Self-Awareness and Enactment of Supervisory Stance:
Influences on Responsiveness toward Student Teacher Learning

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Introduction

Effective teacher education is the first step in preparing quality teachers for our schools, and ensuring strong supervision is a necessary component of the teacher education process. Providing student teachers with access to knowledgeable others, such as supervisors, can structure support systems that encourage effective practices.

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However, based on the existing literature, the research and writing on student teacher supervision is a dated body of work (Steadman, 2009). Extensive research last flourished in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This research focused primarily on cost and logistics of offering supervision through the university and on the social relationships among student teachers, supervisors, and classroom teachers (Hoover, O'Shea, & Carroll, 1988; Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Zahorik, 1988).

Some research was conducted in the 1990s on supervisory experiences as they related to changes in attitudes and beliefs of student teachers. Overall, these

studies found that little relationship existed between belief change and the involvement of the supervisor in the process of learning to teach. Howey (1994) discussed how the traditional supervisory experiences fail to address the actual attitudes, beliefs, or understandings of the student teachers, instead focusing primarily on observable behaviors. Borko and Mayfield (1995) found that little change in attitudes or beliefs of student teachers was deemed attributable to their work with the university supervisor over the semester. Other research, however, suggests supervisors do play a role in the development of student teachers (Friebus, 1977; Zimpher, DeVoss, & Nott, 1980). Friebus (1977) found that the university supervisor either superseded or was a close second to mentor teachers in influential areas, such as "'coaching' the student teacher, and in 'providing legitimation' for the student teacher" (cited in Zimpher, DeVoss, & Nott, 1980, p. 12).

Zimpher, DeVoss, and Nott (1980) determined that the university supervisor offered another perspective for reflective feedback that limited the tendency to simply recreate the mentor teacher's instruction and philosophy. In addition, the supervisor provided constructive and critical feedback to help the student teacher reflect on success and grow as a professional. A few pieces of recent research have started to examine supervisors as key in the teacher education process, looking at them as ones with a stake in the process, influenced by context, the educational climate, and professional development opportunities (Bates & Burbank, 2008; Bates, Ramirez, & Drits, 2009; Ralph, 2003; Steadman, 2009).

These studies have focused primarily on larger educational issues and not on concepts such as supervisor stance, a phrase we have coined and that we will further develop in this research. A *stance* is a supervisor's professional knowledge, perspective, and conceptualization about how student teachers learn to teach in the classroom context. Stances include issues such as how learners learn, what effective classroom instruction looks like, and how to prepare teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. The studies cited above left us to wonder what it was about the supervisors' practice that facilitated growth by the student teacher.

There has been little attention to the stances that supervisors take and how they influence supervisory practice in helping beginning teachers learn to teach though some work has been done on the conceptualizations of practice by the supervisors of practicing teachers (e.g., Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995). Attention to the supervisor's stance, its origins, and its development, could have a clear impact on a student teacher's learning opportunities and could result in substantive improvements to the process and experience of student teaching. We lack the knowledge to improve field-based components of teacher education without considering what our supervisors offer our teacher candidates and how this impacts their learning opportunities.

Research Objectives and Methodology

This study closely examined the stated and implicit philosophical stances of

student teacher supervisors from their own perspectives as well as from the perspectives of the student teachers with whom they worked. Written and audio documentation of the interactions and conversations between each of the participating student teachers and his or her individual supervisor after classroom observations of teaching practice allowed us to explore the perceptions of stances in comparison to their enactment in actual supervision. Our goal was (1) to determine the nature of supervisors' philosophical stances and whether student teachers and supervisors perceived their enactment in practice as matching or contradicting the stated stance, and (2) to explore the possible relevant causes for the stance (origin and development) and participants' perceptions about the stance. Further, we explored the influence of stance on supervisors' practice and on their student teachers' learning, including how the supervisors' self-awareness of stance influenced their practice, consistency in enactment, challenges to enactment, and influence on student teachers.

Participants

The participants in this study included three elementary supervisors and 12 student teachers. Of primary interest were the supervisors, as they defined the cases for analysis and provided insight into their roles and philosophies. All three were employed as clinical faculty members at a large public university in the West who taught courses and provided supervision to a cohort in the teacher education program.

LeeAnne. LeeAnne, an eight-year veteran of university supervision, had been a long-time elementary classroom teacher in the district in which she supervised. LeeAnne received her master's degree from the study university in the late 1990s, had worked extensively with teacher candidates as a mentor teacher, and had opened her classroom to university research studies. As a supervisor, she worked with student teachers in a somewhat diverse, suburban setting in four elementary schools that faced challenges related to full inclusion and increasing immigrant communities.

Jean. Jean was in her second year of university supervision at the time of this study. She had recently moved to the state from another part of the country, where she was a former elementary classroom teacher and, later, a district literacy specialist. This background offered her experience working with other teachers in different roles and an opportunity to gain experiences in mentoring and coaching in literacy instruction. As a supervisor, Jean worked with four schools in a suburban, homogenous district.

Andrea. As the study commenced, Andrea began her 14th year as a member of the clinical faculty at the university. Her familiarity with the history of the program and long-term relationship with the various districts afforded her a larger perspective on the program. Andrea also received her master's degree from the study university prior to employment as a supervisor. Before this, she was an elementary classroom teacher in the school district where the university is located. Her four elementary schools were highly diverse, urban contexts with the concomitant issues in student learning needs and social challenges.

The student teachers who participated in the study were typical of the university's teacher candidates in elementary education. Of the 12 student teachers, half had attended community college before enrolling at the university to complete the teacher education program. Most were in their mid to late 20s. Two of the 12 were male and two were from out of state. Supervisors worked with researchers to select a subset of six to eight student teachers per supervisor that were then approached to gain permission for the research project. Of those that agreed in each supervisor's group, four were selected that represented a range of teaching readiness levels, variety in school-site demographics and grade levels, and reflected the demographics of the students enrolled in the program.

Data Collection and Analysis

For each of the three supervisors, four of her 25 student teachers participated in the study. This study included data collected across the school year. In the fall, each supervisor spent time in the classroom with student teachers through a field practicum. During spring semester, the supervisor worked with the same set of students as they engaged in their 13-week student teaching experience.

Interviews

Each supervisor was interviewed twice during the school year. The first was in late fall when the supervisor had spent some time getting to know her teacher candidates and the contexts for their student teaching experience. The second interview was conducted at the end of the year. In both cases, the supervisors were interviewed before their student teachers so as to gather data on their stance and experiences in order to inform the questions asked and responses given during the student teacher interviews. Supervisor interviews lasted one to one and a half hours.

The student teachers were interviewed on a similar schedule; their interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes. The first interviews were conducted near the end of the fall semester and gave a baseline of the student teachers' expectations, hopes, and fears regarding the student teaching experience as well as their initial impressions of the role and purpose of the supervisor. At the end of student teaching, they were interviewed again to find out whether their expectations and impressions from fall matched their experiences in spring. Further, attention was paid to what role the supervisor, as compared to the mentor teacher, played in their learning to teach.

Observations

Each student teacher and supervisor pair was observed in debriefing conferences conducted after the supervisor observed as the student teacher taught. A member of the research team attended the debriefing conference, audiotaped the conversation, and compiled field notes without participating in the interaction. For each pair, this happened at least twice and up to four times during spring semester,

depending on scheduling and the supervisor's approach to conducting her observations (e.g., LeeAnne conducted fewer, but longer, observations). The novelty of having the observer present faded after the initial interaction. Also, because we did not watch the actual teaching portion and because we had no evaluative role, the students seemed less concerned with our presence during the debriefing conference. The debriefing conferences were at least 18 minutes and sometimes as long as 35 minutes.

Artifacts

For each supervisor, a collection of artifacts was developed that documented the daily aspects of her practice, including: weekly seminar agendas, student teacher lesson plans, observation notes, weekly goal sheets, relevant emails, syllabi for the cohort courses, formative and summative evaluations. These materials helped to round out the picture of interaction between each supervisor and her student teachers and provided data sources to triangulate.

Analysis

Each of the three elementary supervisor participants was grouped with four of her student teachers for the development of case studies (Yin, 2003). This number of participants allowed for a rich set of three case studies across contexts and grade levels. Initially, each case was analyzed independently. Broad categories (e.g., origin of stance, challenges to stance) were identified in the data by reviewing all debriefing conference transcripts, collected artifacts, and interview transcripts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As we reread the transcripts and artifact documents, the broad categories were refined, and each case was revisited individually in light of these revisions.

For each case, we engaged in a cyclical process of analyzing and writing about the data. Memos on each supervisor were compared, and the themes that emerged were refined by looking carefully at the overlap between the ideas reflected in each. Student teacher interviews and artifacts from observations of the debriefing conferences provided data to triangulate the supervisors' perceptions of the experiences they had with their student teachers. Following the analysis of each case, cross-case analysis was done to identify broader themes and issues of supervision practice that existed across the experiences of the various participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Findings

Our research shows that each supervisor was aware of the various practices that she engaged in that reflected her particular stance. The three supervisors were able to enact their stances in practice to differing degrees, due to factors such as time available for supervision, student learning needs, the university's expectation of supervisors, and prior supervising experience. Table 1 summarizes the stances along the dimensions of type of stance and origin of stance.

Three understandings from this research offer the potential for further insight

Table 1

Supervisor Stance Characteristics and Focus

Supervisor	LeeAnne	Jean	Andrea
Type	Self-esteem building model	Professional thinking model	Relationship building model
Origin	Professional development, prior experiences in teaching and as a Site Teacher Educator, trial and error, self-reflection, university course	Professional development, prior experiences in teaching	Professional development, prior experiences in teaching, trial and error

into supervisory practice. These include: (1) awareness of the ways in which stance influences practice and that the more complex the stance, the more advanced the practice; (2) stances develop over time and are heavily influenced by individual philosophies about learning and prior professional experiences; and (3) the more explicit and consistent supervisors are about their stance, the better student teachers understand expectations held for them. While individual personality traits may impact a supervisor's stance, they are beyond the scope of the data in this study. Evidence will be provided to create a picture of the stance as indicative of the practices each supervisor claimed and enacted with her student teachers. Finally, these findings support the supervisor as a necessary and valuable player in the student teaching experience, encouraging teacher education programs to take seriously the role of the university supervisor.

Self-awareness and Complexity of Stance

Although there were elements that all supervisors felt were important to support in the process of learning to teach, each supervisor felt strongly about her particular approach and advocated a stance that had become the foundation of her interaction and the purpose of her work with each student teacher. LeeAnne viewed her stance as a *self-esteem building model* reliant on the strategy of coaching students to gain a sense of self as teacher. She focused on what motivation the student teachers had for teaching in a particular way and how to best develop their internal dialogue, teaching skills, and responses in the classroom to maximize that vision.

Jean utilized a *professional model* stance emphasizing the role of supervisor as one that prepares teachers for the commitments and responsibilities of a professional educator. She wanted her teacher candidates to approach teaching as a career with expectations, responsibilities, and authority and sought to help them move into that role.

Andrea's stance suggests a *relationship building model* where her practice was based on her belief that student teachers listen and learn more if she has a strong collaborative relationship with them as a foundation for that work. Andrea's stance emphasized the interaction between supervisor and student teacher, and her work with them prioritized their shared relationship as teachers over specific concerns about teaching and learning.

We have characterized supervisors' stances as ranging from more complex to less complex, which we will describe in detail below. By this we suggest that a stance that looks at the developmental needs of the student teacher is a more complex stance than that which focuses solely on the specific actions and beliefs of the supervisor. A complex stance recognizes and affirms the multilayered nature of teaching that challenges student teachers because of the many nuances that are relevant to the practice. A less-complex stance focuses more on the "here and now" of supervising and less on the eventual future and growth of the candidate as a teacher, often relying more on the logistics of what the supervisor sees and does as a part of her job than on teacher development.

LeeAnne

LeeAnne's vision for her student teachers was predicated on their development as self-reflective teachers with a clear understanding of their own beliefs about teaching and learning and the self-esteem to see this through in their own classrooms. LeeAnne repeatedly described her supervisory role as "coach." She believed it was her task to ask guiding questions to lead students to understand what they do and why they do it. LeeAnne believed that students "learn from their experiences as observers" but that, more than anything, they learn by doing (fall interview, p. 1). As a coach, LeeAnne strove to create opportunities for students to gain experience, reflect on it, and build "teacher" identities that aligned with their already established self-identities. She said, "My role is to get them to where they don't need me" (fall interview, p. 5). Further:

> I would say the most important thing to me is that I remain a coach and a mentor. That to me is really what my role is all about. …Because I want them to be who they are, the best teachers they can be…help them find themselves, their teacher selves. (fall interview, p. 10)

This supervisory stance provides student teachers opportunities to gain a sense of their own knowledge and expertise. In turn, this gives them a voice and the confidence to share their experiences and insights as professional educators.

Although evaluation was a necessary component of her supervision, LeeAnne did not focus heavily on it in the traditional sense, stating, "Supervision is not just about going in and watching the student and then giving them feedback on how they did" (fall interview, p. 11). Rather, teaching and learning were a collaborative endeavor, and she maintained her coach stance while fulfilling her evaluative role.

Rather than provide praise, prescriptions, and problems to solve, LeeAnne engaged the student teacher in a conversation about her/his teaching and the rationale behind her/his teaching decisions. She stated, "I turn it to them and they have to tell me" (fall interview, p. 6).

LeeAnne's stance reflects great complexity in that she was aware of and responsive to the individual student teacher in her explanation of her stance, and this pushed her practice to an advanced level. LeeAnne knew when to challenge her students, when to push them forward, when to back off and let them enjoy their success or fret over their failures. She said, "I've got to know the students well enough to know which ones want me to be direct with them and which ones want me to sugarcoat it in a roundabout way and get there anyway" (spring interview, p. 9). As she coached individuals, she balanced fairness and consistency with the consideration of student teacher goals, personalities, and classroom contexts.

This notion of supervision has been termed "situational teaching" in that it is responsive to the specific context and student teacher rather than trying to enact one particular model of practice (Cohn & Gelman, 1988). More recently, this type of supervisory style has been labeled "contextual supervision," in that the context (including the individuals within it) determines the course of action (Ralph, 2003). There is evidence that the alignment of supervisory style to the context and developmental needs of the learner can enhance the learner's professional growth (Ralph, 2003).

LeeAnne frequently questioned her own practice and solicited feedback from students that informed future instructional and supervisory decisions. With her students, LeeAnne participated in "wondering about teaching" as a crucial component of improving both her own and her students' practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 25), effectively modeling the reflective process. "This is what good teachers do. This is how we become lifelong learners because we reflect and grow and improve our practice" (fall interview, p. 10).

Jean

Jean's stance came from a theoretical rather than practical base. She saw her supervisory role as teaching, showing, and guiding her student teachers in what it means and takes to be a teaching *professional*. We refer to this as her *professional thinking model*, as this was the primary influence on how she viewed her practice and responded to the learning needs of her students. Of all the things her students needed to learn, Jean emphasized, "Professionalism. Well planned. There's always a reason for everything that's done" (fall interview, p. 7). In teaching students how to be professionals, Jean helped them establish themselves as teachers and validate their own choices. According to Jean, part of being a professional is seeing beyond what the mentor teacher does and not taking on those practices simply out of habit or replication. She also communicated to her students that the teaching profession is complex, conceptually difficult, and that learning to teach is a process:

"[Students] have to have an understanding that teaching isn't all about pedagogy and content…but it's the students that really guide" (fall interview, p. 7). When describing her role as a supervisor, she said, "My goal is to guide them and to observe them in the setting, to see how they interact with students, to guide them in that process…" (fall interview, p. 2).

Jean felt that the primary focus of her work was centered on the lessons she observed and the students' teaching. However, she did acknowledge that establishing a trusting relationship with her students was necessary in guiding her students to professionalism, and she did this by being positive and personable. She stressed the importance of continuously highlighting students' capabilities and strengths:

> It's my job to pull [out the positives] in every aspect of their professional wisdom—their positive interactions with the staff, their positive interactions with students, the way their lessons go. (spring interview, p. 5)

Jean was able to resolve the assist-versus-assess dilemma inherent in supervision (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003), establishing a sense of trust that she believed fostered productive dialogue about students' teaching without the anxiety of observation and evaluation. In time, student teachers came to realize that Jean would not discourage them with her tone or responses. Her positive focus was clearly centered on practice and the specifics of teaching in the classroom. Her praise was directly linked to her students' experiences and not just general reassurances of "being okay." Then, "we can be honest and open and talk about their performance, and improving their performance" (fall interview, pp. 9-10).

While Jean's stance, like LeeAnne's, was complex, it focused less on individual needs and more on creating a professional attitude and philosophy among her student teachers. Her attempts to achieve this goal demonstrated her supervisory practice as more than a check-off approach, as she provided substantive and professionally relevant feedback that required reflection and thought.

Andrea

Andrea believed her stance was focused on a *relationship building model.* She recognized her multiple roles in the supervisor position (coach, mentor, evaluator); but above all, her stance focused on her relationships with her student teachers as a foundation to help her achieve her goals for them as future teachers.

The main idea Andrea advocated was building relationships as a means of developing trust with one another. She believed this would further student teachers' ability to talk meaningfully about the process of learning to teach. She explained, "I look at supervision as being a process where you build a relationship with a teacher candidate over time to try to help them think about their practice and, eventually, improve their practice" (fall interview, p. 8). She worked hard at the beginning of the year:

> …to let them know that I'm okay, I'm not there to tell them they didn't pass, or they're a failure, or what they're doing in the classroom is wrong. And so I start out doing a lot of encouraging, a lot of praise, a lot of "everything is going well." (fall interview, p. 2)

Once she felt she had a firm relationship with each student teacher, Andrea focused on developing teachers who are reflective and critical thinkers. While she described the importance of meeting individual needs, her stance showed less complexity because of its focus on the relationship alone rather than on creating the conditions for individual student teachers to advance to their highest teaching capacity. Slick (1997) asserts that one of the major roles of university supervisors is to "initiate and establish a positive, caring relationship" with students (p. 717). However, the scaffolding these relationships provide must ultimately be removed as the teacher candidate engages in the complex process of learning to teach (Denyer, 1997).

In sum, the data show that while all three supervisors had very different stances, each used her stance as a foundation for practice. The cases also demonstrate the variation in complexity of the three stances. LeeAnne's complex stance led to the most advanced practice, in which she coached students as individuals to create their own teaching tools, philosophies, and ideas. The complexity of LeeAnne's stance suggests her student teachers might be better prepared to develop their own complex advanced practices because they had developed a strong sense of self as a teacher.

Development of and Influences on Stance

The supervisors had a variety of influences on the development of their stances, pulled from different aspects of their personal and professional experiences. Each supervisor cited multiple sources for her knowledge base and referred to different experiences that significantly informed the development and refinement of her ideas at the time of the study. This section describes the effects of each supervisor's background on how she enacted her stance in practice.

LeeAnne

Prior to becoming a university supervisor, LeeAnne had extensive experience as a classroom teacher and had served as a mentor teacher. In those experiences, she gained knowledge "over time, just working with the student teacher and figuring out what worked and what didn't and trial-and-error" (spring interview, p. 1). As described above, LeeAnne's *self-esteem model* stance developed from a combination of learning through study, experience, reflection, and collaboration with others. Once LeeAnne became a supervisor, she developed her skills through reading and through a course on preservice teacher supervision that allowed significant opportunities for collaboration, discussion, and problem-solving. LeeAnne also received some training in cognitive coaching, and used components of this to inform her supervision:

> I want them to be who they are, the best teachers they can be, not who LeeAnne thinks they should be or the mentor teacher thinks they should be, but just help them find themselves, their teacher selves and become the very best that they can be. (fall interview, p. 10)

LeeAnne's supervisory stance also came from continual reflection on her own practice and on feedback she received from former and current students. She was open to suggestions and questions and altered her practice accordingly, just as she expected her students to do. She implemented new strategies or lessons she felt better serve student learning goals, and abandoned others if she felt students were "spinning their wheels" or the work "wasn't serving any real purpose," (spring interview, p. 2). LeeAnne also reflected collaboratively with colleagues, sometimes adopting their successful ideas, such as the weekly goal sheets her students now complete. In her opinion, this type of collaborative reflection and social interaction among supervisors had improved her practice. Collaborative work like this has also been suggested as an "investment" teacher education programs should make to improve the effectiveness of the supervisors and the program (Rust, 1988).

Jean

Jean's *professionalism* stance stemmed from her experiences as a classroom teacher and a central-office literacy specialist, and from two training programs, Ohio First and Pathwise. All of these experiences taught her what "good teaching is" (spring interview, p. 1). She was a mentor for student teachers both as a teacher and literacy specialist, where she modeled, taught, and coached teachers. Her Pathwise training taught her, as an evaluator, what "types of evidence we would see in the classroom that would show success or not" (fall interview, p. 8). She seemed to have applied this to her role as a supervisor through use of evidence and specifics:

> We had to find the evidence. You can't just say they're doing fine, can't just say management's good, can't just say the kids aren't responding. You need to show them what kids are doing, responding, so that they can say, 'Ahhh.' They make more connections that way. Otherwise they're just taking your word for it. (spring interview, p. 9)

Her ideas about supervision changed over time in that she came to value specificity in feedback to students by giving them certain goals to work on. To organize her feedback, she used her knowledge from the Praxis standards, Pathwise, the Internet, and her own experience to create forms that categorize specific teaching behaviors.

Andrea

Andrea had a vision of the teacher learning process that helped rationalize her *relationship-building* stance as she interacted with student teachers:

> Go with the formula of experience plus reflection equals growth. You can have lots of experience and that doesn't necessarily equal growth. And you can reflect

all you want; that definitely doesn't mean growth. But I think those two things in combination with each other equal growth as a teacher. (fall interview, p. 1)

Based on this vision, Andrea sought out support to inform her practice, and pulled ideas from various sources including:

My own teaching practice when I was a public school teacher, my work with teacher candidates over the years, a couple classes that I've taken. I took a supervision class … a class on cognitive coaching, and quite a few classes and gone to a few conferences... So all those various places you're talking with teachers about what's working and what's not working, talking to my students about [this]. (spring interview, p. 1)

Andrea also recognized that her vision of the supervision process and her role in it changed over time. As Andrea became more comfortable in this role, she learned to let the student teachers become more active and involved in the process. Recognizing her more "reactive" role, it became easier for Andrea to encourage her students to share control of the supervisory visits (Zahorik, 1988). This reflected her vision of how student teachers learn to teach because she learned to provide them with more opportunities for reflection and less listening to her "professing" about the experience.

These cases demonstrate the numerous influences involved in the development of a supervisor's stance. Academics, personal and professional experiences, study, and reflection have shaped each supervisor differently. Additionally, stances are not linear; they change and evolve throughout a supervisor's career in response to various experiences (Rust, 1988), and should not, therefore, be considered fixed.

Explicit Expression and Consistency of Stance

Not only do the three supervisors recognize what beliefs and attitudes have influenced their stance and practice, each also determined their origins and development over time. This section explores how the formation of the supervisor's stance is realized in the specifics of practice and the influence this has on the student teachers' perceptions of their supervisors' stances. In two of the three cases, it is clear that consistency and explicitness about stance help student teachers realize what their supervisor values and expects of them as novice teachers.

LeeAnne

LeeAnne was consistent in her expectations as she coached students and encouraged them to reflect and make decisions for themselves. This is clearly a central aspect of her *self-esteem building* stance. In their fall interviews, students expressed the understanding that LeeAnne was able to "teach" and "model good teaching practices" (Courtney, fall interview, p. 1). Additionally, all four students stated that they expected support, help, and advice or suggestions. All of these expectations could fall under the stance that LeeAnne held for herself, but the student teachers

initially seemed to have differing conceptions of her role. The following sections demonstrate ways in which LeeAnne's stance aligned with student expectations as well as the instances of discordance.

LeeAnne enacted her coaching stance mainly through consistently guiding students to reflect on their practice and learn to question their thoughts, actions, and beliefs. As she and her students carried out their post-observation conferences, LeeAnne asked them to answer a series of questions. She had four basic questions that structured the conference initially (What worked well today? What would you change in the future? How do you know your students learned? What are your goals for the next lesson in this area?). Then, students' responses drove the conversation forward, and LeeAnne asked more specific, relevant questions that heightened the level of reflection. She explained:

> They need to question, learn to question…what's the reason for doing it. And I may not agree with their reasons…but at least they have a rationale for doing it. I don't want them just to do things because somebody told them to or they saw somebody do it…I want them to know why they do it. (fall interview, p. 7)

In examples such as this, LeeAnne balanced support and challenge, engaged students in collaborative dialogues that required reflection and inquiry, and that resulted in meaningful learning for both the supervisor and the student teacher (Street, 2004).

Student teachers initially resisted LeeAnne's supervisory approach, placing great value on her experience and her knowledge base and wanting "direct" suggestions and "critique" from her in observation conferences (fall interviews, Chelsea and Molly, respectively). They believed the supervisor must be someone who was "deemed the expert" (Taylor, fall interview, p. 2), and they expressed initial frustration with her lack of prescriptive, "expert" advice.

Thus, students had a sense of LeeAnne's role that differed somewhat from how she defined her role. As the year progressed, students seemed to gain a better understanding of and ultimately appreciated LeeAnne's coaching and guidance. Taylor remembered:

> The only thing I was a little disappointed about was that I wasn't getting as much feedback from her. But looking back on it now, I see how much better it is for me to analyze myself. (spring interview, p. 5)

Likewise, Courtney recalled her initial frustration and eventual appreciation, saying:

> Sometimes it's tough for the candidate, because she pushes you to those things and sometimes you don't want to; you just want someone to tell you. But it's definitely to your benefit, because I know now, when I start teaching, I'll know how to go through that reflection process on my own. I think that will really help. (spring interview, p. 4)

While her student teachers recognized and valued different things initially, ultimately LeeAnne's consistency with her stance and her willingness to support her teacher candidates in reflective practice helped them realize their development into stronger and more self-assured teachers.

Jean

Jean was viewed by her student teachers as focused, directed, and capable of pushing them to grow as professionals. They understood that she wanted them to become professional in attitude, practices, and relationships in their schools. Jean enacted her *professionalism* stance by giving them *specifics* in how to develop or improve their professional skills or techniques:

> Just the whole word *specificity*—the more I know, the more specific I can be with students, the more they can find ways of improving, by giving them certain things to work on or give them goals that I think—or have them come up with goals that we can work on together. (spring interview, p. 1)

When asked about evidence-based feedback, Jean replied, "I think it's huge because it offers them the specific examples they need to continue the behaviors." Specific evidence allowed students to understand on a practical level rather than on a theoretical level the effect their teaching had on their students. "If you want improvement," she argued, "you've got to teach specifics." (spring interview, p. 12).

During each observation, Jean wrote down specific things in her conference forms that the students did well and then discussed these during the post-observation conferences. Central to the conferences were specific goals that related to the Praxis exam, one measure of the professional nature of the field. She matched specific behaviors to Praxis domains, and told students what she was looking for in their lessons (for example, with one student teacher she expressed that she was interested in the student teacher's ability to employ age-appropriate language to explain mathematical content and adapt to students' needs). She tried to provide her students with substance and depth in her feedback during the conferences, and pushed her students to think like professionals. Jean asked questions to understand student teachers' choices and objectives. As she put it, her role in the conferences was:

> …telling them things that I see and questioning them often. I try as hard as I can to not only just give them my thinking but say, "This is what I saw. Why did you make that choice?", so I can push their thinking a bit…They need to stop and think about whether it is the smart thing to do or not the right thing to do. (spring interview, p. 8)

In their interviews, students uniformly complimented Jean on her specific feedback, her constructive criticism, and her thoroughness. They said her self-stated role was to help them succeed. One student teacher noted that Jean had high expectations for them, and it made her want to work harder. Her students all felt that she stressed reflection and that she expected them to think hard, on their

own, and to come up with ideas. All said that she encouraged them to think more deeply and more thoroughly than their mentor teachers and that the feedback was more constructive.

Jean also enacted her stance through positive guidance and perspective, stressing two reasons: to establish trust and to model professional behavior. Jean always asked students first what went well during a post-observation conference, "I force them to tell me everything that went well" (fall interview, p. 6). Each conference finished with, "Tell me what you heard me say during the conversation. Give me some positives you heard and some goals we will work on next time." By doing this, she hoped they might retain a positive impression of themselves.

Jean also used positives as a means of modeling professional behavior, because she believed this is how her students should interact with their own students:

> I believe that not only will [being positive] help them to feel better about themselves, build their confidence. It provides for them a model that I hope they will follow when they talk to their kids about their own improvement in school. (fall interview, pp. 9-10)

In the spring interviews, all students noted that Jean's tone was always professional (and formal), and most said she modeled professional behavior. This consistent implementation of her expectations and the communication of her stance through her behaviors and interactions with student teachers clearly cemented student teachers' perceptions of her stance in ways that reflected her stated philosophical beliefs about supervision.

Andrea

Andrea worked to build relationships with her teacher candidates and to communicate that she was there to help (her *relationship-building* stance). She demonstrated this by spending a good portion of the first semester "doing a lot of encouraging, a lot of praise, a lot of 'everything is going well'" (fall interview, p. 2) after conducting a classroom observation. Her rationale for doing this was to help student teachers see that she was "not there to tell them they didn't pass or they're a failure" (fall interview, p. 2). Students recognized this in Andrea's practice. In reflecting on the debriefing conferences, Zoey commented:

> It was probably 75% encouragement, like "Yes, you're doing great; I liked how you did this." And the other part is just… offer different ways of seeing or thinking about the things that I'm teaching. (Zoey, spring interview, p. 3)

Andrea worked early on to build a foundation of openness and trust in this complex relationship. She felt that to solve any problems that might arise in learning to teach, it was necessary to have a strong foundation for the student teacher to rely on as a support. She described this process:

> I do a lot of talking; that's why it is so important for me during fall semester to

build community with my student teachers. Then I feel like I can go in when there's a problem, and the level of trust is there. And I can really just sit down and have a heart-to-heart talk with them. And in most cases, they feel the same way. (spring interview, p. 13)

Andrea recognized that over time she did more assisting than assessing (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003), encouraged more independent thought and activity by pulling herself and her opinions out of the feedback:

I think what helps often, too, is when I try to take my evaluative stuff out of it and just put down, "This is what you said" or "This is how many times you called on girls versus boys" and just show them the data and go, "So, can you talk to me about this? What's going on?" It's them interpreting what they see on this piece of paper. (spring interview, p. 10)

Throughout all of Andrea's commentary on the debriefing conferences were references to the needs of the individual, since she valued her relationship with each student. Because she was responsive to students' individual progress in learning to teach, she appeared to determine what she did in a given conference or conversation to correspond with her perception of this progress. Andrea commented that in the conferences, particularly later in the year, "It's a matter of listening to see where they want the conversation to go, what they're most concerned about, and talking about that" (spring interview, p. 5). As Mike described, her feedback met his particular needs:

[She]. . . gave me a better idea of what things I needed to work on the most. She would point out some specific things that she noticed, but she would also just ask a lot of rhetorical questions for me to think about and to help me figure things out on my own... (spring interview, pp. 1-2)

Because Andrea recognized the importance of individual students' needs, it was difficult for her to prescribe her own practice as focused on one particular approach or stance; rather, she said that it all depends on the learning needs and development of the individual. Although she was consistent in her desire to create relationships with her students, she did not make her stance explicit to them. This was reflected in their lack of clarity on her stance. They were unable to provide a firm understanding of how they grew and learned through the relationship and through her influence.

In conclusion, LeeAnne's and Jean's consistent and, especially in Jean's case, explicit expression of stance was not only clearly understood by their students, but also valued and internalized. By reinforcing through word and action the values and expectations they held for their students, these supervisors sent the message that it was important to have and maintain a stance or a teaching philosophy. Perhaps more importantly, the supervisors demonstrated how a strong stance serves as a foundation for standards for both student teachers and themselves. The consistent and explicit expression of stance had a significant effect on how the students under-

stood their roles as future teachers. Andrea's stance was less explicit and obvious to her students, though in her solid commitment to creating positive and trusting relationships with her students, she, too, gained their respect and appreciation.

Implications for Teaching and Teacher Education

Over two decades ago, Zahorik (1988) claimed that the idea of a common supervisory style "defies human nature" (p. 14). This study shows three distinct stances, each with its own implications. This is an important finding for informing teacher education programs: that supervisors can have a powerful effect on the identity, self-perception, and quality of future teachers. This finding further emphasizes the research on the importance of the university supervisor in "contributing to worthwhile, successful experiences for student teachers" (Slick, 1998, p. 831). Better understanding university supervisors' complex stances and practices can provide a foundation for improving learning opportunities for student teachers.

The findings demonstrate how supervisory stances can play an important role in the complex picture of teacher preparation. From these cases, it is clear that stance influences how each supervisor engages in her practice, both in how she chooses to spend her time and how she believes it will influence her student teachers. Student teachers see that the supervisors enact their stances in practice. This was evident as supervisors supported their students while challenging them to reflect on their experiences, identify issues or challenges in their practice, and problem-solve.

Student teachers typically have only one supervisor during their student teaching experience. Therefore, "what is emphasized, and presumably learned, in a student teaching program is, in large part, a function of his or her relationship with a university supervisor" (Zahorik, 1988, p. 14). With the potential for such direct, significant impact on student learning and eventual teaching, it is imperative that researchers better understand how individual supervisors envision their stances and enact them in practice.

A supervisor might be responsible for courses, weekly seminars, and learning and assessment approaches. The more a supervisor is aware of her stance, the more she can reflect on and respond to her own strengths and biases. Further, knowing her stance means that a supervisor has one more opportunity to model the idea of a teacher as reflective practitioner who is aware of and responsive to her own practice.

These three cases offer several implications for the improvement of the practice of supervision. Attention must focus on how to support supervisors in understanding individual student teachers' learning needs and then developing program policies and structures that allow them the freedom to respond as appropriate. For example, our supervisors requested additional professional development and training on models that would allow them to improve their practice. One request was that this be ongoing and conversation-based so that problem solving and idea sharing could occur about whatever issues become relevant at a given time.

We believe that the supervisor's stance towards practice has a direct influence on what they do and how they do it. Andrea, Jean, and LeeAnne all demonstrated that their stances impacted the choices they made in practice—how to praise students, how to build relationships, what to focus on as priorities during the time that they spent in conversation with students. Clearly their stance influenced the learning opportunities available to teacher candidates and directly informed what and how they learned about teaching. Encouraging supervisors to become aware of and develop stances that are responsive to student teachers' learning needs will increase the quality of supervisory experiences. As with any educational endeavor, reflection, inquiry, and dialogue can help teacher educators improve their practice (Perry & Power, 2004). And although studies such as this may not provide truths or solutions, they allow us to ask questions that can better guide supervisory practices and might bring us closer to finding a harmony between vision and enactment.

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