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The impact of an alternative model of student teacher supervision: Views of the participants

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Abstract

This study examines the views of student teachers, classroom teachers, and university-based personnel who participated in an alternative model of student teacher supervision and traditional triad model. A variety of data sources including surveys, interviews, and anecdotal evidence was used to determine the perceptions of the participants. Although there were concerns about the alternative model, the participants viewed it more positively than the traditional triad. Recommendations for teacher education programmes and the student teaching experience are made. © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

The student teaching experience is noted as one of the most influential factors in the preparation of beginning teachers (Clark, Smith, Newby, & Cook, 1985; Koehler, 1988; Lemma, 1993). Yet, researchers have noted that the student teaching experience can have positive and negative consequences (Koehler, 1988). Although this phase of the preservice teacher's preparation is considered "essential in training and helping future teachers develop pedagogical skills" (Slick, 1997, p. 714),

the student teaching experience has been routinely criticized.

The criticisms include the lack of an explicit curriculum during the student teaching experience that is described by Stones (1984) as an apprenticeship "where good teaching is to be caught and not taught." The lack of integration between the student teaching experience and the university coursework has also been considered problematic (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1989). The inconsistent quality of supervision found in the traditional triad is a weakness of the student teaching experience (Zeichner, 1990). For example, when there are conflicting ideas between the cooperating teacher and the university faculty, most often, the pedagogical knowledge of the university faculty is

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supplanted by that of the cooperating teacher (Palonsky & Jacobson, 1988). However, the cooperating teacher seems to be excluded from important decisions, such as the determination of the final grade, that occur during the student teaching experience (Veal & Rikard, 1998).

This apparent disconnection between the university faculty and the cooperating teacher is discussed in Hamlin's (1997) research on supervising teachers (cooperating teachers). She recommends that teacher education programmes should encourage collaboration and seek the input of teachers and administrators in the design of its programmes. She also asserts the need for training support, and recognition of supervising teachers. In addition, Hamlin suggests that release time should be provided for these mentors. Hamlin concludes that this would allow the time for reflection that was needed for all participants in the supervisory process.

In addition to the issues raised by researchers about cooperating teachers, research (e.g., Boydell, 1986; Follo, 1999; Su, 1992; Wilson & Readence, 1993) indicates that the college supervisor makes little impact on the beliefs and practices of the student teacher. Bowman (1979) calls for the elimination of the college supervisor position; although, other researchers defend the contributions of the college supervisor to the traditional triad (Slick, 1997). Slick (1998) explores the college supervisor as a "disenfranchised outsider" and makes several recommendations concerning teacher education programmes. These recommendations include greater involvement and direction of the university faculty in this phase of the preservice teacher's development. In the past, college faculty members who serve as college supervisors often receive little recognition at the university level (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). Subsequently, a graduate assistant who receives little guidance and support in the supervision process often holds the position of college supervisor. Slick (1998) asserts that teacher education programmes should reward fulltime-faculty members for their work in this process (e.g., load and merit) and that adjunct faculty hired to supervise should be provided with more guidance. She also recommends that a fulltime-faculty member

should serve as a coordinator for the university-based or college supervisors.

The research of Beck and Kosnik (2002) supports this notion of greater involvement of full-time faculty in the process of practicum supervision. After redefining the role of the university-based supervisor to focus on mentoring the preservice teachers and collaborating with the "associate teachers" (previously cooperating/mentor teachers), the researchers conclude that the preservice teachers, associate teachers, and university faculty expressed satisfaction with the reconceptualized model. They also indicate that the school–university partnership was strengthened, and that the university faculty developed greater knowledge of schooling. However, they note that the negative effects of the model affected the full-time university faculty. The researchers assert that the work in this model of supervision was time-consuming and often went unrecognized because the time was spent in schools. They express concern about the culture of academia which often devalues faculty members who spend time working in school settings. In spite of this, the researchers assert the importance of such a model that can bridge the gap between theory and practice, develop an integrated curriculum, and develop a mentoring relationship.

1.1. Reform efforts in supervision

Concerns have been well-established about the quality of the student teaching experience. As a result, national commissions have explored ways to strengthen the student teaching experience. One recommendation is the development of cadres of teachers known as "clinical master teachers" who would combine the two roles of cooperating teacher and college supervisor (Carnegie Task Force, 1986; The Holmes Group, 1990). This is similar to efforts that have been made in teacher education programmes to "bridge the gap" between university-based faculty and school-based faculty by focusing on a school–university partnership (Cornbleth & Ellsworth, 1994). Such programmes encourage university-based supervisors to work in a collegial role rather than a dominant role (Banaszak, Wilson, & McClelland, 1995;

Emans, 1983; Kagan & Tippins, 1993). In this model, the cooperating teacher becomes a member of a cohort of teachers, or *clinical master teachers* (Banaszak et al., 1995). The teachers assume the primary responsibility of supervising and mentoring student teachers. The university-based supervisor (formerly the college supervisor) works as a liaison between the school and university. In addition, the clinical master teachers collaborate with university professors as they plan the curriculum of teacher education programmes (Kagan & Tippins, 1993).

Referring to recent reform efforts in the field of supervision, Slick (1998) notes that “change occurs slowly, and it is unlikely to occur unless efforts are made to view current practices open-mindedly and to seriously consider potentials for change” (p. 824). In order to do this, the experiences and perceptions of all participants should be considered. The present study examines the views of all participants in the student teacher supervision process (i.e., student teachers, classroom teachers, university-based personnel) of an alternative model of supervision, the clinical master teacher (CMT) model. All of the participants for this study had been involved with the CMT model and the traditional triad model which gave the respondents the perspectives of two supervisory models.

The research questions that guided this study are: (a) What are the perceptions of the student teachers, CMTs, and CMT liaisons for the CMT model of supervision? and (b) What are the differences in the participants’ perceptions of the CMT and triad models of supervision.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and setting

This study took place at a university in the southeastern United States. Participants for the study included 20 elementary and secondary student teachers for the interview portion of the study. Each of the student teachers was placed with a cooperating teacher and college supervisor for one-half (eight weeks) of the 16-week student

teaching semester and a CMT for the other-half (8 weeks) of the student teaching placement with no specific order. Open-ended surveys were administered to 90 student teachers during the data collection process. Ten CMT, all of whom had previously served as cooperating teachers also participated, as did five university-based faculty/liaisons who served as both CMT liaisons and college supervisors.

2.1.1. Description of the clinical master teacher (CMT) model

In the current CMT model, candidates considered to be outstanding teachers and supervisors are selected to participate in this alternative supervisory programme at the elementary, middle school, and secondary levels. Each CMT must meet the following criteria: (a) 5 years teaching experience and a master’s degree, (b) a minimum of two semesters as a successful cooperating teacher, (c) evidence of participation in professional activities (e.g., presentations at professional meetings, staff development presentations, service/leadership in the school/school system), (d) recommendation by the principal, (e) review by a panel which includes school-based and university-based members, and (f) approval by all faculty in the elementary education and secondary education departments.

CMTs fulfill the traditional roles of both the university-based supervisor and the school-based cooperating teacher. After selection, the CMTs are grouped in teams consisting of four to six members and work cooperatively in the supervision of a group of student teachers assigned to the entire team. Although each CMT has primary responsibility for one or two assigned student teachers each semester, all CMTs are expected to work with all student teachers assigned to the team through observations, critique of student teacher planning and classroom instruction, and other professional activities such as student teacher professional development seminars. Each student teacher must receive a minimum of 12 observations for a full placement of 16 weeks or six total observations for each of two 8-week split placements. In the CMT model, six observations must be completed by the assigned CMT in a full placement (three in a split

placement). In addition, each student teacher receives a minimum total of six additional observations (three for a split placement) from other members of the CMT team.

In this model, the role of the university-based faculty (CMT liaison) has been re-envisioned from the role of the college supervisor in the traditional triad model. Instead of observing the student teachers, the CMT liaison collaborates with the CMT team to make suggestions and mentor the interns. If a problem arises or if requested by a student teacher or CMT, the CMT liaison will observe a student teacher. In this model, a CMT liaison may be a tenure track faculty member, a university instructor, a doctoral student in the teacher education programme, or a retired teacher who has served as a CMT. All liaisons must be certified teachers. The current CMT coordinators (one elementary, one secondary) are tenured, university professors who are also certified teachers, who often simultaneously serve as college supervisors.

2.1.2. *Description of the traditional triad model*

For the traditional triad model at this institution, a cooperating teacher must meet the following criteria: (a) a minimum of three years teaching experience, (b) completion of at least a Master's degree, and (c) recommendation by the school principal. The college supervisor must (a) hold a Master's degree, (b) be certified to teach in the content area/grade level in which they supervise, and (c) have previous teaching experience. The cooperating teacher and the college supervisor are responsible for each completing a minimum of six observations for a total of 12 observations for a full placement (16-week experience) of the student teacher's teaching practice. Student teachers who receive split placements (8-week placements for each half of the student teaching experience) receive three observations each by the cooperating teacher and college supervisor for a total of 12 observations.

2.1.3. *Procedure*

This study was conducted over the course of 3 years. Using interviews, open-ended surveys, and anecdotal data (e.g., fieldnotes from meetings and

informal discussions), the researchers examined the participants' perceptions of: (a) the quality of supervision provided by the CMT team and the traditional triad, (b) their relationships with the CMT participants and the members of the traditional triad, and (c) any problems or concerns that arose during the placements.

Focus group interviews were held with small groups of student teachers and small group of CMTs. Focus group interviews were used to provide information about the perceptions of the participants and encourage discussion and interaction (Krueger, 1994). University-based supervisors, who had served as both college supervisors/CMT liaisons, were interviewed individually during the course of the study since fewer than five CMT liaisons serve the programme each semester.

The research approach employed for this study was qualitative as described by Patton (1990) and Punch (1998). This included: (a) utilizing a small sample, (b) not expressing results with numbers, (c) employing open-ended questioning techniques (surveys and interviews), and using a coding approach to examine trends as they emerged from the data (Punch, 1998).

2.1.4. *Data sources and analysis*

Data sources included: (a) open-ended surveys regarding the CMT programme given to the student teachers and CMTs, (b) interviews with the student teachers, CMTs and college supervisors/CMT liaisons, and (c) anecdotal data (e.g., fieldnotes, journals) was collected from selected participants. The open-ended surveys asked the student teachers and CMTs questions regarding the quality of supervision, their perceptions of the two models, and their perceptions of the roles of the other participants. Specifically, for the student teachers, the open-ended survey questions addressed the roles played by the CMTs and cooperating teachers, the characteristics exemplified by the CMTs and cooperating teachers, the quality of supervision provided by the CMT, CMT team, cooperating teacher, and college supervisor, and which model was preferred. The CMTs were asked open-ended questions about the roles of the participants, their perceptions of the quality of

supervision, and positive/negative aspects of the two models.

Interviews were conducted in which probing questions (Merriam, 1998) were asked to clarify the preliminary results of the student teacher surveys. These interviews focused on: (a) the functions/roles of the participants, (b) the respondent's relationships with the other participants (e.g., the student teachers' relationships with college supervisors and CMTs), (c) the positive and negative aspects of the CMT model, and (d) the participants' views of the supervision in the CMT model. The student teachers were interviewed over the course of six semesters during three academic years. CMTs were interviewed in focus groups over a 3-year period. College supervisors/CMT liaisons were interviewed individually over the course of six semesters. (For clarity, the term university-based supervisors will be used to describe CMT liaisons/college supervisors.)

All data were analyzed for emerging patterns and trends using constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1964; Miles & Huberman, 1984). This analysis included careful reading and rereading of all data by the members of the research team. After examining the data that were collected, recurring themes were noted. During subsequent readings, a matrix was developed using the themes. A table was developed to code the frequency of the references made about the models and the participants in the models. Quotations that were representative of the themes that emerged from the data were selected. To produce an accurate presentation of the research findings, as well as to control for researcher bias, data were triangulated across the research team (two professors and one doctoral student in teacher education all who have served as both college supervisors and CMT liaisons) and data sources (e.g., interviews, surveys, fieldnotes).

2.1.5. *Limitations of the study*

Limitations of this study include, but may not be limited to, researcher bias and methodology used. As previously mentioned, efforts were made to control researcher bias. A limitation of the study may be that the researcher serves as both a college supervisor and a CMT liaison and may

have brought her own perceptions of the models to the analysis. In addition, the use of focus group interviews may be another limitation because some participants may have been influenced by the comments of other members of the focus group (Krueger, 1994).

3. Results

The discussion of the results is organized around categories that reflect the purpose and research questions of the study.

3.1. *A collaborative effort*

One of the most positive aspects of the CMT model discussed by the participants is the collaboration or teamwork exhibited by each team which included CMTs, student teachers, and a CMT liaison. In the traditional triad, the student teacher is placed in a classroom with a cooperating teacher and receives a minimum of six visits from the college supervisor. With the CMT model, a team of supervisors is formed to supervise a cadre of student teachers. The opportunity for a team of classroom teachers to engage in the supervisory process collaboratively was seen as a benefit of the CMT model. One CMT interviewed explained: "I rarely talked to the supervisor but here because I had other people in the same situation with me...if I said it was a bad day, how can I say this to her to make her better...it worked out a lot better. I had more support for myself." Overall the CMTs interviewed preferred the team approach to supervision versus the university or college supervisor in the triad model. "It's hard to steal moments in the hall with a supervisor...I never really had an opportunity to sit down and talk. It is something that you really need to sit down and explain because if there was a comment that she made that you didn't understand, you really didn't have time to go over it... We (the CMTs) are all here together and there is time...we're just right here with each other." Regarding the notion of teamwork for the student teachers, one of the CMTs explained that the CMT programme makes the students closer because "it's just us and it's all of us."

This notion of collaboration was observed by the student teachers who felt it enhanced the student teaching experience. One student teacher surveyed wrote: “The CMTs were a true team!” A student teacher noted the importance of the teamwork approach: “Everyone worked well as a team...I often saw CMTs talking and planning.” Another student teacher explained that: “All of the CMTs had meetings to make sure that everyone was doing okay and no one was in trouble.”

One way in which collaborative supervision was demonstrated was through cross observation. A student teacher explained: “They were helpful on coming to see me [observe lessons] when I asked them...I think they worked well together in helping us.” One student teacher interviewed explained this: “I was observed once by all the CMTs who were involved at my school. I felt it was beneficial to include this in the program [sic] so they could pick up on anything my CMT might have missed.” Several secondary student teachers commented on the diversity of perspectives provided by the different content area teachers. One student teacher explained: “I felt that their input on teaching style and techniques was positive because they were all from different departments.” Similarly, an elementary student teacher commented on the multiple perspectives presented by the team of elementary CMTs: “I liked the opportunity to have a wide variety of [teachers from different] grade levels observe me.”

3.2. *A sense of community*

The teamwork that developed in this model seemed to lead to a community built by the participants. “There was a good bond of unity within both (CMTs and student teachers) arenas. The [student teachers] were continuously helping each other “The student teachers felt that the community formed through the CMT model was different from the relationships which developed as a part of the triad. One student teacher noted that she was “...not observed by an outsider” in the CMT model. Although most of the student teachers felt positively about the experiences they had with their college supervisors, the student teachers viewed the college supervisor as an “outsider” who was a

visitor to their cooperating teacher’s classrooms. In contrast, the other members of the CMT team who observed them were never categorized as “outsiders” by the student teachers. For the student teachers, the college supervisor was seen as an outsider, who did not see the day-to-day activities, yet “gave the final grade.”

The university-based supervisors also felt that there was a greater sense of belonging or community with the CMTs than with the cooperating teachers in the triad model. A university faculty member explained:

In the triad model, the cooperating teacher and student teacher consider me the outsider. The student teacher and cooperating teacher often work together to perform a “dog and pony show” for me. Many cooperating teachers feel that college supervisors are viewed as holding more authority since we actually give [the student teachers] the final grade. With the CMT model, I have developed relationships with the teachers. Since I am a part of the team meetings, I feel a closer relationship with the CMTs than I do when I am working with cooperating teachers.

Frequently, CMT liaisons were invited to social gatherings for the student teachers; as college supervisors none of those interviewed had similar experiences. Overall, the university-based supervisors felt that they were received more positively by the student teachers as well mainly because they were seen as a “supporters and mentors instead of evaluators.”

3.3. *Empowerment and professionalism*

As indicated by the requirements for selection to the CMT model, teachers in this model receive a rigorous screening and yearly evaluation. CMTs are school leaders and must have served as successful cooperating teachers. The professionalism of the CMTs was noted by the student teachers. In the survey responses, the student teachers noted overwhelmingly that the student teachers felt the CMTs were “more professional” and had “higher expectations” than their cooperating teachers. One student teacher explained the difference: “I feel that the

supervision I received from my CMT was excellent. She observed my teaching each time I was scheduled to teach...She offered much helpful advice and was very open in discussing problems..." They [the members of the CMT team] were professional and supportive as well." On the survey, the student teachers overwhelmingly recognized professionalism as a quality of their CMTs as opposed to their cooperating teachers.

The CMTs interviewed and surveyed acknowledged the sense of professionalism through ownership, empowerment, and confidence that resulted from their participation in the CMT model. During an interview, when asked to explain how the CMT model was different from the triad model, a CMT explained that the CMT model employed made them (classroom teachers) an integral part of the student teacher supervision process and that there was no need for "the university" to substantiate their work. Specifically, another CMT explained:

Before, you always had the other person...from the university that came out four times or whatever and watched and that was your grade. They could justify that and it seemed like the cooperating teacher was a little bit removed from the picture. But this [the CMT model] — we're there everyday... they [the student teachers] come in day one, they understand...

3.4. Concerns

The greater responsibility given to CMTs led to the only negative comment made by the CMTs about the CMT model. Several CMTs noted greater stress with this model than the traditional triad model, in part because in this model the CMT is given the main responsibility to discuss grades, problems, and remediation plans with the student teachers. With the empowerment afforded to CMTs, they are designated as adjunct faculty and the CMT team assigns the final grade for the student teacher. Subsequently, they provide a "guarantee" for the success of the student teacher once the graduate is employed by one of this state's public schools. As a result, if a CMT student teacher graduates and is deemed inad-

quate as a beginning teacher in a state public school, the CMT is responsible for providing remediation for that teacher.

Although 18 of the 20 student teachers surveyed preferred the supervision provided by a CMT and CMT team to the cooperating teacher and college supervisor, there were instances where this alternative model was not preferred. For example, two student teachers selected the traditional triad model. They noted that that they had "a personality conflict" with their CMT. Although CMTs were part of a team, some of student teachers expressed concerns about the CMT having so much responsibility (e.g., assigning the final grade). One student teacher wrote: "My CMT was power hungry." It is interesting to note that these students did not feel that they received the grade they deserved.

Although the university-based supervisors interviewed preferred the CMT model to the triad model, there was one concern expressed by most of them which related to their relationship with student teachers. Specifically, one supervisor explained: "Since the CMT model allows me to work with many schools and many student teachers, I do not feel that I have as close a relationship with the CMT student teachers...as a result of time and logistics." The university-based supervisors also felt misgivings about not observing the student teachers themselves. One of the university-based supervisors explained that she did not have the opportunity to actually observe the student teacher. This concerned her because she did not know if the CMTs might not support the "teaching methods promoted by the university".

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of the participants engaged in an alternative to traditional student teacher supervision. Participants who had experience with the CMT model as well as the traditional triad model were asked to assess the CMT model. The results of this study indicate that the participants considered the CMT model more positively than the triad model. It seems that the collaboration,

community, and professionalism were factors that led to this conclusion.

With few exceptions, the student teachers preferred the CMT model to the traditional triad. The student teachers indicated that they preferred the sustained, ongoing observations of the CMT to the sporadic, formal observations of the college supervisor. This was further indicated by the fact that the student teachers perceived the cross observations and feedback provided by the other members of the CMT as valuable in contrast to the feedback provided by the college supervisors. This research supports the work of Follo (1999) who concludes that the college supervisor had little impact on the student teachers. Like the student teachers in this study who seemed to appreciate the feedback and interaction with several teachers (the CMT team), the student teachers in Follo's study (1999) expressed a desire for greater involvement with other teachers at their school sites. The student teachers perceived the CMTs as more professional and having higher expectations than the cooperating teachers. It is important to note that there were some concerns about the CMT model. Specifically, conflicts arose with two student teachers, and others indicated the potential for problems for student teachers when placed with a CMT. Future research should examine the perceptions of student teachers who do experience such conflicts.

Overwhelmingly, the CMTs viewed the CMT model more positively than the triad model. One reason for this was that the CMTs interviewed felt more involved and responsible for the supervision. The CMTs explained that their previous involvement in the triad model had made them feel removed from the supervisory process. It appears that the responsibility and recognition provided by the CMT model made them view it as more effective than the triad model.

According to the CMTs, another factor was the difficulty they had working with the college supervisor (e.g., time, number of visits). The CMTs viewed the college supervisor as an outsider (Slick, 1998) and they did not feel they were a part of the triad model (Veal & Rikard, 1998) when they were cooperating teachers. According to these teachers, while working in the traditional triad,

they had deferred to the college supervisors for assessments and mentoring of the student teachers. The CMT model gave these teachers credibility as professionals. In this model, the team of teachers serves as mentors and evaluators. Instead of deferring to the university-based personnel, the CMTs had the primary responsibility of all facets of the student teacher supervision (e.g., assessment, mentoring) at their schools.

Although the university-based supervisors played a supportive role in the CMT model as opposed to the dominant role they had in the triad model, they, too, preferred the CMT model to the traditional triad. This was mostly a result of the more collegial relationship they had with the CMTs. This was similar to the findings of Beck and Kosnik (2002); however, in contrast to Beck and Kosnik, the university-based supervisors in this study expressed concerns regarding their relationships with the student teachers. Perhaps this is because the university-based supervisors in this study were assigned to up to four school sites each semester and did not spend as much time in each school as did Beck and Kosnik. Another concern expressed by the CMT liaisons was whether or not the CMTs supported the philosophies of the university faculty. Possibly, the role of the CMT liaison could be refined to allow the liaisons to visit the classrooms and collaborate with each CMT and student teacher more frequently.

Overall, the CMT model was deemed as preferable to the triad model. The CMT model was viewed more positively in regard to collegiality, quality of supervision, and communication than the triad model (Emans, 1983; Kagan & Tippins, 1993). The views of the student teachers and CMTs regarding the university supervisor substantiated previous research in supervision (Boydell, 1986; Wilson & Readence, 1993) which suggested that university supervisors were perceived to be ineffective in many areas, including time available and accuracy of assessment.

5. Implications

The results of this study are applicable to teacher education programmes worldwide.

Clearly, the CMT model was preferred to the traditional triad model. However, since the traditional triad is an important model of student teacher supervision, teacher educators should consider the findings of this study. To begin with, teacher educators should examine ways to improve the role of the college supervisor. All teacher education programmes should ensure that college supervisors have time in their schedules to discuss important issues and collaborate with the cooperating teacher (Koehler, 1988) and do more than observe lessons on an infrequent basis as noted by the participants in this study. In addition, college supervisors should be aware of the possible communication and interpersonal issues related to the traditional triad model of supervision, possibly through special training (Slick, 1997, 1998). Although Bowman (1979) calls for the elimination of the college supervisor in the supervisory process, the university-based supervisor can provide the leadership for an integrated curriculum (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1989) and the link between the school and university (Kagan & Tippins, 1993). Although it may not be feasible to have a staff of university-based supervisors comprised solely of university faculty, there should be a faculty member who coordinates and “supervises” the supervisors (Slick, 1998). Teacher education programmes must recognize the importance of the student teaching experience and reward all participants in this process (Beck & Kosnik, 2002).

The role of the cooperating teachers in the triad model should be refined. Hamlin (1997) discusses greater involvement, collaboration, recognition, and compensation for the supervising teachers in her study. In the present study, the CMTs received greater responsibilities (e.g., teacher guarantee) and felt more confident in their role as mentors. Cooperating teachers can be empowered by being given greater responsibilities. In addition, teacher education programmes should consider providing professional development release time to the cooperating teachers for reflection, training, and communication with the college supervisors (Hamlin, 1997).

It is also important that researchers and teacher education programmes ascertain the views of the

student teachers. Although numerous studies have been conducted to explore the student teaching experience, “the voices of thousands of student teachers have been relatively silent” (Follo, 1999, p. 4). In the future, researchers should explore perceptions of the student teachers toward the student teaching experience.

Teacher education programmes that choose to use a model similar to the CMT model should consider the impact that such a model had on the affective side of the participants. The student teachers perceived that they had received greater mentoring, the CMTs felt empowered, and the CMT liaisons recognized that they had developed a greater collegial relationship with the classroom teachers.

If implementing such a programme, teacher educators must ensure that the CMTs and student teachers are not disconnected from the philosophies and theories promoted by their teacher education programme. Perhaps, the use of Professional Development Schools where university faculty are teaching on-site and collaborating regularly with classroom teachers may alleviate such concerns. Additionally, a greater presence of university faculty might reduce the stress felt by the CMTs due to the greater responsibility they held in the CMT model.

University-based faculty should work closely with school-based faculty to “bridge the gap” between schools and universities (Cornbleth & Ellsworth, 1994; Slick, 1998). By allowing school-based faculty and university-based faculty to develop a more collegial relationship (Kagan & Tippins, 1993), they can work in tandem to mentor and support the student teachers. Such collaboration by both groups can better understand the philosophies and theories of education as they can best be addressed in the realities of today’s K-12 and university classrooms.

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