falling into *Clinician* and *Collaborator* codings were dispersed throughout each conference, indicating that Amelia was not adhering to a particular format, at least in the order of her comments and suggestions. In both post-observation conferences, she began in a collaborative tone, for example, by responding to Nancy’s review of her lesson, “So, they had a good *eating* morning!” (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 1) and by being comfortable in Nancy’s taking the lead in the discussion of Observation #2.

Table 1

S#1: Frequency of Style and Approach Codes

	1A (<i>Clinician</i>)	1B (<i>Collaborator</i>)	1C (<i>Assessor</i>)
Observation#1	22	9	8
Observation#2	21	10	4

Amelia’s comments that were coded #1A (*Clinician*) tended to illuminate and support the ST’s efforts while leading her to further reflect on the issues involved:

- You stopped for a lot of questions ... and stopping was very good for helping them to anticipate what was going to happen next in the story.... (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 2)

- So you've been doing it. That's important. (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 5)
- You could show them the kernel and the popped corn together at the end so that they could see that one came from the other. If you have someone like that little boy who doesn't really believe it's the same thing, you *could* do that. (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 6)
- Maybe more than one example of multiplying by the 10 because some of them ... got lost in the multiplication.... (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 2)
- ...It's always helpful to have them put their names on it first.... You don't have that complication of whose tape is which... (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 2)

Her #1B codings (*Collaborator*) also tended to encourage reflection. The difference captured here was in an approach that seemed to create the impression of two professionals discovering the import of the situation *together*:

- Yes, and we just saw that film in class yesterday! I kept thinking, "Oh, my ... this is the right day for this...." (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 2)
- I found that as a teacher, too. (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 2)

While fewer in number totally, her comments coded #1C (*Assessor*) seemed directed to either allowing the ST to recognize and value a strength or to illuminate an area which might need strengthening:

- Your reading was done with very nice expression.... (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 2)
- The whole atmosphere [you created] is very pleasant. (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 4)
- I wrote in my notes that you did a nice job integrating curriculum here ... the excitement of math connected to the solar system.... (S1, Ob#2, 4/30, p. 4)

Interestingly, the codings for Amelia showed great consistency between Observation #1 and Observation #2 with regard to the *Clinician* and *Collaborator* ratings. Overall, the role of *Assessor* was less visible in Amelia's style of supervision

and approach to the ST, and seemed to fade in the second observation. She seems more comfortable either providing advice or thinking in tandem with the ST.

Focus Codes. In terms of the Focus Codes, Amelia touched upon virtually all of them in both conferences, with the exception of “2T” (*Time Management*) in the first, and “2Y” (*Child Development*) in the second (see Table 2). In the first conference (the kindergarten placement), there were many more references to “2Y” (*Child Development*) and “2S” (*Behavior Management*) than in Observation #2.

Table 2

S#1: Frequency of Focus Codes

	Observation #1	Observation #2
2S: Behavior Management	7	2
2T: Time Management	0	2
2U: Lesson Planning	5	10
2V: People Skills	2	0
2W: ST Reflection	10	7
2X: Curriculum	0	1
2Y: Child Development	5	0
2Z: Children’s Learning	6	8

In that first conference, Amelia also addressed “2V” (*People Skills*), which she did not do in the subsequent conference (the Sixth Grade placement). I found this interesting because these areas so typically seem to revolve around needs of young

children, yet she said in her interview that she did not alter her expectations in terms of the grade placement. In fact several of her closing comments to Nancy in the first post-observation conference were directed specifically to the needs of kindergarten children, and she seemed to make a special effort to spotlight this area.

In the second conference (Observation #2), comments coded “2U” (*Lesson Planning*) doubled, while “2T” (*Time Management*) and “2X” (*Curriculum*) appeared for the first time, although still relatively infrequently. In both conferences, Amelia seems to address “2W” (*Student Teacher Reflection*) most often, with “2U” (*Lesson Planning*) and “2Z” (*Children’s Learning*) also showing consistency.

The Researcher’s View of the Supervisor

While not drawn to teaching initially, Amelia seems not only to have grown to love the field, but to develop a confidence in her teaching skills, which should not be considered unusual given her more than 30 years in the classroom. What is unusual is that in all that time, Amelia never wanted to totally leave the classroom and still felt she had enough to offer to come out of retirement to do what she loved.

Amelia’s view of herself as a *Clinician* is clearly evoked in her practice. However, her feelings about *Collaboration*, while not specified as such by Amelia, seem to form at least part of the foundation for her approach to the job:

- (In discussing a teaching colleague who refused to share a model of unit planning with Amelia in her first year of teaching) ... I had to beg her.... She thought I would copy it [and] ... I just wanted to know how to frame it.... So she showed it to me and I learned how to do it. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 4)
- (In explaining how she resonates with the other supervisors) I don’t know if the university helps us more, or maybe our working together ourselves as a group.... (S1, I, 3/10, p. 11)

While Amelia considers that she just “got better as [she] went,” she shared that over the course of her career, she kept returning to school, and for about 20 years was involved in daily collaboration with other teachers in the multiage class.

In her reflections about Observation #1, while watching a review of the video, Amelia was remarkably consistent with her initial responses recorded at the time. In fact, in general, her remarks about her philosophy of supervision in her interview were strongly reflected in her work with Nancy. Her beliefs about the importance of understanding children’s developmental needs were also imprinted on everything she did.

All of my data on Amelia seem to convey both a unified approach to the supervision of STs and a consistency between how she views the skills and sensitivities needed to teach children and the skills she herself utilizes to supervise student teachers. For example, just as she encourages Nancy to see the individual needs that may drive Nelson’s behavior, she is herself quick to recognize Nancy’s individual needs for autonomy. Again, just as she pushes the thinking of the ST in searching for alternative approaches, she too practices such reflection in her own work. She wants Nancy to become aware of the importance of avoiding foreseeable failures that may close children off to learning, while at the same time encouraging them to take risks with her assistance (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 3). It is interesting to watch her try to do this also with Nancy.

Amelia was anxious to grow as a supervisor, but frequently voiced her belief that the growth in STs would come “from doing the work themselves.” This could be a reflection of the fact that Amelia never did student teaching, getting her own field experience from substitute teaching. While Amelia reflects that she herself “got better as I went along” (S1, I. 3/10, p. 14), it is interesting that she acknowledged how she

tapped into the knowledge of others as frequently as she could and learned from the “modeling” of others. This is similar to how teachers frequently comment that their education courses were not as important to their development as a teacher as was experience (or instinct). The possible contributions of knowledge assimilated and accommodated over time into mental models that seem to emerge *intuitively* seem often to be overlooked in such self-analysis.

Amelia seems firmly convinced of the critical importance of her work with STs, even as she acknowledges that few, either in the university or the field, assign it equal value. Seeing the CT as having a vested interest in the “recreation” of her own model of teaching, she voiced thought that a university supervisor may be in a unique position to offer objective advice, to push reflection and disequilibrium, and to encourage the ST to make connections between theory and practice. Amelia also saw the supervisor’s responsibility as helping new teachers become *change agents* in schools: “Students learn the latest research in the university. A supervisor should help students introduce new approaches to the classroom...” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 24).

Her recommendations for teacher education include “more knowledge of child development,” and this is another consistency in her philosophy, since understanding children is central to her own approach to classroom teaching. The most frustrating part of the job for her is assessing whether students are really ready for their own classrooms and not knowing more about what is most effective in helping them. Interestingly, this was Amelia’s first time being videotaped professionally, and while she definitely looked relieved when it was all over, she stated, “I guess I was pretty pleased with how it went.... I’ll do better [now] and try to keep all I learned in my head” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 15). While she was not interested in being the subject of a video again, she voiced much interest in seeing someone else supervise, not only as a way to

learn about how to improve the student's work with children, but to acquire more knowledge about interacting with STs in general. She also felt that if all supervisors could view and critique the same lesson, it would help them learn from each other.

Several other points of interest emerged as these data were analyzed. One of these was Amelia's practice of utilizing the seminar class as an effective stage to spotlight weaknesses observed in the field. Such an approach provided a forum within which students could grow without a focus explicitly on their individual problems. She found STs more open to these types of discussions and felt that the sharing that took place stimulated reflection on the parts of all involved.

She also admitted to feeling less integral to the students' program (and less valued) than full-time faculty. She did not feel that supervisors were consulted enough by full-time faculty; and even though several USs in this program also taught methods courses, it did not relieve her impression that practice was valued *in theory* by the academy, but that theory was really valued *in practice*. The *theory versus practice* problem can also be viewed as an incongruity between the scientific and humanistic cultures (or world views). Such differences in *world views* may be at the heart of what Amelia, who has worked with thousands of children in ways that demand on-the-spot decision-making on a daily basis over many years, experiences as she deals with the university. As Schon (1987) would say, she struggles to find where theory is visible in her practice and where her practice makes theory visible.

Supervisor #2: Mary

Interview

Mary enters with a sense of purpose. Diminutive in stature, she nonetheless commands the room somehow by her presence. From her neatly arranged blond hair to her well styled outfit, she is the image of a professional woman, but it is her sense of composure and competence that really completes the impression. Polite and gracious, she waits for me to direct the focus of our meeting, but I feel sure she would be comfortable assuming the mantle of authority at any place where I faltered. As she takes a seat in the chair I offer her and we begin some introductory conversation, I become aware of how directly yet tactfully she approaches issues. I am surprised by one additional observation, and that is that beneath the serious demeanor that even her eyeglasses conspire to convey, her eyes smile. When I look to the warmth and gentleness speaking through her eyes, I see a side of Mary that complements and informs my first impressions (S2, I, RJ, 3/9).

Background. Mary just recently retired from her position as a principal. Her professional life within the public school system of a suburban district spanned over 35 years, but teaching was actually not her first choice of careers. She was definitely more interested originally in becoming a nurse, but a February graduation from high school offered incentives for a teaching major that were not available in nursing. “That’s how I became a teacher,” she said, “and I’m delighted. It was a wonderful career. It still is” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 1).

Her undergraduate degree at a public university in another state primarily certified her to teach Nursery through Grade 3.

I had a very good experience because we had a very small class. We were steeped in early childhood education and child development the last two years. It was more scientific, more specific, in those days. [Perhaps

today] it has to be more global due to the fact that you're dealing with K-6. It focused all of us in the class, all 14 of us, in *looking* at the *child*. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 11)

In terms of student teaching, Mary feels fortunate to have had a whole year's placement in her own teacher education program, with each semester at a different grade placement. "That was very, very important. So when I got out of school and was ready to take my first job, I felt, I think, better prepared" (S2, I, 3/9, p. 17).

After graduation, she accepted her first job in that state as a First Grade teacher, where she taught for three years. It was a choice district, and Mary shared how her expectations from education classes were quickly displaced by reality once she arrived at this first teaching assignment: "I thought, oh, I'm going to have *marvelous* equipment, and *wonderful* manipulatives, [pause] but I ended up making all of my own [pause] which was fine because [through this experience] I saw the need for teacher-made materials" (S2, I, 3/9, p. 1).

Her connection to this university began when, after a relocation following marriage, she started to work on a master's degree in Early Childhood/Special Education as she continued to teach. Mary reflected on how well the master's program resonated almost seamlessly with the child-centered approach she had been introduced to as an undergraduate, adding:

It was a wonderful program with incredible, nationally respected staff. They were so forward looking! [We were taught] to look to the child to know whether you have been successful or not, as well as to check for understanding. I don't believe that teachers today have enough of that approach. Many just involve themselves in the curriculum, the lesson plan--or finishing the lesson, and leave a lot out. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 12)

The master's program that Mary completed also stretched her professionalism in new ways:

This [the degree program], I think, helped make me a more successful educator, not only as a teacher along all grade levels but also as a

supervisor, because I learned how to really analyze. [The program pushed me to] look at myself and how I analyze, which is what you have to learn to do in the area of reading diagnosis and, of course, prevention [of problems]. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 1)

In her work as an educator, Mary seems to have begun early to seek out leadership roles, for example, through work in the teacher's union and in pursuing grants. She was, in fact, instrumental in developing a program for the early identification of children with learning difficulties and received a grant for the first combined reading/learning disability program in the state. As her role and responsibilities widened through her work with this grant, Mary gained experience with children from kindergarten through grade 6 and feels her views of children and learning were enlarged in the process. She also noted that from very early in her career, she had student teachers placed in her classrooms.

She began to speak to groups on the changes she was observing in children and their problems, even presenting a forum at the university with a colleague. She found herself exploring ways to help children "because children were changing and the traditional ways were not working for them. Problems I [was seeing] in first grade [were similar to] those you used to see in third grade" (S2, I, 3/9, p. 2). Mary feels she learned some essential lessons as she worked through her responsibilities with special needs children, most notably, to treat the whole child and not "the problem."

What I tried to do was [encourage a philosophy which] did not fragment the child's education, but gave consistency.... I saw the need, when you're working with children, of utilizing the same materials and subject matter already being used in the classroom ... [and of] really being [the child's] advocate ... to find the strengths of the child and share them with the [classroom] teacher. That's a very important part of the job, to find ways to look at each child through positive eyes.... (S2, I, 3/9, p. 3)

As Mary began to become more of a specialist, and with over 15 years of teaching behind her, she left classroom teaching and, working in collaboration with

two other schools, refined and developed the program connecting reading and learning disabilities. Here again, her experience lent itself to an expansion of leadership and supervision skills as she learned to work with and train volunteers and assist teachers in learning new approaches in their classrooms. While many teachers seemed to resent being “watched” at first, Mary felt she had a very positive effect on many of them and, in turn, on the children’s learning, as she explained and demonstrated to the teachers what she was doing and worked alongside them both mentally and physically to construct new and more effective approaches to teaching. Making herself available at the teacher’s convenience (during lunch, for example, or after school), she shared techniques and materials she had learned about, and modeled each step of the way. Most important, she felt, was the care she took to include the teacher as a partner, so that as much as possible it was clearly an endeavor of “we ... not just me. I couldn’t have gotten [anything accomplished] without their support” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 5).

In the late 1960s, Mary was offered and accepted an adjunct position at the university teaching children’s literature. She was enthusiastic about both the work and the influence she felt she had on students. She also began a doctoral program in Reading and Educational Administration at the same institution, and this was completed in 1980. When she was invited to apply for a principalship, she did so because she saw it as the best of both worlds of special education and coaching.

As principal, she was in charge of a K-6 school that included an award-winning preschool program run by the PTA, and she shared the belief that her toughest challenges were in the roles of instructional leader and coach. As principal, she continued to advocate a child-centered approach and felt that such concentration on the child, instead of the teacher, helped her be a more effective instructional leader to the staff:

I felt if you took the focus off the teacher and looked at a problem [in terms of] a child, it would be more effective. I would say something like, “He [a particular child] did this. Why did he do that?” and “How do you think he could be more successful?” ... and it seems to have worked. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 6)

Mary’s career as a principal spanned another 14 years of her public school experience before her retirement, and she continued during this time to teach as an adjunct at the university as needed. She also worked closely through the years with university supervisors, especially those at this university, whose students were placed in her school. With some of them in particular, she developed a strong rapport and collaborated on several innovational activities, among them “on-site” seminars. As principal, she reflected, she firmly held to her principles about the quality needed in student teacher placements.

We placed students only with teachers who I truly believed were the finest.... Any good college *should* request the finest and the best.... I don’t believe that you should put two weak people together. You have to have your own beliefs. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 9)

Mary seemed to feel that her beliefs were well grounded and supported by her rich background of experience, and this made it easier to become a stronger advocate:

Fortunately, I became a principal after a experience in grades K-6. I have background in teaching myself and ... in school service personnel. I have experience in curriculum and in special education. I have experience at the college level.... I truly believe that we have to produce the finest teachers.... Just like we expect teachers to have high expectations of their students, we must, as administrators, have high expectations for our teachers. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 9)

At retirement, she had had over 35 years of rich and varied experiences. During most of this time, she had continued pursuing educational opportunities for herself, and by the time she began to supervise student teachers for the university, she had had a long relationship with the institution and many of the people involved in the teacher education program.

Supervision. Mary began supervising student teachers after her retirement. “It’s something I can do [which allows me] to continue to work with teachers. I have experience and that’s why I’m here” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 6). “I certainly don’t do this for the money. I’m doing it to get something out of it because I love it so much” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 47).

After an initial semester of working with the “participant-observers” (those doing preliminary field work before actual student teaching), she began supervising student teachers. At the time of data collection, it was her second semester of doing so. Her understanding of the department is based on many professional connections with the university over the years, including sitting on a committee that helped one of the education departments gain accreditation. “From that you get to know how the college operates, what their philosophy is” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 7).

Mary feels she what she brings to the job is:

an understanding ... and I’m not afraid to ... have high expectations. I think it’s important that student teachers know that this is, I think, one of the most important jobs available in the world.... Really [pause], if you’re in this because you think it’s a 9-3 job, you don’t belong. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 11)

She alludes to many aspects of her experiential background that have well prepared her for supervision of student teachers, among them her three degree programs in varied areas, her continued professional growth, her breadth of experience with preschool through sixth grade children, her experience as a classroom teacher working with student teachers, her supervisory experience as a principal, which included much coaching, and her lengthy connection to the university and its philosophy of teacher education.

[I bring] knowledge and experience ... knowledge about children, what kids need, what works with kids.... I’m always [growing] from the

research ... as opposed to looking at a child [and teaching] in one way. I have taught so many children, and thousands have gone through my school over the years and I bring that experience with me. That's important. I also bring with me the experience of having coached ... teachers and student teachers. A strength [of mine] as a principal was with teachers without tenure. They used to send me new teachers to get them off to a good start. I am a seeker of knowledge. [Even now that I'm retired], I read research articles and discuss them.... All of this helps student teachers.... There's one other thing. [STs] know that I've spent many years interviewing for teaching positions ... so I have background as to what administrators, teachers, and parents on interviewing committees are looking for in the hiring process. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 27)

Other personal traits Mary mentioned as impacting her strength as a supervisor were her well-organized approach to tasks, her coaching of self-reflection in problem-solving as STs connect practice and theory, and her emphasis on the child as a focus for that problem solving, so that changes in practice flow from the child's needs and not the ST's. Although student teaching, by its nature, presses the individual to more self-awareness (as it should), the efforts of such self-awareness should be driven by the children's needs. This frequently needs to be made explicit to STs, and Mary feels it also helps them deal with the insecurities felt during this trial-and-error period.

When problems arise, Mary feels comfortable seeking out advice from many people connected to the program and has felt supported when she needed direction or help. Several of the supervisors and other faculty are people with whom she has had longstanding professional relationships. She was even acquainted with the current Director of Field Placement because "she was a teacher when I was a teacher" (S2, I, 3/9, p. 15).

In terms of the purpose of the supervisor's role, Mary offered several thoughts.

- One purpose is, of course, to be an advocate.... Unfortunately, students don't always use us as much as they could. I find that I'm frequently the initiator. I will call [in between observations] to ask how they are doing or if they need help, but they are *in the job* now and the climate [the connection to the university] has changed.... They [believe they

have to be] independent ... but there's a dilemma there. I believe that even when you're experienced you should utilize your school personnel or your principal, and ask questions. But many student teachers are reluctant to [do that]. They seem to feel that if you show you don't know [something], that's saying you're not OK, but it's really just the opposite. Anyone who asks questions, to me they're a thinker. It's another way to grow and seek support. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 19)

- [Another purpose is] to provide objectivity to the student's experience.... The classroom teacher frequently doesn't get to see the ST objectively. Very often, I have found in my own experiences in dealing with CTs, when I refer to how well the ST has done, they [the CTs] respond with something like "Yes, well, we do that in this class" or "I went over that with her ... and showed her how to do it" ... which is natural and understandable. Therefore, I come in as the objective person and can look at [the student's work] objectively and in relationship to the children. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 19)

Good supervision, according to this supervisor, includes some additional practices. Mary elucidated the following in the course of our discussion:

1. A good supervisor is someone who is willing to spend the time needed with the student and be there for support (S2, I, 3/9, p. 20).
2. Planning with the student takes some special skills on the supervisor's part. It's important "not to tell them, but rather to help them ask themselves the right questions, to facilitate them, to lead them ... to help them recognize for themselves what is *good* rather than saying, 'You're terrific' or 'That was great.' I have found that after we have gone through the process with this model, they feel that they have accomplished it themselves" (S2, I, 3/9, p. 20).
3. A supervisor who can focus reflections on the child and not the ST stands a better chance of avoiding the ST's defensiveness. Keeping the child central to the process is important, and comments about the specifics of a child's behavior and questions about that child can stimulate thinking that is not

encumbered emotionally in the same way that personally directed approaches may be. Two examples of comments she might make to a ST in a post-observation conference along these lines were, “John reacted positively to that. Why do you think he did?” (S2, I, 3/9, p.10) and “I noticed that the youngster sitting in the front did “blank.” What did that tell you?” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 20)

4. While praise is certainly important to the process, supportive comments that are too general can seem “empty” and not offer helpful feedback. Praise that directs itself to specific knowledge, skill, or behaviors observed in the ST has the potential to reinforce and stimulate these strengths (S2, I, 3/9, p. 20).

Mary approaches the supervision of STs from a background rich with experience. The skeletal frame of Mary’s approach to her work as a supervisor seems to be drawn from many theoretical models, including Cogan’s clinical model. Mary, however, would assert that she follows no definitive “model”, but has absorbed all she has learned over the years in her education and professional life and adapted it to fit her own reflective vision of the role.

Several areas are described by this supervisor as typifying her work. She always begins the semester with a meeting between the CT, the ST, and herself, where “We talk together about what’s expected.... As we go over the requirements, [the process is] reinforcing what’s expected for the ST while at the same time showing the CT that I’m following a routine and also that I’m here for these STs” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 11). Simultaneously, such a discussion goes a long way toward helping the CT come to terms with the assignments that are expected during student teaching so that she/he can make room for them in planning.

Recognizing that some placements, even given this approach, do not offer students the degree of creativity and flexibility they expect and need, she reminds the STs in seminar that “this is the last chance they have before interviewing for a job ... and they need to take risks at this stage in order to find out for themselves what works and what doesn’t. They must feel comfortable [in the placement] if they’re going to take risks” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 12). If the placement doesn’t lend itself to ST risk-taking, or if there emerges any sort of conflict between a CT and an ST, Mary believes the responsibility to help broker a solution rests, “number one,” with the supervisor. She described several strategies at her disposal:

1. Believing that collaborative problem-solving and team-building can be helpful skills for a new teacher, she encourages students to explore alternative options and offer advice to each other in seminar, expecting this kind of exchange to be formative in establishing future collegial relationships in their professional lives.
2. She also believes that the same sort of collegiality can be attempted with the student teaching triad.

We can [work with the CT by] setting up the pre-observation conference as a team and that is very logical because the content and the curriculum is generally chosen by [the ST] and the CT. If the CT is included in that discussion (the pre-observation conference), strategies and process can be introduced that reflect the university’s philosophy and ... that [reflect] the assignments expected of the Sts.... (S2, I, 3/9, p. 24)

Mary is clear that such success as a change agent is dependent upon her respect for the CT and her own sincere willingness to help implement change in the classroom. For example, a CT who is new to working with the university may discover that some of her/his practices are not in line with the university’s assignments. Perhaps whole

group instruction is the norm for this classroom, and the ST is expected to demonstrate how she works with learning centers. In such a case, Mary would try to acknowledge the CT's concerns and accept her/his investment in current practices, then look for opportunities to create a way for the ST to try out alternatives to existing practice that would be acceptable to the CT. After explaining the school of education's mission and expectations, she might say the following: "We'd like [the ST] to try this. Would it be all right with you? I know it's a difficult class [schedule, curriculum] ... and if you need me, I can come and work with one of the groups" (S2, I, 3/9, p. 25). When you put yourself on the line as an equal, willing to help, she explained, most CT's are less resistant to alternative practices.

When asked how she *knows* if a student is doing well, Mary noted:

I would base my response on the feedback I pick up from lesson, on how effective his or her instruction was at the time ... not just on any worksheet the children may be given to assess learning but throughout the lesson. I look for how the ST ... [is able to] judge throughout the lesson how effective the instruction is ... in terms of verbal responses, motor activities ... and I look for how children [are encouraged to] work together in cooperative groups.... I look for how flexible the ST is in terms of making a decision to change slightly ... based upon [the reaction of] the group. It's more than thinking on your feet, it's assessing as you go along.... Assessment is ongoing, constantly, with children and just as when we have a conversation with a person we know ... their reaction by watching them ... that's how it is when children learn, but it's not always so easy to see. I can also tell something about ST responsiveness from their written [evaluation of the lesson] and their questions. How do they get below surface issues in their questions? I also speak to the CT and get her or his reaction ... but usually the CT is hesitant to say anything negative unless they absolutely have to. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 31)

If a ST needs help, Mary says she herself is not hesitant to speak up.

I am not afraid to say [they] need to improve. Maybe this is from my years of experience as a principal. I don't tell [STs] I *think* something should be improved, I document it with script taking, read it back to them and then we try to work on it.... It's here that you have to build

confidence.... In order to get them to move forward, you have to emphasize what they have done well ... [and ask them] to build on that. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 32)

She also believes that the supervisor frequently needs to foreground aspects of practice that can be missed in the process of functioning *full time* in a classroom for the first time:

Some [STs] seem truly to be [working and observing] on the surface and not really analyzing what is happening. They go through the motions of a lesson but ... [can miss] the long-term outlook. [The supervisor] needs to ask questions such as “What is the purpose of doing that?” or “How will it be applied?” When you say [something like] ... “What are you going to do with the simile after [this assignment] is done?”, you can get to see their thinking about follow-up and long-term learning goals. You also see if there is understanding about *why* you’re doing something and how the ST will continue until the skill is mastered. This [is the opposite of] someone who just does a lesson, and then it’s over and done with. There’s a homework assignment ... and they move on. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 32)

Mary articulated several problems in the university supervision of STs:

1. Supervisors need time to be most effective. When an ST is on the right track, but an observation illuminates something that both the US and ST can see needs some work, the ability to grow is enhanced by repeated dialogue and additional visits. Mary wonders if most university systems support such help with enough vigor.
2. “Management” questions also can be difficult and frustrating for supervisors to deal with adequately. Students tend to put store in many of the strategies they have seen in the current or other classroom placements, whether or not they reflect what has been learned in class, and whether or not they are really healthy practices in the long run. Even STs who are uncomfortable with the methods utilized in their current placement are frequently just looking for a replacement. They think they should be

offered specific answers to behavior problems and are frustrated when they hear that these answers are probably best addressed, not by isolated mechanistic formulas, but through good teaching. Mary tries to help them see that “good management is tied to good lessons” and that with appropriate planning (which according to her is dependent on the teacher’s astute skill in observation and assessment), active engagement can eliminate the need for disconnected strategies. But this is not easy to perceive from the neophyte’s perspective. Mary recognizes that “it is so hard to get across to them (the STs). That takes experience.... Even learning what is important to ignore ... and when not to ignore ... takes experience (S2, I, 3/9, p. 35).

3. Mary noted how difficult it can be to work through lingering conflicts about how to apply principles of an integrated reading program. Students seem to need time to talk through the connections of practice to theory as they begin to negotiate the full-day experience, and she worries that the seminar does not offer enough time, especially if the student teaching placement does not reflect all the essential elements of such a program. The two courses required by the state are just “not enough” in Mary’s view (S2, I, 3/9, p. 36).

One solution to these problems, in her opinion, is a demonstration school on campus. She described such a school that was set up years ago on a nearby college campus in conjunction with the public school system. She felt that this demonstration school was comparable to the concept of today’s professional development school except that it existed *on* the college campus. “The principal was appointed by the public school system ... and there was a strong relationship [between the two]. That’s

what you need ... a placement so [the ST] can see [over a period of time] what a *program* entails” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 39). Mary saw this demonstration school as providing a model of how an integrated philosophical approach to learning could anchor experiences in other schools and offer a continuity between theory and practice in a way that had the possibility of expanding understanding.

She is most frustrated in her job by the time constraints. “Follow-up” needs time. Trying to make cognitive connections through revisiting events and practices over time is important, Mary feels, especially at this stage of the teacher’s development. “After a post-observation conference, [the ST] hopefully will be in a better position to plan for the next day, and the day after that. That is how you really help someone learn to teach” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 52). Another way to improve the education of teachers, she felt, was to somehow continue university supervision through the first year of teaching.

Commentary. Mary seemed very at ease in this interview process and eager, in fact, to share her viewpoints. She is clearly confident in the fact that her background has prepared her well for her work with STs, and it seems obvious that she enjoys the work. She seems to have had many educational opportunities to fine-tune her mentoring skills, and although she is no longer interested in shouldering the responsibilities of a principalship, she is nonetheless eager to continue in the field in a way that she feels offers essential help to the formation of new teachers.

As we talk, I begin to recognize that Mary’s confidence and convictions about supervision of student teachers should not be interpreted as an inability to see or hear another way of looking at the issues. She is a person who seems to have invested her professional life in *growing* and *learning*. I sense that she not only is open to alternate

views but that such infusion of new ideas is central to her philosophical approach to education in general, and herself, in particular.

Mary has had many years in influential positions within the school system. She has adjusted to the adjunct status of a university supervisor, but such relinquishment of status has not dimmed her philosophical approach to her work, nor, apparently, has it seemed to slow her desire to keep current in the field (S2, I, RJ, 3/9).

Post-Observation Conference #1

This was Susie's second observed lesson in her first placement. She was in a third grade class in a large city school district. The classroom was notably neat and organized. A bulletin board listed several "centers," but I was unable to distinguish their physical location in the classroom. The ST began the lesson confidently, calling "tables" by number to come to the rug area. The children obviously knew the routine and responded quickly by gathering around the space where Susie was ready with the materials for her lesson, most notably a large hand-drawn paper doll of a female character in a yellow dress.

Beginning with the previous fairy tale read, *The Frog Prince*, Susie led the children through a discussion of fairy tale characters they had previously discussed and into the idea of a "main character." She asked the group what they thought this character could be and recorded their responses on a semantic map. A vote on this new character's name took an extended time and seemed unrelated to the essence of the lesson. After telling them a story about the girl she created, and that included the opportunity for children's participation in finger-snapping patterns and predictable rhymes, the ST elicited words to describe the princess and recorded these on a second character web. While Susie certainly used her voice, body movements and teacher-made props creatively to get and maintain the children's attention, and her gentle

laughter shared and expanded the children's enjoyment, her story ran overtime and turned out to be the "main event" of the lesson.

When the children returned to their tables to write their own fairy tale paragraphs, there was little time remaining, and they were not easily drawn into the assignment, seeming to prefer talking about "characters" to writing. While most did get some writing done, there was no time to gather and share their work. The ST was somewhat disappointed that time had slipped away and she had not achieved all she planned.

Following the lesson, we walked to a nearby room, where both Mary and Susie wrote quietly for about five minutes as a way of beginning the post-observation conference. Each seemed to know the routine and immediately set to the task (S2, Ob#1, FN, 3/9).

When both had finished writing, Mary took note, began with a compliment, and immediately sought the ST's reflection:

M. I just wanted to say before you begin that your story was really wonderful.

S. Oh, thanks.

M. You have a talent in writing.

S. I like it (smiling warmly).

M. Okay. [pause] How do you feel the lesson went? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 1)

Susie was ready with her reflections, and Mary quickly picked up on where these reflections needed to be probed further:

S. I was nervous, but it went well. There's always a time thing with me. I think the motivation was there and I think my fairy tale did give the kids ideas to write about that were their own creations. [pause] They were involved in the story.

- M. Great. [pause] But let's go back. You said you think it's a *time* thing? At what point in the lesson did you think it was a time thing? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 1)

Susie gave an answer and Mary pressed her for more specific analysis by referencing her next question to the ST's response:

- M. So you sensed it at the *end* of the lesson?
- S. Well, no, [pause] not at the end. When I was finishing up with the story.
- M. And if you had the opportunity to do it again, would there be some way that you could have sped it up? What *would* you do?
- S. Memorize it.
- M. All right.
- S. That's one thing, [pause] and possibly minimize the predictions.... I mean a lot of the answers I got were pretty much the same, so I have to learn how to move on. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 2)

Apparently satisfied with the ST's reflection on this aspect of the lesson, Mary moves it forward again, rephrasing the ST's responses where necessary to help her focus on aspects of the lesson Susie might be missing:

- M. So you're analyzing that part [of the lesson] based on the responses of the students. [pause] How about the part of your lesson where you asked what the character should be named? What do you think about that?
- S. Oh, where I had that one name and then the other?
- M. Yes. You talked about the *type* of story, which was wonderful, and when someone said, "Let's call her Cinderella," what happened?
- S. Then I wanted them to vote [on her name].
- M. How did that work out? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 2)

Mary's practice of teasing more from the student's comments became familiar as the conference continued:

- S. ... You don't want to shut anybody off.
- M. That's true. That's true. [pause] And I understood ... what you were trying to do ... but, again, what is the key? What are you trying to accomplish if you think back to your objectives?
- S. Right. Exactly. Go back to my objectives ... (Susie seems to be weighing this in her mind.)
- M. ... And that can help you make the determination....
- S. ... And focus into what my task is.
- M. Yes. You'll see what activities should be eliminated and what you need to focus on. That's why we want you to stay focused on the objectives of the lesson.
- S. It is crucial. I see it. I mean I *know*. I *try* to stick with my objective... (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 3).

The principal arrives and joins us. She didn't see the lesson and, in fact, has no awareness of the lesson as planned, but immediately begins to ask questions of the ST, and Mary pleasantly waits for the diversion to end. When she [the principal] leaves, Mary returns the conversation to decision making in planning:

- M. Okay, so here you are in this situation. Time is running out and you feel you need to complete the story. You have an objective to reach and you're unsure if the story alone will get you there. What could you do?
- S. Read it. (Susie nods as she speaks.)
- M. Could be. You *could* read it. Is there anything else you could do (on the spot)?
- S. Change it. Make it shorter as [I] go along....
- M. You know, you *have* all the answers. You know it.... Make it shorter. Get to the important parts. Just as you keep your mind on what the goal is for a lesson, you do the same for a story. You wrote it. Get to the crescendo and the climax.... [pause] It was a wonderful story.

S. Thank you.

M. You know why I feel it was a wonderful story? ... Because I looked at the kids. How did they react to the story?

S. They were *so* involved!

M. They were *engaged* (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 6).

The conference moves on into several different areas, but the flow of Mary's comments consistently push the ST's reflective ability.

- So you'd say ... that part of the lesson was accomplished? How could you tell? How could you tell that that part of the lesson was effective? In what ways were you able to check on that? ... (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 7)
- What did you do to see if they understood...? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 7)
- OK, so you feel that they (the children) developed a character and were able to use the descriptive words to explain their character.... Now let's go back to the original goal. You said you wanted to compare. Did you compare? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 8)
- You had the character webs.... When you assigned them to write, how could they have used those character webs? *Could* you have utilized them? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 9)
- When they went back to their tables, it might have been a good idea to clarify the directions. Now why do you think I would say the directions need to be clarified? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 11)
- So what is that telling you? The *children* tell you, [pause] just like when you observed them reading the story, you said you *knew* everyone was involved. You *saw* that. Okay, this is the same thing. When [children] work in groups and they ask you questions, they're telling you something. You can use their questions to analyze how [you] can make the lesson better. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 13)
- Based on our talk, our analysis together [of this lesson], what would be the next step you would take? I know we discussed this earlier, but from this point in the conference, I'd like to hear it again. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 17)

While Mary probed Susie's reflective processes throughout the conference, the bulk of her questions were directed to Susie early in the discussion. About halfway through the conference, Susie seemed to begin reflectively analyzing on her own, and Mary responded to this by altering her approach and expanding on the ST's reflections:

- S. That's something they did, you know? What I'm saying is that they can build it from there if they want to [or] they can build their own story based on what they have heard. You want it to be that they are the ones who make that decision.
- M. You want to empower them.
- S. Exactly!
- M. And at the same time ... we have to be very efficient in our teaching. There's so much they need to learn, and it's important not to waste time.
- S. Right. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 9)

Other comments by the US that illustrate this change in the second half of the conference include the following:

- So if you couldn't do that [have different time blocks for lessons], you'd have made this two or three lessons? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 10)
- I see. So afterwards you would have talked about the story? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 10)
- Are you're saying that when they went back to their seats it might have been a good idea to clarify the directions? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 11)
- You got it! (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 12)
- And then a youngster said, "Can he sit over here with me?" You knew a lot of them were unsure. You saw that dilemma in them. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 13)

Mary repeatedly referred to her notes, read back her "scripts" to Susie, and was clearly interested in revisiting some issues several times. Susie, for her part, seemed very invested in Mary's comments and took many notes. In fact, both seemed to enjoy

the process of “unraveling” the lesson intellectually, playing off one another’s comments and extending each other’s ideas. Mary frequently seemed to be scaffolding the ST to a wider view of practice, as these examples illustrate:

- Perhaps the objectives weren’t clear enough to *you*. Maybe if we clarify them in your mind, it will be easier for you to connect this process. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 8)
- That was *fine*. It’s important ... that children share. You could have even stopped and asked who would like to share their character web.... When they share, they get ideas from one another. They can check that they’re on the right track, they’re interacting, and you’re [allowing for] differences, an important part of multiple intelligences. This is when kids really take over their own learning in a more efficient manner than can happen with the voting. I understand that’s the objective you had for the voting, for the children to take ownership, but you have to decide what is important in that ownership. You may find that sharing is more productive in terms of the learning than voting. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 14)
- You say you want to change your objective [if you were to do it again], but that’s really not a different objective. It’s the same one. You’re just reaching it differently. Can you see that? (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 18)

Her compliments to Susie were neatly packed within the conversation and emerged naturally within the flow of the discussion:

- You have a great feel, there’s no doubt about it. I could see how your use of props enhanced it, and I agree with you that storytelling is a wonderful way of developing rapport with the kids. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 6)
- So you started out beautifully. You shared your character, you brought yourself into it, you engaged them ... all wonderful things. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 9)
- You have great potential as a teacher because you have tremendous insight. You knew exactly where your problems were. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 14)
- Your questioning was wonderful. You asked many open-ended questions that the children responded to. (Mary read examples from her

notes). The descriptive words were a difficult part of the lesson but ... you knew how to comment on their words positively. (She read more examples from notes.) I mean you really gave praise when I [thought] it was deserved. It was honest. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 15)

- It was wonderful how you used their motor skills. You involved all the children with the snapping of the fingers and the rhyming phrases. Their involvement was very positive ... and you stopped at important parts of the story to give them an opportunity to react. (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 16)

While Susie soaked up these compliments, her most noticeable pleasure seemed to be when she “got” the larger picture that Mary was encouraging her toward. At one point, for example, the ST said, “So what I could have done ... I could have had them go back to their desks and instead of writing a fairy tale, I could have had them develop a character web. The *next* time I could have had them develop a story *based* on their character web” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 12). Mary nodded and smiled as Susie laughed aloud and gently chided herself for not seeing that point earlier. Mary added, “This is the purpose of this conference. You planned and went through the lesson, worked hard at understanding the purpose of what you were doing, and now you see it! That is really checking your instruction” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 12).

Susie also had her own convictions, and Mary built on several of them. For example, as the ST explained to the principal how her lesson aimed at the children’s writing a fairy tale about a girl who was really a princess, she described the children’s previous experience with various types of fairy tales. The principal interjected the fact that there are *Cinderella* tales from many countries and Susie responded, “I am so sensitive to multiculturalism. You always see a regular blond-haired, blue-eyed Cinderella. I made her Asian with black hair. That’s just the way I am, and that’s how I did it today” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 4).

Mary expanded on this a few minutes later. “I liked something else in this story. Not only was it multicultural, as you said, but you also included social studies in terms of the continents and literacy with the descriptive words or adjectives behind them. You were integrating the curriculum” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 6).

As a way of wrapping up the meeting, Mary asked Susie if she could think of anything that would make the observation/conference more productive for her in the future. Susie immediately mentioned that she would have liked more of this detailed help before the lesson. However, the ST then acknowledged that she, herself, had not had the story text available for the pre-observation conference. Without that, Mary didn’t have enough information to help alert Susie to the problem with time. Susie vowed to get such planning to Mary next time.

Commentary. Mary and Susie seem to have a good working relationship. Recognizing that the power differential between the two cannot be discounted (Blumberg & Jones, 1987; Holland, 1989), they seemed nonetheless able to speak openly, many times in a very collegial manner. While Mary did seem to lead the direction of the conference, the issue of time management was initially introduced by Susie, and perhaps this became a central theme of the conference *because* the US sensed the ST’s frustration with this aspect of the lesson. Rather than direct her energy to the issue of time management for its own sake, Mary adroitly helped the student to consider the consequences of inefficient use of time on reaching learning goals for children and in this way helped her to integrate her own learning. Mary chose to explore the problem of time through two specific areas, teacher planning and reflection. This may be because she saw the student as relatively accomplished elsewhere or because she views these skills as central to the process of teaching.

She clearly tried to situate the child and her/his needs at the center of the ST's thinking and problem-solving, and at every point Mary pressed Susie to articulate her thinking and problem-solving, as well as synthesize what she was taking from the conference (S2, RJ, 5/1).

Post-Observation Conference #2

At the time of this observation, Susie had changed placements and was in a more suburban school, in a fifth grade class. She was not as comfortable with this placement, since the teacher held to more traditional ways and several of the approaches she tried to introduce were either unsupported or really needed more time to be effective. On the day of this observation, Susie was noticeably tense. Her CT was out, and the substitute teacher who replaced her was not much help. Much more was demanded of her than usual this day as she helped the substitute teacher learn his way around the class. An additional burden was the breakdown of the Xerox machine, and Susie had had to find alternative ways to make the copies needed for her observed lesson. She looked tired and stressed, but as earlier, confidently in charge of the group.

The lesson concerned the ongoing topic of decimal numbers and would have the children using a different route to adding and subtracting decimals, working with money using the decimal point to indicate less than one dollar. The ST had gathered supermarket flyers and play currency and had created worksheets for recording the math operations. She separated the children into groups of four and informed the groups that they would decide how the four jobs of facilitator, cashier, accountant, and flyer keeper would be divided among group members. With the allotted amount of money (\$50), each group member would choose five items to "buy" while staying within their total budget. She spent some time at the onset eliciting from the children some important behaviors in cooperative group work, then distributed materials.

As the lesson progressed, it was obvious that Susie was not pleased with the children's lack of progress as they digressed to play with the materials. Many of them chatted about the flyer and the foods they liked and were distracted by the money, being noisy and silly with their wads of "cash." It was difficult to get, and keep, the group totally on-task; and though it was obvious that all the groups were actually doing the expected math, Susie seemed distracted by the play, which slowed down the sequence of activities. While none of the groups finished all their purchases, they had been totally engaged and were working enthusiastically with decimals, albeit not at the focused pace that the ST anticipated nor in as quiet a setting as was the classroom norm (S2, Ob#2, FN, 4/27).

My researcher journal notes the following about the beginning of the conference:

Susie is notably deflated. As she joins us in a small adjacent room, her body language spells out clearly that she would rather not be here discussing the last hour. She plops uncomfortably in a chair and smiles weakly. She looks as if she would love to disappear. Mary seems in tune with Susie's feelings. She is solicitous toward the student and quietly allows her a few minutes to shake off her disappointment. (S2, Ob#2, RJ, 4/27)

Mary opened the conference with a casual reference to some comments made to her by one of the children in the class as she entered. She related to the ST how eager the girl was to show her the projects that Susie had done with them.

M. She went through it *all*.

S. Oh yeah?

M. That should make you feel good ... that your efforts have paid off.

S. Oh, good. Well, at least that's *something* good (dryly). (S2, Ob#2, 4/24, p. 1)

Susie does not begin to write reflectively this time and must be prompted by Mary. Although she was quite familiar with this routine at the last observation and

began it on her own, she now must be drawn into the process. She even asks the US what to do.

M. Why don't you do a little thinking? It will make you feel better.

S. So you want me to write [pause] and reflect or something?

M. Yes. Just write your thoughts, whatever they are, and I'll write mine.
(S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 1)

When Susie begins to speak, Mary listens. Her comments are supportive, and she seeks out opportunities to help Susie see the positive in her lesson. Thoughts tumble out of Susie as she reflectively reviews the lesson, all of them negative:

S. It was definitely a [lesson] that needed more attention to group effort [pause] and cooperation and [pause] I see that. I think it would have been better if I had just limited the numbers. There was so much time [lost] because of explaining, you know, [pause] answering questions.... A lot of them didn't seem to hear what I said... Maybe I was talking too fast or [pause] I don't know, it just seems that I was repeating everything [pause] and I think it was just too much to do in one day. Maybe I should have just set up the process today and then we could have done the activity tomorrow.

M. Was there another way?

S. ... The money, you know, it's just a whole other chapter [pause] because once I brought out the money, everything was focused on the *money*.... Is it due to [pause] maybe they never handled that much money before or [pause] the fact that they have it in their hands?

M. Yes, all of that. It is a distractor.

S. Exactly. But it's *fun*. That's the thing. It's fun and it's different and it takes you out of the regular routine of just going through the book.
(S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 2)

Susie is definitely uncomfortable feeling the loss of control as the children *played* during the learning process. She seems to be having a difficult time reconciling her own knowledge of learning with the culture of this classroom, even though she

admits here that she was trying to break out of the mold. Being pulled in two directions, she seems to have expected that this break from routine would still play out in as orderly a fashion as the teacher's regular format. When this didn't happen, she has evaluated her effectiveness by the usual classroom standards and, in her mind, has failed to measure up. She has concentrated on the *fun* aspect of the assignment but seems to try to convince even herself of its usefulness as she speaks. Mary refocuses her thinking as the exchange continues:

- M. It's *authentic*. I think that's an even better word. It's a real task, something they can relate to.
- S. Yes. Something they can relate to. Definitely. [pause] And something they probably never even really get a chance to do. When do they get a chance to go to the store and buy something with money in their pocket, you know? So it *is* fun. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 2)

Susie seems to hear Mary but is unable to dispel the cognitive conflict between *work* and *play*. She seems to want to defend the need for play in learning but appears blinded by the memory of noise, laughter, and the time delays prompted by the slight diversions the materials encouraged, to really be able to evaluate the children's learning. Susie has always taken her lesson planning and post-lesson conference very seriously. She is keenly aware that while many of her skills are excellent, she sometimes has been sidetracked by the needs of the moment or poor time planning, and in those situations, she is apt to lose track of the larger goal. She has been working to clarify and simplify her goals while planning in order to use them as a guide during her teaching. She and Mary have been working on this all semester, and her chagrin over the ways this lesson unfolded seems to reflect her frustration in not being able to pull together this part of her teaching.

In this lesson, there were two objectives. The most important objective was for the students to demonstrate their ability to calculate numbers using decimals. An

additional objective was to provide a challenge for those students who could easily master the first objective. This was offered by the assignment to have each member “buy” five items yet stay within the group’s \$50 limit. Mary now chooses to address this latter objective first as a way of leading the student to reflect on the primary goal of this lesson.

- M. You’ve just said that they’ve not had this experience before, that they don’t have enough money to choose what they want from a flyer. So there are two areas [to explore]. The first is to think about the time they will need to use a flyer [in order to] have experience enough, not just to buy, but to choose what they can purchase within a budget. ... From my observation you are absolutely right. Some just chose 5 items because they wanted them [with no regard to the overall group budget] and so, at the higher levels, what you were after was not accomplished with all of them. But that wasn’t your only goal. We had talked about [the fact that] this *is* the first lesson of this type for these children. When we talked [in the pre-observation conference], you said your main goal was simply... [pause] Do you remember your goal?
- S. Yes. [pause] To add and subtract in decimals using real money.
- M. So, was that accomplished today?
- S. (With slight hesitancy as she thinks about it) Yes.
- M. That *was* accomplished.
- S. Oh my God. I *did* it. I *did* accomplish my goal!
- M. Now, how do you *know* you did?
- S. I know because I was walking around and they were telling me, ... they were *actually* telling me ... “We started with fifty dollars and we’re already down to thirty dollars and we still have to buy...” and another table was saying, “We’ve already purchased ten things and we still have almost forty dollars left.” So you can tell that they’re recalculating and subtracting at the same time ... and they were using the decimal points to record their purchases. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 3)

Susie's body language visibly changed from this point in the conference. She was clearly pleased with herself and her whole mood brightened. As a student teacher, she had had many successes but had been pursuing this particular accomplishment all semester and grinned widely with the confidence that success encouraged. It is perhaps important to note that Mary did not just simply praise Susie in this instance. Rather, she helped her discover the goals she accomplished as well as those she didn't. This was done by a combination of modeling the supervisor's own thinking by reflecting aloud and intermittently pressing the ST to reflect on her own by the use of pertinent questioning strategies.

Susie now seems more amenable to probing the lesson with Mary and, in several cases, takes the lead:

- S. It was great to see the groups actually working together. They definitely were. Most of them, I could say all of them, were actually doing the work.
- M. It's true. I recorded that.... They shared. They took turns. I noticed that they helped each other. Did you notice that?
- S. Yeah. I noticed that they even coordinated tasks. I never said to do that. They just took it upon themselves.
- M. So what does that tell you? (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 4)
- S. I noticed that a lot of them really aren't as confident as they should be even when they know the answer. The stress just isn't as great when they're working in groups. Do you know what I mean? (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 5)

As the conference progressed, Mary explored more subtle aspects of the lesson and helped Susie extend her thinking about where to go from here. She approached the pursuit of continued learning from several angles, each time encouraging the ST to verbalize what she would do next and how she came to this decision:

- What was interesting to me was to think about another step, at a higher level.... (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 4)
- Now that you know that they're using the decimal point properly, what would your next step be? (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 7)
- Some of your lesson as planned got short shrift today. We [had talked about] questions for the children after they finished. How will you use those questions as you plan new objectives for tomorrow? How will you bring in the estimation and the wonderful high level thinking that you originally planned? That is the key. (S2, Ob #2, 4/27, p. 8)
- If that happens to you all the time, what's the lesson there for you? (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 9)

There were two other areas that Mary took care to explore with Susie. The first had to do with cooperative groups and the second concerned planning before the lesson, and each seemed to be a focus of Mary's discussion for a different reason.

The CT apparently preferred to teach to the whole class, and Susie did not feel supported in her attempts to introduce hands-on activities in small work groups. Mary did encourage the ST's innovative attempts and had counseled Susie that introducing children to a change in routine, especially at this time of the year, would take time. However, it was evident from the ST's reaction to the behavior during cooperative grouping that she still expected to command the order and routine that were the classroom norm and was disappointed in herself when this did not happen. In light of this, Mary took extra time to help Susie develop confidence in the use of alternative strategies. By reminding her of a previous observation where the ST had followed the teacher's lead and used whole group instruction, Mary helped Susie recognize that quiet acquiescence to routine was not necessarily a good learning environment:

- M. If you remember the last day I was here ... it was different. You didn't use cooperative groups. It was ...
- S. ... the way it usually is ...

M. ... the way the teacher runs it [pause], and I can tell you that there were private conversations going on between children who were disinterested. Those same girls were working beautifully in your groups today. The boys on your left were talking then, and not about the lesson. Not so today. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 6)

From here, Mary attempts to help Susie distinguish between the noise of active learning and the noisy disintegration of attention. She probes Susie to think about strategies for regaining attention when necessary:

M. What do you think works well to get the room quiet when you need it?

S. What's worked in the past for me is to use clapping sequences. I've never done that with this group because the CT is usually here and they never get too loud. If I wanted to introduce clapping today, it would have taken ten minutes!

M. So what did work today?

S. [Pause] Stopping.

M. Yes! When you had *wait time*. [pause] When you stopped and waited.

S. That's when they realized.

M. That's when they got quiet, the only time. There were other times when you called their names or said, "Shh," but when you did this, your own voice just kept getting louder and louder. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 13)

While Mary recognized that some of the out-of-bounds behavior was a result of the format's novelty to the children and some was an expected outgrowth of the hands-on group work, she invited Susie to problem-solve the situation. Without ever saying so directly, she led the discussion to the conclusion that the noise itself was less of an issue than her response to it. By reflecting back what she had observed, the US helped the ST to consider alternatives that actually did work for her.

Planning is an area that Susie is quite adept at, yet on this day she was thrown by situations she had not encountered before. As an ST, Susie had been concentrating on her own responsibilities within another teacher's room. She planned what she was asked to plan and was always well prepared. Today, for the first time, she was confronted with the overall responsibilities and the unexpected intrusions that color every teacher's day. Mary leads Susie to place herself within this wider frame and to consider how alternatives in planning could help avoid these pitfalls. Susie is not easy to convince, but Mary keeps trying:

- M. Things seemed a little hectic when I arrived....
- S. That had to do with [pause] my teacher was supposed to be here today.... They put a substitute in here at the last minute, and he didn't know what to do ... and basically I had to do everything. I usually have time to organize everything beforehand, and that didn't happen today.
- M. What has this shown you? ... What do you do to help things go more smoothly, I like the word *efficiently*, so that you spend more time on the children's learning.... You do need to consider that your teaching experience will be like this in some ways....
- S. But the copy machine broke yesterday too, so I had to wait till today to make my copies. I couldn't leave the room because no one was here, and the children were wound up because the sub had no clue.
- M. So [pause] what does this tell you?
- S. To plan ahead. But I *did* plan ahead. And then I also had to wait for the manipulatives. Someone was using them in another building, and they didn't get here till yesterday. I know, things always happen, so it has to get done two or three days early. I know that.
- M. Yes, and in some ways, being ready was the linch pin....
- S. But I *had* everything ready. I just didn't have everything *there*.... I thought I had done everything.... [pause] No, I wasn't ready, but I thought I was.

M. It's just important to keep in mind that that *will* happen in your teaching. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 12)

Many times, as she moved to a new aspect of review, Mary recapped for Susie what they had covered before moving on:

Well, so far you've demonstrated the importance of cooperative groups, and now you're talking about hands-on experiences. What do you see as the value of these hands-on experiences, even for older children like these fifth graders? (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 7)

She also praised Susie in a way that helped extend the ST's recognition of what she, herself, had accomplished:

- So I can see that you are able to integrate learning, and in an authentic way. You were able to integrate reading, math and social studies, as well as to bring in information from the web. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 15)
- You have to be complimented on the fact that you were so willing to take a risk, like trying new groupings with this class. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 15)
- So you have assessed that they were using the decimal to count. You *assessed* that they knew this. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 3)
- You didn't mention something that I must commend you on, and that is your willingness to tackle new and difficult teaching environments. This isn't easy. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 13)
- What is great is that you are trying to utilize all they have learned.... Clay asked me to help him with some research he was doing on the computer as follow-up to a previous lesson. (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 13)

Susie actually initiates the conclusion of the conference by asking, "So, what do *you* think?" (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 16). While Mary has already given much of her opinion, she nonetheless summarizes what she has said and synthesizes her assessment of Susie's teaching. She isolates the qualities and skills that demonstrate Susie's strength but also clearly alludes to areas where she hopes to see continued growth, ending with her final and perhaps most important assessment, "You learned from this lesson" (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 16). Both Mary and Susie smile and relax, as if they have

just finished a physical challenge together. My Researcher Journal records the following:

Mary not only comes to the post-observation conference with notes she has taken during the lesson, she continues to organize her thoughts in writing while Susie jots down her reflections. Mary's way of breaking down the lesson into segments which the ST can pull apart during the "post-mortem" helps Susie move beyond her initial defeated attitude and recognize her success. This in turn seems to allow her to deal with the cognitive dissonance she feels in the noise and distractions which result from her attempting something new in the classroom. (S2, RJ, 4/27)

While Mary revisits important points as if to assure understanding she moves on quickly when she assesses that understanding is clear. Susie seems comfortable explaining her perceptions, even when they differ with those of her supervisor, and in fact, she and Mary actually seem to enjoy the problem-solving process itself. Susie takes notes thoughtfully throughout the conference. (S2, RJ, 4/27)

Review of Video of Second Observed Lesson and Conference

Mary arrives for this meeting after her seminar class with the STs.

She is dragging physically and seems not to have much energy for this task. While she is polite and attentive, I sense that this cold she is fighting makes her wish that she were now on her way home after this long day. She sits down, chooses her second videotaped post-observation conference to review, and attentively observes. (S2, RV, RJ, 10/6)

It is not long before Mary shakes off her physical ailments, and almost despite herself, is "into" Susie--enthusiastically watching herself interact with the ST. She wants to talk as she watches the video, and I begin to tape--even though I realize that it will be hard to hear over the video. The student's lesson is first, and as we watch it together, Mary seems to go through every supervisory step again, except this time she talks aloud instead of taking her notes:

- She divided the money, see that.... We talked about that in pre-conference. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 1)

- I could have *told* her so many things at this stage. Instead, what I tried to do was take what she saw herself and help her see it another perspective, or to see something more specific in it. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 1)

As Mary observed the student go through the lesson, she nodded, smiled, and watched intently. One would almost think it was her initial viewing. When the video moved on to the post-observation conference, Mary continued her running commentary:

- You see that. She thought she didn't know but look at that. Some teachers can't do that! She described how she *knew* the children understood. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 1)
- In this class, the teacher never used groups. Susie had an uphill climb to create them. She took a big risk there. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 1)
- Right. She knows. There she's explaining how she *planned* her groupings around some children who weren't learning in the whole group instruction ... and she was so right! (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 1)
- Look at that. See that. She was so reflective. I just had to lead her a little there. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 2)

As we continue, it is easy to agree with Mary that Susie's reflective skills are well developed. I try to remember if the US might have influenced the selection of Susie for this study because of this. My concern is noted in the Researcher Journal:

Mary seems so in tune with Susie. They seem to play off each other's ideas so smoothly that I wonder if this had anything to do with Susie's participation in this study. In checking through my notes, I find that the ST agreed to participate *before* her first observation by Mary. While her personality and risk-taking nature may have played into her willingness to be included in the study, her reflective skills were apparently unknown to the US at the time the dyads were composed. (S2, RV, RJ, 10/10)

Mary seems interested in observing herself as supervisor but is drawn more, it seems, to Susie. Most of her comments are directed to the student's behaviors in this conference. When she does address her own actions, she notes,

- Susie pulls from our conversation. I help direct and redirect some of these reflections occasionally, like moving her from the money issue to the flyer, because it reinforces her own reflective ability. When I redirect her--or ask her questions, she's very positive. She wants to grow. I try to question her in ways to help her move to the next level. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 2)
- She's not defensive because she trusts me, and I work hard to establish this trust. Some students are very defensive in their student teaching. They only want to hear the positive. If I make a suggestion, they counter it with a reason their way was right. "I did that because I wanted to encourage them" or "I didn't want them to fail" or "I want everyone to feel equal" [pause] all good their own right but too often thrown up as a way to ignore alternatives or shut off critique. Susie does not. She's not defensive of everything she did. She really wants to make it better. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 2)
- Did you notice how when I wanted her to think about how she would improve that part of the lesson, I asked her how she could be more *efficient*? I use that word specifically instead of the word *better*. I have several key words like that that I use that help the student focus on the effect of their teaching rather than on themselves. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 4)
- Helping students develop their reflective skills takes time--and with the really good ones like Susie, it actually takes even more time, because you have to help *them* reach for it. You want to lead them--but not do too much of the talking. As teachers, we too have to be wary of *telling* them too much--because they don't always internalize what we tell them. If they come up with it themselves, they are more apt to remember it. So you try to expand their thinking in a new direction, which *you* can see because of your experience. [pause] Some, like Susie, are so sharp that they can pick up on where you are going with something and not think it through for themselves, which I really want them to do. You could see that when she was exploring whether one aspect of the lesson went as well as it should. She brought up the fact that she felt that she was ready and I said, "Do you think you were completely ready?" Susie never got defensive. She sat and thought and then she said, "No, I guess I probably wasn't." Then she went on to mention other ways she could have prepared more. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 10)

When I ask if Mary thinks Susie was this good from the first time she saw her,

Mary answers:

No. When I first met her she did not really know how to use the review, ... to go back in order to go forward. She was able to reflect and now she's able to analyze through that reflection [pause] and to say what she would do next. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 11)

As we talked, Mary elaborated on this view of Susie and how her knowledge of the student influenced her supervision:

I think I talked much more in her earliest conference but as I realized how reflective she is, I eased off. Do you see how she evaluates herself? What I do for her is direct her thinking. Did you see in the video how as she examines her cooperative groupings? I encourage her thinking by reminding her of her experience with a previous whole group lesson. She takes it from there and makes her own comparisons. She could immediately see what the differences were in the focus and attention span of the children--and she even related it to the hands-on activities that her cooperating teacher never utilized. Not only that, she was able to note the differences in individual children. Susie shows her ongoing assessment of the children as she talks. When she talks about her lesson, you can hear in her discussion that she has been checking for understanding and effectiveness as she's teaching, even when she didn't realize that she was doing it. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 12)

Mary shared her belief that her 18 years of administrative experience really allow her to know how to supervise and how to ascertain children's needs:

When I walk into an observation, I'm watching the children closely too. The other day I heard a ST ask a mundane question with a self-evident answer. A boy sitting near me gave the answer and the teacher said enthusiastically, "Excellent, James!" It was only second grade, but the child made a face at his friend which clearly said, "How did I deserve that response for that?" Teachers don't always see what the children are doing. It was my job as an administrator to help them see this, and it's a big help now with the student teachers. I had to know all grade levels--so even my sense of child development grew as I was principal. (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 13)

When asked whether her supervision of Susie epitomized her style of supervision in general, Mary answered that it did in terms of the reflective model employed. However, she allowed that Susie's own reflective skills enabled her to take advantage of Mary's lead in ways that are not always possible with every student.

She shared that she would see herself as having a collaborative style of supervision. “This, to me, is the goal [pause] because all three [of the style and approach codes] are included if you are a predominantly a collaborator [pause] but not the other way around” (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 14). In terms of her own focus in working with STs, Mary concluded, after very little hesitation, that reflection was primary. “You can’t move forward unless you can analyze yourself, see where you’ve been and what you’ve done, and decide whether your actions produced something positive or not. What good is a *great* lesson on paper if after you’ve gotten through it, nobody learned?” (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 14).

Once the student can reflect, then Mary wants to see them able to do some modification of their teaching based on this reflection--and hopes to see that it involves some risk-taking. “A teacher needs to be able to assess the children along a continuum and on an ongoing basis, so that they know what is being learned and by whom” (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 15). Mary explains her view that assessment is important primarily for how it can lead to changes in teaching, not simply for a grade. “When a student tells me that children aren’t paying attention--or haven’t “grasped” the material--I tell them to look to themselves--not the children” (S, RV, 10/6, p. 15).

From here, Mary next identified helping STs define and work through their objectives. “It is so hard for them to see the importance of this. If they can clarify their objectives, much of the rest falls into place” (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 16). Two examples of areas that exemplify this, she felt, are behavior management and time management. By helping STs articulate their objectives, Mary feels that she helps them recognize the interrelatedness of teacher planning and the inefficiency of examining some areas in isolation.

Analysis of Portrait #2.

Style and Approach Codes. In both the first and second observed lessons, the interactions coded “1C” (*Assessor*) were few in number--and in fact notably fewer than either of the other categories. In Observation #1, *Assessor* interactions were interspersed throughout the conference, whereas in Observation #2, they appeared predominantly at the end, almost as a summative note to the ST (see Table 3).

Table 3

S#2: Frequency of Style and Approach Codes

	1A (<i>Clinician</i>)	1B (<i>Collaborator</i>)	1C (<i>Assessor</i>)
Observation #1	44	30	13
Observation #2	53	22	5

Comments coded as “1B” (*Collaborator*) were less prevalent in both observed lessons than were those coded “1A” (*Clinician*); however, the order of their appearance in each of the conferences was also different. In Observation #1, Mary began with more “A”s and led into the “B”s. Over the course of the conference, there were many more “A”s than “B”s, and most of these were early in the discussion.

In Observation #2, the US started immediately with comments coded as “1B” but by the middle of the conference, had altered her approach. From here on, most of the comments were coded “1A”--and overall there were over double as many “A”s as “B”s. There could be many interpretations as to the reasons for these differences, but with the data already gathered on Mary, some possibilities can be foregrounded.

Mary does not believe in empty praise for children, and her “1C” comments to the ST may embody this belief. Therefore, her assessments may be so embedded in the discussion that they speak more to the collaborative or clinical approach than to assessment. While comments such as “I think it is really wonderful that you tried to make something meaningful” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 6) have been coded as “1C,” as has, “You have a great feel. There’s no doubt about it” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 6), other responses were so woven into the fabric of conversational data coded “1A” (*Clinician*) that in terms of what the student hears, they are part of the learning process. “Yes, we had talked about how to do that, but now you also did something else that was great. You used those character webs. How could you have made further use of these webs afterwards? Did you utilize them?” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 8). Here Mary has deftly rolled the compliment into the meaning of the comment and in so doing, I believe, allowed the student to feel more comfortable as she strives for a higher goal.

The “1A” and “1B” codings also fit Mary’s profile. In Observations #1, Mary leads with *Clinician* comments. Susie is relatively new to her, and the US works hard to press for reflection. Sometimes, she has to model her own thinking, and in these situations, the data are coded “1A” (*Clinician*). “So you’re analyzing that part [of the lesson] based on the responses of the students. [pause] How about the part of your lesson where you asked what the character should be named? What do you think about that?” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 2)

As she moves further into the conference, Mary begins to recognize Susie’s reflective abilities and responds to them: “You know, you *have* all the answers. You know it.... Make it shorter. Get to the important parts. Just as you keep your mind on what the goal is for a lesson, you do the same for a story. You wrote it” (S2, Ob#1,

3/15, p. 5). This comment was coded as a “1B” because here Mary is operating as a true collaborator. It is almost as if they are thinking through the issue together.

In the Post-Observation conference for Observation #2, Mary immediately takes a collaborative stance. Her comments support the ST and in many ways play off what Susie says. “Yes, they *were* using the scrap paper. I noticed that too” (S2, Ob#2, 4/27, p. 3). Because of the ST’s dejection at the conference onset, it is difficult to project whether this change in style has been chosen as an outgrowth of the student’s development, or is a response to her current mood. In either case, Mary seems comfortable enough after beginning with the collaborative approach, to work in a hefty dose of issues for Susie to chew on reflectively.

Focus Codes. Mary seems uniformly attuned to the need to develop the ST’s reflective abilities. Her emphasis on reflection permeates all of the data, and in fact is the foundation upon which any other focus rests. While it can be said that in some way or other she touched upon all of the eight Focus Codes, there was a clear preponderance of comments addressing three areas: (“2W”) *Student Teacher Reflection*, (“2U”) *Lesson Planning*, and (“2Z”) *Children’s Learning* (see Table 4). This supervisor frequently reiterated her views that reflection on children’s learning and planning go hand-in-hand; and that without attention to these areas, focus on the other areas would lose effectiveness. The data on her practice were consistent with these views.

The Researcher’s View of the Supervisor

As a US, Mary seems to have a sense of purpose and direction, is able to articulate a philosophy or approach, and quite deftly, can concretize her mental frameworks in her interactions with the ST.

Table 4

S#2: Frequency of Focus Codes

	Observation #1	Observation #2
2S: Behavior Management	2	5
2T: Time Management	6	3
2U: Lesson Planning	26	28
2V: People Skills	1	1
2W: ST Reflection	38	40
2X: Curriculum	3	1
2Y: Child Development	1	1
2Z: Children's Learning	11	20

She elicits answers from Susie and regularly scaffolds her to a wider view of practice. She models reflection as she prompts the ST to revisit activities, goals, and comments and consistently helps bring Susie's focus back to the bottom line, which is children's learning. It cannot be known from this portrait of her interactions with one ST if this style is consistent across students; but since much of what Mary outlined in her interview held true of her practice in this instance, it is probably fair to say at the very least that the data collected here reflects what she attempts to do.

Perhaps more than anything else, Mary's supervisory approach brings to mind Barbara Rogoff's (1989) concept of *Guided Participation*. Although Rogoff is referring to the development of children and her views are consistent with the Vygotskian approach, the parallels to the US presented here are evident, especially if one reads her description with an eye to reflective thought processes in place of physical activity:

Guided participation involves interpersonal communication as well as stage-setting arrangements.... It includes explicit efforts to guide ... development as well as tacit communication and arrangements that are embedded in the practical and routine.... The process of guided participation--building bridges between what [is known] ... and new information to be learned, structuring and supporting [the learner's] efforts, and transferring to [the learner] the responsibility for managing problem solving--provide direction and organization for ... cognitive development. (Rogoff, 1989, p. viii)

Supervisor #3: Bonnie

Interview

It strains my credulity to believe that Bonnie is old enough to be a principal, even a retired principal. To be fair, she chose to opt out of full-time employment well

before it would normally be expected due to a major life change, but even that knowledge does little to ease my initial shock.

It is not that she doesn't look capable of doing such a job; she certainly does. Rather the disequilibrium is a creation of my own internal lens. Bonnie does not fit my framework of either the word *principal* or *retired*. If pressed, I might identify her as an energetic graduate student, raring to assail those windmills of educational dilemma with a dream and some elbow grease. As I get to know her better, my lens expands as I see the busy woman with time for a cheery personal greeting, the capable leader who seems dedicated to making others feel comfortable, and the talented educator tempered through the years by the awesome responsibilities of a teaching career.

As I think about it from this perspective, I am moved to discover that Bonnie really does seem to epitomize the inspirational image of what a vibrant educational administrator should be: one who has caught the excitement of that educational "dream"--and never let go of it (S3, I, RJ, 5/12).

Background. Bonnie has been retired for about a year; and although this is her first year of supervising student teachers for this department, she has previously supervised both participant-observers within this program and administrative interns in the graduate program of another department in the School of Education. Education was the only career she ever thought of pursuing. As Bonnie explains it, this was not due to the fact that teaching was a career path particularly suited to women (this was the 70s she reminded me), but rather to the concept of following in the family footsteps. "There are many teachers in my family, and ... it was sort of expected ... that you would just continue that generation of teachers.... My father was a high school teacher" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 3). Bonnie always viewed education as important and

described herself as a serious student, even as a child. “I did well in [school] and I was expected to do well. It was the family’s expectation” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 3).

Her undergraduate degree was completed at a large religiously affiliated university where she majored in elementary education and graduated with certification as an elementary teacher. Memories are hazy of the degree program, but Bonnie particularly singled out her Science Methods course and student teaching as memorable. “I was very close to my Science Methods professor. She was my mentor at the time, and I still stay in contact with her” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 4).

In describing her preservice program in general, Bonnie offered the following:

I came out with a tremendous amount, but we’re talking about 25 years ago.... I look [at] what students are getting today, and I think they are learning so much more, but I don’t know if it just seems that way ... being older and wiser and now looking back.... I know I didn’t get everything I needed, [and] (pause) I ... guess I do still think programs are better today. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 4)

Her student teaching experience spanned one semester and offered two different grade placements for 15 credits. Bonnie remembers the following from this experience:

- I remember that I was assertive enough to ask ... to be assigned to one particular school for student teaching.... It was in a school that was not a regular placement site, but I knew they had upcoming retirements ... and [I] got a job in that same district. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 5)
- I regret to say I don’t remember [the supervisor’s] name. I don’t think there was much contact, really ... just a simple “It was a great lesson.” I never remember sitting and really going through the lesson, [pause] the strengths, the weaknesses, and other things like that. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 6)
- We [the supervisor and Bonnie] never met before [the observation]. There was no pre-conferencing.... She saw me once in each placement, I think. I remember I was in a second grade and a fifth grade ... but I remember very little about the supervisory process. I do remember ...

the two cooperating teachers, but that could be because I got a job in that school and continued to work with those people. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 6)

When she began to teach, Bonnie was initially hired as a first grade teacher. She taught first grade for 5 years before moving on to several other grades for a total of 11 years in the classroom. During this time, she went back to school for a master's degree in Elementary Education, completed a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) and a Professional Diploma (PD) in Educational Administration, became a principal, and earned an Ed.D. in Educational Administration with a focus on curriculum. She spent 5 years as principal of a K-2 school before serving her last principalship at a K-6 school. Including the 8 years there before retirement, Bonnie was a principal for a total of 13 years.

She loved being a principal and left only because she needed more flexibility in her life. She describes how she now feels able to meet her own needs and her desire to stay connected to the field by this present work with student teachers and interns.

I think I'm good at [supervision].... Obviously, in the 13 years I was principal ... I worked with a lot of new teachers.... Trying to get them on board and into the climate of the school was exciting. I felt they really appreciated what I was doing for them. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 9)

Supervision. The move to supervision of student teachers after she retired was a natural one; in many ways, it really seems an extension of her role as principal. Her doctoral program and her administrative experience were excellent preparation for the skills, insight, and sensitivity needed to be an effective US, Bonnie feels. Although she had been a CT only once in her own teaching career, this was due more to the school's policy than any personal reluctance. When she assumed a position of authority, she strongly supported the placement of STs in her schools: "It's kind of our duty to encourage the profession" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 12). Additionally, since all her own graduate studies took place at the university where she now supervised, she had developed close

ties to several faculty members as well as a strong connection to many of the program's ideals. "I had a very good working relationship with many people here," she offered. Her view of education resonates well with the program's philosophy, particularly the fact that:

The whole concept of integrated learning is emphasized ... that children should construct their own learning. The use of manipulatives is so encouraged, even in the upper grades, and [students are asked] to reflect on all their actions in the classroom. I also like the fact that students are out in the field early [in their program]... It shows in their student teaching. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 13)

Bonnie voiced her conviction that supervision was an important part of learning to teach, even if it had not been a strong aspect of her own teacher education. Reflection, a cornerstone of the teacher education program with which she is affiliated and Bonnie's own philosophical approach to teaching, needs good mentoring, she felt, to become well enough developed to impact teaching behaviors: "Supervisors need to do more than just ask students to reflect. They have to help them really see what's going on. They can't just say 'great job' like mine did and walk away" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 11).

Bonnie feels that mentoring newcomers to the field is vitally important because they are at a point in their professional development when individual approaches to teaching are taking hold and when positive attitudes toward mentoring and cooperative learning can be encouraged. "There are tenured teachers who don't want any advice, who don't want to hear any critique," she noted (S3, I, 3/12, p. 10). In her opinion, this may be a result of the fact that most teachers perform their work in isolation, that the culture of most schools does not allow much time for collaborative work. Having someone else in the classroom, therefore, is likely to bring on thorny feelings of being evaluated rather than any exciting prospects for shared learning. If future teachers

could experience more collegial relationships early in their careers, she feels, teachers' learning throughout their careers might be enhanced.

Bonnie herself clearly felt supported by other professionals in her own first teaching placement, and this may have helped her feel more open to other collegial relationships throughout her education and administrative experience. She described such a relationship that she feels helped frame her growth as a principal: "I became better because [I was] willing to accept help.... I don't know if that's because I worked so closely with another principal and we always bounced ideas back and forth" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 10). This included sharing individual tasks. "Many times we were ... interviewing for jobs where we had demo lessons to [observe], and things like that.... We would sit and do it together and then talk about it together. We'd ask each other what [we saw] and then we'd compare" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 12).

Bonnie then described how this collegial relationship with Jim, her principal-friend, began when they met as they were interviewing in the same district for principalships. The trust they have in each other's friendship and judgment has allowed them to share frankly and openly through the expansion of their professional horizons. They have supported each other over many years, through administrative job searches as well as through the spectrum of dilemmas that principals face on a regular basis, and Bonnie believes that through such sharing and willingness to accept advice, they have helped each other grow through the duties of each role: "The principalship ... was remarkable because of the kind of linking relationship we had.... There was a lot of open communication" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 18). Interestingly, Bonnie has not let her retirement end this outlet for support. When she was invited to teach an undergraduate class called *Classroom Interactional Analysis* (a companion class to the student teaching seminar at this university), she began to confer regularly with Jim about the

class. Soon she had recruited him, still a full-time principal, to teach another section of the same course. Although they do have separate classes, she and Jim plan together and offer their students several team-taught classes each semester.

But this is not the only example of how Bonnie continues to see mentoring and learning from others important at the university level. When a peer evaluator came in to observe Bonnie teaching the *Analysis* class and expressed discomfort with her own role, Bonnie told her, “I’m thrilled because I need ideas. I’m new at this” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 24). She related how the evaluation helped her recognize that she was actually modeling the same questioning strategies in her teaching that she encouraged her students to use in their work with children, and this was an encouraging and welcome outcome.

In the same vein, she also expressed how helpful it was to attend meetings expressly for Uss. “She [the Director of Field Placement] met with us who were new as orientation to the university’s program. It gave us support and really helped us get a gist of the courses students took. [It was helpful to learn] that students had field placements from their very first course” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 16).

This supervisor expressed strong views about why supervision is important to student teachers, especially in the form of a university supervisor:

- The supervisor should act as an anchor. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 20)
- [Students sometimes] tend to get directed ... by the thoughts of the cooperating teacher. That’s something I can help them step back from and analyze [in terms of teaching and learning]. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 22)
- Planning takes time and some students wait till the last moment. [The supervisor] can push them to plan earlier so that there’s time for discussion and perhaps redirection, if necessary. (She alluded to the fact that such focus may be easier for a supervisor than a cooperating teacher, who has so many responsibilities for the children’s day.) (S3, I, 3/12, p. 26)

- [My] help is based on close observation.... One student seemed to get frustrated as she tried to manage the class. In an irritated voice she said, "I told you three times to sit down!" But that's the way the cooperating teacher taught the class. We talked about different [strategies] she might use instead so that when I come back ... she can implement something different. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 28)
- I can plant the seed [for realizing] that others are ready to help you ... and that I will be there if I can help you out. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 34)
- University supervisors generally have more connections [in the field] because of their background and experience. People like myself have been on interviewing committees. I do think I bring to them a perspective of what a principal might be looking for [and since] we're usually well networked, that brings a broader perspective. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 36)

Good supervision, from Bonnie's perspective, is neither easy nor comfortable, whether you are in the principal's role or the US's role, for growth involves self-analysis and the supervisor's role is to provoke such analysis. "That's the difficult thing.... You have to be the one to hold up the mirror to the teachers" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 14).

A good supervisor is one who's supportive, one who looks for the strengths in a student and in a lesson and tries to focus on those. But there's no doubt that you have to bring in the areas for improvement or the weaknesses. You can do it gently but you can't sugar coat it so that the student doesn't realize (pause). You can't make it so gentle that they don't even take it to heart. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 22)

Other aspects of good supervision this supervisor mentioned included the following:

- The supervisor should model effective and desirable strategies in her own work with student teachers. This involves demonstrating some of the things you want in teaching through your own teaching. One of the things that over the years has become more important to me [in teaching] is questioning strategies.... When I work with the STs I try to [stimulate] thinking by using these strategies myself. When [we have] a discussion [in seminar], I try to facilitate their interaction by

trying to step out and let them talk back and forth. I try to do what I want them to do in the classroom. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 22)

- In helping students refine their thinking during planning, the supervisor must walk a fine line between helping them learn to analyze their plans--and giving them solutions. This is especially important as students become stressed in anticipation of a US's observation. "Sometimes they are close to tears" (when something is singled out as probably unworkable in a lesson), but Bonnie feels that this verbal walk-through with her is essential to their learning to plan realistically, in a manner which provides the best chance of success. "Sometimes I give them ideas ... sometimes just words of encouragement.... I try to be very clear and remind them just what I am looking for" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 24).

While Bonnie seems to approach her supervision methodically, she does not attribute this to any identified style or model. She attests that her educational background gave her much on the theoretical level, but was less directly helpful when it came to connecting that theory to the practical aspects of the job. When asked about mentoring, Bonnie, for example, does not refer to a theory but to individuals who modeled such behavior for her. About her first teaching job she said,

I had two very good student teaching placements before getting my first job.... The teacher that I replaced had been let go--and the room was a disaster. I walked in and looked and said, "Oh my God." This was back when we had three basal readers, you know, the "bluebells" and the "blackbirds" (laughter). We have come a long way! I didn't even know ... how to put the series together. If it wasn't for the other two first grade teachers who took pity on me [pause]. They worked with me, mentored me really, before that word was really used. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 18)

In terms of how she approaches the supervision of student teachers, Bonnie described several areas of attention:

- The preplanning session is very important. The students don't give anything to Bonnie in writing. It is, instead, a discussion. She expects them to lay out what they plan to do, their aims, procedures and anything else that may be relevant. "They alert me to problems or concerns.... If a CT keeps jumping in [to the lesson], I can help." She explained how she would problem solve such a dilemma with a student by discussing possible ways she, as the supervisor, could actively support the ST. Bonnie related how she would share suggestions and model alternative strategies during the discussion, thinking aloud with the student until an appropriate way for Bonnie to help was agreed upon. "I could ask if the CT can get me something from the office if I think that being circuitous might work best, or I could be more direct." In either case, Bonnie seems to hold finding (and modeling) the most creative, effective, and sensitive solution foremost in this process (S3, I, 3/12, p. 28).
- In observations, Bonnie tends to be especially alert to how the ST uses questioning strategies.

I think it is essential to teaching.... They can have wonderful lesson plans ... but if they are constantly saying [to the children], "Tell me," then it seems like they're the only one who needs the answer. If they [question] and then consistently repeat student answers, then that leads to other behavior problems. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 28)

I want to see the way they pose questions at higher levels. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 24)

- In addition to questioning strategies, Bonnie looks for techniques of teacher responses, or "sanctions," in all her observations. Beyond this, she feels it depends on the student and the point in the semester at which she is observing. "If the subject changes, or if it is a different kind of lesson, I may

look for different things. Certain lessons draw upon understandings of group management more than others. If the lesson is very complicated or if there is much moving around, these issues may be prominent” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 24).

- Since inclusive practice has become more implemented in classrooms, Bonnie also tries to help students grow in ways that will allow them to meet all students’ needs (S3, 3/12, I, p. 30).
- She also looks for evidence that the student is learning and growing through the student teaching process. “I look to see if they are able to implement some of the recommendations discussed and whether they are becoming more effective in the classroom” (over the course of the semester) (S3, I, 3/12, p. 10).
- Bonnie likes to hold the post-observation conference immediately after the lesson, if at all possible. “I think that’s the most effective way” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 28). She usually begins by asking them to reflect on how they think the lesson went and ends with a question about how they might do it differently in the future. In between, the conference takes shape and flows from what the ST says. This is where she really works on the reflective piece of learning to be a teacher. “It makes me nervous,” she commented, “if I’ve seen that the student has struggled in a lesson and then they come to the conference and insist that it was fine” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 32).
- She uses the seminar to highlight issues she feels touch indirectly on the observation procedures and tries, through these experiences, to connect theory and practice. In the last seminar, for example, she had discussed the English Language Arts (ELA) Standards and helped students identify where and how they were already integrating these standards into their work with children.

“These students are well prepared. They know the standards. I just don’t think they always recognize how well they’ve integrated them into their thinking and planning” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 28). For Bonnie, this weaving of theoretical and practical understandings is critical to STs being able to articulate their skill and expertise. Whether in interviewing for a teaching position or in terms of professional demeanor generally, Bonnie feels that this is an important part of what she does (S3, I, 3/12, p. 28).

In terms of whether a ST is competent in the classroom, Bonnie clearly acknowledged that most of the STs she has worked with, either as a US or a principal, do remarkably well. Nonetheless she believes that the US has a critical responsibility to the profession and to the ST if that is not the case. She initially looks for students who may need extra help because they are more frustrated than others, but acknowledges that in some cases this may be less a reflection on the ST than on the particular placement. Describing one such ST currently placed with her, Bonnie noted, “It’s a tough class, so I wouldn’t want to make a firm judgment [at this point], but I do want another observation pretty quickly” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 28).

She also explores the ST’s general relationship with children and described how, after observing, she can usually get a good “feel” for this. Their demeanor in the classroom is an important component to the mix of traits and abilities that Bonnie holds essential to good teaching. She feels comfortable that an ST is doing well by mid-semester if she or he knows what they are doing and why, if this is evident not only in their lesson plans but in their practice, and if they have a sense of how to work through problems. Most lessons can always be improved, but “it shouldn’t just be a do-or-die attitude on the ST’s part (pause) you know, just get through the lesson?

[They need] to know when to go back to it and how to express this understanding” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 30).

In the second placement, Bonnie allowed that she would expect to find “a little more polish, more growth, and implementation of some of the earlier suggestions that arose in discussion” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 32). When this is not the case, she feels that it is the US’s responsibility to help the ST recognize and work on areas that need attention. Asked to describe a particular “success,” Bonnie interestingly commented that it is possible that we should count as successes people who come to the realization that teaching is not right for them and choose another profession. Then she chose to discuss a student who had problems from the start in her student teaching.

I certainly think a US can be helpful in many ways (pause) and should be willing to give all sorts of help, and I do. I originally advised this student not to do student teaching in the semester she had chosen. I didn’t feel she was ready. I advised her as well not to take other courses at the same time, but she didn’t want to listen. Apparently, she took on more than she could handle because of pressure from her family to finish the program. To every suggestion, she kept saying, “I can’t. I can’t. My father will be upset,” but I could see that it was too much. I then offered her a change in placement, more observations, and finally, I offered her extra time to complete her student teaching assignments more successfully in the following semester. It was a very difficult time because it was getting later in the semester and it wasn’t coming together for her. She really didn’t want to hear what I was saying and just wanted it over. She fought my suggestions (pause), but I just couldn’t give her a grade for successful student teaching. She finally called me and said she would be willing to do the extra time in the next semester. It was just what she needed. It was difficult for me, but that’s a success story. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 34)

Bonnie offered that there is much she would like to learn about supervision.

- Each US brings her or his own perspective to the work. We are on the same track but may focus on different things. I think I could grow by learning what others do. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 12)
- I’m the new kid on the block [in terms of time as a US] here but my thought is that we should have more meetings between the regular

professors and the USs. I think it would help the USs tie in more effectively to the university philosophy. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 20)

- I'd like to learn more ways to offer students help and guidance ... more practical ways for them to come up with good ideas. I wouldn't say time should be an excuse because there's always seminar time to do follow-up, and, beyond that, the telephone or e-mail can always be used. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 26)
- I'd like to look at other perspectives that might be effective. I'd like to step outside my own experience and be more objective, even if it was difficult. Perhaps we could do this on videotape or audiotape like the students do. (S3, I, 3/12, p. 32)

Although Bonnie obviously sees room for growth, she nonetheless considers her work as a US very effective. Though new to this aspect of the supervisory process, she feels she not only brings something special, but also offers a good example in her critical self-reflective skills.

You know, sometimes I feel rushed, like everybody [pause] because you're trying to do a post-observation conference while the children are at lunch and somebody needs the room ... so you're standing in the hallway [pause] and you can't help feeling harried...but all in all I'd like to think, [pause] I do think, yes, I am a good supervisor! (S3, I, 3/12, p. 26)

She adds, "I'm always critical of myself. I always think I don't know enough" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 26).

Commentary. Bonnie's interview was probably epitomized by the last two quotations. Her overall attitude reflected the intellectual conflict between a confidence born of the depth of her experience and education and the awareness that "good" was never good enough to become complacent about. As an educator, she had not "retired" from the pursuit of excellence when she left her principalship.

While confident as an educator, she was also very aware that she was the focus for this study. My Researcher Journal reflects some of this: "It is clear that Bonnie is aware of being the focus here. Although I sense that this makes her a bit self-

conscious, she is in for the ride and seems to enjoy the excitement of discovery as well as the possibility of self-discovery” (S3, RJ, 3/12).

In her role as US, Bonnie has recognized that the playing field has changed, and that seems to be all right with her. She has adjusted to work in the academy very smoothly and functions as an eager team member. Most interesting to me is the fact that she still carves out opportunities for collegial growth and cooperative learning for herself. By encouraging her friend, Jim, to get involved in teaching the same lecture class as she teaches, she has carved out another opportunity for the shared growth and development in which she seems to delight. More importantly, her openness to learning with and through others is not limited to one individual. All Bonnie’s professional interactions carry an invitation to others around her to share in collegial endeavors.

Post-Observation Conference #1

The first conference I observed between Bonnie and her student-teacher Allison took place in a first-grade public school classroom in a suburban setting. It was the supervisor’s second observation of this student. The atmosphere of the school itself was unique, as noted by this entry in the Researcher Journal:

On the outside, the school looked like any other brick façade typical of America’s older school buildings. As I pulled the front door open and stepped inside, however, I was struck by a feeling that is hard to describe. Words like *peaceful*, *inviting*, and *warm* come to mind.

In the entry lobby was a large open space with offices leading off to the left and right. Centered in the middle of this lobby was a pedestal upon which was placed a large bouquet of beautifully arranged flowers with a small statue of a child reading beside it. Every child or adult who entered the building had to walk around this pedestal.

As I entered the administrative office and asked for directions to the room, a phone call was placed to the class, and a first grader was soon greeting me and escorting me to the proper place. (S3, Ob#1, RJ, 3/10)

It is important, I believe, to place this observation in light of the above description because much of the data collected may have been influenced by the setting in which the observed behaviors evolved. It is also worth noting that the CT, while allowing the ST autonomy, seemed quite naturally and unobtrusively to act as her aide as needed during this lesson. Additionally, a graduate student from another college was also observing this day, and both he and the US seemed very comfortable walking around and interacting with the children as they worked in their small groups.

The lesson involved a science experiment where children predicted how porous different material would be and then both tested their hypotheses and recorded their results. Previously they had created a chart of their predictions; and after reviewing the chart and being given directions for the experiment, they worked in small groups of two or three. Each group was given a tray upon which was placed four clear plastic glasses. Inside each glass was a paper person taped into a standing position. The mouth of each glass was covered by a different material (wool, polyester, cotton, and nylon) held taut by a rubber band. Each tray also contained a small container of water and a spoon.

The students were expected to spoon water over the material covering each container in order to determine which fabric kept the person inside most “dry”. On worksheets, they were to record which fabric they would choose to wear in the rain, and why. The lesson ended with the students gathering on the rug to discuss their conclusions. As the students left the classroom for another activity, Bonnie and Allison met in the classroom. Both the worksheets and the actual materials were on the table as they spoke.

Bonnie began the post-observation conference by asking for Allison's "impressions" of the lessons, concentrating initially on the student's positive reflections: "How do you feel it went...? What do you think was successful?" (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 1).

Allison seemed relaxed and comfortable as she began the reflective process. She quickly reviewed what she recognized as successful and then turned the conversation to where *she* saw room for improvement:

I think in general it went well. The children got the objectives, they understood that all materials aren't waterproof, and they could recognize which things were and weren't and why.... I do think that maybe I could have spent a bit more time before this lesson exploring their predictions ... maybe making it a bit more challenging.... They kind of knew before we even started which materials would work and which wouldn't. Some of them had a bit of a debate with it, but I feel they had a good sense of it already. (S2, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 1)

Bonnie picked up on Allison's reflections and moved to a discussion of the children's prior knowledge for a while before addressing her own observations of the lesson's strengths:

Overall, I saw some super positive aspects to this lesson.... I give you a lot of credit for doing this [lesson]. This is a very *active* lesson, and to do it for an observation, and to do it with so many other people in the room, shows that you are willing to take risks.... I think you designed a lesson that made the children enthusiastic and they really stayed on task. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 1)

As this discussion of elements over which they both were in agreement ebbed, the supervisor continued to prod the student's reflection, and the ST responded in a comfortable, open manner:

B. How do you feel about the way you got them to make that transition from this very exciting hands-on activity to [working on] the record sheet?

- A. I knew that was going to be a bit hard because ... they were really excited about doing [it].... I knew getting them to [move on] to the recording sheet wouldn't be easy, but I also figured that because it's a fairly simple and interesting recording sheet, they could still be interacting and talking about it while they were getting it done.... So while it took a while to get on task, they all did do it. It just took some of them a bit longer than the others.
- B. Did you do anything in particular to help get those children on task?
- A. Normally I am always walking around ... always trying to stay on top of them, you know, encouraging them with "Come on, let's get this done."
- A. What I noticed was that you were constantly circulating but always in a very positive fashion. I know from your Analysis class you realize that sometimes there are going to be negative sanctions, but you kept these to a minimum and addressed particular children quietly. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 2)

And again:

- B. I saw that the teacher stepped in and helped whenever another pair of hands was needed. How would you handle taking the water away, for example, without her help in your own class?
- A. I think I probably would signal with the lights [for them to stop] and have each group dump the water left on top of the fabric.... Maybe get one of the bigger buckets with the handle so I didn't have to worry about walking back and forth ... and leave them with their cups so they could see the results.... (She demonstrates with one of the trays on the table as she talks.) (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 2)

The conference bounced back and forth like this, with Bonnie obviously leading the discussion and Allison seeming to actually enjoy the process.

Allison's face is animated as she talks, her body relaxed. There is a collegiality sensed between the two discussants. While Allison does not take many notes during this process, she is obviously interested in the intellectual analysis of her lesson and frequently seems eager to add to the discussion. (S3, Ob#1, RJ, 3/16)

The US wove her questions throughout the give and take of the interaction, yet managed to keep returning to positive observations and supportive comments from time to time:

- I observed that your lesson involved hypothesizing, observing, recording and as we have already discussed, much integration [of subject areas]. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 3)
- You circulated to assist.... You have a positive manner with them, and I can see you're enjoying what you are doing. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 3)
- I like the signals you used to get attention, the clapping patterns and the xylophone. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 4)
- It looks like you use routines well. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 4)
- I mean overall, the lesson went very, very well, and I think that the children discovered a lot. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 5)
- Another positive point came out in the closing, and I don't know if you realize this, but the children are reading the labels. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 5)
- You talked to them about being scientists, and I liked the way you were careful to use scientific terms as you talked to the children. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 6)
- You were extremely well prepared. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 7)
- (Speaking about the end of this placement and the upcoming move to a new grade level): I think you've demonstrated a lot. You've been very successful. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 7)

However, such attention to positive feedback did not preclude Bonnie's attention to areas where she obviously sought to provoke the ST's further growth:

- *That* might have been an opportunity for you to make the connection to that "Words I Write" book that they used. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 4)
- (The ST had brought in a display of clothing that matched the fabrics in the experiment, and, as the children gathered on the rug after the lesson, she asked them which of the items was the most waterproof. One raincoat was compared to the nylon in the experiment, and Bonnie

noted this.) The outside of that is really rubberized, so if you are doing that lesson in the future, you may want to use something that is truly nylon.... They may be confused by comparing the two. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 6)

- You used some good strategies for dismissing children from the circle, but then they got excited [and the lesson went a bit over, delaying lunch a few minutes]. What could you do to remind them that their turn was coming? (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 6)
- How will you use this book [to continue the learning process]? (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 7)
- Have you thought of tying this to a health theme? (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 7)
- Have you looked at any of the worksheets? What do they show you [about the lesson's effectiveness]? How will you address the discrepancies in understanding for the few who drew different conclusions? (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 8)

Interestingly, there were times in this post-conference discussion where Bonnie and Allison appeared to really be colleagues, sharing and defending differing opinions, and using each other's reflections to arrive at shared conclusions:

- B. How did you feel about how they came back to the circle? Would you handle that differently in the future?
- A. They didn't *want* to come back to the circle. They really still wanted to be doing the activity! They all *got* there. (The student is not defensive here, but seems to be thinking aloud.)
- B. Yes. Do you blame them [for wanting to continue experimenting]? Yes, they *did* all get there. Could you think of anything you could do differently to get it accomplished more quickly?
- A. Well, normally I would use the xylophone (where she hits the notes slowly in a proscribed, and therefore predictable, order). They usually rush there before ... [I] hit the red bar so they can get a "listening link," but I was afraid that if I did it that way today, they might have forgotten their papers or brought their cups of water, so I was unsure....

B. If you can't use the usual routine, what about doing something I've seen used in this classroom before: "Put your papers in the *share* position"?

A. Yes, that is something we do with them.... (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 4)

Another example of this occurred in a discussion of two habits that the ST was apparently attempting to reduce: The first was to switch from "Tell *me*" to a more inclusive phrase (so that the emphasis in learning was not merely on pleasing the teacher), and the second was to not consistently *repeat* each child's answer. The following dialogue reveals that the ST actively is engaged in analyzing and critiquing her own behavior through the process of discussion:

B. One thing we talked about in the last conference was the use of "Who can tell *me*?"

A. See, I know I do that, but I think I only do it when I'm closing. I discovered that. Because the rest of the time I normally say [pause] in fact, even when I write lesson plans, it's *we*.

B. I know you have the awareness because the next time you said, "What does that tell *us*?" So you're at one of those points where you've got it, but it takes time to [break the habit] and I know you're going to make that step over.

A. Right. [pause] I tried. (The ST does not appear to be disappointed in this reply.) (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 4)

And again:

B. I noticed that when you asked about the cotton and the polyester, you did not repeat their answers.

A. I was actually pretty good about not repeating their answers for a long time! The more we talked about it in our Analysis class, the more I became aware that I was doing it. Because I'm becoming conscious of its becoming more frustrating when I [recognize that] I'm *doing* it.

B. Our discussions will tend to raise your level of awareness. Maybe that is something you will want to listen for in the taped analysis you do [of a lesson]. (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 6)

As the session wound down, Bonnie and Allison reviewed the children's written work together, did some shared planning together for extending the concepts, and the US closed by saying, "I got some great photos of the lesson. I know they'll be great in your portfolio." With warm smiles, they said their good-byes (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 9).

Commentary. It seems clear that Bonnie and Allison work well together and just as clear that Allison and the CT are a cohesive pair. The ST seems quite impressed by her CT, and, in fact, when she speaks of any decision that is made in the class, Allison says *we*, as if she considers herself an equal member of the team. I would expect that the CT had much to do with Allison's feeling included in these processes, and as I observe the CT's actions during the lesson, I am impressed by her quiet "team spirit" as far as Allison's lesson is concerned.

Classroom routines are consistent and creative and have offered Allison some tangible options to knit into her own repertoire of teaching behaviors. Nonetheless, she appears to be a very conscientious and reflective individual who is comfortable with both dialogue and critique.

After leaving the school, my Researcher Journal noted the following:

Bonnie was alert to all going on around her probably as a result of the accumulated responsibilities of her former role as principal. She was able to balance more than one role at a time, as evidenced by her ability to move among the groups of children, interacting, evaluating, and taking note of points she wanted to bring up later with the ST. While this probably was influenced by her own comfort level in this school (the principal is a friend of hers) and with the particular personalities involved in this triad, Bonnie nonetheless was obviously sensitive to the needs of this student, and was consistently able to intermingle positive strokes with other pointed references to examples where she perceived opportunities for Allison's growth and reflection. (S3, Ob#1, RJ, 3/18)

Post-Observation Conference #2

Allison was being observed here for the final time. Although she was still in the same school, her placement had changed and she was in a fifth grade classroom. Once again, she seemed comfortable with the classroom culture and confident in her work with the children. The lesson observed was a review of a unit on the branches of government, where the goal was to have students identify the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial branches.

After beginning with some group discussion, Allison asked students to create questions whose *answers* had to be one of the three branches, and write them on index cards. Then, by following the specific directions on the ST's handout, they were to construct a game envelope that would allow them to work with partners to check each other's comprehension of the material. It was an interesting way to approach a review session. The cognitive challenge of matching the pertinent information to questions that had one of the three specified answers was further enhanced by the novelty of the assignment and the perceptual/motor skills practiced in the construction of the game envelope.

Children had some difficulty at first understanding that they were to write questions whose *answer* always had to be one of the three branches. They also showed some confusion over the construction of the envelope, but Allison gave more directions, and they resourcefully talked to and watched each other till they seemed able to proceed (S3, Ob#2, FN, 5/5).

As the Post-observation conference that immediately followed the lesson began, Bonnie led off, as usual, by encouraging the ST's impressions. Allison was obviously ready for the dialogue. The following was noted in my researcher journal:

Allison falls into the reflective process immediately. In fact, it would seem apparent from some of her comments that those reflections had

happened during the lesson in ways that guided her to take action. She is open to the discussion of alternate views and seems very comfortable with Bonnie and the process. (S3, Ob#2, RJ, 5/5)

After commenting that the lesson went “pretty well” and that the children had obviously enjoyed it, Allison immediately turned to the inferences she had drawn on-the-spot. Bonnie listened to the ST’s analysis and drew her into further reflections.

- A. It took them a bit to understand exactly what they were doing. They got confused and that was probably [because] my directions weren’t as clear as they could have been. I knew something was wrong when I got the same question too many times. When I realized this and re-explained it really quickly, then I think they got it.
- B. Do you feel you met your goals with them?
- A. Yeah, I really do. They did well using their notes, they used their textbooks for reference, or they just used their own knowledge. That was fine because they should know it at this point.
- B. I would agree, from what we talked about in the pre-conference discussion. Now, if you were going to do it again, ... would you do anything differently?
- A. My explanation would have been done differently. I would have ... explained it more in depth.
- B. What part do you think you didn’t explain ... well enough?
- A. The making of the envelope was okay up until the taping point ... so maybe I should have taped it in front of them ... that probably would have worked. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 2)

Although the student seemed to have a good grasp on where she might have improved in her planning, Bonnie pressed on to help her make other connections:

- B. Do you think they learned anything by figuring it out themselves--or from looking at what other people were doing?
- A. Yeah (pause), definitely, because I like when they check with their neighbor.

- B. So maybe it wasn't so bad that you didn't exactly show them how to do it.
- A. Some of them were problem-solving ... they realized what they were doing wrong as they did it ... and that's not always a bad idea. Sometimes modeling everything perfectly structures them to a point where they don't have to think it through. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 3)

Allison absorbed Bonnie's input but seemed more concerned with continued discussion of how she could improve on the lesson. She moved on in her own reflections:

- A. In my directions (pause), I should have also been a bit clearer in what they should be writing ... and what their answers should match up to.
- B. I did notice there were some questions about that, but I thought that was the way you wanted it. I thought you saw it as a benefit.

As Allison considered Bonnie's remarks, she seemed to take a new perspective: "And it was a benefit!" (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 3).

Bonnie and Allison seemed to be synchronized in many areas. In fact, the US's focus and general demeanor may be both informed and shaped by an awareness that Allison is comfortable with her CT, feels competent in the classroom, and is at ease in critiquing her own performance. Allison conveyed the impression that while she was pleased by her performance and confident of her overall ability, she was still eager for reflection that would lead her to more effective levels of teaching. Many of Bonnie's comments seemed aimed at giving Allison this opportunity. As the conversation moved on, Bonnie led Allison into a discussion about the educational benefits of requiring question phrasing that was designed to result in one of the three *expected* answers versus the opportunities offered by more complicated questions.

This interchange continued for a while as both US and ST discussed individual children's approaches and cited examples of their work. Several children were drawn to more inventive scenarios that could result in higher-level thinking. While such an

approach would not have fit into the simplicity of the game the student had created, the dialogue nonetheless gave Allison an opportunity to explore the use of a more creative approach--and to reflect on whether diverse responses in questioning strategies could have been utilized within the game or would have been useful in helping children understand the concepts.

After recognizing and discussing some examples of these intricate narratives that various children had constructed and ways in which they might be shared by the class in a future lesson, the ST's reflective issues on her lesson seemed to have been exhausted. At this point, Bonnie moved the conference on into areas of the lesson that *she* had reflected upon, and this again drew the ST into a dialogue. Some examples of this are the following:

- What do you think about the timing? In the pre-observation conference, you seemed to have specific expectations in terms of time. How did this play out? (S3, OB#2, 5/5, p. 6)
- What would you do differently if you didn't have Mr. K. (the CT) in the classroom? You used him as an aide in many ways. How smoothly do you think it would have gone if it was just you? (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 7)
- Your game involved posing [information] as questions. Suppose a child didn't frame their [sic] work as a question? Could you have picked that up [in the way the lesson was designed]? (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 12)

Allison calmly and reflectively played with these ideas, not at all reluctant to explain herself. In referring to Mr. K.'s help, she responded:

Oh, it could have gone just as smoothly, because I already had it in my mind (pause) what I was going to do. [Since] they were all working on their own taping, I was going to put them in groups of four, so they could help each other, and I was going to move from group to group. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 7)

Elaborating on this, Allison explained how she was at ease either working alone or in tandem with another adult and was familiar with delegating tasks:

I also had experience sharing a room ... when I was assistant teacher in a day care center. The teacher and I ... we kind of went back and forth ... all the time. Sometimes we did the same thing (pause), but sometimes we were on our own. If we had high school kids in the class, I would always pass on something to do so they wouldn't feel like they were just sitting there. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 8)

About timing, she responded:

The review I knew would take 10 or 15 minutes to go over quickly in the beginning.... The actual project itself? You know, I wasn't really sure because they had to make the envelopes, then research it, and then, you know, write it out. Some of them are perfectionists, and I knew that they would want it just so, and I expected that I would have to see how it went. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 6)

From this point on, Bonnie balanced positive, supportive observations with questions that probed the ST's thinking and problem-solving. She introduced these comments by saying, "Now I want to share some of the things I noted. Jump in at any point if you want more information or want to add something" (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 8).

Sometimes she would begin with a positive comment and move on to a probe. Other times, after pressing the ST to use an alternative lens, she would seem to highlight something positive related to the issue being discussed, as a way of bringing about closure and perhaps also to help the student keep the issue in perspective. For example, when the discussion of Allison's use of Mr. K. as an aide seemed to be ending, Bonnie pointed out to the ST that, in fact, her ease in dealing with people was quite a strength:

I want to comment that in both placements where I observed you, you've had a good relationship with the cooperating teacher. It would seem that you are able to deal with people well, and that's *always* an asset.... My sense is that if you found yourself in a situation where you had to deal with people coming in and out [of your room]--or you were team teaching,

you could work very well. You seem comfortable as a team member, and you are also able to make use of assistance. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 8)

Among the positive observations of Allison's teaching that were interspersed throughout the post-observation conference were the following:

- I saw that you circulated to help. You seemed to know that this activity needed that one-on-one attention. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 8)
- It was quite an interesting twist on drill and practice. And interestingly, it left them wanting to do more on the subject! When they are looking to do it again, that's a sign of a successful lesson. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 8)
- I thought you were well prepared. You thought through some of the issues in terms of use of time. Choosing to prepare some of the materials yourself was very smart. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 9)
- You integrated many areas, especially considering it was a review. Besides the fact that they had to research, you brought in language arts, social studies, cognitive skills of problem-solving, and social skills. And I know you were able to see this yourself because you noted it in your lesson plan. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 9)
- It appears to me that you're comfortable with an activity where children are active (pause) talking to each other and sharing. What could be better than hearing what I heard a child say, "Christine, I'll study with you." (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 9)
- You have such an encouraging manner with the students. Even if they are struggling with something, you say, "Come on, you can do it. You can do it." (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 9)
- The children were *talking* social studies. That's great. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 9)
- You know, I noticed at one point that some children were working on their own and not listening to the answers, and just when I wrote that down, it was like you were reading my mind because right then you stopped and got everyone's attention. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 12)

Allison added to these comments in some cases, but frequently she just listened appreciatively. She seemed to welcome the US's compliments though not to be particularly surprised by their content. When she was questioned in reference to other

areas of the lesson, however, the ST was animated in her response. In one case, Bonnie asked Allison why she had responded to a particular child the way she had. Allison was clear and succinct in her explanation of both the extenuating circumstances involved (that would not have been apparent to the observer) and the behavioral consistency within her response.

Another area that came up for discussion was the ST's spelling problems, which apparently have been known and identified as a disability for some time. In the context of the conversation between them, it was clear that the subject was not a new one and that there was no discomfort in addressing the issue:

- B. At one point I heard one girl ask you to spell a word.
- A. Well, with me when that happens (pause), because of my spelling problems, when I hear that I have to tell them to go to a dictionary.
- B. So you don't offer the spelling of a word?
- A. No, not usually. When they ask me I tell them why.
- B. Do they see you using the dictionary or a spell check?
- A. They have, yes. I make sure I let them see me use it [pause] because I want them to see how I handle the problem.
- B. So they see you checking your own spelling?
- A. I make sure I do that. I did it a lot with the first graders too, because I wanted to make sure that they understood that it was okay if you don't know. It's *okay* if you look it up in the dictionary. It's *okay* to use another resource. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 11)

As the conference progressed, Bonnie seemed to move from the specific mechanics of the lesson to larger issues. Toward the end of the meeting, and perhaps because this was the final conference, Bonnie addressed several of these more general topics. One involved the ST's earlier expressed preference for the younger grades:

- B. You said when you started this placement that you think you're better at the lower grades. I can't say I would agree with that based on what I've seen.
- A. I don't mind being in the upper grades, really, as much as I thought I would. I've had fun with them and they're easier to joke around with. You can get into some interesting levels of conversation in a way that first graders can't. But in the same respect, I *still* prefer the first graders.
- B. Good, but I wanted you to know there is nothing that I've seen that makes me feel you are stronger in the lower grades....
- A. Well I guess it's good to know that, and I am comfortable teaching both levels, but if I had a choice, I'd pick first grade. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 14)

Bonnie then utilized the last part of their time together to press Allison for a general reflection on her growth over the semester, particularly as how that applied to the process of being observed. Allison responded:

I think I've grown a lot. You know, I'm more conscious of certain things. I'm a bit more on top of what I am doing and while I'm *doing* those things, I know now how to reflect on them. A lot of times now I say, "I should have done this--or I should have thought of that beforehand." Some of that I always did but not as much. Like I can sit down here with you and tell you what I should have changed right away [pause] and I can do this without having to stop and go over it all again in my head because as it's going on I kind of make notes now. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 15)

When Bonnie asked if this mental notetaking was an integral process of the lesson just observed, Allison continued:

Yeah, and in most of the things I do. I'm very conscious of it now.... I did most of the social studies here [in the current placement], and as you move from day to day and lesson to lesson, you have to make changes based on what you learn. If I do that, it runs smoother the next time. So I keep trying. (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 15)

The remainder of the time they spent together, Allison and Bonnie basically collaborated on ways to take the curriculum forward. After I left them, I recorded the following in my Researcher Journal: "Bonnie and Allison seem to play off each

other's strengths in a collegial fashion which suits both their personalities. Allison enjoys the reflective process and is well on her way to independence in this regard" (S3, I, RJ, 5/5).

Review of the Video of the First Observed Lesson and Conference

As I have come to expect, Bonnie is anticipating the opportunity to review and reflect upon her approach to supervision. She arrives visibly eager to watch the student's lesson again and to see and evaluate her own work with Allison. She has chosen the first of the two videotaped lessons and post-observation conferences that I had observed with her for review and is animated throughout the showing. She takes several notes during the playing of both the lesson and the post-observation conference videos. (S3, RJ, 8/31)

After both videos have concluded, I ask Bonnie what first comes to mind after she has reviewed the lesson and conference. Interestingly, she begins with a comment on body language during the post-observation conference. "Well, I noticed that the two of us are sitting together at the end of the table" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 1). Her comment infers that this US's first concern is that the physical environment be supportive of the student's participation in the process in as equal a way as possible.

Then she turns to other areas of note, listing and explaining several reflections on her reaction to the video:

- I think that I'm positive. I ask questions, and I have concerns, but it's certainly not a "my way or the highway" kind of approach. That's for sure. If she can explain her thinking or her rationale, then that's what I am looking for. So I felt it was a positive, well-rounded discussion with shared strategies. I'm clearly open for ideas too. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 1)
- I encouraged her to be reflective and really review [what she did]. Many of my questions to her support that: "How would you do this lesson again?" "What else would you change?" "What would you *keep*?" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 1)

- I do think I missed something I picked up on in reviewing the video. The initial circle time seemed more confusing than I remember, (pause) a lot of directions were given in a row. The kids did well and were very attentive. They got it, but a different class might not have. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 2)
- I was able to make some connections to her *Analysis* class (a class taken along with student teaching and the accompanying seminar in which STs are guided through several different methodologies for analyzing their own teaching behaviors), because I also teach that class. For example, I can relate some of what she does to terms we are using in that class like *positive and negative sanctioning*. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 3)
- I accented the positive in her lessons, (pause) you know, gave encouragement. I gently pointed out some things she might want to work on, like the meetings and some of the questioning strategy. But note that it wasn't hard to do here.... She's a good student teacher and she's in a very good class in a very good school. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 4)

The fact that once again an ST working with one of my four supervisors was mentioned as being quite capable intrigued me. I used the comment by Bonnie to probe the ST's selection:

- I. How was Allison selected to participate with you?
- B. My whole class was asked. She volunteered to do it.
- I. Was Langwood School your choice?
- B. I *do* know the principal but, no, I was just assigned this student teacher whose placement happened to be at that school. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 5)

As I asked Bonnie to describe her strategy for approaching the conference, she responded, "Reflect first. That is my strategy exactly. Unless there is a pressing reason to deal with something else immediately, I always like to begin with the student's reflections" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 2). Reiterating this point of view later, the US added, "I ask them to reflect first because I want to see if things that are visible to me are also things they are aware of in their thinking" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 12).

Bonnie also noted that she uses the ST's reflections as a way to actively involve the ST in the process of analysis before introducing the US's own observations, comments, and questions. She has found that this sequence works well for her. "When I can use their own thinking as I work with them, it always seems to make a greater impact. I listen to what they say and then put my comments and questions within their frame of thought, if that makes sense to you" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 26).

When questioned about her relationship with students, Bonnie described her own affect as generally warm and then explained:

I'm someone they know is there to help them, not just remind them of what they might be doing wrong... In my evaluations, they tell me that I'm approachable, that my body language and smile makes me easy to work with. Students say they like to share their ideas with me because they know I share them with others. They see me write them [their ideas] down, and that validates their effort and their thinking. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 6)

I do encourage them to try. If it doesn't work out, then we'll try to figure out why it didn't work. I tell them not to worry if something doesn't work [during an observed lesson] because I'm going to see them do several lessons. There's no need to panic if there's something they later acknowledge needs to be improved. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 8)

As we turned specifically to her work with Allison, Bonnie acknowledged that while Allison also seemed to perceive the US as supportive, we should not forget that this ST brought something special to the relationship of both the US and ST dyad and the classroom triad. "She is without doubt a risk-taker. I can be supportive of her but she is the one who obviously brings that to the table" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 7).

Some of the specific observations Bonnie made about Allison during this meeting were the following:

- I didn't have any specific worries about this student at the time of this observation. The lesson we just watched was her second observation, and she was trying a difficult lesson for a first placement. She had all

this water, (pause) and all the directions. I remember saying to myself “Oh, I *hope* this goes well for her.” (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 9)

- I marveled at her preparedness. I know she spent a lot of time putting it all together and planning. I was also happy that she was willing to *try* it. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 9)
- You know, I felt a strength in Allison. If that lesson had totally bombed (pause), even if she lost control of the kids, which could have easily happened in the activity she chose, we (the CT and I) would have had heart attacks (empathizing with the discomfort it could cause the ST), but I believe that Allison would have been strong enough to come back to the drawing table and figure it out. I really believe she would try it again until she got it right. That’s the way she is about this. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 10)
- Allison has many strengths--and the beauty is she is already aware of many of them. She is always well prepared. She is already able to integrate curriculum and her gentleness with children is a pleasure to observe. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 10)
- She was always responsive to any of the things I brought up. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 11)
- I was able to see a few more things in this review of the videotape that I could have picked up on more with her, a few more areas to improve on. But she took a lot from her own observations of the children, and I would say the biggest thing she would need to practice is her timing. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 10)
- I guess I would have to say that I feel the supervision process best helped her further her reflective thinking. She is well on her way, and I say this not only because of her interactions with me, but I can see how hard she is on herself. She sets high standards for herself, and if she feels she didn’t meet them, then she’s going to try harder. Coaching only helps in the process, but it is a help. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 15)
- She willingly took my comments and tried to incorporate them. That was clear to me over the semester. She herself made more than one connection in the conference to things we had discussed in her previous conference. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 15)
- Allison relates wonderfully to children and knows where each one is developmentally.... It wasn’t obvious on the videotape, but I could tell, for example, by the way she teamed students up. She had a real sense

of how to pair children so that the teams work.... When she was going over their paperwork at the end of our conference, she knew exactly who had understood and who hadn't, and could remember what several individual children had said which led her to this understanding. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 19)

When asked which of the three styles of supervision typified her approach with student teachers, Bonnie carefully considered the three options of clinician, collaborator, and assessor before answering, "I'm not sure exactly, but I think I feel more like a collaborator, at least for this student" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 10). At a later point in our conversation, she commented, "I think my beliefs about supervision are obvious in the ways I attempt to collaborate.... I think I set a tone ... and even try to model some options they might want to try" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 12).

Bonnie was also clearly impressed with Allison's cooperating teacher, Robin. "Robin happens to be a phenomenal cooperating teacher," she remarked (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 12), adding, "She has modeled many strategies that have obviously percolated through Allison's thinking and are appearing in her lessons. I don't think Allison is doing that to make Robin happy. She's using them because she can see that they work" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 13). But while recognizing the quite positive aspects of Robin's influence on Allison's growth as a teacher, Bonnie nonetheless feels that she, as a US, can bring something unique to the student's experience.

I can bring [the ST] a broader perspective in many ways.... Some cooperating teachers haven't been in many classrooms other than their own. They may not have seen enough to be able to consider other alternate perspectives, whereas I, as a principal, have been into so many classrooms and have seen many different kinds of teaching. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 14)

In discussing her approach to the two different placements, Bonnie offered the opinion that she was responsible for seeing that the ST was competent to plan curriculum related to the development of the children and the grade level.

I look for [STs] to apply concepts they learned in their other classes as it relates to the grade level and to be able to apply content knowledge relevant to the upper grades.... Sometimes when a ST switches from an upper grade to one of the early grades, they have some trouble initially, and I can help them reflect on what the class of students needs and how observation of the children can help their planning. (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 24)

Analysis of Portrait #3

Style and Approach Codes. As Bonnie's comments were coded according to the style and approach codes, it became apparent that the "C" (*Assessor*) code was consistently the lowest in number. In her first observed post-observation conference, the vast majority of the US's comments to Allison were coded as "A" (*Clinician*), and these, in fact, outnumbered even the "B" (*Collaborator*) codings by three to one (see Table 5). In the second post-observation conference, the "A" and "B" codes were almost even. It would seem that as Bonnie became more confident of Allison's growing skills and abilities, she slipped more easily into the role she admitted preferring, that of collaborator.

Table 5

S#3: Frequency of Style and Approach Codes

	1A (Clinician)	1B (Collaborator)	1C (Assessor)
Observation #1	30	10	6
Observation #2	19	17	7

Another difference between the codings in Observations #1 and #2 for this US was the fact that in Observation #1, the "A" codes predominated in the beginning of the conference. In Observation #2, the US's comments and questions seemed to flow

more seamlessly between all three codes. One interpretation of this could be that Bonnie was aware of her own responsibilities to scaffold an ST's thinking and did this more directly until the student was better known to her. In both observations, Bonnie led off by encouraging the ST's reflections. She then used Allison's comments to further probe the student's thinking before she introduced some of her own observations and reflections.

It was obvious that Bonnie felt comfortable with the level of the ST's performance in both observations, and she let Allison know this early in both post-observation conferences. For example, almost immediately in the first conference, she interjected, "Overall, I saw some super positive aspects to this lesson" (S3, Ob#1, 3/18, p. 1). In Observation #2, after the student had efficiently reflected on the positive aspects of her lesson, Bonnie added a simple, "I would agree..." (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 1). Both US and ST seem open to the exchange of ideas, so perhaps it is Allison's apparent confidence level that encourages Bonnie to address issues more directly in Observation #1. The increase of collaborative codings in the second observed post-observation conference may be an indication of a shared realization that the US's job is almost complete with this student.

Focus Codes. The coding for Bonnie in terms of focus showed many consistencies between Observation #1 and #2. In both post-observation conferences, this US directed comments to all areas with the exception of "Y" (*Child Development*) (see Table 6). The areas addressed most frequently in both observations were "W" (*Student Teacher Reflection*) and "Z" (*Child's Learning*), but it should be noted that some of the "Z" comments could refer to previous class discussions that may well have highlighted developmental issues. I also noted that the "W" comments increased

Table 6

S# 3: Frequency of Focus Codes

	Observation #1	Observation #2
2S: Behavior Management	6	2
2T: Time Management	3	2
2U: Lesson Planning	6	12
2V: People Skills	2	3
2W: Student Teacher Reflection	10	16
2X: Curriculum	3	2
2Y: Child Development	0	0
2Z: Children's Learning	10	11

noticeably in Observation #2. Bonnie seemed to appreciate the ST's eagerness to reflect and used this awareness to press the student to new levels of self-reflection.

The other notable area of difference between the two observations was that "U" (*Lesson Planning*) comments doubled between Observation # 1 and #2. At first, this seemed unusual to me in light of the rest of the portrait that was emerging from the data. Upon revisiting some of these codings in context, however, Bonnie's increased focus on what was coded a "U" could be interpreted as specific extensions of the US's attention to reflective thinking and an example of the US's collaborative efforts. For example, in discussing the way that Allison had framed the questioning strategies that she wanted the children to include on their cards, the US said, "Could there have been an advantage to planning for other types of answers, perhaps four cards, and allowing

some of the other answers?" (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 2). In this case, the comment had been coded for both reflection and planning.

The Researcher's View of the Supervisor

In the review of this US's work with this particular ST, I was left with the impression that Bonnie had not so much tried to mold the clay she had been given as to utilize her experience and insight to polish its natural sheen and present its best light. Allison was eagerly reflective and energetic in her drive to do a good job. Her natural skill at dealing with people was imbued into so much of what she did that Bonnie really didn't have to address it much. The US was able to pick up on Allison's strengths and looked for ways to push her beyond her present limits.

Bonnie seemed comfortable in the self she saw projected in the review of the video of her post-observation conference with Allison. "I was pretty pleased with what I saw myself saying and doing," she commented. "I think it was good for me [to observe herself on video]. I am very hard on myself. I always second guess myself and wonder if I am doing a good enough job. I looked at the video and I said, 'Okay. I did pretty well,' so I feel good about it" (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 24). Bonnie admitted that she had trouble with self-praise but nonetheless had enjoyed the experience. "I would do it again," she added.

Supervisor #4: Marion

Interview

Marion sets me at ease as soon as I arrive for our meeting. Since she lives quite a distance from the university, she has requested we do the interview at her home, and I am happy to comply. She is a tall and imposing figure, who moves and speaks with a

directness of purpose and a confidence of approach that I sense could be unsettling, except for the fact that it is immediately tempered by a softness in her gaze and voice that puts me soon at ease. I feel warmly welcome.

It does not take me long to recognize that the marvelous twinkle I frequently note in her eyes is a hint of some tongue-in-cheek comment to follow. It seems that humor, wit, and even a healthy dose of sarcasm, pepper Marion's conversation on a regular basis. She laughs easily, enjoying the verbal play, and pulls me along into her mischievous take on things. Such humor does not detract, however, from her passion for children. It punctuates our conversation and spills out from almost every corner of her thoughts. (S4, I, RJ, 3/11)

Background. Marion had been teaching almost 30 years when she decided to retire several years ago. The decision was clearly a difficult one, precipitated by a family move that left her with an unreasonable commute to her teaching job. For 10 years, she drove the lengthy distance because she did not want to leave her school, but "then it was just time. I had to give it up" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 4). Recognizing that working with children was something she really wanted to continue, Marion began to volunteer, first in a museum, then at a university hospital, and finally back in a public school near her home, where she began an after-school writing workshop for children. Soon the writing workshops extended to another school, and then to a summer program. She loved concentrating on writing and also enjoyed teaching children of different ages, but when she received a call from the university asking if she would supervise some STs who needed placements in her area, she agreed to fit this into her schedule as well.

When Marion graduated at age 20 from a prestigious woman's college with a major in sociology and psychology, teaching children was not something she had even considered. She married immediately, had three children, and settled into the life of "full-time wife and mother." Her husband's career had taken them to the Midwest, and

her youngest child was in kindergarten when Marion recognized that it might be time to think about a career of her own. “At that point, I had spent a lot of time with kids and had *developed* an interest [in them]. I would never have thought of [working with children] as a young woman in college” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 1).

After deciding on teaching, she began an initial certification program leading to a master’s degree in Education and described the transition from her world of “tennis and sewing and entertaining” to that of student:

I loved going to the university ... but first of all, I was a mother going back to school.... When I applied, I had an image of this big stamp of *Betty Crocker* they were going to stick on my application. When I went for the interview, a young woman held the *door* for me. Then I knew, oh my God ... I was this old *lady* ... I wasn’t really old, but I did feel out of place. I was so nervous about going back to school, but I *loved* being there! (S4, I, 3/11, p. 9)

Marion remembers her certification program in mostly general terms, such as, “I loved [the course], *The Politics of Education*,” and “I don’t remember much about the methods courses,” but it is her *Statistics* course that she talks most about in terms of lecture classes. Perhaps this is because it caused her the most anxiety:

The only thing that gave me a hassle was statistics. I was terrified. and my poor family, (pause) everybody knew that Mom had to go to statistics class on Monday nights.... I had been a very good mathematician, but there was something about [that class]. The young man who taught it was about 15 years old, and I, of course, was the oldest person in the class.... When I finally calmed down, I did pass the course, but for whatever reason, that was the hardest experience. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 10)

Student teaching, by contrast, was the highlight of this supervisor’s teacher education program. While she was felt all her “courses were good,” she was “crazy about student teaching” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 9). In fact, she describes student teaching as “the most valuable part of her program, certainly” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 12). Her university required a single semester placement in one classroom, and Marion was able to choose

the class and teacher she would work with. She had been very impressed with Hope, a second grade teacher who had taught two of her children, and when she asked Hope if she would take her on as an ST, “sure enough, she did. So every morning, my two girls and I would go to together to school. They would go [to their classes], and I would go to Hope’s class as a student teacher” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 2).

Marion is not certain if allowing STs to choose their own placements would work overall, but in her situation, it was a decision that resonated well with her personal philosophy and infused her with priorities that continued to unfold throughout her own teaching career. Perhaps, she allows, this was because of the caliber of the CT involved:

I know the reasons I admired Hope as a teacher of my own children were the same reasons I admired her as a cooperating teacher. The main thing about her was that the children always took precedence over the program. If a child came in and was sitting alone looking sad, she would notice it. Even if she had this whole lesson plan ready on, let’s say, the rivers of Turkey, you could forget the rivers of Turkey until she had helped that child. It was always clear that the children came first and the program would follow. She was *such* a humanist. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 11)

Marion reiterates that her experiences with her own children were essential to her making sense of the teaching process. She feels that seeing teachers as a parent first was a great advantage and that she wouldn’t even have learned of Hope if she hadn’t been a parent. “What prepared me most [for teaching] was being a parent and my interactions with children” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 12). She is clear about the fact that “if I hadn’t been a parent, I would not have thought about becoming a teacher” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 13).

The same district offered Marion a job in a first grade class right after her student teaching was completed, and she stayed there for four years before moving back to the East Coast town where she had been raised. There she remained for some 25 years

teaching half of the time in first grade and the remaining years in third grade. “I really fell in love with third grade ... and I was reluctant to ever leave [that age group]” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 3).

While teaching, she began her association with the university that now employs her to work with student teachers. She took, in effect, a second master’s degree and was awarded a supervisory certificate. “I loved the program. I loved [the courses] on public school finance and public school law. I think they could help every student” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 12). She is clear in relating that pursuing this certificate “had nothing to do with personal interest. I thought I would become an administrator.... I just thought it was time for me to be an assistant principal, or principal, or whatever” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 19).

Marion never did become an administrator. She applied for a position only once and didn’t get the job. She never applied again because by that point, she was already involved in the long commute from home to job. How committed she was to actually finding an administrative position is open to question when she adds:

Now anybody else would have left the [old] school and found a job out here near my new home. (pause) I had *very* strong ties [to the old school]. I had all sorts of things going for me there that had taken years to develop. There was the garden outside my class, my pumpkin patch and my bird station. Kids would come to school wanting to help me in the garden. They could watch sparrows feeding from our classroom window, and hawks trying to attack those sparrows. I even started a butterfly garden.... (pause) So I wouldn’t have been leaving just a classroom or a school, but place that had given me enough leeway to do these things. I couldn’t ever picture leaving there.... All of my interests had been extended into the classroom.... I’d have to start it all *over*. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 20)

And again: “I never got tired of teaching. I just got tired of driving” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 4).

Marion does not refer to the supervisory coursework again. She does, however, frequently allude to another educational experience that she refers to as her “big

adventure.” For three summers, she made the long trek to New York City, where she attended the Writer’s Workshop at Teachers College, Columbia University. While Marion was enthusiastic about her love of writing before this experience, and, in fact, this passion probably drew her to the workshop initially, she felt transformed by what she learned there:

It has absolutely changed my life.... Although I have bumped into [former] students who told me how wonderfully I taught them to write [before beginning the Writer’s Workshop] ... from my perspective now I am embarrassed because I realize the focus was on *my* creativity. I would make up wonderful scenes for the children to write on, but I was highlighting my own creativity. *Wasn’t I wonderful?* I can only see this after taking the workshop and changing my teaching style. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 4)

What Marion took from the writer’s workshops may well have been the same thing she took from her relationship with Hope, a recognition of like-minded values given professional shape through a new lens. Marion absorbed possibilities for refining her teaching, but some of what she learned also reinforced who she already was as a teacher. One of the themes that recurred in her interview, for example, was in terms of “interactions.” Interactions with children, it seems, were at the heart of Marion’s view of teaching:

- The courses I took in the Writer’s Workshop all involved interacting with children. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 14)
- I was very much a hands-on teacher, and I always believed in giving my children as many experiences as possible. I would *know* if my kids were not understanding a lesson because of my interactions with them. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 14)
- (In discussing a lesson that she had observed recently): I’m not saying the children *didn’t* derive a great deal from it, but we really don’t know! We’d have to talk to them [the children], and she didn’t do that. There was no interaction with them as individuals. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 15)

- I love children's writing because it's such a way of getting to know them. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 16)
- What seemed so satisfying to me as a teacher and worked so well also as a parent was that I was not afraid of children. Some young people today are so worried about the class *getting out of control*. You would think they are talking about machetes and knives being hurled around the room, instead of a little bit of noise. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 18)

Supervision. Marion had been retired about four years when she began supervising student teachers. She regularly takes the few students needing placements near the town where she lives, and since this is such a distance from the campus, her group has been confined to graduate students. Marion has even held the student teaching seminar class there, so that the students have fewer days to drive to campus.

She began doing the work because she received a call from someone she knew at the university. "I didn't go looking for this job. They asked me, and that's how I got here and it's lovely" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 6). What appeals to her about the supervision of STs is "the opportunity to pass on the torch.... That is so valuable to me, especially as the reality sets in that I'm getting too achy and squeaky to run around after kids" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 24).

Teaching has been one of the most wonderful things in my life. [University supervision] has been an opportunity to transfer my enthusiasm for learning to those coming up and share, in a way, all I feel about having an opportunity to work with kids. It makes it all worthwhile. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 28)

She adds:

Well, for me, it's the same reason a teacher would accept a student teacher in her classroom. I mean, they're definitely a pain. You've got to work more to justify everything you do. You always have this person around, and you have to think about everything you do. Yet you feel like you are giving something to the profession. [In supervision], my efforts are multiplied. If I [supervise] six student teachers and can help them grow through some of the ideas I feel passionate about, that's wonderful (pause), and I have six times as much influence (pause) and fun. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 24)

Over the length of her teaching career, Marion has worked with student teachers, but sees the relationship in a somewhat different light from this vantage point:

In the years I taught, I must have had five of them (pause), but after I started supervising, I began to feel guilty about what I had done and hadn't done with the student teachers.... Talk about point of view! In retrospect, I don't think I was willing to give up as much control as I should have. I had students from several colleges, and some of them didn't seem, (pause) if they made grammatical errors it would bother me a lot.... I certainly didn't look at it in the same way you do once you are supervising. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 7)

Marion's view of the supervisor has also gone through a transformation since beginning this work:

I don't have any good recollection of interacting with supervisors [while being a cooperating teacher]. I mean I never considered them a strong presence. I always thought of them as sort of shadowy people who were really not a part of what we did. I didn't have a strong connection to any of them. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 8)

When asked if she thought cooperating teachers now saw *her* as a shadowy presence in their classrooms, Marion did not hesitate to answer, "No. But I think that's just part of my personality" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 8).

In terms of preparation for the job of university supervision, Marion refers to her years of experience as the foundation for what she does. She believes her approach to teaching would have been well known to the university, since she taught in the same school for many years with some of the other supervisors currently working for the university. Additionally, a few faculty members knew of her work with children from being either a former teaching colleague or a parent of children she taught. Interestingly, she does not credit her supervisory coursework with providing many guidelines for her current responsibilities. "It was so long ago ... what I use now are my life experiences" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 20).

Marion does still seem to feel a bit insecure in her ability to reflect the precise philosophy of the school of education she now represents. While acknowledging the helpfulness of the initial orientation sessions given her by both the Director of Field Placement and the Chairperson of the department, as well as the regularly scheduled supervisors' meetings, which offer much information and opportunities to hear from other supervisors, Marion feels remiss for not auditing some of the lecture classes. "Some of the [faculty] have come into our meetings and talked about what they do, but I have not taken any of those classes. I think it would be helpful to do that" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 21). The issue is important to Marion because of the currents of change that sweep through educational systems:

Things change so quickly. Just look at "whole language" and "phonics" and the positions educators have taken regarding them! So the thing is, what experiences do you want student teachers to have in terms of such approaches? No one has ever asked me. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 22)

Marion further reflects on the solitary nature of supervisory work and the responsibilities of working alone. When starting out, "I didn't have a buddy I could ask about things"(S4, I, 3/11, p. 22). It is interesting that she does not seem to have been distressed by the same solitary nature of teaching children, but this could have more to do with Marion's perception of the press on her for congruity with the teacher education program goals than with her confidence in working with student teachers.

She shares, however, that she calls Joan, the Director of Field Placement, whenever she is concerned about a student teacher's progress and also mentions relying on the faculty member who had taught in her school for occasional advice. "Millie was there [at the university], and if I had questions in the beginning, I would call her and talk to her.... Her door was certainly always open" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 23). Her respect for Millie, both personally and professionally, is obvious. They had been in the same

college at the same time, and having worked in the same school for many years, Marion “loved and respected” Millie’s work with children:

I knew lots of great things about [what she did] and the philosophy that went into it.... We would talk and we knew that we saw eye-to-eye on what was important to kids.... We agreed on the things that made us most proud of being teachers. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 23)

Her identification with Millie’s philosophy has been, in fact, as much a guide to what she does in supervision as almost any other factor. “If the department respected her, then I knew what her standards were and I felt I knew what to do” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 23).

Marion does not single out any one model as she describes her approach to supervision:

- I started by thinking of what they would need, and the first thing I thought of was juice and cookies. They laughed, but that’s what I bring to Seminar. They all work so hard, and I know they are stressed by the time they get here, so I do it. I guess it was just part of my *Mrs. Tiggywinkle* or nurturing approach, or something like that. I think in a way it sets a tone that says I understand that they’re tired and that they had a hard time. So sit down and have a cookie and take your shoes off and let’s talk a while. Seminar is a time for me to be sympathetic as well as informative. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 28)
- I believe that I have to share my passions with them. I share books. I share poetry. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 30)
- The first year I was given this job, I thought, “How am I going to do this?” So I sat down and came up with a timeline. Each week I listed some sensible goals the STs might be accomplishing, and I give it to all of them. Of course, it reflects my own experience as a teacher, but it’s written generally enough so they can plug their own experiences into it. Some need help reading between the lines, but I help them go under the surface.... I realize it works for me because I designed it, but I share it as a structure to get students started, and I revise it every year as class needs change. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 35)
- In the beginning, I did a lot of extra work with students on the telephone. I felt that the most important things would happen on a one-to-one basis with the ST. I would also sometimes meet them at [the

bookstore] so we could talk out a problem they were having with a lesson. As I got more students, this had to be curtailed a little, and then I had to develop a sense of community so they would be trustful enough to share problems with the group. So the thing second in importance to the juice and cookies became developing a sense of community. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 38)

- Students need to see how someone other than their [methods] teacher uses some of these hands-on manipulatives. I know they get to use manipulatives in their Math Methods classes, but they may not ever see them in their classroom experience. Some schools don't even use any manipulatives any more. Can you believe it? Too messy, I guess. They make noise and have to be gathered up (pause) or thrown away by the custodian. The fact is, they're gone, and some teachers have retired rather than accept that. I try to see that they use some of these things in the classroom. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 46)
- Sometimes I have them write out their approaches to a situation, or draw a classroom diagram. I do one, too, and then we discuss how they are different and why. I try to help them see the *naturalness* of children rather than planning for how they want children to act and move and think. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 47)
- I try to push them to try things in the classroom that you just don't see frequently enough any more. How often do you see children dramatizing anything any more? Where are the puppets and puppet stages? When do children get a chance to act out some of those stories? If someone doesn't say that part is missing, they won't notice it. They're new. They take what they see as what is normal. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 50)
- I want every ST to know how important it is to start out knowing each child in their class as individuals. I don't want them to think of a successful lesson as something done and evaluated from the front of the room with 44 eyes on you. So I ask them questions about specific students in the class. They need to be able to discuss the learning habits and progress of each child. Every class is composed of individuals, and each one has a story. I want to help them get clear that this is *not* a group business. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 52)

Marion assigns herself the role of *supporter* more than any other, and as she describes this role, it is clearly reflective of all three of the roles I have coded as Assessor, Clinician, and Collaborator:

Well, I certainly think if I were the student teacher, I would want a supporter. I try to be that supporter to the ST and to do everything that I can to strengthen her. I don't necessarily identify with the CT. When I am in sync with her, that certainly is a bonus and a plus, but I try not to consider that. I know my job is to be helpful and supportive, and I have become increasingly sensitive to *everyone's* anxieties. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 36)

Good supervision for Marion is a process. She feels strongly about what makes a good teacher and tries in her role as supervisor to see that these views are represented:

- First of all, you have to be able to critique. I mean, you just can't say, "Oh, that was wonderful" all the time. It's great to say that when you really feel that way--but that can't be all the time. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 39)
- At first I was too sympathetic an ear and was not enough of a judge. Or my hair would stand up and I would get very upset, but I'm better now. I'm able to critique more and am less impatient [with the growth process]. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 28)
- Good supervision is trying to move the ST beyond what is merely acceptable and raising their own standards of performance. Things can be okay in the classroom and the student may be getting by all right, but I can ask some questions that can move them beyond that level. A good supervisor should raise every student's standard of what they see is a goal for themselves professionally. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 54)
- I try to help students notice the children's reactions as they work with them. This is feedback they need. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 57)
- The one thing that gives STs the greatest sense of anxiety is classroom management. I try to give them concrete examples of what is working well for them and why. I say things like, "I saw that your clapping worked well. The kids were with you." If I acknowledge their efforts to take the children's needs into account as they try to manage, then I hope they learn that behavior is dependent on the children's needs. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 57)
- I also have to help them realize that going on with the lesson if the kids *aren't* with them is not a good thing. Getting through the lesson is not all that is important. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 58)

- I work with and observe a ST as many times as is necessary. If a ST needs more time, I offer it through individual conferences. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 59)
- New teachers have got to learn that children have their own timetables. I knew a child who didn't learn to read in first grade or even second grade. It was only when his third grade teacher saw his interest in bugs and connected with this interest by getting him a magnifying glass and books on bugs that he began to read. Today he has his doctorate in entomology. As a supervisor, I want to help them be sensitive to the child who just may need a special sensitivity. I try to give them lots of examples to think about, and I'll point out some of those children in their classrooms so we can discuss them. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 61)

Marion knows a ST is doing well if she or he is able to use suggestions for growth. She recognizes that they all start at different places, but the ability to grow is what will carry them throughout their careers. Some only need to have the direction pointed out and a mentor to help them take the first steps alone. She described one student who had a style that seemed remote and disengaged. Marion was worried enough to observe her several more times than expected, all the while giving several possible guidelines. The student was receptive, and while Marion acknowledged that her class of second graders was difficult, the ST nonetheless had made big changes by the end of the semester. "She was smiling throughout the lesson. She got it. I know she felt supported by our talks and the letters I write to them. I don't think she ever saw what I was doing as punitive or negative. There were no negative write-ups" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 39).

Later, she talks about the other side:

Sometimes I've missed the mark. I didn't know how anxious one student had been until I got his evaluation of our class. He wrote that he hadn't felt supported by the other students enough to bring up problems in class. He didn't trust me enough to talk about it, and I didn't know about it until it was all over. I learned a lot from that evaluation. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 53)

She added that while she tries to establish a rapport with the students, if they don't click, it's often difficult to get beyond that wall.

Other students present a different problem. They are difficult to work with because they do not see any reason for critique. When she alludes to a recent student, she says, "The hardest thing for me to deal with was his great sense of confidence in going down the wrong road" (S4, I, 3/11, p. 55). He performed very well academically and was well versed in method and theory, but didn't seem at all motivated in his work with real children. Marion could see this ST going through the required motions with what she sensed was little interest in the actual people involved. He was changing careers after several years in the business world, and Marion was perplexed as to why he chose teaching at all.

I did what I could to get him interested ... but I could have been talking to him in Portuguese. He didn't want to know. He didn't want to read to kids. He didn't want to hear from kids. I don't think he *liked* children, and I don't know if he ever had a really good teacher himself. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 56)

What was most troubling to Marion about this student was that good academic standing can sometimes screen some of these problems until student teaching. With a great effort and some prowess on the student's part, he was able to pass under the radar screen that is set up to identify and work with such problems in the fieldwork component of earlier classes. Although such cases are rare, they place a great burden on USs when they do occur.

In the process of the interview, Marion talked at length when the topic held interest and gave short shrift to issues that did not hold precedence for her. One of these was the need for two placements during the student teaching semester. Marion did not elucidate any reason for two placements during student teaching. She seems

much more interested in the length of time involved and the quality of the experience than she in the particular grade levels involved.

Other topics drew lengthy responses from this supervisor and strong views. For example, there are many areas that Marion feels can be touched by a supervisor in ways that aren't likely to be addressed by a cooperating teacher. Marion describes one such experience:

I went into a ST's classroom for the first time, and all the desks were so neatly lined up, all touching each other. There was *no* way for children to work in groups, and the ST was hesitant to rattle the CT. It was *her* way. But if the student is ever going to do this, it must start in the classroom, and the CT knows this when she takes on a ST. We talked about finding potential for a child to move around, to look at a bug they may have talked about earlier in the day that he might want to write about or draw. Maybe a child would want to count the seeds in a sunflower. By the second observation, the children were in groups, and the ST had a much better grasp of them as individuals. She was even talking more about individuals, and I think that came from the physical changes in the class that allowed her to get to know them better. The student told me there had been a dramatic change in some of the children and they were interacting more. She was thrilled. I know that will affect the way she designs her classroom in the future. She would not have gotten this from the CT, and she would not have gotten it from my telling her. She experienced it herself, with my help. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 48)

In terms of advice for the field, Marion offered:

- I think there should be as many opportunities as possible for students to get into classrooms. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 25)
- I would say they need more internships. I mean, some of these people entering teaching now, those who are changing careers, for example, have not had any experience with children. They have *no* idea how a second grader thinks! (S4, I, 3/11, p. 26)
- When I think of the STs who have had problems in the classroom, they tend to be the ones who haven't spent time with children. They may tell me they have a couple of nieces and nephews, but the thing is, they don't know how to talk to kids. They don't know the questions to ask

to get to how a kid thinks. *That's* not easy to teach someone without *lots* of interaction. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 26)

- I think it would be helpful for STs to keep journals to share with their supervisors. I know they journal with their Analysis professors throughout student teaching, but I feel we, the supervisors, miss out on some of this alternative communicating avenue. I think it's great for them to be doing this type of journaling themselves while we are trying to get them to do this with children. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 32)
- It is not made easy for us [supervisors] to interact with the rest of the faculty. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 41)
- [As supervisors], we are not asked what we think [in terms of the larger teacher education program] ... and I think that the more we work together, the more everybody working with these students knows and understands each other, the better job everybody can do. I definitely feel like an outsider. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 43)
- We should certainly be paid more. We make about four cents a week. figure it out. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 43)
- Student teaching is critical, and there is not a realistic amount of time allotted to US work with STs. Teacher growth takes a long time and should have *years* of mentoring. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 49)
- Today, the test is wagging the dog, and all schools are aware of that fact. The CT is aware of that, and the ST feels the pressure that is on the CT. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 50)
- I am a teacher from the dinosaur age. I come from a time of wonderful smells in classroom from cooking. We used to thrash the wheat we used for baking! Am I going to tell this to a ST in today's atmosphere? (S4, I, 3/11, p. 51)

Commentary. Marion's interview was an enjoyable experience. Her frank and funny remarks made the time fly, and she poked fun at herself as frequently as she did some of the systems involved. Her passion for children was so clearly evident in all the transcripts, but this was the hardest interview to analyze. The interview I remembered was not the one I read in transcription. It took me a while to recognize that this was because some of her witty way of tossing off remarks was tempered by

body language in the taping in ways that the written page did not represent. So many of her comments had been tempered in the actual moment by her voice, her laugh, and the twinkle in her eye.

I returned to the videotape several times during the analysis of this data. I was each time struck by her frankness and her wish to continue her work with children. When I refer to my researcher journal for the day of the interview, I read the following entry after the close of our time together:

I leave feeling that while Marion will probably “not suffer fools lightly,” she has spent her profession life nurturing minds and spirits with a ferocious drive and a deep love of learning. I suspect that in Marion’s classroom over the years there was a magic that not all adults may have understood, but which drew and absorbed children into its net in ways which may have been significant to the people they became. (S4, RJ, 3/11)

Post-Observation Conference #1

Marion observed Karen in a fourth grade class where the student had been placed in a small, suburban public school with a quiet, rural atmosphere. This was the ST’s second observation with these children, and she seemed quite at home in the spacious and orderly room. The children had been studying “first, second and third person,” and the ST’s planning related to this topic in her sharing two versions of *The Frog Prince*, each told from a different point of view.

This day’s lesson introduced the second story, Jon Skieszca’s version of the fairy tale. The ST began by reading the book to the class as they gathered around her chair, sitting on the floor. She then asked some questions about the story before having the children return to their seats. The children were quiet and attentive, although some squirmed in their seats toward the end of the story. Karen then asked the children to take out their literary notebooks to make a story map. Using an overhead projector, she

guided the children through an analysis and comparison of both tales. They were asked to name the main characters, the setting, the problem to be resolved, the point of view of each author, and the manner in which the conflict was resolved. As children offered responses to each question, the teacher wrote down the correct answer, and the children copied the answers from the overhead. The concluding activity was a Venn Diagram. Karen reviewed the concept of the diagram on a chart board, and the children were asked to compare and contrast the two stories in their own Venn Diagrams before coming back to the rug to share information as a group.

A large number of children in this class regularly leave the room to go for additional help in the Resource Room or to attend the gifted and talented program, and the ST noted during the pre-observation conference that the lesson would be taught to the remaining seven children. When the US questioned the appropriateness of teaching something the whole class should be learning to such a small number of children, the ST had turned for advice to her CT. The CT, she reported back to the US, was comfortable with the fact that the gifted and talented could catch up on their own and that the Resource Room children could take their work with them. In point of fact, for some reason there were actually 16 children there on the actual day of the lesson, and no mention was made of this discrepancy.

The conference took place in the classroom after the children had left for another activity, and Marion began by requesting the ST's reflections on the lesson:

- M. How do you think it went?
- K. I think it went well. There were a few glitches here and there, but I think I'm more of the mindset that I think it's good to have the kids see that I make mistakes, so they can feel okay when they make mistakes.
- M. What would you call a "glitch"?

- K. Well, that one little part when I said that they [the books] were both in the third person. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 1)

When Karen recounted how a student had caught the mistake and corrected her, Marion used the opportunity to introduce early positive feedback:

- M. You were *so* supportive of her. She just loved that you thanked her and ... it was wonderful....

- K. ... I mean I *was* embarrassed that I hadn't picked it up, but I wanted to make her feel ...

- M. ... But you made her day. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 1)

The conference continued in a conversational tone, and both participants appeared very relaxed and comfortable. After a few minutes, Marion took the lead again by asking Karen to describe how she felt about the children's behavior and cooperation. The ST was very affirmative in her reflections, and Marion utilized her comments to offer more positive feedback:

- M. I was comparing this lesson to your previous one.... You were in control of everything then, but the flow is so much smoother now and you seem so much more confident.

- K. Oh, thank you. I feel a little better about this.

- M. And you told me that you had been discussing ways to get children's attention with Sally [the CT], that you had talked about getting eye contact by saying, "Let me know when you're ready by looking up." Well, every time that you did that, it worked.

- K. Right! (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 3)

Once again, the tone became conversational, and a discussion followed about children's knowledge of fairy tales in their original version, as opposed to the Disney portrayals, before Marion moved on to another issue. Several times during the conference, the US offered additional affirmations:

- I thought you did everything that you wanted to do, and more. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 4)

- You should feel very good knowing that you ... really had these kids in the palm of your hand. They all appeared to be involved and interested. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 4)
- I thought it worked well, and I was wondering if your experience working in a law firm hasn't carried over into your teaching because you make things very logical for the children in a step-by-step progression. I think you must think that way. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 4)
- It was a great compliment to you [that the CT allowed the ST to plan the entire week in her first placement] because she doesn't seem to let go easily. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 5)

Marion asked several more questions about the lesson, such as why the CT had gathered the children instead of the ST, and how the lesson would carry over into further learning experiences. Karen answered, and they moved on to a discussion of her next placement, which would begin in two days. The ST would move to a first grade class for her second placement, and Marion had shared the ST's concerns about how difficult it would be for her to "go backwards." As if to aid her transition, Marion used some conference time to probe the ST about this again and made some suggestions for ways to make connections between the two grades. Since the second placement was in the same school, Marion asked whether the ST thought it possible to plan some kind of activity where the two classes could work together. The ST answered, "That's an interesting thought. I'm sure there's something" (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 6).

It should be noted that at no time in the conference did the ST refer to individual children, except through the prodding of the US. Several times, Marion pulled away from generalities and infused the discussion with comments specific to children by name:

- Stacy had said something earlier that was wonderful. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 1)
- Who was the child that said that? (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 1)

- Who was missing from the class? (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 2)

While Karen responded to these comments and queries, it was interesting that she seemed more concerned with the flow of her lesson and the behavior of the children as a group than she was with issues involving any individual child. The same could be said to any reference to children's learning. While the ST alluded to reading the children's homework, for example, she did not refer to how they did until Marion brought it up:

- K. I had them do a follow-up, a homework assignment where they had to write from the point of view of a bus driver.
- M. I saw that. Could they do that?
- K. They did, and I read a few of them this morning because they had left them out on their desks.
- M. And how were they? (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 1)

Marion wrapped up the conference by praising the ST once more:

- M. It was a wonderful lesson. I think the kids will start thinking about those points.
- K. I hope so. I think they really got something.
- M. Are they going to have some carry over? Do you think this will carry over into other writing that they do?
- K. I think so. The one question I forgot to ask them was if they thought they could recognize points of view in their future reading....
- M. You could ask them about things you know they have already read.
- K. Right. (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 7)

The conference ended with some "housekeeping" discussion.

Commentary. Karen's lesson had been well prepared and smoothly conducted. She seemed to have developed a close relationship with her CT and was very comfortable with the age group. Interestingly, I was able to sit in on another of

Marion's ST observations in this particular school today, and by contrast, the US had much more to say to the other student. Perhaps this was because the other ST's lesson involved more one-to-one time with individual children and her reflections included reference to specific children. While there was not much negative to say about Karen's lesson, there was not much to pull out of it either. Although a part of teaching, it is difficult to do much critique about the reading of a story and a question-and-answer session, especially when the children involved move through the activities with no apparent difficulty (S4, Ob#1, RJ, 3/25).

Post-Observation Conference #2

At the time of this observation, Karen was in a first grade class in the same school as her first placement. The classroom was devoid of much decoration, and, in fact, the physical setting was an obvious distraction. The CT had recently moved to a new classroom, and boxes were piled high along the walls, obscuring part of the blackboard and some of the bulletin boards and windows. Some boxes were open, and others were still taped shut, although it was several weeks past the move. Desks had been arranged in small groups around the room, leaving a space for children to gather as a group near the blackboard. As the ST sat in the circle with the children, her face was framed by stacks of boxes that were difficult to ignore.

Karen introduced a lesson on seeds and used a small table at the side of the room to display the few types of seeds that she had gathered. The lesson began with her reading a book about seeds and asking the children questions as she proceeded. She seemed comfortably at ease. At one point in the lesson, she asked all the children to move to the table display to see the samples she had arranged, but there was not enough room for all of them to gather. As they pushed a bit in an attempt to see, Karen sent them back to the circle where she read parts of another book to them before

holding up actual fruits, vegetables, and nuts. As she went on to describe how we can extract oil from an almond, Karen demonstrated by rubbing an almond on a paper towel and showing the children the resulting residue. She continued asking questions about how seeds are spread and planted before dismissing the children. When the post-observation conference convened in the classroom while the children went to lunch, the cooperating teacher (CT) asked if Marion had any objections to her remaining. Marion obliged graciously.

As they settled into their places, Marion engaged in some light conversation with the CT before turning to Karen:

M. Well, I guess we'll begin. Let's look at the lesson as planned. What were your goals?

K. Well, I wanted them to see the different ways that seeds are disbursed so they can grow. That kind of thing.

M. And what do you think of how it went?

K. I could have planned better for moving them around.

M. Do you mean from the circle to over there? (pointing to the table)

K. Yes. I wasn't really sure how that was going to work (pause), and you *don't* know really. (pause) I didn't realize until I saw them come up to the table how they were crowding each other. I forgot that they're, you know, only five and six years old, so they're going to do that. But I guess that's what happens. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 1)

While acknowledging the planning problem, Karen then dismissed it as unavoidable in a way that did not invite discussion. Marion may have taken her cue from the ST's comments or chose to change the topic for another reason. She picked up on the ST's reference to the age of the children and attempted to focus Karen's attention on the children's thinking at this point, rather than on the management

problem. She offered several observations as a way to encourage reflection in this vein:

- M. I'm crazy about the children's comments during the lesson, especially the little boy who said that if you plant bird seed you get a bird seed tree!
- K. I loved that too. I know, (pause) that's great.
- M. And they had *so* many things to add. That one child was so enraged because the pumpkin seed he had planted didn't grow.

Marion seemed intrigued with individual children's comments and the thought processes they represented. She appeared ready to move further into the discussion, but Karen did not show much interest in exploring this line of thinking. Instead, the ST returned the conversation to more general outcomes and her own performance:

- K. Yes, it's great. The responses you get from them are great, but I was really happy that after reading the first book they were able to articulate what they had learned.... I kind of threw in the second book. I hadn't really planned to but I figured it covered a lot of things that the Eric Carle book didn't exactly touch on.
- M. And you were pleased that you did that?
- K. Yes, because, well, the way I did it, I was happy with the way it came out. The way I did it informally worked, (pause) reading a page here and there, discussing it and putting some words on the board, I thought that worked well. They seemed interested in it. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 2)

Marion's initial attempts to stimulate a discussion around the children's learning and/or development had met with limited success. Once again, Karen returned the discussion to the mechanics of the lesson. Marion seemed to absorb this fact and tried to match the ST's approach by herself alluding to mechanics, albeit to reflection about issues outside a single lesson. She began:

- M. Now what are your plans in terms of where you're going to take this?

K. Well, (pause) I'd like to do some type of classification as the follow-up to this lesson. I'd also like to soak some beans and show them the parts.

M. Absolutely!

K. I might even do, if I can, the creative writing aspect of it. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 2)

The ST expressed no specific ideas or definitive plans to extend the lesson as she answered the US's question. Nor did she offer much that Marion could stretch into further reflection. The US tried to return the conversation once more to issues that highlight the developmental needs of first graders. This time she tried to explore the possibility of more hands-on experiences for the children.

There were several books about seeds displayed in the classroom, but the selection of actual seeds on the little table display was rather meager. The way they had been used during the lesson would infer that to the ST, they are neither central to the lesson, nor important to the learning process. Once again, Marion attempted to press the ST to consider an alternate viewpoint through her questioning strategies, but with little success:

M. Now, are these just the seeds that came in today? (pointing to the table)

K. Some of them [the children brought]. Some of them are seeds that I brought in. I brought in the fruits and vegetables.

M. But are there more coming? I mean, is this your whole collection of seeds or just the ones for today?

K. For today. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 3)

Karen answers affirmatively, but she does not seem to absorb the point that Marion is making; that the actual seeds are an important component of the children's understanding and that the lesson should continue for a while for optimum effect. The ST adds:

- K. There is an activity I read about where you have them each bring in one adult sock and they put it over their shoe and take a walk through the woods and see what collects on their sock.
- M. Are there trees and plants on your campus or around your campus where you could go and actually see seeds on the ground ... or collect them on your sock?
- K. I'm not really familiar with the campus, but there are definitely acorns. I know that. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 3)

It seems clear that the ST is not giving much thought to the activity she is describing to her US. Her final comment indicates that even during this reflective process, she is still not connecting the activity in point to the reality of her physical setting, since acorns will not adhere to socks. Marion chooses not to pursue this further, but it is of note that this is the ST's second placement in the same school and she is unaware of the resources available in the schoolyard (S4, Ob#2, RV, 4/22).

Marion changes gears here. She forgoes her questioning strategies and offers the ST positive feedback while continuing to try helping Karen to probe her thinking about alternatives and possibilities.

- M. Well, I'll tell you. I thought that the children were very responsive and that they got a lot of information. I don't think it mattered at all that they had heard the Eric Carle book before.
- K. Right.... That happened when I was in the fourth grade, too.
- M. But I *was* wondering when there was going to be some kind of a hands-on experience for the children. There was a lot of *listening*, and in my head, I was waiting for them to be put into groups, small groups in different places around the room, where they could *sit*, and not necessarily have a formal assignment to classify or something, but just have time to examine [seeds] and think about it and make comparisons among themselves.
- K. Right. If we had more time, that would have been the next step. Whether it was classifying or not, we would have had a hands-on.

M. Perhaps, Karen, (pause) today's lesson was really two lessons. In other words, when you showed the children that there's oil in nuts, that could have been a whole lesson. Then, if each child had been given some nuts and some paper towels, they could explore the oil coming out for themselves and they would remember the experience.

K. Right.

Karen's responses do not leave much room for Marion to expand the conversation. The ST is polite but shows no interest in probing her US's comments.

Marion continues to offer some possibilities:

- Have you considered looking for dandelions or other weeds and pods outside? (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 5)
- If they could go outside and pick some things up and do a book from the experience rather than just talk about it, that could be so much fun! (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 5)
- Perhaps in the future, when you're planning for your class, you might want to think about how the lesson you're planning could be broken down to two or even three lessons (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 5)
- If you *do* plant seeds, you may want to consider little cups where everybody would get their own plant to tend. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 6)
- Will the children have an opportunity to browse through the books on their own? Have you ever considered having them take partners and have two children go through a book together? (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 7)

Each of these and similar comments were met most consistently with a single response: "Right." A few of Karen's replies deviated from this but still clearly did not invite further exploration. These responses by the ST included:

- Yes, definitely. But I think this is a good introduction.... (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 5)
- I agree and *if* I had more time, I would have definitely included, (pause) I mean I *had* it in the lesson [plan]. I *wanted* to do a hands-on thing with them. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 5)

Marion adjusts her approach once more here and pursues a different aspect of her feedback. She begins to concentrate strictly on the positive, but this doesn't prompt much extended conversation by the ST either:

M. Karen, you have just a wonderful way with children.

K. Oh, thank you. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 7)

And again:

M. I thought they [the children] were very responsive, and I thought they were very good.

K. They *were* good. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 8)

Getting no dialogue going with Karen this way either, Marion switches tactics again. This time she tackles even more directly the issues she had attempted to introduce earlier and that are not being heard by Karen:

You were the main participant today. The children were *receiving* information but weren't actively involved in what they were doing, and I would hope that in other lessons you can kind of stand back more and watch the children being more active. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 8)

Karen's response repeats her earlier reactions. She offers verbal agreement with Marion, but her choice of words implies something else. She then dismisses the US's advice as unrelated to her lesson: "Right. Right. But at this time, like I said, it was more of an introduction to this type of lesson" (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 8).

Marion does not debate the merits of this argument. She turns to another issue but tries to keep focused on the children. The question she poses is unusual except for the fact that this ST has repeatedly omitted discussion of individuals on her own. In this conference, once again, she has mentioned no child by name. Her observations about the children have always referred to them in terms of the group. The US has

offered several prompts along the way that could have served as openings for Karen, but they have been dropped by the ST. Marion tries again:

- M. Have you gotten to know the children as individuals?
- K. Yes, yes, definitely. Definitely. I can anticipate who's going to say what when and what their personalities are like.
- M. How many of the children do you consider particular challenges in terms of their behaviors (pause) or their learning styles?
- K. Maybe two or three, four at the most. (pause) I think it's more the typical distractions of five and six year olds. I don't think there are any particular kinds of problems in this class.
- M. How about the little girl this morning who wanted you to notice her hair?
- K. That was Naomi. She loves to get extra attention.
- M. Well, I thought it was really wonderful.... (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 10)

Marion is interrupted before she can say more by the CT, who has been sitting silently till now. She interjects her own comments:

- CT. Well, it *is* wonderful, except she would love to do that all the time, everyday.
- M. She [Naomi] wants to be at center stage?
- CT. If you respond to it too much, it kind of accelerates. She likes to do it all the time anyway. So we kind of low key her interruptions like that because she would do it all day, everyday.

The comments by the CT were unusual in two ways. It was the only time during the data collection that a CT interrupted a conference, and even more unusually, her interjected opinions appeared to be conflicting with what the US was about to say. Interestingly, the exchange also prompted the ST to introduce a topic on her own for the first time, and the CT involved herself in this discussion also. While tangential to the previous conversation, the following comments were addressed to Marion and

seemed to be placed as a justification for her original difficulties with managing the physical behavior of the children as they gathered around the display table:

K. Just as you saw, too, when they start touching something or you start talking about something that in the beginning has something to do with the lesson, and then it goes off from there.

M. You mean that it [the discussion] goes into their personal experiences?

CT. And the next thing you know you're talking about rabbits.

K. Right, and if you let one do it and then the next one, you'll hear about the cat who ate the bird and the bird who had the seed and it will go on and on until you have to rope them back in and bring them back to what they are talking about. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 11)

It was not clear why this issue surfaced here, but the ST and the CT were obviously of one mind, and Marion chose not to press for more reflection on the topic. She only added:

M. Well, I thought they got a lot out of the lesson.

K. I think so, too. I was really happy with the way they responded. They were eager about it, and they didn't lose attention. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 11)

Moving to the closing segment of the conference, the US took one last stab at encouraging the ST to think about some alternatives for hands-on experiences with young children, but again it took an unusual turn when the CT answered *for* the ST:

M. When you're out on the playground, do you notice any seeds that are blowing round? If [the children] were to look at the ground, would they see anything you could use in a lesson like this?

CT. Not too much over where we go because it's pretty much a cleared area.

K. Oh, that's right. There's lots of rocks.

CT. We've taken the kids out to the field to do leaf collection, so I guess we could take them out again to see if there's anything there. It's just that with some of the children being allergic ... we have to be a little careful that we don't send them home with poison ivy. You know, even if the children walk in poison ivy and then tie their shoes (pause)... All I'm saying is that we agree. All I'm saying is that we're careful where we let the children walk, so they don't end up with poison ivy on their shoes.

M. Right. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 12)

At this point, Marion seemed to have nothing more to say. She smiled broadly and turned to Karen. "Well, thank you, my dear. I'll see you in class." In my field notes, I recorded the following:

As Marion and I headed out the front door of the school to our respective cars, following a path where the children [and teachers] walk everyday with no apparent danger of poison oak, Marion glanced down. "Look around," she said to me. "Can *you* see seeds?" When I nodded affirmatively, her frustration was visible. "How can they miss that when it's so clearly in front of their eyes? It's amazing what people don't see because they're not interested." (S4, Ob#2, FN, 4/22)

My Researcher Journal, written later on the same day, reflects some of the questions that were surfacing in my own mind:

I leave this session feeling vaguely unsettled. The ST is a mature woman with a wonderfully gentle way with children. She looks and acts like a teacher and carries the role with confidence. She planned and organized a lesson that *on the surface* worked well. Except for the jostling of bodies around the display table, there was little to pick up on. She has the full support of her cooperating teacher, and they seem to work as a team, yet even this is unsettling for some reason. As an observer here, I felt that the congeniality they shared somehow was working against the supervisor in ways that are difficult to explain. (S4, Ob#2, RJ, 4/22)

I sense Marion's impatience with Karen's lack of interest in exploring the children as individuals. She tried several times to go in that direction, but her efforts were thwarted. While she did address other issues with the ST, Marion seemed to sense that Karen was generally competent in many areas. Recognizing this herself, the ST demonstrated little interest in what the US was trying to offer. Marion, in turn, concentrated her efforts on the

areas that were less developed, but not necessarily visible to the casual observer.

Marion's repeated efforts in this vein imply convictions about the both individually and developmentally, that emerge in almost everything Marion says and does. She focused her efforts on trying to stimulate the ST's further growth by encouraging Karen to explore her teaching in a way that was new for her. This, however, was resisted at every turn. When the CT joined in, Marion backed off. I felt that her choice was made from frustration--and the apprehension she must have felt about upsetting the delicate balance between triad members. (S4, Ob#2, RJ, 4/22)

Review of Video of Second Observed Lesson and Conference

Marion did not appear anxious to revisit her work with this student. A controversy had erupted after the second of my observations when Marion included several of the concerns in her "write-up" that the ST hadn't really heard during the conference. After some unpleasantness, a dialogue meeting took place between Marion, Karen, and the Director of Field Placement during which an additional observation of the ST was agreed upon. It had been a difficult experience for Marion in many ways. Her body language today hinted strongly that she would have preferred not to return to any of it and was only here out of a sense of responsibility to me. Recognizing this, it is worth noting that she chose the problematic second conference as the one to review. (S4, RV, RJ, 5/11)

Marion watched the video of her conference with Karen in some obvious discomfort. When I began discussion on the video review by asking Marion about her reactions, she was hesitant but forthright in her comments. The emotions her words conveyed were very clear:

[I felt a] great sense of frustration because it was not a satisfying experience for Karen (pause) or for me. What happened was when I wrote up the observation, I included the things I felt [that Karen hadn't heard in the conference] and she took great exception to it.... She was quite upset by the fact that I suggested more hands-on activities [in the formal write-up], that I mentioned that two books were probably too many to read to first graders without letting them get up, that if she had wanted them to touch the seeds, she should have put the table somewhere where children could walk around it.... I think she was even more furious about my comments because her cooperating teacher thought she was perfect and her

other observations had been so good.... Instead of stepping back and saying, "Well, let me think about this," she blew it up. No, everything that I felt and said was wrong. She was not going to be happy until I took back what I wrote, but everything came from my experience with children and with growing things. I wasn't going to back away from that!... At one point [in the three-way dialogue meeting with the Director of Field Placement], I said something again about taking the kids out to look for seeds, but she insisted that was not a "lesson." I told her that was the most wonderful *kind* of lesson, but she couldn't see what I was saying. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 1)

After that it was very hard ... because it was really hurtful, you know. I felt frustrated and her anger was upsetting. I mean, [it seemed like] here I am, the only one giving her a hard time but at the same time, it was my responsibility, and I felt so strongly about it. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 2)

The biggest problem for the ST, it seemed, was the fact that all her other written feedback had been positive. In probing this point with Marion, the following dialogue took place:

- I. Why do you think you saw problems here and not in the ST's earlier placement?
- M. ... Things [that she did] worked much better with fourth grade children than they did with first graders. In retrospect, what looked in the fourth grade like a good lesson worked *because* it was a fourth grade, and a bright fourth grade. They were able to take the fairy tale and extend it, but that's not what it's all about in first grade.
- I. Do you think...
- M. ...And the other reason is because she *changed* it. We talked about the lesson ahead of time [in the pre-observation conference], and it *was* to be a hands-on experience!
- I. Why do you think she changed the lesson?
- M. It was easier and less messy, (pause) and I suppose the CT would have had to have talked her out of it after I discussed it with her. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 5)

This sequence led to a recurring theme in this review: that Karen's CT had strong views of her own that seemed to be placed in conflict with those of the US.

Within this interpersonal dynamic, and perhaps contributing to it, was the strong undercurrent of Marion's dissatisfaction with both the physical environment of the classroom and a modeled teaching approach that she perceived as antiseptic. It was also antithetical to what she believed was essential to the ways young children learn. Many of her comments swirled in an orbit around the crux of these two points:

- I know she [Karen] approached any hands-on activities reluctantly. When you [as a ST] hear advice about “letting them get into it,” I know that can be scary, especially because there was no indication she was seeing the children get *any* of this in the classroom. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 6)
- I don't consider myself paranoid about CTs, and perhaps this one just wasn't feeling well that day, but the lesson *was* changed after Karen and I talked. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 7)
- I realize that I was definitely sensitive to this lesson. Absolutely [because of her experience with the age group and the topic]. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 7)
- There are so many things that go undiscussed [in terms of the placement]. I was dying to ask [the CT] why her room wasn't unpacked and why she had accepted a student teacher in that situation. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 11)
- I've never *had* a CT ask to sit in on my conference with the ST. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 11)
- CTs need to give STs their *best* years. Sometimes there could be something going on in a teacher's life and that year will not be their best. To take one then is shortchanging the ST. It is such a responsibility. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 14)
- The problem is that this student didn't have examples. She didn't visit other first grades [as Marion had suggested], and in the first grade where she was, different kinds of activities were limited. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 18)
- Anything I suggested, Karen found reasons for not doing. I'll bet the help she got from *that* CT, Miss “We have to be careful of the poison ivy,” would erode anything I said. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 20)

- She [Karen] obviously saw the CT as more important to her development [than the US]. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 21)

Marion had seemed uncomfortable viewing the video, and we discussed how she felt about her own performance. When I asked her if there was anything in retrospect that she would change, she at first was adamant that she had done all she could:

- Change? No. I think I really kept my cool. I was enraged, really, watching just now, because I empathize with the children, and I know that some teachers would rather keep them sitting neatly in a group like that so that they don't get dirty or things don't get messy. I find it outrageous. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 5)
- ... I didn't have any embarrassment looking at this. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 10)
- I tried to bring her attention to the importance of activity and experience in young children's learning during seminar, so this wasn't the first time she heard it. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 18)

This initial defensiveness, however, seemed aimed at confirming the accuracy of her original assessments. With this behind her, Marion became more open to introspection; and as we explored various aspects of Karen's teaching and Marion's supervisory actions, she noted several areas that could have influenced her approach and made the following comments:

- I was not uncomfortable [with her teaching] *all* the way along. I guess I didn't consider what she did my style of teaching, but there's something very comforting about going into a room where everything is just so, where the overhead projector is ready, it is very neat, nobody's nose is running and nobody is falling off their chair. I mean (pause), it's a *nice* environment. When you're in a room where the principal would look in and say, "Oh, this is wonderful" and you're supposed to be the lovely guest, I mean, it's like going to a perfect little tea party where there's a doily under the pot, and it's oh, so lovely. So who am I to disagree? ... It had very little to do with what my classroom, or any good classroom, ever looked like, but I had accepted that. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 17)

- ... I think I was really too polite and too supportive.... I thought that was appropriate then, but I think now I was influenced by having her CT there. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 23)
- I was made to feel like I was harassing her when I questioned her or made suggestions. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 25)
- I was less sincere than I would have been if the CT hadn't been there. I would be very careful not to let that happen again in the future. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 47)

Marion related that, although she felt she had prepared the student for the written comments throughout the post-observation conference, in retrospect, those were the comments that the ST had consistently objected to. Moreover, the US was really unsure of how she had helped this particular student at all. She said, "I would like to think that I was influential in opening her eyes to things she hadn't thought about before, but I don't think that happened here. I don't think I did very much of that" (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 15). She was sure, however, that she was still happy about trying to do so.

She described her supervisory approach in the following words:

I would like to be a *collaborator*, in the sense that the two of us together would plan and reflect. I wanted to support her in her attempts to do new things, if she was willing to try something new. You see, ... it would have been so different if she had tried *any* kind of a hands-on lesson, even if it had been a disaster. I would have backed her absolutely, whatever had happened, because she was trying and because I know she's not comfortable with it. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 19)

Marion's overall feelings of failure with this student were heavy on her mind as we spoke of the video. Several of her comments to me highlighted this perception:

- This was *not* a constructive dialogue. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 20)
- She [Karen] just wanted this over so she could go on with her life. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 21)
- I was not successful with her. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 27)

- I had the feeling that if I were her principal [instead of the US], and wanted her to do something in a different way, she would have swallowed it. She would choke it down, (pause) until she got tenure. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 31)
- I got along with Karen fine until I gave her some feedback that wasn't all positive.... Then she saw me as a witch. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 17)

Behind these comments, however, was the poignant realization that Marion seemed to absorb the failure as her own. When I asked her if perhaps she saw this student as unreachable, no matter what she might have done, Marion was quick to answer, "Oh, no" (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 25). Several of Marion's comments alluded to the fact that after watching Karen teach this lesson, she had begun to rethink her earlier assessments of the ST. She reflected on some of this process:

- After this problem, I started thinking about her first CT, whom I respected. I remembered thinking that things [I was observing] were a bit too controlled and too perfect, but until I got to see this [lesson], I couldn't put it into perspective. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 4)
- I get the feeling she doesn't know children well. I really didn't feel that way with the fourth grade placement, but now looking back, the only child she really appreciated [in that lesson] was the child who excelled. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 32)

Understanding children, in fact, seems to be at the center of what Marion found unsettling in Karen's approach to teaching and the piece to which she kept returning. This, coupled with the ST's continued disinterest in exploring any critique Marion had to offer, apparently made Marion uneasy with the ST's progress at this point in the semester. The US appeared to recognize the many strengths Karen brought to the job that must have worked well for her in her prior career. Such traits as organization, planning, neatness, and personality continue to support her teaching, and the US's recognition of these strengths framed Marion's earlier evaluations of Karen. Marion was now worried that these skills alone could not suffice without more reflection on

her experiences with the children. This is what she had expected to see develop within the second placement and why her worries were fueled by this observation:

- [In the second placement], I was particularly watchful for how she handled a different group of children, how she adjusted the kinds of activities and lessons she taught *to* those children ... things that would show she was prepared to teach her own class [of young children]. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 18)
- I was looking for how she was *continuing* to develop as a teacher in the second placement. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 19)

In explaining why this was worrisome to her in her last observation of the student, Marion clearly defined her responsibilities as a US in terms of the two placements: “The second placement is to give them an experience with another age group, because children are very different people at different ages.... My role is to help the ST become aware of the distinctions and the needs of children at various ages and grades” (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 44). Throughout this review, Marion alluded to her worries that such distinctions did not appear to be guiding Karen’s teaching:

- I don’t think she had any awareness of the developmental needs of first grade children. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 21)
- There was no indication, (pause) there was not one indication in that lesson, in the way she wanted the children to respond to her and the way she responded to them, that she understood the age group (pause) or the individual children. There was no indication that she *knew* these children! (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 33)

Perhaps most distinctive in this review were Marion’s feelings of being at loggerheads with this student while at the same time frustrated that she apparently could not influence her in any way. “She had a certain set of expectations about teaching and had blinders on to anything I had to suggest.” When I asked her if Karen was a reflective practitioner, her response was “Absolutely not. Absolutely not” (S4,

RVC, 5/11, p. 27). As we concluded the review, Marion offered this overall reaction to the process:

It [the review of the video] made me very sad. This was one of my least successful experiences [as a US]. If you had observed Tina [the other ST she had been observing that semester in the same school], it would have been all bells and whistles. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 47)

Analysis of Portrait #4

Style and Approach Codes. The codings for Marion in this area displayed interesting similarities and differences between the first and second observation. In both cases, the “1A” (*Clinician*) code occurred decidedly most often, but the number in this coding grew dramatically from the first to the second observation. The frequency of the other codings reversed in number over the same period. There were more than double the number of “1B” (*Collaborative*) comments as there were “1C” (*Assessor*) comments in the first observed conference, and more “1C” than “1B” comments in the second observation (see Table 7). It could be interpreted from these results that Marion became more concerned with the ST’s performance in the second observation, and therefore concentrated more directly on what she perceived to be the remaining deficits, since even the “1A” comments increased in number from the first to the second observation.

Table 7

S#4: Frequency of Style and Approach Codes

	1A (<i>Clinician</i>)	1B (<i>Collaborator</i>)	1C (<i>Assessor</i>)
Observation #1	15	11	5
Observation #2	24	5	10

The different tenor of each conference is hinted at in the very first supervisory comment, in both cases through use of a question to begin the conversation. Post-observation conference #1 began with Marion asking, “How do you think it went?” (S4, Ob#1, 3/25, p. 1). This comment was coded “1B” (*Collaborator*) because it invited the ST to lead the direction of the discussion. The question that began Marion’s second post-observation conference, “What were your goals?” (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 1), requested a substantive answer from Karen and was coded “1A” (*Clinician*). Although the US’s next question followed up with “What do you think of how it went?” it is clear that by positioning this question after the first that the answer was expected to be in reference to the question on goals.

It was soon observed in both conferences, and particularly noticeable in the second, that the ST did not seem inclined to reflectively consider the US’s suggestions, nor to explore the US’s comments. This gave Marion little foothold from which to proceed. In both observations, the “1C” comments are interspersed throughout but hang there in expectant isolation. Without some reflective interest on the ST’s part, they frequently seem unconnected to the dynamic at hand, and Marion seems prompted by the ST’s response to move on. In the second conference, for example, Marion made the following comment that was coded a “1C”: “I thought they [the children] were very responsive, and I thought they were very good.” Karen only responds, “They *were* good,” and Marion picks up on a new topic (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 8).

After observing both of these ST’s lessons and conferences and sharing the video review with the US, I am unsure if these data reflect Marion’s regular style and approach or are a result of her interactions with this particular student.

Focus Codes. Once again, there is a marked difference between the codings for the first and second observations. In both cases, Marion addresses almost all areas

(only missing *Time Management* in Observation #2), but in quite different proportions in significant areas (see Table 8). There are marked similarities in the focus Marion gives to encouraging Karen to reflect in both conferences.

Table 8

S#4: Frequency of Focus Codes

	Observation #1	Observation #2
2S: Behavior Management	6	1
2T: Time Management	1	0
2U: Lesson Planning	4	14
2V: People Skills	1	1
2W: ST Reflection	10	9
2X: Curriculum	2	2
2Y: Child Development	1	10
2Z: Child Learning	7	15

While the US's attention to areas coded "2S" (*Behavior Management*) is reduced in the second conference, three other areas show marked increase: "2U" (*Lesson Planning*), "2Y" (*Child Development*), and "2Z" (*Child Learning*). Sometimes these comments stand alone and are directed to one area or the other specifically, but more frequently, Marion covers two or more of these areas in one sequence. The following quote is one example:

Perhaps, Karen, (pause) today's lesson was really two lessons. In other words, when you showed the children that there's oil in nuts, that could

have been a whole lesson. Then, if each child had been given some nuts and some paper towels, they could explore the oil coming out for themselves and they would remember the experience. (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 5)

I coded this statement as “2U,” “2Y,” and “2Z” because it dealt with the mechanics of lesson planning in ways that accounted for the developmental needs of children as they could be expected to impact on learning. Because of such a pattern, I am led to believe that the increased number of items coded “2U” in the second conference do not infer a focus on lesson planning itself, but are tied directly to Marion’s growing awareness that Karen could benefit from a deeper understanding of the specific developmental needs of young children.

This perspective is strengthened by the focus that reverberated throughout the video review session. Here Marion’s concern about gaps in Karen’s applied knowledge base of how young children learn and her relationship with the children *as individuals* surfaced many times, heightened perhaps as the ST worked with younger children in her second placement. As Marion reflected upon her work with Karen in that second post-observation conference, comments like the following appeared frequently: “I don’t think she’s had many experiences, (pause) I don’t think she has seen effective young children working and learning things in an effective situation” (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 22).

The data collected in Marion’s initial interview also echoes the tone of her work with this ST. The centrality of knowing children and shaping your approach to teaching in a style that is appropriate for each individual is a strong component of what Marion states over and over is at the heart of good teaching.

I want every ST to know how important it is to start out knowing each child in their class as individuals. I don’t want them to think of a successful lesson as something done and evaluated from the front of the room with 44 eyes on you. So I ask them questions about specific students

in the class. They need to be able to discuss the learning habits and progress of each child. Every class is composed of individuals, and each one has a story. I want to help them get clear that this is *not* a group business. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 52)

The Researcher's View of the Supervisor

This portrait was a complicated and, at times, an awkward one to unravel mentally and then stitch together with language that would describe it adequately and sensitively. In my attempt to do so, I tried to look beyond the individual personalities involved, recognizing that both the US and the ST in this case might have provided an idiosyncratic example when examined as a dyad, that was not representative of either of them individually.

Marion is a person of strong convictions. Her beliefs about what is essential to good teaching cannot be mistaken. She is passionate about children and easily ruffled when she perceives that children's sensitivities may have been trodden upon. She is firm in her convictions that *teaching* involves more than completing all the items on a lesson plan without chaos erupting in the classroom, and she is as firmly convinced that *learning* can only be assessed on an individual basis. She further believes that this is the crux of what she brings to her job of supervising student teachers. Marion repeatedly looks to children for clues as to where and how to proceed in teaching and clearly tries to encourage this sensitivity in the STs she supervises.

Karen, on the other hand, is a student who fits the cookie-cutter profile of what many are pleased to see in a ST: she is bright, mature, responsible, neat, and organized. She plans ahead, does all her assignments with attention to the requirements, and has an easy smile that complements her gentle and friendly manner. She writes well, speaks well, and puts in an appearance that most principals and parents would associate with positive images of teaching. She comes to student

teaching with excellent grades, and her prior field experiences have been very positive. She has been “eager to learn,” “a wonderful addition to the classroom,” and “always responsible” in the eyes of classroom teachers who have worked with her.

But all of these traits do not cancel out the other aspects of Karen’s approach to teaching that became apparent to Marion over the course of the semester, especially as she worked with younger children. In fact, the problems that this ST presented to this US are ones that are forewarned in several views Marion expressed in her interview:

- When I think of the STs who have had problems in the classroom, they tend to be the ones who haven’t spent time with children. They may tell me they have a couple of nieces and nephews, but the thing is, they don’t know how to talk to kids. They don’t know the questions to ask to get to how a kid thinks. *That’s* not easy to teach someone without *lots* of interaction. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 26)
- I try to help them see the *naturalness* of children rather than planning for how they want children to act and move and think. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 47)
- Good supervision is trying to move the ST beyond what is merely acceptable and raising their own standards of performance. Things can be okay in the classroom and the student may be getting by alright, but I can ask some questions that can move them beyond that level. A good supervisor should raise every student’s standard of what they see is a goal for themselves professionally. (S4, I, 3/11, p. 54)

Karen is not a *poor* student teacher. That she presents so well is probably the biggest difficulty that Marion faced with her. To many supervisors, Karen’s student teaching would probably represent a successful experience and one that would receive accolades. Marion’s child-centered views, however, compelled her to look for more in Karen’s classroom experiences than the ST expected. In the particular placements that she received, moreover, Karen reflected and imitated the status quo in ways that were difficult for Marion to challenge. Reflecting and imitating her CTs, Karen saw no need

to move beyond her current standards of performance, and as much as Marion pressed her to do so, the ST justified her approach according to the standards of the classroom.

To Marion, Karen seemed perhaps a bigger liability to good teaching than mere ineptitude would indicate, since a failing lesson at least offers something tangible with which to work. With the ST's surface performance smooth and acceptable, it was more difficult for the ST to appreciate what Marion was striving for. To Karen, one would have to think Marion represented the university's "ivory tower" approach, one that would not offer much help to her in the real world of teaching. She appeared to tolerate Marion politely, but gave little more than was minimally acceptable in terms of this relationship.

There is no doubt that Marion fought an uphill battle in her attempts to encourage Karen to reflect on some these issues. I recognize how difficult this was for her to do, given all the other positive aspects of the ST's performance. As a person who has spent a great deal of time observing in classrooms, I know that Marion could have easily been persuaded by what she referred to as the "comfortable" aspects of this ST's performance, and looked no further. If she weren't so tuned in to the children themselves and dedicated to passing this on, that might have been the course she chose.

I am further aware that the easiest path to take would have been acceptance of that performance with a pat on the back for the ST and a non-judgmental attitude toward the CT's classroom. Yet I could not help but respect the continuity between Marion's stated approach and her real-life practice. Her diligence to the high expectations she held for teaching made for personal turmoil in her relationship with Karen and, in the end, left Marion feeling saddened.

Missing, by design, in the data that were collected in this study (and perhaps a component which might have offered insight to this particular case more than the

others), is an examination of the perspective of the CT and an exploration of the extent to which supervisors *should* impose their ideas about good teaching. Slick (1998) tells us: “In examining the supervision issues of teacher education, teacher educators must apply their knowledge about the ownership of learning and the importance of collaboration that leads to professional growth and learning for all” (p. 314). Slick does not tell us how this is to be accomplished by supervisors who recognize that they are also expected to be what Zimpher et al. (1980) refer to as “the watchdog for the completion of university requirements during student teaching” (p. 14). Marion’s problems, while unique to this sample, may offer a window to one of the more complex problems of university supervision.

Chapter V

CROSS-PORTRAIT ANALYSIS

In Chapter IV, representative data were utilized to tell the stories of four university supervisors by creating individual portraits and presenting them in a descriptive form. The present chapter integrates these findings across cases as another variation in the “story” that helps unwrap the phenomena under question. Data here are analyzed across portraits, first in a general discussion that draws upon background details, supervisory experience, and professional reflections, and then as these data relate specifically to the three original research questions. A summary and discussion of the findings as they relate to the literature are presented in Chapter VI, followed by an examination of implications for practice and future research.

While much of this analysis reflects my own interpretation and synthesis of the research and as such represents another view “outside” the perceptions of the persons involved, the individual supervisors’ words and actions form the basis of conclusions drawn and have been incorporated as much as possible. Although each of the portraits was reviewed by the participant involved to assure that it depicted the beliefs and practices of that particular woman, findings nonetheless must be interpreted in light of the fact that they represent a small number of university supervisors working with one student teacher each during a single semester.

General Portrait Composite

After the individual portraits had been fleshed out in narrative form, it then became important to explore how the case variations represented in this study connected, intersected, and layered into the subtleties of their own composite portrait. Glasser and Strauss (1967) remind us that “comparing as many differences and similarities in data as possible ... tends to force the analyst to generate categories, their properties, and their interrelations as he tries to understand his data” (p. 55). In the following section, background information, supervisory experience, and professional reflections of the participants in this study are presented in composite form.

Background Information Composite

Background information specific to university supervisors of preservice teachers in elementary education programs is infrequently reported in detail in the literature. Without such information, it is difficult to assess how, if at all, the idiosyncratic nature of individual background and experience, as well as the commonalties they represent, may affect supervisory beliefs and actions. Although the sample in this study is small (four), such data have been synthesized and included here because they are viewed as important to analysis and because they may eventually contribute to a body of research. Following is the composite portrait that emerged as similarities and differences among the supervisors were explored.

Background. Within this small sample, many similarities and differences were noted in background among the participants, the most easily categorized of which can be found below (see Table 9). Similarities of note in these data encompass the following:

Table 9
Background Information

	Amelia	Mary	Bonnie	Marion
BA degree	Sociology and Anthropology	Early Child Education*	Elementary Education*	Sociology & Psychology
Master's degree	Elementary Education*	Learning & Reading	Elementary Education	Elementary Education*
Other degrees	MS in Nutrition/ Coursework in administration	Administrative Certification	CAS, PD	Administrative Certification
Ed.D.		Ed.D.: Reading & Admin.	Ed.D.: Educ. Admin.	
Teacher Ed. program	No student teaching	Year-long student teaching	Not memorable	Loved student teaching
Specific mentor	Child Development professor		Methods professor and fellow teachers	Cooperating teacher
Years taught	32	15 (plus several as a resource teacher)	11	29
Grades taught	3 rd through 6 th grade	1 st - but worked 6 th and below as a specialist	Grades 1 - 6	3 rd grade and below
Administrative experience		Principal: 14 years	Principal: 13 years	
Retired	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supervisory coursework	Administrative coursework	Doctorate program	Doctorate program	Administrative coursework
Experience as a cooperating teacher	Very frequently	Many	Once	About 5 times

* Teacher Certification Program

- All participants had been cooperating teachers at some time in their teaching careers.
- All have had enough coursework in supervision and administration to qualify for administrative positions within the public school system.
- All have continued their own education through most of their professional lives, even where such coursework did not lead directly to a change in job responsibilities. These four educators have truly been “life-long learners,” pursuing their own professional growth throughout the course of their careers.
- All are retired and have come to the supervision of student teachers because it keeps them connected to the work they feel is important.

Differences among these four supervisors were more difficult to categorize but several examples can be highlighted:

- Only one supervisor, Bonnie, truly chose teaching as a profession in her undergraduate program. The others “found” teaching for a variety of reasons including expediency (Mary), and interest that grew out of parenting (Amelia and Marion). Amelia and Marion, in fact, clearly stated that as undergraduates, they *never* wanted to be teachers. These data, however, offer more insight when viewed within the context of their times. Mary, Amelia, and Marion were choosing careers in an era when options for women were limited and an undergraduate major in education might have been viewed as a more sensible choice. Bonnie, on the other hand, came to her college experience at a time when career options were more fully open to women. A choice of education as an undergraduate major in her era could also be viewed as going against the flow. Looked at in this light, all of these participants chose majors that, for their day, were *not* the most popular for women. (A

slight exception needs to be highlighted in the case of Mary. Although she eventually did earn an undergraduate degree in early childhood education, the choice was directed by a press to graduate in a shorter amount of time and was not a selection based on early interest.) It is of further note that all four embraced teaching with a passion at the points in their development where they found it, and this passion has apparently not been dimmed by their many years of experience.

- Only one participant, Mary, had a significant educational background specific to early childhood education, although both Amelia and Marion referred frequently to the fact that their teacher education programs were “steeped” in child development. All three were probably heavily influenced by the child-centered orientations of the teacher education programs of their era.
- No patterns were discernible in their own student teaching experience. Two had had a semester long experience (Bonnie and Marion); one had had a full year of supervised placements (Mary); one had had no student teaching at all (Amelia).
- While all had had over 10 years classroom teaching experience, their professional pathways diverged after this point, with two becoming administrators and two remaining in the classroom. The overall number of years each of these women had spent in public schools ranged from 24 to 32. Between the four of them, they shared 114 years of experience.
- A more complex area to analyze is their education/experience in early childhood education. The participants who remained in classroom teaching for the duration of their careers (Amelia and Marion) had taught at different grade levels (Marion consistently at 3rd grade or below, and Amelia at 3rd

grade and above) (see Table #9). This afforded Marion years of experience in dealing with lower primary children, whose age would also categorize them as within the early childhood years. Taking Mary's ECE degree into account, this would indicate that of the four supervisors, the education and/or professional experience of two of them would clearly lean toward the early years. The influence of the child-centered philosophies within their teacher education programs, as reported by Amelia, Mary, and Marion, may account, however, for more than is easily understood from the lens of another era.

- During the interview process, three of the four participants singled out, of their own volition, a specific individual whom they considered a noteworthy mentor. The inspiration provided by that person was repeatedly connected to their individual internal models of good teaching. For all three, the person mentioned was someone connected with their individual teacher education programs. In Marion's case, this person was part of the student teaching triad; a cooperating teacher. For the other two (Amelia and Bonnie), a child development teacher and a methods professor were cited, respectively, but Bonnie also reported much invaluable mentoring by fellow teachers in her early years of teaching. Interestingly, just the opposite was reported by Amelia, who felt her co-workers were very unwilling to help her in any way.

Supervisory Experience. Each of these participants was invited by the university to supervise student teachers based upon knowledge of her classroom work. They all reported to me that they had chosen to accept the invitation because supervision of student teachers offered them a way to continue to influence the lives of children after retirement. Teaching the student teaching seminar class to their own supervisees was a benefit cited by all four participants essentially because they could tailor the

discussion, when needed, to particular needs observed in the field that would not necessarily focus on an individual student teacher.

With respect to experience in supervision in this program, some differences became apparent. Amelia had been working with student teachers at the university for about 8 years, and Marion had been supervising almost 3 years. Mary had had 1.5 year's experience, and this was the first year that Bonnie was supervising elementary student teachers in the program. However, when totality of supervisory experience factors in, for example, the administrative experience gathered in Mary's doctorate in Administration and Reading, as well as her 14 years as a principal, it must certainly add more weight to the existing data. Likewise, Bonnie's doctorate in Educational Administration and her 13 years in a principalship place her in the same position. Coursework in administration reported by both Amelia and Marion raise their experiential level, too. Bonnie, Mary, and Marion, although newer to university supervision than Amelia, also brought with them to their relatively new positions as supervisors in this program, an extensive relationship with both the university and the school of education. Such long-term connections may have made them more familiar with program philosophy, mission, goals, and general staff than is easy to weigh in an analysis of experience. In many aspects, therefore, the background information on the supervisory experience of this small sample reveals a population with a rich background in supervision that would not necessarily be noted if simply years of university supervision were given. Additionally, the fact that these four women had advanced certification and/or doctoral degrees specifically in supervision and administration would not necessarily be known by a report of their level of education only.

Perhaps most compelling within this aspect of these data was the commonality of these supervisors' interest in learning more about their own style of supervision. There is little or no opportunity for supervisors in general to observe each other at work, and this was reflected by all participants, who voiced much interest in comparing their supervision to that of others and learning in the process how to improve their own work. They were also eager for specific evaluative comments from me. I was probably the only person who had ever observed them in the process of supervision of student teachers, and they were anxious to get my reactions. Since feedback from me was not a part of this study, I refrained from giving any evaluative comments, though it did cause me some discomfort, knowing how eager the participants were for feedback.

Professional Reflections. A desire to observe other supervisors as they do their jobs and a desire for feedback on their performance as supervisors, in fact, was most frequently mentioned when the participants were asked for advice on how to improve the field. Other suggestions included more time and opportunity for sharing with others and a period of "shadowing" another supervisor as an introduction to what would be expected in supervising student teachers. Further advice of a universal nature within this sample included the need for more contact with full-time faculty and the desire that full-time faculty appreciate more fully the importance and centrality of student teaching, and therefore student teaching supervision, to the process connecting educational and practical experience.

Summary. Overall, this composite of background information and professional reflections from a sample of four university supervisors of preservice student teachers reveals a cohort of professionals who are committed to their work, have an extensive background in the field, and, even in retirement, are anxious both to accomplish some good for children and to grow professionally. The following section will address how

the data collected in this study were analyzed across portraits to answer the three research questions.

Analysis Related to the Research Questions

In the previous section, units of analysis across cases were developed as they emerged after a period of “playing with the data” (Yin, 1994, p. 125). In this section, categories already existing in terms of the three research questions are used as another opportunity to increase the quality of the cross-case analysis. Each of the research questions is examined in order and discussed in terms of how the data generated the findings.

Research Question #1

How do four university supervisors of elementary student teachers define their roles and responsibilities in the education of preservice teachers?

McIntyre and Byrd (1998) state that “the most important role played by university supervisors ... results from the uncritical relationship between cooperating teachers and their student teachers” (p. 414). This may well be true, but the statement begs the question of just what it is that supervisors themselves seek to accomplish in the vacuum these authors describe and how they see their work of value to the education of teachers. Kato (1993) tells us that “because the competence and effectiveness of university supervisors has most often been measured by others, few articles appear in the literature that provide data regarding supervisors’ own judgments or perceptions about their work” (p. 4).

Studies related to various aspects of the university supervisor’s role have sometimes been examined, but these studies generally encompass the wide array of

roles the supervisor may be expected to play. Kato (1993), for example, examines and ranks ten roles that broadly interconnect with the work that university supervisors do, among them those of liaison, seminar teacher, researcher, department committee member, consultant, and clinician (p. 9). Some of these role divisions are also reflected in the work of Koehler (1984) andENZ, Freeman, and Wallin (1995). Few studies, however, address the complexities inherent in the university supervisor's role (Slick, 1998a), and, in particular, those complexities representative of the supervisory interactions with student teachers that are directly tied to observations of those student teachers' work with children.

Recognizing that the original Cogan-Goldhammer model of clinical supervision has evolved in many current settings to a format that is taken for granted rather than a theoretical approach per se, this study looked into assumptions woven into the clinical supervision model that involve such role complexities. The three roles so isolated in this study were that of technical advisor (here termed *clinician*), *collaborator*, and *evaluator*. These three terms were identified as "Style and Approach Codes."

In the course of the interview and in the discussion following the final video review session, participants were asked to identify themselves as one of the three "codes." Transcriptions of the two post-observation conferences for each supervisor were coded according to these three conceptual frameworks. Findings related to research question #1 included the following:

Although all four of these supervisors followed the external format of the clinical supervision "model" (the abbreviated five steps of the original Cogan model that were described in the earlier literature review), none would identify themselves in the interview as following any particular model. Instead, they spoke to aspects of their individual approaches to the role of supervisor. Amelia spoke about how it was

essential to be “supportive,” while Mary introduced the importance of “advocacy” and “objectivity.” Bonnie wanted to be an “anchor” for her student teachers, and Marion felt it was essential to be “nurturing” and to share her “passions” with the students she supervised. Each supervisor shared an idiosyncratic view of the supervisory process that relied on the strength of her own interpersonal skills, experience, sensitivity to the student teacher, and understanding of the complex responsibilities inherent in their roles.

In discussing their work as university supervisors, these women were acutely aware of their roles as “gatekeepers” and how such responsibility brought with it the press to tackle uncomfortable situations from time to time. Occasionally, they shared, the problems they confront in their observations of student teachers are not apparent during earlier field experiences and only emerge within the daily stresses and responsibilities of full-time teaching that accompany the student teaching semester. That is to say that even with ample early field experience built into a teacher education program, the “student teaching” field placement has the ability to foreground certain weaknesses that might not have surfaced earlier. These supervisors shared the feeling that such attention to critique was not always welcomed by the students, especially at the tail end of their programs.

Several times, the participants mentioned how they frequently raised problematic issues observed in the field within seminar discussions as a way to induce reflection in the least threatening atmosphere. Since it was felt that much of the initial stumbling they observed was common to all students, such discussions were felt to be valuable and effective for all, especially where they provoked student teachers to compare and work through their insecurities and weaknesses collaboratively. Where this failed to produce the desired awareness in a particular student, all mentioned feeling compelled

to confront the issue directly, even while feeling uncomfortable when the student was sensitive to such critique. Many of these observations fit the clinician and/or assessor role much more adequately than that of a collaborator.

Mary, for example, shared the fact that “I am not afraid to say [they] need to improve.... I don’t tell [STs] I *think* something should be improved. I document it with script taking, read it back to them and then we try to work on it” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 31). Bonnie noted the discomfort in this aspect of her role: “That’s the difficult thing.... You have to be willing to hold up a mirror to the teachers” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 14).

As part of the video-review protocol, each of the participants was asked if one of the roles identified in the Style and Approach codes might typify their work more than the others. In this instance, when offered one of the three specific roles from which to select by name (as opposed to the more open-ended question in the interview), all participants except Amelia identified themselves as aiming for a collaborative style and approach. After reviewing the videotape of her conference with Nancy, Amelia stated, “I feel that here I’m more of a clinician” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 10), but her statement did not reveal whether such an approach typified her usual relationships with students or was addressed to her specific work with this individual student only.

In many ways, these four supervisors put forward their individual beliefs that their own capabilities as supervisors grew directly out of their own synthesis of personal experience rather than as a direct result of education in general or any specifically focused theoretical underpinnings in particular. In this, they seemed similar to teachers who are so frequently quoted in the literature as believing that coursework in education classes was not as influential in learning to teach as actual experience. While further exploration of this phenomenon was not a part of this study,

it was tantalizing to think about the mental processes that may conspire to produce such observations and their particular resonance to the lived experience of educators.

It is also important to note that since the university supervisors studied here work at the same university, they might be expected to reflect the roles and responsibilities of their jobs as they are defined broadly by that particular teacher education program. Many such similarities were noted in the surface styles and approaches these supervisors used in their work with student teachers that would be indicative of such common frameworks, and in fact, the participants themselves referred to the influence of the program's philosophy from time to time in my discussions with them. They all, for example, talked about the importance of "reflection" and how they hoped these new teachers would become "change agents" in their practice. However, each supervisor was also found to bring some unique and personal perspectives to the job.

All four participants cited their experiences with children as essential to the work they do. Mary and Bonnie commonly referred to the value of their experiences as principals, especially as such experience related to evaluation of teaching staff. Amelia, Marion, and Mary regularly were seen to tap into their backgrounds in child development. Since the teacher education programs of these three women were so grounded in the child-centered approach, they all seemed to frame their work within an acute sensitivity to the needs of the individual child.

Earlier it was stated that strong elements of clinical supervision were expected to be apparent in the work of these women. This held true in several ways, especially in terms of the skeletal structure followed, and the complex interrelated aspects of the clinical approach that were explored here in discrete units. The supervisors met face-to-face (more often side-by-side) with students in conferencing, used classroom observation and objective observational data as a basis for conferencing, elicited the

student teacher's inferences, opinions, and feelings, and encouraged the student to consider alternatives (Acheson & Gall, 1997).

Developmental supervision (Glickman, 1981, 1990) seemed less obvious within this sample as it could apply to the structure of the student teaching experience. Developmental supervision relies on the diagnosis of stages of conceptual thought and the application of such diagnosis to a choice of supervisory approaches. While it was felt that several, if not all, of the participants in this study actually did tailor their work with the student teacher to an unconscious, or at least unstated, understanding of that student's conceptual development, nowhere was it apparent that any attempt was made to choose a directive, collaborative, or non-directive strategy based on those developmental characteristics outlined by Glickman (1981), that is, level of job commitment and the ability to think abstractly. Some existing literature reveals that this model is more appropriately utilized with inservice teachers, but others propose it as especially helpful with preservice teachers (Thies-Sprintall, 1980). Although none of the participants indicated a background in this model, neither did they demonstrate any detectable propensity for using such guidelines in their work.

Some of Gitlin's (1981) perceptions of what he termed horizontal evaluation did seem somewhat appropriate when applied to the data collected. Gitlin pointed out that if supervisors attend only to the congruence between a student teacher's stated goals and her outcomes, the opportunity could be missed to extend the student's understandings. Some of his strategies were detected in the way these supervisors encouraged their student teachers to reflect on their practice. In her comments to Nancy about Nelson, Amelia seems to be illustrating the strategy of helping the student to see alternatives by asking Nancy, "So what else can you do with him?" (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 3). Mary, for another, demonstrated techniques common to horizontal

evaluation in her comments to Susie on sharing and voting (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 8) and by prompting the student, through questioning, to see that two objectives were similar (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 18). Bonnie seemed to be using a similar strategy when she asked Alison, “What part do you think you didn’t explain well enough?” (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 2), and Marion offered the same type of prompting when she asked Karen, “Are there trees and plants on your campus or around your campus where you could actually go and see seeds on the ground?” (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 3).

In their interaction with these students, in fact, the four supervisors demonstrated many of Gitlin’s techniques on a regular basis in ways that promoted both critical thinking and reflections on practice. In their comments to me after they had reviewed the video of their work with the student in one of the post-observation conferences, supervisors made several references to aspects of evaluation that seemed to draw from Gitlin’s emphasis on the student’s ability to be self-critical. Bonnie, for example, notes, “I feel the supervision process best helped her [Alison] further her reflective thinking. She is well on her way, and I say this not only because of her interactions with me, but I can see how hard she is on herself” (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 15).

Findings related to the Style and Approach Codes further enriched this study. As applied to transcriptions of the two post-observation conferences, these codes offered additional insights. When observed as a group, it is clear that across portraits, comments coded “Clinician” outnumbered those coded either “Collaborator” or “Assessor,” often by significant numbers (see Table 10). Comments coded 1A “Clinician” occurred twice as often across all cases (228) as those coded 1B “Collaborator” (114), and almost four times as frequently as those coded 1C “Assessor” (58).

Table 10

Cross-Case Style and Approach Code Overview

	Observation # & Grade Level	1A <i>Clinician</i>	1B <i>Collaborator</i>	1C <i>Assessor</i>
S1: Amelia	Observation #1 (K)	22	9	8
	Observation #2 (Gr 6)	21	10	4
S2: Mary	Observation #1 (Gr 3)	44	30	13
	Observation #2 (Gr 6)	53	22	5
S3: Bonnie	Observation #1 (Gr 1)	30	10	6
	Observation #2 (Gr 5)	19	17	7
S4: Marion	Observation #1 (Gr 4)	15	11	5
	Observation #2 (Gr 1)	24	5	10

Immediately observed is the fact that Mary's transcribed post-observation conferences resulted in a higher total of coded comments across categories than any of the others, generally almost double in number. By comparison, the other three supervisors were much closer to each other in number of moves coded. One reason for this discrepancy could be Mary's natural loquaciousness, but an additional review of the videotape of the observations involved also provoked the thought that this was possibly encouraged both by the reflective nature of the particular student teacher involved and by the comfortable relationship that seemed to typify their work together.

The total number of comments for each supervisor did not seem to be as striking, however, as the consistency of patterns across cases. In all observations except one, the IC "Assessor" comments occurred least frequently. This seemed congruent with comments made by the supervisors in either the interview or the review of the video sessions that revealed they did not prefer the assessor aspect of their role, even as they recognized the need, as Bonnie put it, "to hold up a mirror" to the student teacher (S3, I, 3/12, p. 14). While the assessor comments in this study were rare, they did reveal that when making a direct evaluation of teaching performance, comments tended to accent the positive and be supportive in nature. Amelia alludes to this tendency when she says, "I ... was very careful in trying not to say something which would threaten her..." (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 7).

When juxtaposed against each other, the findings that emerged from the interviews, the two post-observation conferences, and the review of the video as applied to the first research question seem to point to some conflict between self-view and action--or as Gitlin (1981) would put it, between stated intent and actual practice. In discussion, supervisors leaned heavily to seeing collaboration as an ideal role. Many of their comments that touched upon style and approach support a view of their roles as

collaborative. In the coded transcriptions from the practice of these four women, however, we see that comments in the clinician category were coded twice as often as that of collaborator. While the post-observation conference is admittedly only one area of a university supervisor's practice, it is a significant piece of the work that they do, and for this reason these findings and the inconsistencies they bring to light seem worth noting.

Moreover, the supervisors who participated in this study seemed acutely aware that their roles were difficult and that their responsibilities to the profession were great, even as they sensed that others around them might not always be of the same mind. They were in agreement that cooperating teachers could be wonderful colleagues for student teachers, but that the nature of this daily working relationship left little time or emotional space for critique. Instead, they described with some consistency their observations that the collegial relationships that developed between cooperating teachers and student teachers resulted in more transfer of teaching style than any critical reflection on the student teachers' part that could produce growth. Student teachers, all participants noted, tended to unduly mold their teaching behaviors to fit that of the cooperating teacher, and while that could be a positive experience, it might not involve any construction of knowledge on the student teacher's part.

Responsibility for finding and helping the student grow through perceived gaps in their development as teachers clearly lay heavy on the minds of those participants supervising a student in need of constructive criticism. Both Amelia and Marion were in this position and both, interestingly, were concerned with the student's understanding of child development and children's learning. Marion lamented about her discomfort and her sense of commitment by saying, "Here I am, the only one giving her a hard time but at the same time, it was my responsibility, and I felt so

strongly about it” (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 2). Amelia dealt with her own frustration by saying, “I knew what I was trying to get to was for her to develop a relationship with Nelson ... and somehow I couldn’t do it” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 1). Later she added, “I really should have given her more possible suggestions for Nelson ... to get her to focus on what happens when you are saying the same things over and over to a child” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 2). These two situations differed, however, in that while Amelia saw Nancy as a strong, competent teacher who could have used more guidance in terms of understanding children’s needs, she also was comfortable seeing her in a classroom where she could continue to grow into such understandings. Amelia also seemed to see that while Nancy rebutted the supervisor’s suggestions and diverted the focus of her questions, the essence of those questions and suggestions penetrated her awareness at some point and was integrated into later comments she made to Amelia.

This did not happen in Marion’s case. She, it seemed, was more frustrated by the fact that Karen performed well enough to appear competent by many people’s standards, and it was left to her, in the final semester of the student’s teacher education program, to attempt to help the student reassess some of her teaching behaviors. Given a student who was strongly supported in an opposing direction by the cooperating teacher and who was not flexible in any way to the supervisor’s comments, Marion was left with her convictions--and the feeling of “spoiling the party”--a role that did not sit well with her. Although Marion was the only one in this small sample of participants to deal with such an uncomfortable situation, her feelings and frustrations highlighted a very salient aspect of student teacher supervision, and one that every supervisor may deal with in the course of her or his time in the position.

McIntyre, Byrd, and Foxx (1996) lament that “the potential for supervision to assist student teacher growth is not fully met due to problems of communication and

delineation of roles and responsibilities of all participants” (p. 179). In this admittedly small sample, the participants seemed to have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for themselves, but they also understand that their place within a larger teacher education program limits their influence. Interestingly, when asked whether they saw themselves as clinician, collaborator, or assessor at the beginning of the data collection process, these supervisors would not choose one over the other. After the final session, where each participant reviewed one of their videos of a post-observation conference, three of the four used the word “collaborator” as a role they aspired to. While they were coded as moving between roles of clinician, collaborator, and assessor many times in the course of one post-observation conference, they felt the draw of the clinician role more than the others in actual practice. Although they may state that they prefer to function as collaborators in their interactions with student teachers, they clearly find it difficult to function in that role for any length of time while still offering the student teacher the help that they needed within the confines of the time and opportunities allotted.

The fact that all of these supervisors made regular attempts to be collaborative in their interactions with students can be seen as an attempt to introduce such practices as a way to “seed” expectations of such interactions when these student teachers have their own classrooms. That direct assessor comments were seen to be uniformly held to a minimum in these findings, and tended even then to be positive, may be indicative of the modeling that these supervisors voiced as being part of their approach to working with beginning teachers.

Research Question #2

What is the focus of supervisor practice for each of the four supervisors?

As indicated in their interviews and carried out in the post-observation conferences, the focus of these four supervisors' comments covered many areas, both in discussions of their work and in their interactions with student teachers during the post-observation conferences. In analyzing data collected from transcriptions of two of each supervisor's post-observation conferences, supervisory comments were coded into the eight delineated areas of *behavior management*, *time management*, *lesson planning*, *people skills*, *student teaching reflection*, *curriculum*, *child development*, and *children's learning*. Results were analyzed across cases in this phase of the study, and, once again, patterns became apparent.

In each of the post-observation conferences studied, coded data indicated that three areas received substantially more attention than the others (see Table 11). Data totaled across cases revealed that *student teacher reflection* received 140 comments, *lesson planning* was discussed 105 times, and *children's learning* was the focus of supervisor comments on 81 occasions. The closest coded area to these totals was found in *behavior management*, with a total across cases of 31 comments.

That comments addressed to *student teacher reflection* should be so prominent in the distribution of these data might have been expected given the frequent reference to reflection made in discussions with these supervisors. Each of the participants, in their own way, highlighted the importance of the development of reflective skills in student teachers. Moreover, it is a central component of the goals of this particular teacher education program and one that would be familiar to all of the university supervisors connected to this institution. Mary, for example, reported that she felt a good supervisor would "help them [the student teachers] ask themselves the right questions"

Table 11
Cross-Case Focus Code Overview

	S1: Amelia		S2: Mary		S3: Bonnie		S4: Marion	
	Obs.#1	Obs.#2	Obs.#1	Obs.#2	Obs.#1	Obs.#2	Obs.#1	Obs.#2
ST Grade Placement:	K	Gr 6	Gr 3	Gr 6	Gr 1	Gr 5	Gr 4	Gr 1
2S: <i>Behavior Management</i>	7	2	2	5	6	2	6	1
2T: <i>Time Management</i>	0	2	6	3	3	2	1	0
2U: <i>Lesson Planning</i>	5	10	26	28	6	1	4	14
2V: <i>People Skills</i>	2	0	1	1	2	3	1	1
2W: <i>Student Teacher Reflection</i>	10	7	38	40	10	16	10	9
2X: <i>Curriculum</i>	0	1	3	1	3	2	2	2
2Y: <i>Child Development</i>	5	0	1	1	0	0	1	10
2Z: <i>Children's Learning</i>	6	8	11	20	10	11	7	15

(S2, I, 3/9, p. 20). Later in the interview, she commented, “I look for how the ST ... [is able to] judge throughout the lesson how effective the instruction is” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 31). In her review of the video, Mary commented, “See that. She was so reflective. I just had to lead her a little there” (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 2). Later she noted, “Helping students develop their reflective skills takes time--and with the really good ones like Susie, it actually takes even more time, because you have to help *them* reach for it” (S2, RV, 10/6, p. 10).

Bonnie identified *reflection* as central to her approach to teaching as well as to supervision and shared how much attention she felt it deserved in terms of student teacher development. “Supervisors have to do more than just ask students to reflect. They have to help them really see what’s going on” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 11). In her review of the video, Bonnie assessed her own effectiveness as a supervisor in terms of her attention to the student teacher’s reflective skills by stating, “I encouraged her to be reflective and really review [what she did]. Many of my questions to her support that” (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 2). Later, as she explained how she approached the post-observation conference, Bonnie noted, “I always like to begin with the student’s reflections” (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 12).

While Marion and Amelia did not frequently refer to “reflection” by name, they, too, indicated the value they placed on helping students gain perspective on their own work. Amelia, for example, wanted to know whether the student teacher “notices the learning ... and what they are doing about it” (S1, I, 3/10, p. 18). In her review of the video, she said, “I wanted her to figure it out” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 2), and later, “I’ll try to remind them of the goal they were working on and help them work toward a way that would be more successful” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 7). Similarly, Marion offered the following: “Good supervision is trying to move the ST beyond what is merely

acceptable and raising their own standards of performance.... I can ask some questions that can move them beyond that level” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 54). A few minutes later, she added, “I try to help students notice the children’s reactions as they work with them” (S4, I, 3/11, p. 57).

It is also noteworthy in considering these findings to recognize that reflection can be a component of comments addressed simultaneously to other areas, and this may also have influenced the more frequent appearance of this coding. When a supervisor asked, for example, “How could you tell that part of the lesson was effective?” (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 7), the comment was coded both 2Z (*Children’s Learning*) and 2W (*Student Teacher Reflection*). This happened across cases more frequently with issues of reflection than any other coding combinations and serves to remind us of how much emphasis and encouragement of student teachers’ own construction of knowledge are visible in the work of these supervisors.

When explored within individual cases, these data remained remarkably consistent to the overall pattern just described. Even considering the fact that once again Mary’s numbers are substantially higher than those of the other supervisors, the participants involved in this study showed a propensity to focus on some areas much more than others. When results are combined for first and second observations for each supervisor, only Marion had a higher combination of totals in an area outside *Student Teacher Reflection*. (Her highest numbers were in *Children’s Learning* and were heavily weighted to her problematic second observation. Her second highest coded totals, however, were in *Student Teacher Reflection* and were very close in number to her totals for *Children’s Learning*.)

Conversely, a few areas conspicuously received less attention uniformly across cases. *People Skills* was coded, for example, only 11 times across all four cases, and

Curriculum only 14 times in all the observation comments of the four supervisors combined. Only Bonnie addressed *People Skills* a total of three times (in Observation #2), and Amelia was coded as not addressing this area at all (in her second observation). This seemed puzzling at first, and the coded transcriptions were reviewed one more time in an effort to shed light on these findings. Several possible reasons are finally proposed to explain the much smaller number of times these areas were coded.

For the purposes of this study, *People Skills* was identified as the skill needed for the student teacher to get along with other people, to be a flexible and cooperative team member, and to be viewed as a teacher whose personal demeanor was not cold and reproving. It did not necessarily include the student teacher's reluctance to see things the way the supervisor might have wanted her to see them, nor did it include comments that were addressed to skills in dealing with children that could have been identified as developmental. Thus, *People Skills* was very focused on an overall view of the student teacher's ability to get along with people in a way that would stand out as impacting general relationships with others. In this particular group of student teachers, there were no real problems in this area, but that may not be representative of all groups that could be studied. Anecdotal evidence from my own experience supervising student teachers indicates that, although rare, where this *is* a perceived issue, it is sufficiently problematic as to warrant much attention.

Curriculum was coded only a handful of times more than *People Skills*, but in light of this particular teacher education program, this is not difficult to understand. Education students in both undergraduate and graduate programs have to complete a fieldwork component connected to *every* methods and child development course they take. Although the undergraduate program requires substantially more hours of field

placement (owing to the fact that undergraduates tend to be full-time students while graduate students are often working and taking their certification classes at night), all elementary student teachers in this program have had opportunities to work through curriculum issues specific to the particular subject area under study. As they did field placements resonant to those areas, education students were under the supervision of a representative from the university and had time to explore, question, “try on,” and reflect on curriculum. Student teaching issues, therefore, tend to revolve more around the everyday give-and-take of overall teaching and learning responsibilities. Both supervisors and their student teachers infrequently need to address curriculum, per se, but codings that incorporated issues peripheral to this area were seen to include lesson planning, child development, and children’s learning.

Lesson Planning was the second most frequently coded area of focus during the post-observation conferences, while *Children’s Learning* received the third highest number of coded comments. Although these findings can be interpreted as following individual supervisors’ emphasis, some noteworthy patterns emerged that held true for all participants. For example, in each case, comments addressed to both lesson planning and children’s learning increased during the student teacher’s second observation, although the order of frequency differed among supervisors. For both Amelia and Mary, comments addressed to *Lesson Planning* were second in frequency; although in Amelia’s case the numbers between second and third place were almost negligible (*Children’s Learning* was coded once more than *Lesson Planning*). Mary, on the other hand, was coded 54 times as addressing issues of *Lesson Planning* as opposed to 31 times on issues involving *Children’s Learning*. In retrospect, these variances may have more to do with perceived needs specific to the lesson observed than with any philosophical focus of the supervisors themselves. For both Bonnie and

Marion, the frequency order of the second and third items coded was reversed; *Children's Learning* was addressed more frequently than *Lesson Planning*, which was coded third in order of frequency. For both of these supervisors, there was not much of a difference in actual numbers of times the two areas were coded, leading one to the conclusion that both were of vital, though somewhat interchangeable, focus to these participants. It is perhaps important to note that, for these supervisors, the lesson planning under scrutiny was a process, not a format. While supervisors did want to see that student teachers could show their planning on paper, the particular format, however it was organized or presented, was of less importance than the student teacher thinking such planning represented.

Behavior Management was dealt with by each of the supervisors almost uniformly, and although each participant showed a marked difference between the first and second observation, the number of times supervisors were coded as addressing *Behavior Management* correlated to grade level placements in all cases except Marion's. While the numbers represented by these codings were themselves small enough to be viewed once again as representative of nothing more than idiosyncrasies of the individuals involved, it nonetheless seemed worthy of attention that Amelia, Mary, and Bonnie all addressed issues of *Behavior Management* more frequently in the lower-grade placements than they did in the higher grades. Marion did not, but that could be explained by the fact that she spent much more time on issues of *Child Development* and *Children's Learning*. Although Karen did "manage" the group adequately, at least in terms of what is usually evaluated in this area, her way of doing so ignored what Marion considered essential to the developmental and learning needs of young children.

It may also be important to note that in this sample, Karen was the only student teacher who went from a higher to a lower grade in her second placement (see Table 11). In retrospect, this could have accounted both for her unrealistic expectations of the younger children, and Marion's inability to pick up on this problem, as she perceived it, until late into the student teaching experience. It should also be remembered that Karen was the only graduate student in the group. Whereas the other student teachers in this cohort were undergraduates, were younger, and as part of their program, had had more hours in the field, Karen was in the process of changing careers at the time she was observed and was coming from several previous years of working in a law office.

Time Management did not seem to provoke much discussion in this sample. While Mary was coded more frequently than the others in this area, this could be in keeping with the unusual frequency of her interactive patterns generally. Mary's first observation of Susie was also directed to issues of time more than any of the other observed lessons.

Perhaps the most intriguing finding of the cross-case analysis of these focus codes was the infrequency of supervisory moves coded as focused on *Child Development*. Marion's second observation of Karen deviates markedly from this pattern (10 comments directly focused on this area), and Amelia spent some time helping Nancy focus on Nelson (5 comments); but although both these examples are drawn, interestingly enough, from data collected in kindergarten and first grade placements, there was almost nothing coded in this area over the other six observations. (Three observations had a total of one comment, and three showed none at all.) The only two conferences coded with any frequency were Marion's first grade placement conference with Karen and Amelia's kindergarten conference with Nancy. In both

cases, the supervisor seemed to perceive that the ST needed to be prodded into reflections as they applied to the development of children. While this can be considered an exemplary practice in that these supervisors picked up on developmental needs of children and focused them back to the STs, there remains at least a bit of a question as to how the other six placements could have been devoid of such need.

In summary, it is clear that within this admittedly small sample, patterns did emerge. Findings indicate that these supervisors focused more on issues of reflection, lesson planning, and children's learning than any other of the identified areas. Lesson planning discussions were not wrapped up in the technicalities of the written plan, however, as much as they were addressed to the student's understanding of what her goals were and what she was able to accomplish.

Research Question #3

In what ways, if any, do the practices of these supervisors differ as they work with the student teacher in third grade placements and below as compared to their work with the same student in placements above third grade?

A puzzling aspect of the practice of dual placements within student teaching is the fact that although there seems to be strong enough consensus for a model that requires prospective teachers to have practice working with children both above and below third grade, guidelines as to exactly why that is important, or what is to be accomplished by such a grade level differentiation, rarely surface in the literature.

If the inclusion of two placements is aimed only at providing a student teacher with the opportunity to work in two different settings, with two different groups of children, then it would seem reasonable, for example, that a fourth grade/sixth grade placement or a kindergarten/second grade field experience would suffice. But that is not the way student teaching placements are most commonly divided. A typical

student teaching experience requires a placement in third grade or below, and one above third grade. In New York State, for example, where the existing license certifies the holder to teach from Pre-K through grade 6, the third grade placement dividing line assures that one student teaching grade placement covers at least 5 grade levels (Pre-K through grade 3), while the second placement covers the remaining three grades (grades 4, 5, and 6).

This study sought to explore the beliefs and practices of the four participants as they impacted on the grade placements of the student teachers involved. The following reflect the findings related to this exploration and include a discussion of participants' education, experience, beliefs, and practice as they can be seen to relate to the third research question.

As stated earlier, the participant sample selected for this study was purposeful to a certain extent, but in no way was it based on prior knowledge of the backgrounds or existing beliefs of the supervisors involved. While it could be taken for granted that these four women brought with them both elementary teacher education backgrounds and elementary school practice, nothing else was apparent to the researcher until the final selection was completed and the interviews begun.

Subsequent interview data revealed that two of these participants majored in education as undergraduates; Bonnie pursued elementary education, and Mary studied early childhood education. Both eventually became principals. Amelia and Marion began their teacher education in graduate programs, and both remained in the classroom for the duration of their careers, although both also accumulated the appropriate credentials to become administrators. Of the four, only Marion consistently taught in grades three and below, but all spoke of experiences in multiple grade placements. Table 9 gave a brief comparison of backgrounds and experience of

the participants, and the comparison is mentioned here again since some of these variables may be seen as influencing beliefs and practices.

In the interview process, all four women were asked how they planned their supervision of student teachers to take advantage of the practice of the two grade-level placements (see Appendix A), and they were free to discuss whatever they saw as important with regard to this question. In their discussions of their practice within their interviews, several differences were noted.

Marion did not really deal with the question, expressing the feeling that experience was cumulative, and the more a student had of it, the better it was for her teaching. The other three revealed a variety of viewpoints; Amelia initially said she saw no difference in the way she approached the two grade placements, but then added, "I expect them to take more responsibility in the second placement" (S1, I, 3/10, p. 15). Later in the interview process she noted,

I spend the most time with them in their first placement ... and there's always a jolt in their thinking when they move. [As they begin to feel comfortable in their first placement] ... they tell me they love the grade and ... when the new children are suddenly presented to them, they frequently find them difficult and want to go back [to their old grade placement]. We really discuss a lot about that, you know, (pause) how you're a teacher of every grade and how you have to have an attitude when you go in of accepting every child. (S1, I, 3/10, p. 22)

Bonnie answered the question at first, by alluding to differences in the lesson taught and saying, "If the subject changes or if it is a different kind of a lesson, I may look for different things. Certain lessons draw upon understandings of group management more than others do. If the lesson is very complicated or if there is much moving around, these issues may be more prominent" (S3, I, 3/12, p. 24). Later, she also noted how her expectations may change in the second placement by saying she

expects “a little more polish, more growth, and implementation of some of the earlier suggestions that arose in discussion” (S3, I, 3/12, p. 32).

Interestingly, Mary echoed the initial reaction of the others when first asked the question. Her answer began, “Not really,” but quickly moved on into “except that the second placement is generally easier for the student teacher. You supervise a little differently because they’ve had experience ... they tackle things more readily” (S2, I, 3/9, p. 42). Mary also shared some thoughts similar to those expressed by Amelia about the student teachers’ frequent discomfort on having to leave a familiar age group and move on. These were the only allusions to the age of the children involved that the supervisors spoke about in answer to the question, and, in fact, most of these and other points made could apply whether students changed grade levels in their second placements or not.

Unlike Amelia’s feeling that the change itself was the discomfiting issue, Mary felt it was easier for a student to move from the lower grades to the higher than the other way around and she explained why:

Going from sixth grade down to first grade is much harder for them. In first grade, you get experience in taking something and breaking it down in a way young children can understand. Once you have that, you can take it with you to sixth grade (pause) or to college! You tend to see more grouping in the lower grades, too, and get more comfortable with the concept of not teaching to the entire class. You get used to integrating activities, using manipulatives, (pause) all the things that go with early childhood. Unfortunately, in many schools, we seem to think we have to do away with these things after third grade. That’s why it’s easier to move up, because you can bring this experience with you, you’ll know what it’s like, and the cooperating teacher may be delighted to let you try some “new” things.... Yes, teaching a sixth grader *is* different, but with the standards changing and the push toward teaching to the test, there seems to be so much less attention and time for things like manipulatives, role playing, and differentiated instruction, for example. I think it’s really a plus to have the primary experience as background when the student teacher goes into those higher grades. (S2, I, 3/9, p. 43)

While Mary refers to such experience as making it “easier” for the student to move up to the higher grade levels, it was my sense that she really was expressing her belief that experiences such as those she described enabled the student to teach the higher grade levels more *effectively*. She was the only supervisor to specifically mention the unique needs of the child under age eight in the interview process, and, perhaps not coincidentally, the only supervisor with specific early childhood educational background.

It seems important to note that while Marion did not *describe* any difference in her practice in relation to this interview question, she nonetheless was adamant that the student teacher should know all the children as individuals and recognize that each child has a unique developmental timetable (S4, I, 3/11, p. 61). This seemed to convey her belief that teachers should have experience across age groups as a way of understanding these variations in development. Here, too, it is perhaps noteworthy that all of Marian’s teaching experience was in Grade 3 and below.

In the discussions that followed their reviews of conferences, other interesting patterns surfaced. After reviewing a videotape of herself actually conferencing with a student, Marion made several comments addressed to the developmental level of young children. While she did not articulate that such interest was guided by any particular principles she was following, she nonetheless was determined in what she was looking for in the student’s second placement. Marion had struggled with aspects of development all through the second conference with Karen, and it was not surprising that she emphasized it after watching the video: “ I was particularly watchful for how she [Karen] handled a different group of children, how she adjusted the kinds of activities and lessons she taught *to* those children ... things that would show she was prepared to teach her own class [of young children]. (S4, RV, 5/11, p. 18)

Amelia also addressed grade level differences in her review of the videotape: “It’s really [important] to understand that little children have different developmental needs and they [STs] need to follow definite steps in helping them learn” (S1, RV, 5/7, p. 13). She also, it should be remembered, still insisted later that she looks for the same things in both placements. Both of these supervisors were reviewing a lower primary placement, as opposed to Mary and Bonnie, who were reviewing fifth grade placements. The only explicit goal common to these supervisors in terms of placement differences was their belief that within the second placement, the ST should become more proficient and handle more responsibility.

Within the post-observation conferences, where actual supervisory practice was explored, all the supervisors were seen to allude to the age level of the children, albeit in different degrees. In the case of Amelia, Mary, and Bonnie, the first observations with the student teacher were all in third grade placements or below. In each conference, time was spent helping the student teacher relate to the age group concerned. Many comments revolved around attention span and management techniques important to working with younger children. Amelia tried to help Nancy see that Nelson’s inattentiveness could be related, not only to his inability to understand the language, but also to his developmental needs. Mary helped Susie focus on how her story fit the developmental level of her age group and also led her through a discussion of whether it was appropriate to go through an intricate and drawn-out process of voting on a name for the main character. She highlighted some important strategies for working with younger children when she complimented the student for keeping the children involved physically with many aspects of the lesson.

Bonnie congratulated Allison on how she kept the children on task, how she used a clapping pattern to get their attention, and how the activity with water drew their

interest, all strategies that enhance learning in young children. While none of the strengths highlighted by these supervisors are exclusive to the early years, they are particularly important to understanding the learning needs of young children. At the same time, it can be said that none of these supervisors helped the student teachers *identify* these strategies specifically as important to the developmental needs of the young child.

There can be argument made that such a differentiation according to age is not essential as long as the teaching is effective. It can also be argued that these teaching skills, understandings, and practices are important to all levels of teaching. Both points are well taken. My point here is merely to report that these student teachers didn't *hear* from their supervisors much that would enable them to articulate and defend the importance of some of these practices to the learning of young children.

Marion, on the other hand, supervised Karen in the lower grade during the student teacher's second placement. Where Karen had seemed to meet Marion's expectations in the fourth grade placement, and the supervisor was comfortable with her performance, concern grew when the observation switched to a first grade. In this case, although Marion had expressed no anticipated difference in the way she approached the two-semester student teaching grade placements when she was interviewed, she, in fact, did begin to focus much more heavily on age expectations for the children in this second placement.

In summary, findings for Research Question #3 revealed that these four supervisors did not articulate differences in supervisory practice that were specifically related to the developmental levels of the children, although they did differentiate their practice in ways that reflected awareness of age characteristics of children.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To move, then, from the particularities to wider and wider graspings is, in part, a matter of looking through more particularities, to discover in others' questions and visions more and more ways of transcending one-dimensional grasping. As the dialogue expands, it allows, on the one hand, for the gradual constitution of an in-between; on the other hand, it allows the gradual coming into being of a norm-governed world. (Greene, 1995, p. 69)

In this study, I have explored how four university supervisors perform and think about their work with preservice student teachers in elementary education. My purpose was to foreground the work of these supervisors as I examined the beliefs, practices, reflections, and recommendations they expressed about their roles, their responsibilities, and the focus of their work with student teachers. After interviewing the supervisors, I observed each of them as they worked with a student teacher in two different grade placements over the course of a one-semester student teaching experience and listened to their reflections on that work. In Chapters IV and V, I presented the findings that emerged from these data and created a cross-case composite portrait based on these findings and as they relate to the three research questions. Here I present a summary and discussion of the findings in relation to the literature and then examine implications for practice and future research derived from the findings. This chapter concludes with some reflections by the researcher.

Summary and Discussion

In this section, summary findings are first discussed in terms of the literature presented in Chapter II not addressed in Chapter V, and then as they relate to the voices of the supervisor participants. The discussion is organized around the themes of theoretical influences, issues related to background information of the university supervisors, and issues related to grade placement before turning to a more general discussion of findings related to the supervisors themselves.

Theoretical Influences

While theories tend to be framed idiosyncratically, with language that allows them to be viewed as identifiable entities, people tend to be more eclectic in the way they apply theories to their lives. University supervisors of student teachers are no exception. While all four participants had extensive administrative/supervisory coursework behind them (in which it can be assumed theory was included), none of them voluntarily made any connection to theoretical underpinnings in their discussions. Even when prompted, they were not especially moved in that direction. This seemed to fit the description of supervisors in much of the literature as practice-oriented and disinterested in theory (Glanz, 1995). However, dismissing this reaction as mere indifference can mask the possible subtleties such an orientation may imply. Reiman and Sprinthall (1998) point out that competing theories seem to guide supervisory practice, and Glickman and Bey (1990) describe disagreement within the field over which models or processes of supervision are most effective. Additional reasons may also shade the responses of these supervisors.

Alfonso (1998) questioned whether supervisors of student teachers should be viewed as teachers rather than supervisors. This is an interesting point. Supervisors, if

they are expected not just to evaluate performance but to encourage teachers to reach toward new levels of practice and reflections on that practice, would certainly seem more closely aligned to the concept of *teacher* than to *supervisor*, as those words are commonly understood. This alternate identity seems relevant to the way at least these four women view definitions of what they do.

While definitely aware of their roles and responsibilities as evaluators, gatekeepers, and “overseers” of student teacher performance, this cohort of participants seemed not as moved by a view of themselves as having “super-vision” of teachers as they were by the prospect of sharing and encouraging visions of “super-teaching.” This may be why they tended to retreat from attempts to describe them in terms of a recognized model of supervision, something they may have experienced in their own careers as “snoopervision.” Even the two former principals, while clearly versed in the rhetoric and skills that are necessary for the administrative functions they performed, seemed uncomfortable labeling what they did as following a particular “theory,” almost as if doing so would shade their interactions with student teachers in some less than humanistic way.

However, another way of interpreting their behavior in this regard could have to do with the construction of knowledge. Teachers, working day to day within the often maddening flux of children’s mercurial needs, parents’ anxious demands, and administrators’ ultimatums, must rely to a great extent on implicit knowledge. Isolated as they are within practice, they are rarely called upon to make this knowledge explicit to others. The university supervisors in this sample, both in their previous work as teachers and in their current roles as supervisors, may have grown accustomed to working, thinking, and reflecting either in isolation or in atheoretical terms, and this can be seen as another explanation for the fact that they do not refer to theories in their

talk. For many, perhaps, theory is not part of the internal “dialogue” that characterizes in-flight thinking and decision-making.

In the case of these particular participants, the school of education could also be an influence in that no particular orientation toward a theory of supervision has been articulated for them. Instead, the university offers orientations to the philosophy and implementation of each professional education program, and helps supervisors stay informed about content and methodology, as well as research and trends in the profession by regularly scheduling discussion meetings, speakers, and workshops for the supervisors. In its Mission Statement, the department clearly supports “participatory processes,” “inquiry,” and “experiences” that enable students to be “life long learners.” Programs encourage a “convergence of theory with practice through collaboration ... engagement ... and examination.” Attempts are made to integrate clearly such constructs into all aspects of the program, including the practice of university supervisors. While the teacher education program does not promote a theory-driven approach to the education of teachers, it is committed to preparing individuals who are “theory-informed and theory-informing.” Within such a framework, it does not seem unusual that supervisors would seek to practice in ways that are theory-informed rather than theory-driven. Their theories may be visible in their practice (Schon, 1987) but not necessarily articulated as such. This study examined the literature on three models of supervision as well as adult developmental theory and sociocultural theory in order to explore how these theories might be represented in the work university supervisors do. Following is a discussion of the relationship of such literature to the findings.

Clinical Supervision. Since some form of clinical supervision seems to guide the form and function of many university supervisors’ work with student teachers

(Glickman & Bey, 1990), I was interested in whether particular aspects of it were more prevalent than others, and how congruent supervisors' described practice was to their actual work with student teachers. "The spirit of clinical supervision is difficult to capture in words," according to Acheson and Gall (1997, p. 3). These authors outline several goals of the clinical supervision model, including (1) to provide teachers with objective feedback, (2) to diagnose and solve instructional problems, (3) to help teachers develop skill in using instructional strategies, (4) to evaluate teachers for promotion, tenure, etc., and (5) to help teachers develop a positive attitude about continuous professional development (pp. 13-14). Although all of these goals seem constructive to the growth of a teacher, I was interested in exploring if, in university supervisors' work with student teachers, emphasis on one or another of these goals predominated. The areas defined for this study fit my interpretation of the second, third, and fourth of these goals, and I identified these areas as *clinician* (in the sense of technically advising and offering treatment), *collaborator* (in the sense of cooperatively working with another), and *assessor* (in the sense of acting as a judge).

Earlier I stated that strong elements of clinical supervision were expected to be apparent in the work of these women. This held true in several ways, especially in terms of the skeletal structure followed and the complex interrelated aspects of the clinical approach that were explored here in discrete units. The supervisors met face-to-face (more often side-by-side) with students in conferencing, used classroom observation and objective observational data as a basis for conferencing, elicited the student teacher's inferences, opinions, and feelings, and encouraged the student to consider alternatives (Acheson & Gall, 1997). In Chapter V, I described how data were used to determine if supervisors identified themselves as pulling from one of the three identified aspects of the clinical model and whether practice was congruent to the

stated intent. While it was clear that participants placed a high value on collaboration and recognized the need for assessment, these women more often interacted with student teachers in a clinical fashion. In this way, they could be seen as pulling from many aspects of the clinical supervision model, but took the lead in offering technical advice more than one would probably feel comfortable doing in a more collaborative venture.

Perhaps that is a crucial difference between student teaching supervision and teaching supervision. While the press for developing reflective practitioners and collaborative learning is strong over all in the teaching field, the limited experiential backgrounds of student teachers, coupled with a limited timeframe, may have influenced supervisors' stated goals of collaboration to be overshadowed in reality by a more clinical approach in which supervisors were frequently drawn to the role of technical advisor.

Developmental Supervision. Developmental supervision (Glickman, 1981, 1990) was less apparent within this sample, as it could apply to the structure of the student teaching experience. Developmental supervision relies on the diagnosis of stages of conceptual thought and the application of such diagnosis to a choice of supervisory approaches. While it was felt that several, if not all, of the participants in this study actually did tailor their work with the student teacher to an unconscious, or at least unstated, understanding of that student's conceptual development, nowhere was it apparent that any attempt was made to choose a directive, collaborative, or non-directive strategy based on those developmental characteristics outlined by Glickman (1981): level of job commitment and the ability to think abstractly. Some existing literature reveals that this model is more appropriately utilized with inservice teachers, but others propose it as especially helpful with preservice teachers

(Thies-Sprintall, 1980). None of the participants indicated a background in this model, and neither did I find that they demonstrated any detectable propensity for using such guidelines in their work.

Horizontal Evaluation. Some of Gitlin's (1981) perceptions of what he termed *horizontal evaluation* did seem appropriate when applied to the data collected. Gitlin pointed out that if supervisors attend only to the congruence between a student teacher's stated goals and her outcomes, the opportunity could be missed to extend the student's understandings. I detected some of his strategies in the way these supervisors encouraged their student teachers to reflect on their practice. In her comments to Nancy about Nelson, Amelia seemed to be illustrating the strategy of helping the student to see alternatives by asking Nancy, "So what else can you do with him?" (S1, Ob#1, 3/16, p. 3). Mary, for another, demonstrated techniques common to horizontal evaluation in her comments to Susie on sharing and voting (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 8) and by prompting the student, through questioning, to see that two objectives were similar (S2, Ob#1, 3/15, p. 18). Bonnie seemed to be using a similar strategy when she asked Alison, "What part do you think you didn't explain well enough?" (S3, Ob#2, 5/5, p. 2), and Marion offered the same type of prompting when she asked Karen, "Are there trees and plants on your campus or around your campus where you could actually go and see seeds on the ground?" (S4, Ob#2, 4/22, p. 3).

In their interaction with these students, in fact, the four supervisors demonstrated many of Gitlin's techniques on a regular basis in ways that promoted both critical thinking and reflections on practice. In their comments to me after they had reviewed the video of their work with the student in one of the post-observation conferences, supervisors made several references to aspects of evaluation that seemed to draw from Gitlin's emphasis on the student's ability to be self-critical. Bonnie, for example,

notes, “I feel the supervision process best helped her [Alison] further her reflective thinking. She is well on her way, and I say this not only because of her interactions with me, but I can see how hard she is on herself” (S3, RV, 8/31, p. 15).

Adult Developmental Theory. Adult developmental theory was important to the study mainly in the way it can further broaden the knowledge base of supervisory practice as it is applied to both student teachers and to university supervisors themselves. Undergraduate student teachers may be in a different life stage from graduate student teachers. Then, too, graduate students working as supervisors may have different developmental needs from those of retired teachers and principals who do the work of supervision.

In the five factors indicated by Caruso and Fawcett (1986) as likely to influence adult learning, some seem to be a natural part of the supervisors’ interactions with student teachers and others were not. Most of the supervisors seemed to clearly acknowledge and leave room for student teacher needs in terms of “independence, interdependence, and motivation.” The other factors, while applied somewhat, were not as well accessed by these participants and would seem to hold much promise for the field.

“Self-knowledge and self-concept,” for example, can be powerful indicators of how much a student teacher can be influenced. Adults who have not become self-analytical are less likely to change and may see learning as applying only to children. Supervisors working with them may discover that they are resistant to new undertakings (Caruso & Fawcett, 1986). Marion’s interactions with Karen might be seen in light of this element. However, all supervisors were observed to be already doing what is advised by Caruso and Fawcett in terms of helping students become

more reflective, in that they provided the student with “input about their teaching ... to help them become more reflective about their behavior” (p. 57).

“Orientation to learning” applies to the fact that, unlike children, adults are usually not willing to accept instruction on a topic passively. While advocating a problem-centered approach, Caruso and Fawcett acknowledge that for many people, “problem” implies blame, but used over time, this approach can help shift the focus from self to others. The difficulty seen within such an approach as it is applied to supervision of student teachers is the limited timeframe allotted for such change.

These same understandings of principles of adult development can also be applied to the university supervisors. While all the supervisors in this study seemed invested in their vision of “good” practice, they nonetheless seemed very open to learning and mentioned their eagerness to keep learning frequently. Certainly, their life stages, experiences, and transitions would also be expected to impact on their supervision. For example, all of the supervisors in my sample were retired. How do people at this stage of life approach the process of supervision as compared to people who are in the trenches of their work with children (cooperating teachers) or in eager pursuit of some higher goal (graduate students)? That these women were not only retired after long careers in the field, but also that they wanted to continue to influence the development of teachers and in that way affect children’s lives, are factors to consider.

Perhaps one further aspect needs mentioning. How do these elements affecting adult learning play off the interactions of the participants? How do people in different life stages, and with different orientations to learning, for example, interact with, teach, and/or learn from others who are in different places within their own adult developmental patterns?

Sociocultural Theory. Though limited by a literature base that has not included supervision of student teachers to any extent, sociocultural theory offers some interesting possibilities, when considered in light of this sample. Britzman (1986), for example, writes of the frustrations and feelings of inadequacy teachers described as they worked through the disequilibrium of moving from theory to practice. Gitlin's (1981) work on horizontal evaluation reminds us that there could also be a *lack* of disequilibrium if a student's intent matches practice without consideration of whether those intents are justified. While Gitlin was making reference specifically to moral, ethical, and political implications of justifying intent, my own additional concern has always been that intent may indeed be found to match practice without children's learning being fully evaluated. In other words, a practitioner may teach what she intended to teach without fully exploring how many of the children actually learned from the process. It is possible for a student teacher to accomplish all the planned objectives without having to account for an individual student's learning. As Tharp and Gallimore (1986) point out, locating the ZPD is difficult to do with large groups. Standardized testing, a weak replacement for assessing "in-flight" performance, can remove the burden, but limit the opportunities for children. Lipman (1996) urges teacher education to model the types of interactions that can prepare new teachers for Moll's (1990) vision of the possibilities a sociocultural approach can bring to education.

In fact, supervisors in this study did seem to define both their roles and practice in ways that already reflect some of the tenets of the sociocultural approach. The teacher education program they work with does place emphasis on many of the same goals and practices as those described in Samaras and Gismondi (1998), and several of the findings from that study apply here. In terms of situated learning, for example, it

was found that many of these authors' recommendations for teacher education are practices observed within my sample. In Chapter IV, many examples of discourse between individual supervisors and student teachers were offered that demonstrated how understandings of practice were negotiated, perspectives were exchanged, and disappointments and confusions were expressed and sorted out (or not sorted out in some cases). Participants here also expressed their concern, both from their experiences as teachers as well as from their work in classrooms as supervisors, that cooperating teachers might not typically have the time or inclination to scaffold the thinking of their supervisees.

Goodman and Fish's (1997) finding along this line of thinking relates here in an interesting way because it seems to offer a different interpretation of a word I use as one of my three style and approach codes: *collaboration*. The authors find that developing skill in collaboration and negotiation can be critical to teacher development but seem to accentuate that aspect of collaboration that leans toward negotiating with those in power or who hold different perspectives. While this definition certainly seems to have relevancy for teacher education in terms of advocacy, teachers' feelings of efficacy as agents of change, and effectiveness within power relationships, I did not get the feeling that such a focus was embodied in these supervisors' understanding of the word. Instead, my data seemed to reflect a definition of collaboration that was aimed at joint intellectual endeavors.

While I will later explore dynamics of the triadic relationship that touch on questions of how such "working with the enemy" *should* in fact be a part of the student teaching experience, here I allude to Goodman and Fish's argument in order to point out that my data revealed the word *collaboration* to evoke images of getting along, cooperating, giving support, and encouraging the efforts made by student teachers.

These supervisors felt a strong press to be collaborative, as they understood it, and yet they sometimes felt a need to go beyond such understandings of collaboration in their work with student teachers. Mary and Bonnie, the two supervisors with many principalship years behind them, did not seem to have as much difficulty moving into more critical discourse and negotiated thinking with their student teachers. However, their student teachers, Susie and Allison, seemed more receptive and eager for reflection than either Nancy or Karen. This study could not ascertain whether such proclivity toward reflection grew out of a style of supervision practiced by Mary or Bonnie, or was a component of the skills, strategies, or personalities of the student teachers themselves. However, there was much within the data to offer tantalizing speculation as to how more exposure to a sociocultural approach to supervision could help university supervisors become not only more aware of strategies that might enhance the reflective ability of student teachers, but also encourage them to become more comfortable in using these strategies.

One more aspect of learning related to this theory became noticeable in the analysis of data. While that aspect applies directly to just this small sample, my own years of experience support the view that it is not an idiosyncratic occurrence. All eight of the times I recorded these supervisors observing student teachers' work in the classroom, their observations were limited to the given structure of a "lesson." While the press for academic standards is strong in our schools today, and can be reflected in schools of education wanting to assure that content can be taught effectively by its graduates, it seems perplexing that we almost ignore the levels of skill students of education display outside the confines of this "lesson" structure. How do they handle interactions with parents, for example, and other members of the staff? Perhaps more importantly, how do they deal with other aspects of the child's development, such as

the social, emotional, and physical? Where are they evaluated in terms of their social interactions with children outside the confines of a lesson? How is the student teacher's understanding of context woven into such demonstrations of expertise?

If higher mental functions have their origin in social activity as Hausfather (1996) tells us, and our goal as educators is to encourage the development of those higher functions, then evidence of teaching within social activity would seem of high concern to teacher educators. While activities termed *cooperative* and *collaborative* were frequently utilized in the lessons observed here (and are typical of observations elsewhere), there was little other opportunity to observe student teachers interacting socially with children within the structure of a typical supervision observation. There is even less possibility to observe children's interactions with one another in a typical school day, since student teachers (sometimes encouraged by their cooperating teachers) make every attempt to "manage" well by keeping the children "on task" and "talk" to a minimum. In fact, these supervisors did sometimes encourage more interaction with the children or a more relaxed observation format, but it was difficult for the student teachers to let go of the security of the "lesson." Although this problem was outside the scope of the present study, it nonetheless was a frequent observation made in my researcher journal entries, and perhaps it could benefit from closer scrutiny.

Issues Related to Background Information

In the many studies I reviewed in preparation for and during the course of this study, I was struck by how little we actually learn about the people involved in the supervision of student teachers. There are many and varied voices evaluating and proscribing practice, but only rarely do we hear enough about the flesh-and-blood supervisors to help us relate to them as more than the "shadowy" presence described by

Marion in her interview. Even percentages of responses to a questionnaire do not give a clear picture of who university supervisors are, what they do, and why they may be inclined to take the positions they do. This study attempted to begin to fill that gap in the literature. I am unable to posit findings on this area of the research because the literature here is limited by definitions that are sometimes competing in ways that preclude clear comparisons across studies. However, by separating out and identifying background information on four university supervisors, this study attempted to add to the very small existing research base.

The richest background information within the literature so far has been provided by supervisors who have chosen to explore their own practice, and who texture their writing with information on their backgrounds and experience. In most of these cases, those supervisors tend to be a full-time faculty member or graduate student (Fulwiler, 1996; Rust, 1988; Slick, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). In choosing to explore the background data of supervisors who were *not* moved to write reflectively on their practice, this sample may provide additional insights on the practice of supervision.

Issues Related to Grade Placement

The literature has little to offer on issues related to grade placement as it affects university supervision of elementary preservice student teachers. Nothing I could find in the existing literature encourages a supervisor to look for particular kinds of skills or attitudes related to the developmental levels of the children. Although developmental issues may, of course, be implied by looking at teaching standards across grade levels, such standards themselves may not help the student to connect content area to be taught to behavior of young children. While student teachers can be presumed to have discussed such issues in child development classes, related them to context and content within methods classes, and hopefully also explored the critical and cultural issues that

impact the development we are observing, such issues may not necessarily have become an active and integrated part of the teacher's repertoire of skills and attitudes toward learning as they evolve in the act of teaching.

Within the early childhood literature, some authors call for special attention to such issues that are not reflected in the literature in elementary education. Katz and Goffin (1990), for example, state that teachers of young children need guided practice in building interactive skills that will promote the specific developmental needs of young children. Genishi (1992) offers examples of teachers as they authentically assess children and curriculum through the second grade. Rand (2000) shares teaching cases that extend through the lower primary grades as a link between academic preparation and classroom teaching, and Bodrova and Leong (1996) offer a Vygotskian approach to teaching young children that also extends into the lower elementary grades. Klugman and Smilansky (1990) invite discourse on a number of the implications of play on the development of young children, but such information may not necessarily be a part of the knowledge base of elementary education. Klugman (1990), for example, reports on a study of elementary school principals. His findings revealed that the principals in his study reported teaching experiences that were predominantly in grades three through six; and that while they did respond that play was important to development, they nonetheless seriously questioned the importance of play within the structure of traditional school work when children get beyond the kindergarten level (p. 196). Klugman questions the effect such attitudes will bring to the introduction of younger and younger children to the public school structure and concludes:

The agreed-upon definition of early childhood as including children from birth through age eight seems to be a relatively new concept for the practicing professional in the field, for parents, for policy makers, and for

the community at large.... Implications drawn from these data indicate that the early childhood profession needs to undertake a massive reeducation effort within its own ranks. This effort should include a ... clear explanation of what makes the birth-through-eight age group such a distinct and unique group when contrasted with the current views and values held for the elementary school years. (p. 202)

While Saracho (1993) views fieldwork and student teaching as having a universal enough quality that a separate emphasis on work with young children should not be needed, the work of Katz and Goffin and Klugman, among others, could call this belief seriously into question. Findings from the present study would lend support to the need to at least explore this question further. They show that these four participants actually did an admirable, and often enviable, job of attending to developmental differences by encouraging the student teachers to consider such issues as they dialogued, but it was also found that they brought with them a particular wealth of experience that supported this ability. We do not know what outcomes would have been for other supervisors who did not bring to the role such backgrounds and experience. Of further consideration is the lack of emphasis apparently put on evaluating student teachers' ability to provide play experiences for children and to encourage the social interactions of which Katz and Goffin speak.

That a call for more attention to issues of development specific to the two levels of field placement has not been heard more strongly can be attributed to many factors. Perhaps Saracho and others feel that if *all* practice is geared to the needs of the child involved, then age itself, and therefore grade level, becomes less significant. Then, too, even members of the early childhood field do not agree on the role of child development knowledge, per se, as a source of early childhood curriculum (Katz, 1994). Concerns about *whose* knowledge is represented in discussions of development have certainly impacted on such conflicting views and enhanced our perspectives of children (Goffin, 1996), but with such perspectives also would seem to come a press

for more astute observation skills, skills that are typically more fully addressed in early childhood theory and practice. While critical theory has stimulated educators' thinking in many ways, it may not necessarily have prompted critical thinking across all issues equally, especially as such thinking should apply to every area of teacher decision-making and advocacy. Discussions of power, equity, and ownership of knowledge can gloss over some major tenets of how young children learn. One has only to sit in some lower primary classrooms today to see what I mean. The virtual acceptance by teachers of the "push-down" curriculum that in recent years has dramatically altered early school experiences for young children is one example of this disregard for the developmental needs of many children. I realize that this can be a squirrely issue with many competing dimensions and overlapping viewpoints. Dealing with all of them was not the question I set out to address in this study; but at least in some ways, it is an issue that also concerns Firth and Pajak (1998). They tell us that the field of supervision itself is an emergent one and that it draws on the growing knowledge base of how humans learn.

That being the case, I will leave the issue with the finding that within this sample, supervisors were found to *articulate* that the difference between the two placements was predominantly one of growing expertise in teaching, while *in practice* they expected the student teacher to demonstrate skill in reacting to the developmental needs of children. This was the focus of the lower primary post-observation conference more frequently than it was of the upper-primary conference, regardless of the sequence of grade-level placements. That it is a focus of primary importance to these supervisors, even if not identified by them, and one that may be difficult to work with as well, is seen in the fact that child development issues were the focus of both

examples of conflict that arose with student teachers Nancy and Karen, and that neither Amelia or Marion was pleased by the outcome of their own efforts.

Further, while supervisors were seen to address issues of practices informed by development when they arose, they did not do so in any way that could illuminate the advocacy skills of the student teachers involved with regard to such issues. More reflective student teachers like Susie and Allison might be able to make connections embedded within such experiences, but it may be worth exploring how more attention *within practice* to understandings of how children develop may enrich the understandings of students like Nancy and Karen, who may not have as well developed reflective skills and may be missing opportunities for growth during a time when guided practice is available to them. In the next section, I will discuss issues that arose from the perspectives of the supervisors themselves during the course of this study. Although they do in several cases impact on some of the discussion that has taken place previously, these issues are treated separately here because of their importance to the participants themselves.

Supervisor Voices: Their Issues

In turning to issues voiced within this study as important to this sample of university supervisors, several findings emerged. First of all, without question, these four women loved the work that they do. None of them was being paid enough for salary to be a draw, especially considering all the “extra” time they put into their work with students. At a time in their life when they could turn to other endeavors, these participants chose to spend more time in classrooms and with teachers. Their dreams for education were still vivid and alive, even after all their years of practice. In all the time I have been a teacher educator, I must say that I had never before stopped to think

about this aspect of motivation in terms of cohorts of university supervisors who are drawn from the pool of retired educators.

Being drawn as they are to the field, and bringing to teacher education such a wealth of experience, the issue of status within the university structure was often a topic of discussion, whether directly addressed or in offhand comments that were made from time to time. Even though the Field Placement Office of the university makes attempts to bridge the two worlds of “university supervisor” with “full-time faculty member” in increasingly innovative and successful ways, a “supervisor” in this university, as in many, is still not the “clinical professor” envisioned by Conant (1963), reminding us, as Slick (1998b) points out, that universities have not “taken seriously the importance of examining the complexity of supervision,” and that while “the supervisor title implies status and authority ... [a supervisor] frequently assumes a position of low status at the university as well as at the school site” (p. 821). Concerns revealed by these supervisors revolved, however, not only around issues of status and value, but around ways of improving the education of future teachers. All participants implied in their conversations with me that they could do a better job with student teachers if they were included more in discussion with full-time faculty and that their experience as supervisors might enrich departmental insight and planning. Research that could be directed to exploring the validity of such assumptions seems to be funneled, however, to areas of more scholarly prestige within most universities (Schoonmaker et al., 1998).

These supervisors were not comfortable with the growing expectation that cooperating teachers could supervise student teachers effectively, playing a dual role within their own classrooms. Drawing from their own experiences as cooperating teachers, school administrators, and university supervisors, they offered several

observations on the problems involved in such an instructional structure. All participants made reference, in one form or another, to the fact that full-time classroom practice has its own dictates that can overshadow a student teacher's need to experiment and critique. These supervisors commented on the press for time that epitomizes the flow of most teachers' days and how such time constraints typically left little opening for articulating subtleties of teaching practices in ways that would encourage student teachers toward deliberative practice. They also commented on how student teachers frequently "copied" the practices of their cooperating teachers, the outcomes of which depended on the quality of the cooperating teacher and the needs of the student teacher involved. These views are in line with concerns of Ben-Peretz (2001), Richardson-Koehler (1988), and Zimpher, DeVoss, and Nott (1980), among others.

That all participants expressed strong views on this subject highlights the very nature of a triadic relationship and the conflicts that may be expected to result when groups of three are expected to work together. McIntyre and Byrd (1998) imply that some of the "angst" and "tensions" that typify the friction among triad members may be caused by "a lack of communication and agreement as to the responsibilities of each triad member" (p. 441), and this may very well be true. However, even in the teacher education program portrayed in this study, where responsibilities expected for each role within the triad are clearly delineated and distributed, tensions do arise. Here, Marion seemed to feel the cold wall of "odd-man-out" most clearly in a way that seems intriguing, given some of these negative implications for triads.

In considering the particularities of Marion's experiences and the goals she held for Karen's growth, we should consider the possibility that while a dyad might be the naturally preferred grouping of adults and children (Boydell, 1986), perhaps a dyad

may not be the most effective grouping for the student teaching experience. Rather, a triad may be more productive. If, however, the student teaching triad's effectiveness is predicated upon a lack of tension and conflict between and among triad members, then something essential may be discarded in the quest for a more harmonious group.

I would propose that the student teaching experience is not about psychological intimacy as much as it is about critical inquiry on practice, and particularly a form of inquiry that involves some cognitive conflict. Moll (1990) sheds light on this phenomenon when he discusses collaboration and the ZPD "in which the mechanism promoting development is 'cognitive conflict' or 'sociocognitive conflict'" (p. 159). Research, he reports, has indicated that social interaction bringing different perspectives to bear upon a problem is a highly effective means of inducing cognitive development. If we extend Moll's statements on learning to adults as well as children, we can visualize many opportunities within the *friction* of competing viewpoints that may be used to enhance a student teacher's learning (and, in fact, learning among all triad members). Within the dynamics of the student teaching experience, opportunities for such cognitive conflict may be seen to arise most frequently in groups of three.

Moll does not ignore the problems that may arise for participants within such problem-solving activities and cautions that merely addressing cognitive conflict is insufficient to effect learning. The problems he discusses as emerging from studies on children's collaborative work with a more capable peer and the issue of peer regression as it pertains to such collaboration may hold relevance to such application to the learning of adults, and it is assumed that further investigation would be very helpful on this plane. However, for the purpose of this study, his work is most applicable to an acceptance of cognitive conflict, first as desirable to the learning process, and then to the realization that a triad may inherently provide the impetus for such conflict.

Finally, it contributes to an exploration of ways to reach joint attainment of meaning, for conflict without resolution is non-productive. Moll advises that while such collaboration to achieve joint meaning does not automatically result in higher levels of thinking, attention to the processes of the interactions themselves will increase such possibilities (p. 169).

This work seemed especially relevant in thinking about triad “angst” as epitomizing the feelings of the supervisors in this study who felt such anxiety the most.¹ Perhaps if all members of the triad were led to expect cognitive conflict as a part of the student teaching experience, then tension over its appearance within the triad could be lessened. If we utilize the Vygotskian approach of instruction as leading development, then offering such opportunities for student teachers to observe how professionals (more capable peers) are able to step back from practice and critically examine aspects of work within competing perspectives may be seen as a constructive part of the teacher education process and one that they may be able to carry into practice. “What the child (or in this case the student teacher) can do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow ... [Instruction] must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions” (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 104). The development of such reflective attitudes and willingness to engage conflicting viewpoints instead of retreating from them may in this way be encouraged within the specifically guided relationships of the university supervisor and cooperating teacher to the student teacher and may be a critical component of reflective practice as well as the connection of theory to practice. The data collected on these four supervisors include their views of the role of the cooperating teacher. They offer additional insight on how these views

¹*Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* describes “angst” as a “feeling of dread.”

might connect to a larger picture of the triad's potential to encourage cognitive conflict and attain joint meaning. As such, they can offer an alternative vision for the role of these triad members. Such a role would require professional development in strategies and attitudes that would enable all parties to both see conflict as a productive role and encourage participant skills in identifying, articulating, and working through such conflict.

Limitations of the Study

This study presented findings that represent a very small number of participants as they worked with a single student teacher over the course of a one-semester student teaching placement. The supervisors were all found to have very rich backgrounds in both experience and education that may or may not be typical of other individuals performing the job. All four had advanced degrees, two had doctoral degrees, and they were all retired from full-time careers. Additionally, it is difficult to tell how much my presence influenced the actions and interactions noted within the data. While I tend to think the influence of my presence was negligible due to the responses of the participants, such influence on the data cannot be discounted. In light of such considerations, data could not be generalized to a wider population of student-teacher supervisors, but that was not the intent of this study. Neither did the study purport to be an evaluative tool. The study is limited also by the fact that many of its questions cannot yet be related to the literature in any depth. However, it was hoped that by spotlighting the university supervisor of elementary education student teachers in such a humanizing way, these members of the student teaching triad could finally be

foregrounded in the full light of the expertise they can offer to the education of student teachers.

Significance of the Study

It was further hoped that through this study, discussion of the role and voice of the supervisor in teacher education, the participation of university supervisors in this discussion, and the importance of student teaching in general could be stimulated. Even given its limitations, this study should be an addition to a research base that is not well represented by studies central to this type of supervision. Hopefully, it will stimulate in a unique way thinking about the ripe possibilities for social construction of knowledge that can be explored in the interactions between supervisors and student teachers and encourage inclusion of both early childhood literature and perspectives into the elementary education knowledge base. Then, too, it might also encourage supervisors, recognizing themselves so personally in such a study, to embark on action research of their own, thus making their voices a more integral part of the teacher education decision-making process in the future.

Implications and Recommendations

This study offers four individual cases of preservice supervision of elementary student teachers. Taken together, or considered separately, they offer a rich base of data from which to examine interactions within supervision of student teachers; and they offer wide opportunities, as well, for promoting discussion among teacher educators at all levels, especially among university supervisors themselves. Within each supervisor's portrait, there are individual interpretations that can provoke a line of

further research. Although the answers this study produced are actually few in number, that was actually to be expected in an exploratory study; and as a template for the design and focus of future studies, it may have served its major purpose. In fact, the questions it raises may be its most valuable contribution. Britzman (2000) supports the value of questioning the status quo when she says, “There is a centripetal tendency to freeze knowledge by undervaluing the question and forgetting the importance of doubting the very knowledge on offer” (p. 203). Issues that were raised through the analysis of data are next described in ways that they relate to recommendations for the field of teacher education as well as for research.

Implications and Recommendations for the Field of Teacher Education

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are made for teacher education in general and for supervision of student teachers in particular. I begin by addressing those that are directed to university supervision:

- The term *supervisor* does not adequately convey the roles and responsibilities assigned to university supervisors. Labeling these professionals more appropriately and according to what they actually do would help university supervisors to be more easily identified by their responsibilities to teaching as well as to supervision. The term coined by Conant in 1963, *Clinical Professor*, would seem more appropriate to the role they play in the education of teachers.
- Conflict may be created for university supervisors as they aim for cooperative collaboration in a relationship that can call for scaffolding and the encouragement of cognitive dissonance in student teachers. Although a clear understanding of collaboration and cognitive dissonance would not seem to place them necessarily in conflict with one another, university supervisors

may, in fact, operationalize them in this way. Further efforts in professional development may be helpful to clarify the cohesion of both roles to the work of university supervisors.

- Issues related to adult development, sociocultural theory, and early childhood education have the potential to inform elementary student teacher supervision. They should be included both in professional preparation and inservice development of university supervisors of preservice student teachers.
- Issues within triadic relationships should be explored in light of their impact on cognitive dissonance. Further research needs to be done on the value of such conflict to the development of teachers as well as how best to encourage the productive use of such dissonance through strategies that could promote joint understandings.

In this study, a discrepancy was noted between the way supervisors described their style and approach to supervision and the way they were actually observed to practice. The *Assessor* role was least frequently coded across participants, even though the “gatekeeper” aspect of their role was mentioned frequently. Supervisors seemed hesitant to appear to be assessing, especially in any but positive ways. While they critiqued frequently in the sense that they encouraged critical reflection on practice and offered advice, they did not seem comfortable viewing themselves as assessors. This holds true for all of my previous experience with supervisors as well. Unless the student teacher’s work had serious flaws, supervisors I have worked with tended to accent what went well during their observations and slip critique in as unobtrusively as possible. Such practice is supported by the literature, and, while it may reinforce an awareness that student teachers come to this final leg of their field work relatively well

prepared, it nonetheless also points to the fact that opportunities for further growth and development during this critical period may not always be fully tapped.

The triadic relationship was observed in this study to influence additional constraints as supervisors attempted to respect the practices of the cooperating teachers, a finding also supported in the literature. I would suggest that for each member of the triad, a discussion of the importance of critical feedback and constructive dialogue is imperative. Student teachers should be primed to expect such dialogue, while supervisors and cooperating teachers should be helped to see that differences in approach can be constructively discussed. Supervisors and cooperating teachers should additionally be offered opportunities for professional development in strategies and attitudes that would enable all parties to both see conflict as a productive role and encourage participant skills in identifying, articulating, and working through such conflict.

- Supervisors rarely have the opportunity to observe another person supervise student teachers. Efforts should be made to bring university supervisors together to discuss issues of conferencing and supervision more effectively. Models of supervision as presented through videotapes could be utilized to provoke critical thinking and shared understandings.
- The value of the supervisory relationship to preservice teachers' growth may be enhanced by extending such mentoring through the first year of teaching. Such an extension of supervision would allow for a more seamless opportunity to encourage critical thinking and reflection while providing guided learning that is based on ongoing and cumulative practices. Additionally, the value of such a supervisory relationship to the student teacher would be enhanced once the student is "alone" in the field. Such a

framework might also offer much more opportunity for real *collaborative* activities, and set a positive tone for collegial relationships and lifelong professional growth. As some of the issues discussed by Williams (1996) concerning the difficulties involved in the transfer of conceptual dialogue into practice (p. 166) are reexamined in light of the supervisory experiences presented in this study, opportunities to bridge such transfer of beliefs into practice may be seen as benefiting from such extension of supervision into the first year of teaching. If such a continuum of interactions can be guided and informed by strategies of sociocultural theory and practice when the stresses of full-time teaching begin to take their toll on professional ideals, then perhaps that transfer may make a more adequate connection between theory and practice. In the process of continued supervision, the new teacher may solidify inherent beliefs that are congruent to the program of teacher education that may be otherwise lost. Additionally, such an extended timeframe could impact issues of latency described by Katz (1977) as it relates to readiness for information. “Greater latency, which allows more of the learner’s behavior to unfold, increases the quantity of information upon which the teacher can formulate a response.” She adds that hypothetically, “there are likely to be optimal latencies for every teaching-learning experience” (p. 63), and while she is referring to the adult-child teaching relationship, her words can be seen to offer direction to adult teacher education as well.

- All four of the supervisors who participated in this study felt they had more to offer the university than was taken advantage of. Concurrently, they felt that their supervision would benefit by a closer alignment to the goals of the

full-time faculty. Thus, I recommend a reconceptualization of the working relationship of full-time faculty to university supervisors with an eye to a more effective collaboration.

- The participants in my sample showed strong interest in the connections student teachers made between teaching and learning. It would seem to be a rich area for research within student teacher supervision. As the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) places increasing emphasis on schools of education to assess their students' ability to assess learning in children, greater attention within the research could enable supervisors of student teachers to accomplish these goals more efficiently.

Implications and Recommendations for Research

This study was based on the knowledge that there is less available literature on supervision in preservice teacher education than on in-service education (Glickman & Bey, 1990), that there is no universal definition of supervision (Alfonzo & Firth, 1990; Bolin, 1987), and that the field remains one “full of controversy and uncertainty” (Harris, 1998, p. 1). “Those who wish to understand supervision and its effects need multiple forms of inquiry for the exploration of myriad issues and practices of teachers and schools” (Schoonmaker et al., 1998, p. 131). This study explored a few of the questions within existing gaps in the literature and, in light of the data collected and the analysis that emerged, recommends research in the following areas:

- The field would benefit if more voices of supervisors were represented in the literature. This study explored supervision from the perspectives of four retired school teachers and principals. More data with voices included from this perspective should be collected for comparison. The perspectives of graduate students and cooperating teachers who perform this role should also

be collected and analyzed across case types and research comparing the effects of one type of supervisor over another would also enrich the data base. Studies connecting the effect of student teachers themselves upon the process of supervision would also seem helpful. Both Amelia and Marion thought that the experiences epitomized by their interactions with Nancy and Karen were not representative of their typical supervisory style, approach, or focus. While it was outside the scope of this study to do so, further exploration of such relationships in light of culturally responsive supervision (Bowers & Flinders, 1990, 1991) and face work (Goffman, 1967) may enrich our understanding of such relationships.

- University supervision should explore what types of learning student teachers display outside the traditional framework of a “lesson.” At least in the grades up through third grade, efforts should be made to observe student teachers in informal teaching situations where their ability to promote social interactions, encourage play, and demonstrate the ability to perform and interpret both authentic and dynamic assessment procedures could be evaluated. Within the opportunities provided by guided learning that could accompany such supervisory observation, perspectives on such practices could be addressed. Additionally, advocacy for such practices related to young children could be strengthened in novice teachers.

Reflections of the Researcher

This study was undertaken with the hope of improving understanding of the work that university supervisors do. Although my primary field is early childhood and

child development, I was moved to explore the research questions presented in this study after having the opportunity to compare the experiences of elementary preservice student teachers to that of preservice students of early childhood. The complexities of the research base within the field of supervision were not known to me when I made the choice or I probably would have settled on another topic.

From this vantage point, I am glad I did not abandon such a pursuit in spite of its difficulties. Issues overlapped so frequently as I poured through the literature that it often left me immobilized. Confusion continued as I analyzed findings and throughout my attempts at discussion, not because I was unfamiliar with the literature, but because it was so difficult to isolate one area neatly for discussion without the intrusion of other areas. All issues I raised seemed to have serious import for supervision and yet were frequently tied to larger knowledge bases than one study could adequately include.

Nowhere was this more evident than when I returned to theoretical implications of the data in answering the research questions. As data and theoretical foundations were weaving their way into understandings, insights, and emerging themes, I found myself needing to ask more complex questions and therefore ended in a much different place than I had anticipated when I began. In fact, as my thoughts filtered into unanticipated and more complex areas, the focus of the research slowly shifted, and I found that the original questions did not adequately represent the broader issues with which I was dealing. As a result of such interaction with the data and as my thinking about the questions as seen through different theoretical perspectives evolved, I discovered that I really needed to answer broader research questions, and therefore the questions were adjusted to accommodate and reflect this change in my thinking.

It may be that my experiences are not unique. Such confusion and shifts in thinking may be common for all such studies, and then again, such occurrences may

typify the study of supervision in unique ways. Perhaps, this is why the literature on supervision still demonstrates what Schoonmaker et al. (1998) refer to as “the untidy complexities of the field” (p. 122).

After acknowledging these frustrations, I must confess that the excitement about teaching that came through my contacts with these four women was worth every stressful moment. To have found four such motivated and talented people without sampling for such qualities was a surprise that enriched my respect for the field as much as their work enriched my data. Sindelar and Rosenberg (2000) tell us that “teacher educators get no respect” (p. 188). They explore how teacher educators are often caught in contradictions of policy and practices that undermine effectiveness, even as we are blamed for the shortcomings in teachers that such policies and practices influence. They report that many teacher educators have little patience with the “hardball” politics needed to sustain our instructional and scholarly efforts. It is critical they tell us that:

Each of us become more assertive in the political dialogue surrounding teacher preparation and development. Rather than being frustrated and passive servants to many masters, we must focus on critical issues and actively market our knowledge base in a fashion that is understood by those outside the halls of academe. (p. 193)

Reform efforts in teacher education and in the education of children generally may target those areas most politically advantageous and miss the most appropriate possibilities for improving practice unless those of us in the field find ways to document what we know is critical to the education of teachers and the education of children. Supervision of student teachers is one such area. If teacher education gets no respect within the larger field of education, then supervision of student teachers would seem to be even more invisible. By documenting and analyzing some of the important work of supervision through the interactions and comments of my four participants, I

hope to encourage more discussion and research in this area, especially as supervision impacts on issues of early childhood education in the elementary school. While the portraits presented here are not enough to fill a gallery of ideas, they may stimulate more discussion both within and without the field of university supervision for the story they tell. Supervisors of student teachers may then be truly discovered by the field, not in the accumulation of quantified data or in shadowy impressions, but in the full context of the extraordinary within their ordinariness that makes their stories so compelling.

None of us are to be found in sets of tasks or lists of attributes; we can be known only in the unfolding of our unique stories within the context of everyday events. (Paley, 1991, p. xii)

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Appendix A
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS

This section consists of the three letter templates written to introduce each university supervisor, student teacher, and cooperating teacher to the study and to secure the required signatures of consent. Also included is the template for the letter and consent from the Administrator of the Teacher Education Program represented by the participants. They will be listed in the order just described.

Supervisor Introductory Letter and Consent Form

Dear,

Thank you for your initial interest in this research project. As you know from our previous talks, I am very interested in the work of university supervisors of elementary student teachers and this study which will focus on this interest.

The study I have designed will involve case studies of four supervisors as they each work with a student teacher. Should you agree to participate in the study, one of your student teachers, who also agrees to participate and whose cooperating teachers also agree to my presence in the classroom, will be selected for observation during the supervisory experiences provided by this program. Following is a description of the activities that I have isolated for this project, and the projected time that would be involved by your participation in this research.

- One interview, which will be audiotaped. The time and site for this interview will be arranged for your convenience and should take approximately one hour. Interview questions will focus on biographical data, your views about the education of teachers, and your own approach to your work with student teachers.
- A record of the two pre-observation conferences between you and the student teacher. I will ask that you audiotape this meeting whenever possible, but recognizing that the pre-observation conference is often scheduled with little advance notice, another form of record keeping will also be acceptable.
- Two videotaped post-observation meetings, one in each of the two grade-level placements during the semester. Again, realizing that "rescheduling" is often the norm here, I will make every effort to make myself available on

very short notice so as to inconvenience you as little as possible. I will sit in on the student's lesson and record in a manner that meets the school's guidelines and then join you and the student teacher when and where you convene the post-observation meeting. This post-observation conference will be videotaped. There should be very little additional time involved here, except that which results from including a third person in the scheduling.

- After the observations have been completed, I will invite you to view one of your videotaped conferences and give me a short comment on the entire process from your perspective. We will have time to dialogue during the video review and I am expecting this process to take about one hour.

I encourage you to get in touch with me whenever you feel you have questions or comments, or just want to talk. I expect that some adjustments will be made as the study progresses, but the expectations of time and effort as outlined above should remain stable. As the data are collected and transcribed, I will be sharing the drafts with you to assure the accuracy of my descriptions and will respect confidentiality and privacy by altering all participants' names and schools. All names will be coded during the transcription process, and tapes will be erased at the conclusion of the study.

I foresee no risk to you associated with this study. I hope that you benefit somewhat from the videotape process in that it offers you a way to review and reflect upon an example of your work with students. There will be no reimbursement for your participation in this project.

This study is not connected to the university's teacher education program. It has been designed to promote further understanding of the supervisory process and will not be utilized in any way to evaluate job performance. You should be assured that although I am also an employee of this university, I am functioning outside the

university in this study, and therefore your participation in this project should be viewed as separate from your work within the Department of Curriculum and Teaching.

If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. You also agree to allow video/audiotaping of your participation.

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to further the work of university supervisors, and I look forward to sharing this time with you. I would appreciate your signing and returning this form, which acknowledges your understanding, based on the expectations outlined above, of your participation in my work, and I encourage you to feel comfortable in contacting me about any of the procedures whenever you choose at the numbers given below.

Yours,

Linda Davey

Office:

Phone:

Email:

If you have any question about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact--anonymously if you wish-- the Institutional Review Board at Teachers College, Columbia University, 212-678-4105 or 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 10027, Box 151.

SIGNATURE STATEMENT: All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction by the investigator. I consent to participate in the study described.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Student Teacher Introductory Letter and Consent Form

Dear _____,

I am involved in a research study that is directed at exploring the process of supervision of student teachers. Your supervisor is working with me on this project, and I have planned to observe her and one student as they work together. Should you agree to be the student teacher who is observed in this process, I would like you to be aware of the following procedures that be involved:

- I will be examining one supervisor visit in each of your placements. As part of this study, I will ask that one pre-observation meeting in each placement be audiotaped, if possible, and I will expect to sit in on and record one supervisory observation of your work in each classroom placement, and then videotape the accompanying post-observation conference between the two of you. There should be no additional time involvement for you, beyond your regular student teaching requirements.

This cooperation on your part is not connected to your student teaching course work and will not impact in any way on your grade for the course. It may be helpful for you to keep in mind that the focus of my study is the supervisor, not the student teacher, and that I am there strictly in an observer's function. In the final report of this study, I will respect your confidentiality and privacy by altering the names of all involved. All information will be used for professional purposes only, and tapes will be erased at the conclusion of this study. I foresee no risk to you associated with this study. Benefits might accrue indirectly as they relate to your participation in a research study. There will be no reimbursement for your participation in this project.

I am very excited by this study and anything that can further the improvement of the student teacher experience. If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is entirely voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue at any time without penalty. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. You also agree to audio/videotaping of your participation. Please feel welcome to contact me at any of the numbers below if you would like more information, or have questions about any of the procedures.

Yours,

Linda Davey

Office

Phone

Email:

If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of the study, you may contact--anonymously if you wish--the Institutional Review Board at Teachers College, Columbia University, 212-678-4105 or 525 W.120th Street, New York, NY 10027, Box 151.

SIGNATURE STATEMENT: All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction by the investigator. I consent to participate in the study described.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Cooperating Teacher Information Letter and Consent Form

Dear,

I am a faculty member of the department of Curriculum and Teaching at Hofstra University and am involved in a study that is directed at exploring the process of supervision of student teachers. The Hofstra supervisor and the student teacher she observes in your room have agreed to work with me on this project, and I would like to observe them in their work together. Procedures that I have planned for this study should not differ significantly from those you are already anticipating except that I will be an additional member of the observation team in at least one instance. Should you agree, I would like you to be aware of the following procedures that would be involved:

- I will attend one of the supervisor's classroom observations of the student teacher in your room. During this time I will record the student teacher's actions by whatever method may be utilized in your school for student teacher growth and reflective development during placement. I will subsequently attend and videotape the postobservation conference between the supervisor and the student teacher. My record of the student teacher's classroom observation will be used solely to place the conference in context.

There should be no additional time involvement for you.

Additionally, I would like you to know that cooperation on your part is fully voluntary and that in the final report of my study, I will respect your confidentiality and privacy by altering the names of all involved. All information will be used for professional purposes only, and tapes will be erased at the conclusion of this study. I foresee no risk to you associated with this study, nor any direct benefits. Benefits

might accrue indirectly as they relate to the possibility that studies such as this one may inform our thinking on the processes involved in student teaching. There will be no reimbursement for your participation in this project.

I am very excited by this study as I am by anything which can further the improvement of the student teaching experience. If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. Please feel welcome to contact me at any of the numbers listed below if you would like more information or have questions about any of the procedures. If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact--anonymously if you wish--the Institutional Review Board at Teachers College, Columbia University, 212-678-4105 or 525 W.120th Street, New York, NY 10027, Box 151.

Yours,

Linda Davey,

Assistant Professor of Education, Hofstra University

Office

Phone

E-mail

SIGNATURE STATEMENT: All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction by the investigator. I consent to participate in the manner outlined above in the study described.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Can you tell me a bit about your experiences with school generally? What do you remember of your early attitudes toward school? What kind of a student were you?
2. Could you tell me about your own educational background leading up to and including your present position as a supervisor of student teachers? (Probes: highest degree earned, area of specialization, how drawn to education as a career, major areas of degree focus, continuing education)
3. What can you tell me about your own teacher education program? (Probes: likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses perceived at time or later, specific courses focus on student teaching, teaching credential(s) held?)
4. I'm interested in your teaching experience. Can you describe the work you've done? (Probes: induction into the profession, total years, grade level, # years at each grade level, have student teachers in your room?)
5. When were you last a classroom teacher? (or teacher of K-6 grade students in a specialty area?)
6. What is your most recent professional experience? (probes: administrative experience, other)
7. Of what you know of this university's teacher education program, what stands out to you?
8. Where do you see this school of education's focus? How does this resonate with your own perspectives?

9. What brought you into supervision of student teachers? (Probes: How long doing it? How many students supervised?)
10. How did you learn to be a supervisor of student teachers? Where did (do) you go for advice? (Probes: university, mentors, coursework)
11. How important do you see student teaching in the entire process of a person's teacher education program? (Probe: Explain)
12. What prior academic preparation and/or experience do you feel is most helpful to successful student teaching? (Probes: Specific course work, participant-observation, specific knowledge base)
13. When you think of a "good" supervisor, what comes to mind? (Probes: interpersonal, intrapersonal, and/or organizational skill, education, theoretical frameworks, time, observation skills, teaching skills, adult development knowledge)
14. From your perspective, what background and experience does a supervisor of student teachers need to do the job well?
15. Do you identify with any particular theoretical approach to supervision?
16. Can you describe your strengths as a supervisor? Your weaknesses?
17. Can you tell me how you approach your duties as a supervisor? What do you do and why?
18. Do you see yourself as having a specific focus in your work with student teachers?
19. If I were to ask you if a student teacher were doing well, on what would you base your response to me? How do you determine if a student teacher needs help?
20. Who sets the level at which the student teacher is expected to function?

21. Considering the fact that student teaching is experienced by the student as a totality of experiences between and among their interactions with the cooperating teacher, the school, the children, the university and the student and yourself, how do you see the relative importance of your role?
22. Do you believe you work better with certain types of student teachers than others? How so?
23. In this program each student teacher has two different grade placements. How do you plan your supervision to take advantage of this practice?
24. What are some strategies you use to help a student teacher reflect and grow in his/her teaching practices?
25. Is there a particular area you feel student teachers seem to have more difficulty with than others?
26. Is there an area in which you feel it is usually difficult for a supervisor to help a student teacher grow? Why?
27. How do you decide what strategy to use?
28. Where do you feel the most frustration as a supervisor of student teachers?
29. What could help you reduce this level of frustration?
30. What would you like to learn about yourself as a supervisor?
31. What is most important about the work you do with student teachers?
32. Do you have a favorite "success" story in your work with student teachers?
33. What is the biggest benefit, to your mind, of a student having a university supervisor during student teaching?
34. How would you improve the supervision of student teachers? Given your experiences, what advice would you offer the field?
35. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

36. Well, that's about all. You've been extremely helpful and I'm very grateful to you for your sharing your time and recollections with me. Thank you so much. I'm looking forward to working with you this semester.

Appendix C

STYLE AND APPROACH CODE PROTOCOL

The following codes were used as data collected during each post-observation conference were analyzed as to the style and approach of the university supervisor.

1 A = CLINICIAN

1 B = COLLABORATOR

1 C = ASSESSOR

Appendix D
FOCUS CODE PROTOCOL

The following codes were used as data collected during each post-observation conference were analyzed as to the focus these university supervisors' practice.

2 U = LESSON PLANNING

2 S = BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

2 T = TIME MANAGEMENT

2 V = PEOPLE SKILLS

2 W = STUDENT TEACHER REFLECTION

2 X = CURRICULUM

2 Y = CHILD DEVELOPMENT

2 Z = CHILD'S LEARNING

Appendix E
REVIEW OF VIDEO PROTOCOL

1. What comes first to mind after reviewing this video of yourself conferencing with a student teacher after an observation of her teaching?
2. As you observed yourself, do you think you had a strategy for approaching the conference?
3. What observations can you make about your work with this student? (Probes: strengths, weakness, changes, insights)
4. Given the following three styles that might typify the way a supervisor could approach her work with student teachers, that of a clinician, a collaborator, or an assessor, would you identify your work with this student as being more representative of one of these more than the others? Is this typical of your work generally, do you think?
5. How would you describe your relationship with this student? Does your work with this student seem to typify your work with student teachers generally?
6. What areas affecting the student's teaching would you say you focused on primarily? Do you think that is typical?
7. What factors influenced your approach to the two grade placements? Did your approach and practices change between the two placements?
8. Is there anything else that watching this video brings to mind? Anything else that you would like to share?

Comments

Appendix F

SUPERVISOR INTERVIEW CODED SAMPLE

Style & Approach
Focus

Sup: ... Yes, Language Arts.

R: That's curriculum, but how about in terms of classroom management, planning, or interpersonal skills?

Sup: Oh, no. I think it depends on the student's weaknesses and strengths. If I observe a student who has very strong classroom management, I'm not going to mention it other than to say, "What skills did you use that were effective, and how would you confirm that they were, in deed, effective?" Then I would focus on something else.

R: And the kinds of things you would focus on would be....?

Sup: Planning

R: Planning...

Sup: I'm a stickler on the introduction and summary of a lesson. I encourage them to let the children know, if it's a teacher directed lesson, what they're doing and why it is important to them. Planning also includes individualizing.... I look at kids and I see that there are three or four who have tuned out for the whole lesson, and I talk to the students about differentiated instruction.

R: When you think of a good supervisor, what comes to mind?

Sup: Well, somebody who can develop a good rapport with the student teachers. I think without the rapport and trust and the

*Does she ever observe an-
teacher directed activities?*

*1A**2u**2u**1A**2z**1B*

relationship, you're not able to teach much. You're not going to be able to accomplish very much. So I would put that at number one. I think you just draw on your own expertise here.

R: Are you good at doing that?

Sup: What, developing rapport?

R: Uh, huh.

Sup: Yes, I think I am. I'm very direct and I don't try to cover up and sweet talk. I tell it pretty much the way I see it. I think most of the student teachers appreciate that ... MOST of them.

R: Are there any other supervisory strengths you'd like to mention?

Sup: Just my Language Arts background.

▫ who leads direction of conference?

"Rapport" → (18) or
 really 1A designed
 as rapport?

1A

Style &
Approach
Codes

Appendix G

Focus
Codes

POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE CODING SAMPLE

Supervisor-Student Teacher Post-Observation Conference

Under third grade placement: Review of lesson on writing invitations

1A (Sup:) ... I've just got a couple of questions and observations that I'd like you to comment on to help you out as you reflect on the lesson. 2W

ST: Okay.

1A (Sup:) I thought the lesson had a very good flow. You ran the gamut from types of presentations to encouraging brainstorming for the information that was needed! You started from the simple and went to the more complex, which is always a really good idea. 2T
2U

ST: And I didn't want to put in anything that they wouldn't know about. I wasn't sure about the baby and the bridal, but I figured it was something they would learn.

1B (Sup:) Good. Yes.

ST: You always have to think so simple....

1A (Sup:) Yes. In fact I wrote a comment. I wrote, "Good pick up on the child's question, WHAT'S A BABY SHOWER?" 2Z

ST: Yeah, I was trying....

1B (Sup:) It was like you planted that child!

ST: I know! And then I had the other children answer it for him ... whoever knew ... because a lot of the children do have parents who are having babies so they knew what it was....

Sup: Sure.

ST: ... or they have older siblings ...

Sup: Sure.

ST: ... who are having bridal showers ...

Sup: ... Exactly!

ST: That's why I thought it would be good for them.

1A (Sup:) As your objective you wanted students to be able to identify different types of invitations and tell what they were for. In other words this was a life experience kind of lesson. 24

ST: It had been part of the language arts. They had to learn how to do invitations, but it fit in perfectly with other curriculum because they had to invite people to their ancestry celebration.

TURN VIDEOTAPE OFF. MOVE TO A QUIETER SPACE.

Me: You were saying that the lesson was part of.....

ST: It was a language lesson that they had to do, but it fit in great with what we were doing so it was the perfect time to do it. It made sense to them because they had to do invitations for their ancestry celebration.

1B (Sup:) Right. Right. I got that! ... 24

ST: ... At the beginning of the semester, I wouldn't have stopped like I did. Like obviously you saw, I completely stopped three times during it, three full times! And at first I was a little bit upset by that, but then I realized, what are you going to do? You can't go on.... So I was proud of myself. That was an accomplishment that I had made since the beginning of the semester--and that was so apparent. So

that's what ... it makes me feel proud. I know that I just stopped, not that it's great that I don't have their attention all the time, but I had to get it (their attention) and that's the only way that I COULD get it!

1B (Sup:) Rather than talk over them and ... 25

ST: There's no way, and I'm glad I've come to realize and am showing that you can't do that. Just stop, and I do that all the time now and it's okay.

1B (Sup:) Yes ...

ST: ... and there's nothing I can do about that ...

1A (Sup:) ... and it's also interesting to be able to reflect on how often you lose their attention. If you can't tell, try doing this: count how many times in a given 40-minute period that you have to stop ... because if it's too many times, you know the fault lies ... 2W 25

ST: ... on me.

(Sup:) On you? I was going to say--on your lesson.

1B { ST: And it's never what's wrong with them [the children]. It's wha ... 2U

(Sup:) ... Not on you but on your lesson. *Interesting comment -*

ST: Yeah, on the lesson. It's like: why? Why weren't they focused? What didn't they get? What can I do better?

1B (Sup:) Right, right!

ST: And it's great to be, it's so important to do that ...