

# *The Boundary Spanner in Professional Development Schools: In Search of Common Nomenclature*

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**ABSTRACT:** Teacher education is entering an exciting era for professional development schools (PDS). Recent reform efforts have called for increased school-university partnerships (AACTE, 2010; NCATE, 2010), which means that the PDS community may be well poised to offer insight into the necessary boundary-spanning roles and structures needed to support robust school-university partnerships. The purpose of this qualitative meta-analysis was to use the findings from thirteen empirical studies from the past 30 years to generate new knowledge about the boundary-spanner role in PDS. Findings revealed that in the PDS literature terms for boundary-spanners are contextually-based and therefore vary greatly. This variance has created a lack of common terminology and potentially a lack of common understanding of the boundary-spanner role. The findings also revealed that the boundary-spanner role is supervisory by nature. Implications offer a beginning framework for scholars to use when describing boundary-spanner roles in research and scholarship. The framework has the potential to foster a common understanding while preserving contextually-specific terminology.

## **Introduction**

The need for clinical practice in teacher preparation is no longer disputed; teacher preparation programs must prioritize clinical experiences in their teacher preparation curriculum (AACTE, 2010; NCATE, 2010). This priority resulted from the well known fact that teacher candidates typically favor the practical aspects of their preparation over the theoretical portions, citing them as being the most valuable learning experiences of the teacher education curriculum (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005; Goodlad, 1990, Cuenca, 2012). Practicum experiences are valuable because ideally they provide candidates with a laboratory of practice to apply their theoretical knowledge. And while this value is uncontested, the consistency and quality of clinical experiences is. Clinical experiences are varied with regard to the amount of support a teacher candidate receives both from the cooperating teacher and from the university supervisor (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005). Clinical models of teacher preparation vary epistemologically, ontologically, and theoretically, and these differences create variance in the structures, roles, and resources across various teacher preparation programs (Dennis, Burns, Tricarico, van Ingen, Jacobs, & Davis, In Press). One way models vary is in regard to the presence of school-university partnerships and how these partnerships are conceptualized.

Professional Development Schools (PDSs) are examples of school-university partnerships and have been defined as “innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools” (NCATE, 2001, p.2) whose comprehensive mission includes “...the

professional preparation of candidates, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and enhanced student learning (NCATE, 2001, p.1).” To be considered a PDS, the National Association for Professional Development Schools (2008) states that the school-university partnership must have all nine essentials outlined in their document, *What it Means to Be a Professional Development School*. This document distinguishes PDSs from other school-university partnerships.

When schools and universities work together to create PDSs, they must also form new roles and structures that are boundary-spanning in nature (Goodlad, 1990; NAPDS, 2008; NCATE, 2001; NCATE, 2010). The creation of PDSs and their boundary-spanning roles has created complexity in studying and understanding not only the roles themselves but the individuals who assume them (Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). For the purpose of this paper, the term boundary spanner is defined as individuals who, “understand the dynamics and culture of both worlds and are vital in linking schools and universities in viable collaboration” (Sandholtz & Finan, 1998, p. 24). Where Clift and Brady (2005) found consistency in the literature on field experiences from 1991 - 2001, a recent meta-analysis that examined the literature on preservice teacher supervision since the release of the NCATE PDS Standards in 2001 found a lack of common nomenclature on the university supervisor, indicating that perhaps the introduction of school-university partnerships, PDS models, and boundary-spanning roles were creating complexity in the knowledge and understanding of field experiences (Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). This critique of common nomenclature is not new to PDSs (Teitel, 1998; Zeichner, 2005). However, if the movement in teacher

preparation is towards clinically-rich teacher preparation and clinically-rich teacher preparation requires better collaboration between schools and universities, it is imperative that we delve into the literature on formalized boundary-spanning roles specifically in PDSs with the hope of finding common nomenclature. For this reason, we turned to almost three decades of literature on school-university partnerships to address the research question:

*What can be learned from the empirical literature about formalized boundary-spanning roles in PDSs?*

Ancillary questions included: (1) What terms were being used? (2) How was the role defined? (3) Who was in the role? (4) In what tasks did “they” engage?

## Theoretical Framework

The work of boundary spanning is situated in the literature on hybridity theory and the concept of the third space. According to Bhabha (1994) hybridity theory relates to cultural discourse. As people negotiate their cultural identities, they navigate societal terrain to “initiate new signs of identity” (p. 2) Hybridity exists as “...innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). The negotiation that occurs with hybridity theory results in the reorganization of existing knowledge. Soja (1996) argues that hybrid spaces are particularly innovative in that the new knowledge generated from binary categories “...opens new alternatives” (p. 5). The new alternatives create hybridized practices and the hybridized practices alter the original practices and ideologies resulting in a negotiation of identity.

Scholars have written about the altered identity of transitioning from classroom teacher to teacher educator (Cahn, 2008; Taylor, Klein & Abrams, 2014). This transition is especially transformational when it occurs in clinical contexts in teacher preparation (Cuenca et al., 2011; Jonsdottir, Gisladdottir, & Guojonsdottir, 2015; Lee, 2011; Williams, 2013) and particularly in PDS contexts (Ikpeze, Broikou, Hildenbrand, & Gladston-Brown, 2012; Jennings & Peloso, 2010; Johnston, 1997). The clinical context of supervising student teachers is considered a particularly powerful hybrid space, which has been referred to as “the third space” (Cuenca, et al., 2011; Zeichner, 2010). According to Zeichner (2010),

third spaces involve a rejection of binaries such as practitioner and academic knowledge and theory and practice and involve the integration of what are often seen as competing discourses in new ways – an either/or perspective is transformed into a both/also point of view. (p. 92)

When these hybrid or third spaces exist in teacher preparation, such as in the clinical context, it will require the creation of hybrid educators who are in boundary spanning positions (Goodlad, 1994; Zeichner, 2010). Hybrid educators are individuals who span

boundaries either inter-institutionally or intra-institutionally (Clark, Foster, Mantle-Bromley, et al., 2005). The creation of PDSs as hybrid or third spaces and the need to better understand hybrid educators and the boundary spanning roles needed to exist in the third space of PDS is the impetus for our study.

## Method

In order to generate new knowledge about boundary-spanning roles in PDS, we used qualitative meta-analysis. A qualitative meta-analysis is a distinct type of synthesis in which findings from completed empirical studies focused on a targeted area are intentionally combined (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). A meta-analysis is not a literature review. The distinguishing feature of meta-analysis is the use of empirical studies as data to generate new knowledge rather than summarize the current state of the literature (Scholes, 2003; Timulak, 2007). Paterson, Thorne, Canam and Jillings (2001) suggest that meta-analyses, “...go beyond the aggregation of existing research” and “follow a rigorous procedure, whereby new insights can be derived from the detailed analysis of a vast number of studies addressing the topic” (p. 184). By engaging in qualitative meta-analysis, we brought together a set of potentially underutilized empirical studies to generate new knowledge about boundary-spanning roles in PDSs. This process allowed us to obtain a more comprehensive representation of investigated phenomena by treating the findings of primarily qualitative studies as data for further analysis (Timulak, 2007).

## Selection and Organization of Studies

The search team consisted of one research faculty and one doctoral student whose research, practice, and experiences have been rooted in school-university partnerships. To identify potential articles, we framed the parameters of our search to include 1986 to 2014. We selected 1986 as the initial date because that was the year that the Holmes Group (1986) released their seminal document, *Tomorrow's Teachers*. It was during this time that the Holmes Group, John Goodlad and the National Network for Educational Renewal, the Ford Foundation's Academy for Education Development, and the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy and the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession were all calling for school-university partnerships. This era was a critical time in the growth and development of PDSs (Rutter, 2011). To organize our work, we created tables using Google Drive so that we did not duplicate our efforts and could easily import citations, organize them, and have a shared database comprised of each identified article. In total, there were five rounds of article selection.

In the first round of article selection, we examined the titles and abstracts of every article published in *School-University Partnerships* from its initial volume through 2014. Given that *School-University Partnerships* is the only journal dedicated to PDS work, it seemed critical that our search began with this journal. In order to adhere to the guidelines of qualitative meta-analysis

Table 1. Identified Terms Found in ERIC Thesaurus

Terms Found in ERIC Thesaurus	Terms Searched but <u>not</u> Found in ERIC Thesaurus
supervisors	university liaison
student teacher supervisor	school liaison
liaison	clinical faculty
coordinators	clinical educator
instructor coordinators	boundary-spanner
partnerships	professional development
site coordinator	associate
	hybrid educator
	university supervisor
	field supervisor
	school supervisor
	university tutor-supervisor
	partnership coordinator
	school-university partnership

methodology, we only selected empirical studies related to boundary-spanning roles in PDS. Unfortunately as we read, identifying boundary-spanning roles was difficult. The diversity in terminology led us to generate a potential list of twenty-one terms to use as future search terms to select additional articles. Table 1 shows a list of all identified terms that we used to search ERIC Thesaurus.

In the second round of article selection, we verified the list of twenty-one terms in ERIC Thesaurus, but found that of those initial terms, only seven appeared in ERIC Thesaurus. Those seven terms included site coordinator, partnerships, instructor coordinators, coordinators, liaison, student teacher supervisor, and supervisors. In the third round of article selection, we used the aforementioned seven terms to search ERIC, but the use of those terms produced over 35,000 articles. This meant that we needed to refine our search. In the fourth round of article selection, we used the terms generated from the *School-University Partnerships* search in round one individually and in combination with the seven identified terms from ERIC Thesaurus to search the ERIC database. This created a search matrix that organized our search by various roles identified in the *School-University Partnership* search with the contexts of PDSs or school-university partnerships. This matrix produced a total of eighty-one potential articles.

In the fifth and final round of article selection, we organized the searches into a table that noted the number of articles produced in the initial search and then the number of articles that remained as we read the title and abstract. This process led to an elimination of forty-two articles, which meant that there were thirty-nine articles that we read in entirety. From there, we eliminated articles that were either not empirical or not focused on individuals in boundary-spanning roles. This thorough read eventually produced a total of fourteen articles that were ultimately used in this meta-analysis. The citations of these articles were entered into a table and organized alphabetically by APA citation. These articles can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Articles Used in Meta-Analysis

- Bullough Jr., R. V., Draper, R. J., Smith, L., & Birrell, J. R. (2004). Moving beyond collusion: Clinical faculty and university/public school partnership. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 505-521.
- Bullough, R. V., Draper, R. J., Ericson, L., Smith, L., & Young, J. (2004). Life on the borderlands: Action research and clinical teacher education faculty. *Educational Action Research*, 12(3), 433-454.
- Burstein, J. (2007). Down from the tower into the trenches: Redefining the role of professor-in-residence at one professional development school. *School-University Partnership*, 1(2), 66-76.
- Christenson, M., Kerper, R. M., Dallmer, D., Boyd., Lynch, C., Sennette, J. D., Green, P., Barnes, M. K., Johnston-Parsons, M., & Thomas, M. (2008). Doctoral students as boundary spanners: Complexity and ambiguity for university supervisors within a master of education-professional development school project. *School-University Partnerships*, 2(1), 83-94.
- Ferrara, J., & Gomez, D. W., (2014). Broadening the scope of PDS liaisons' roles in community schools. *School-University Partnerships*, 7(1), 110-117.
- Fisher, T. R., & Many, J. E. (2014). From PDS classroom teachers to urban teacher educators: Learning from professional development school boundary spanners. *School-University Partnerships*, 7(1), 49-63.
- Many, J. E., Fisher, T. R., Ogletree, S., & Taylor, D. (2012). Crisscrossing the university and public school contexts as professional development school boundary spanners. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 21(2), 83-102.
- Martin, S. D., Snow, J. L., & Franklin Torrez, C. A. (2011). Navigating the Terrain of Third Space: Tensions with/in Relationships in School-University Partnerships. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(3), 299-311.
- Myers, S. D., & Price, M. A. (2010). Expanding university faculty's vision of a PDS: So this is what partnership really means?. *School-University Partnerships*, 4(2), 81-91.
- Neapolitan, J. (2008). Doing research in a professional development school and why I feel like Houdini in a straight jacket. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 13(2), 25-38.
- Rodriguez, F. & Breck, S. (1995). Professional Development Schools: Leadership issues and the role of the university liaison. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 11(2), 82-96.
- Simmons, J. M., Konecki, L. R., Crowell, R. A., & Gates-Duffield, P. (1999). Dream Keepers, Wevers, and shape-shifters. In Byrd, D. M. & McIntyre, D. J. Research on professional development schools: teacher education yearbook VII, (29-45), Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Walters, S. (1998). Walking the fault line: Boundary spanning in professional development schools. *Teaching and Change*, 6(1), 90-106.

## Analysis of the Articles

In a qualitative meta-analysis, typically only the findings of the empirical articles are used as data. However, we found that the diversity in terminology across the articles and the lack of and inconsistency in definitions of the terms used for the boundary-

spanning roles presented a challenge beyond what we had imagined. Therefore, in addition to the findings, we also combed the beginning sections of the articles looking for specifics regarding terminology and definition, which we also included as data for our analysis. To analyze the data, we drew upon Saldaña's (2009) notions of structural and open coding. "Structural coding applies a content-based or conceptual phrase to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question to both code and categorize the data corpus" (p. 267). Open coding, also known as Initial Coding, is initiated during the first cycle of coding and is an open approach for the researcher to explore possible theoretical directions indicated by the data collected. With open coding, there are no predetermined codes; rather, codes emerge from the data. It is common in research to engage in multiple rounds of coding and analysis (Saldaña, 2009), and for us, there were five rounds of data analysis.

In the first round of analysis, we read through the terms and definitions for the individuals in the boundary-spanning roles. Many times the terms and definitions were not explicit. In fact, several definitions were embedded in the descriptions of programs. This lack of explicitness required us to make some assumptions about the definitions. We placed the terms and definitions that we could ascertain from the embedded descriptions into a table on Google Drive with the following headings: APA reference, date, key terms used, and definition of terms. This structure allowed us to stay organized in the data analysis process.

In the second round of analysis, we coded the descriptions that we placed in the table on Google Drive. We read each definition and selected a word or phrase that summarized the definition and used the summarized word or phrase as our codes. To illustrate, some of our codes included responsibilities, school-based vs university-based, specific role, prerequisites, characteristics, and duration of role. Two of the codes - characteristics and responsibilities - were large data sets and required some additional analysis. Therefore, in the third round of analysis, we broke down the data classified under characteristics into *characteristics of the person* and *characteristics of the role*. For the data classified under responsibilities, we created a running list of all of the different responsibilities and grouped them into categories.

In the fourth round of analysis, we organized the data chronologically to see if any trends emerged. The earliest article selected was from 1995 and the most recent article selected was from 2014. Despite this organization, we saw no trends in the terminology or definition based on chronology.

In the fifth round of analysis, we coded the findings using the same process of open and structural coding. Since structural codes are predetermined codes typically from a conceptual frame (Saldaña, 2009), our structural codes came from three conceptual frameworks of supervision - Burns (2012) and Burns and Yendol-Hoppey (2015) work on supervision in PDSs and Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, (2014) work on supervisory tasks for preservice teacher supervision. Therefore,

our structural codes included: individual support, collaboration and community, teaching, research for innovation, curriculum development and support, targeted assistance and equity. To strengthen our research, we sought trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002) by including triangulation through multiple searches, paying attention to rich description, searching for disconfirming evidence or contrary interpretations, using inter-rater reliability through discussing inconsistencies, and returning to the conceptual frameworks to ensure that our coding was consistent.

## Findings

Our study sought to generate knowledge about formalized boundary-spanning roles in PDSs. Overall, our findings indicate that multiple terms are used for individuals engaged in formalized boundary-spanning roles in PDSs and definitions were seldomly used and rarely consistent. The role is assumed by both university-based and school-based faculty, but the foci of the empirical literature appears to be more on roles assumed by university-based faculty. Finally the data revealed that the work of boundary-spanners involves tasks associated with a broadened definition and understanding of supervision.

### Assertion 1: Multiple terms are used to describe the formalized boundary-spanning roles in PDS.

The first ancillary question asked: *What terms were being used in the empirical studies related to formalized boundary-spanning roles?* Our study found that no one term is universally used to describe formalized boundary-spanning roles. In fact, we found fourteen different terms in the empirical literature, and they included: boundary spanners (Christenson, et al., 2008; Fisher & Many, 2014; Many, et al., 2012), clinical educators (Christenson, et al., 2008), clinical faculty (Myers & Price, 2010), clinical faculty associates (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, Smith, & Young, 2004; Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Birrell, 2004), hybrid teacher educator (Martin, Snow, & Torrez, 2011), liaison (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004; Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004; Martin, et al., 2011), partnership facilitator (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004; Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004), PDS liaison (Ferrara & Gomez, 2014), professor coordinator (Simmons, Konecki, Crowell, & Gates-Duffield, 1999), professor-in-residence (Burstein, 2007), research liaison (Neapolitan, 2008), school-based site coordinator (Walters, 1998), university faculty (Myers & Price, 2010), university-based coordinator (Walters, 1998), and university-based liaison (Rodriguez & Breck, 1995). While we expected inconsistency in terminology, we did not expect this diversity. Unfortunately, we also recognize that this list is most likely not exhaustive given that our study focused on empirical studies and perhaps much of the literature on these roles may either be descriptive or not published. However, we can conclude that there currently is no agreed upon terminology or common understanding for formalized boundary-spanning roles in PDS.

Table 3. Definition Statistics

Category	Number of Words
Total number of words in all definitions	3125
Range	(339-55) 284
Mean	156
Median	140

### Assertion 2: Boundary-spanning roles are not clearly defined in the empirical literature.

The second ancillary question asked: *How was the role defined?* Just as there was a variety of terms used to name the formalized boundary-spanning roles, the definitions of those roles equally varied in terms of length and content.

By looking at the statistics of the definitions shown in Table 3, in the thirteen articles, there were a total of twenty definitions and 3125 words. Definitions ranged in length with the shortest definition being 55 words to the longest definition being 339 words.

The shortest definition was for the term partnership facilitator (Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004). The longest definition was for the term university-based liaison (Rodriguez & Breck, 1995). The mean word length was 156 words and the median word length was 140 words. These statistics show that there was great diversity in the amount of words needed to define the role of the boundary-spanner.

It was also interesting to note that there was diversity in the number of words used to describe roles in different studies that used the same term. The terms used more than once included boundary-spanner, clinical faculty associates, liaison, and partnership facilitator. Table 4 illustrates the range in word length for the terms that were used in more than one study.

The term with the greatest differential in definition was boundary-spanner with a range of 131 words. It took Many et al. (2012) 242 words to describe boundary-spanner as compared to Fisher and Many (2014) who used 111 words to describe the same term. The term with the least differential in word count for definition was liaison with 21 words separating the difference in lengths. Again, these differentials for the same terminology also indicate that definitions for formalized boundary-spanning roles are not universally described or perhaps understood.

In addition to variance in length, definitions also varied in content. There was no consistency in what was included or how it was presented in any of the definitions. Some definitions included information about the position of the individual assuming the role. For example, in the definition of site-based coordinator, Walters (1998) wrote, "The principal was designated as the site-based coordinator" (p. 93). Likewise, Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., (2004) defined clinical faculty associates as "outstanding teachers" (p. 435). With regard to faculty in boundary-spanning roles, some definitions were broad like Martin et al.'s (2011) use of "university-based teacher educators" (p. 1) or Rodriguez and Breck's (1995) use of the term "faculty" (p. 89) whereas others were more specific regarding the kind of

Table 4. Similar Term Variance

Term	Range of Words	Difference in Words
Boundary-Spanner	242 - 111	131
Clinical Faculty Associates	223 - 153	70
Liaison	96 - 75	21
Partnership Facilitator	111 - 55	56

faculty. In their definition of clinical faculty, Myers and Price (2010) wrote, "While all of the university faculty members were in tenure-track positions, four were untenured assistant professors" (p. 87).

Beyond the position of the individual assuming the role, some definitions included information regarding how long individuals were in the role. Two years was a common time frame for clinical faculty associates (Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004) and for graduate assistants (Christenson, et al., 2008). Including a time frame for the role was not consistent. Other definitions included information regarding how much time was spent at a particular institution. Ferrara and Gomez (2014) commented how they were required to spend "two days a week" (p. 111) at the school site. It was clear that while elements of time were included in definitions, the inclusion was not consistent across the definitions was not consistent.

Finally, it was interesting to note that only six of the twenty definitions were connected to larger bodies of literature outside of the researchers' own previous work. The term boundary-spanner was the most connected definition to a larger body of scholarly literature, which makes sense given the history of boundary-spanning work. The most frequently cited reference in those six definitions was Sandholtz and Finan (1998). Zeichner (2010) was cited in the hybrid educator term and Veal and Rikkard (1998) was cited in the clinical faculty associate term. Otherwise, boundary-spanning role descriptions were not connected to a larger body of scholarship.

### Assertion 3: Formalized boundary-spanning roles are assumed by a variety of individuals across institutions.

The third ancillary question asked: *Who is in the formalized boundary-spanning role?* From what we could ascertain given the diversity in definitions, it appeared that both university-based and school-based individuals assumed boundary-spanning roles. Table 3 lists the different terms and divides them based on their home institution of either schools or universities. Italics indicates the term used. Each term is followed by the descriptors of the role identities.

As Table 5 indicates, the majority of school-based faculty engaged in formalized boundary-spanning roles were primarily teachers (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004; Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004; Christenson, et al., 2008; Fisher & Many, 2014; Rodriguez & Breck, 1995) and most likely master teachers (Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004) or teacher

Table 5. Role Identities

School-based	University-based
<i>site coordinator:</i> principal or teacher leader	<i>professor coordinator:</i> university faculty
	<i>university-based site coordinator:</i> university faculty
<i>liaison:</i> outstanding teacher but employed by university	<i>PDS Liaison:</i> tenured college faculty
	<i>university-based liaison:</i> university faculty
<i>clinical faculty associates (CFA):</i> teachers employed by university for two years	<i>research liaison:</i> university faculty member
<i>clinical educator:</i> teacher	<i>clinical faculty:</i> university faculty from research-intensive university
<i>partnership facilitator:</i> master teacher	<i>Hybrid teacher educator:</i> university based teacher educators
	<i>professor-in-residence:</i> university faculty
	<i>Boundary spanner:</i> university teacher educator with school-based experiences
	<i>graduate assistant boundary spanner:</i> graduate students

leaders (Walters, 1998), but it was unclear what constituted a master teacher or teacher leader, as these terms were also used but not defined. With regard to university-based faculty, it was also unclear as to what kind of university faculty were engaging in the work. With the exception of two terms, PDS Liaison (Ferrara & Gomez, 2014), identified as a tenured faculty member, and clinical faculty (Myers, 2010), identified as a faculty member from a research-intensive university, most terms only used the words, “university faculty” to describe the individuals in the formalized boundary-spanning roles. Likewise, only one term, graduate assistant boundary spanners (Christenson, et al., 2008), indicated that graduate students assumed the formalized role.

It was also interesting that seven terms were used for individuals in boundary-spanning roles that came from both school and university institutions. Those terms included site, coordinator, site coordinator, liaison, clinical, clinical faculty, and educator. Sometimes these words were used by themselves or sometimes they were used as part of other terms to describe both university-based and school-based individuals. This indiscriminate use indicated that these terms were not exclusive to any home institution of school or university. Meaning, the use of the term could not determine whether the role was solely university-based or school-based. At the same time, there were words that were unique to each kind of individual. Words that were unique to school-based individuals included associates, partnership, facilitator, and partnership facilitator. Words that were unique to university-based individuals included professor, professor-in-residence, in, residence, university-based, research, PDS. This exclusive use may indicate that perhaps there are specific words that could connote the home institution of the individual assuming the role.

#### Assertion 4: The work of boundary-spanners is complex and involves the enactment of supervisory tasks.

The fourth ancillary question asked: *In what tasks do “they” engage?* It appears that individuals in formalized boundary-spanning roles engaged in multiple tasks of preservice teacher supervision that included Teaching, Collaboration and Community, Individual Support, Equity, Curriculum Development and Support, and Research for Innovation. Across all of the studies, the only universal task in which “they” engaged was Collaboration and Community. Overall, the majority of their work, as identified in the literature, fell into the task of Teaching and the task of Collaboration and Community.

*Teaching.* Teaching is a supervisory task in PDSs (Burns, 2012) and is defined as “practices associated with the implementation of instruction” (Burns & Yendol-Hoppey, 2015). Our study found that teaching responsibilities included teaching or co-teaching formal university coursework. In total, there were 19 references to teaching responsibilities, indicating that a good portion of the work of the individuals in formalized boundary-spanning roles is to teach (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004; Burstein, 2008; Christenson, et al., 2008; Ferrara & Gomez, 2014; Fisher & Many, 2014; Myers & Price, 2010).

Overall, the teaching descriptions were listed using general, broad, or unspecific generic language like “teaching” or “teaching methods coursework” without identifying more specifically who or what was being taught. Within teaching, half of the responses indicated that teaching involved methods courses in their definitions. Examples of this kind of response included “teach methods courses,” (Burstein, 2007; Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004) “methods professor,” (Burstein,

2007) and “co-taught methods coursework.” (Christenson, et al., 2008). Assuming that methods coursework indicates undergraduates, then a predominant responsibility of boundary-spanners was to teach preservice teachers. One descriptor that was occasionally used in connection with teaching was the indication of location, “taught coursework on site” or “teaching on site courses.” For example, one article explained, “All five post-baccalaureate courses required by the state certification board were offered on-site at the two secondary schools four days each week during the semester” (Myers & Price, 2010, p. 87). Only one of the responses was more specific identifying the teaching responsibility to be “teaching onsite undergraduate courses” (Ferrara & Gomez, 2014).

In addition to preservice teachers, descriptions also indicated that the work of teaching included teaching inservice teachers through professional development. For example, Ferrara and Gomez (2014) stated, “This includes the supervision and placement of student teachers, teaching on-site graduate and undergraduate courses, and providing professional development to the school’s teachers and staff” (p. 111). It was clear that boundary-spanners were responsible for attending to the professional learning of staff or teachers.

In addition to preservice and inservice teachers, it appears that boundary-spanners also worked with PreK-12 students. However, working with children was rare and only cited in one study. In this particular study, the boundary-spanner was the classroom teacher of record. Burstein (2007) noted,

These candidates observed and learned strategies in the methods course, which they then observed in the classroom while I taught sixth-grade students. In addition, to observation, teacher candidates had the opportunity to co-plan and to co-teach sixth-graders with the professor and reflect on lesson implementation. (p. 68)

Being the classroom teacher of record was extremely rare. Teaching in this sense involved “co-teaching” with their preservice teachers, modeling practices such as “test taking strategies,” and “demonstrating best practice with children” (Burstein, 2007).

*Collaboration and community.* According to Burns and Yendol-Hoppey (2015), Collaboration and Community is a supervisory task in PDS contexts and it is defined as “practices that attend to the development of community.” It was clear from the empirical literature that descriptions of boundary-spanners’ work were associated with the task of Collaboration and Community. Working within the task of Collaboration and Community was an integral component of boundary-spanners’ roles and responsibilities. Not surprisingly, our study found that boundary-spanners were charged with building relationships across the institutions. One study noted, “Such individuals play critical roles in helping school-university partners understand each others’ orientations and values so effective relationships are created and maintained” (Fisher & Many, 2014, p.51).

Boundary spanners involved working with a variety of stakeholders (individuals within school, district, community, university, and partnership) and in a variety of contexts (school, university, and partnership) as they enacted the task of Collaboration and Community. Sometimes the descriptions included general description by indicating that the individuals were responsible for building and establishing partnerships, “one such hybrid space is that of the hybrid teacher educator, a university-based educator who works to establish partnerships with K-12 schools that support development of student teachers,” (Martin, et al., 2011, p.1). And sometimes the descriptions indicated that these individuals were responsible for building relationships with teachers in schools. Another study noted,

In addition, we coordinate involvement of other university faculty and preservice teachers in sites, participate in a range of leadership and classroom reform subprojects in the PDS, and function as staff members in ordinary ways at both the school and university. (Simmons, et al., 1999, p. 32)

They also were charged with facilitating the triad of student teacher, mentor teacher, and themselves. One study even associated their boundary-spanners with university supervisors saying, “Like university supervisors, generally they face the difficulty of negotiating the ‘student teaching triad’ from an outsider’s position, as one who faces a ‘strong coalition between [cooperating teachers] and [student teachers]” (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004, p. 435).

Inherent in this task was the need for coordination. Boundary-spanners were often described as needing to coordinate a variety of meetings and activities that involved the continued connection and interconnection of individuals across institutions. Examples of descriptions included, “The school-based site coordinator is released half of the time from regular district responsibilities to coordinate the intern program and to connect preservice education to district restructuring efforts” (Walters, 1998, p. 93), and “We coordinate the involvement of other university faculty and preservice teachers in sites, participate in a range of leadership and classroom reform subprojects in the PDS, and function as staff members in ordinary ways at both the school and university” (Simmons, et al., 1999, p. 32).

Building community is difficult and wrought with challenge, but boundary-spanners are expected to have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively enact the task of Collaboration and Community. The complexity of building relationships can be seen through this study’s use of the word “delicate” in the description, “One such role is that of the bicultural teacher educator who maintains the delicate relationship between the K-12 setting and the university setting at a professional development site” (Burstein, 2007, pp. 66-67). It is also conveyed in this quote, “These professors have to negotiate their roles as teachers, coordinators, peacemakers, and transla-

tors between what are radically different environments” (Burstein, 2007, p. 67). The use of the terms “negotiate,” “peace,” and “radically different environments” conveyed the message that this role was highly complex and challenging.

Building community is also time intensive and required boundary-spanners to attend meetings “regularly” (Walters, 1998), “weekly” (Christenson, et al., 2008) and “monthly” (Rodriguez & Breck, 1995). These meetings occurred with a variety of individuals of varying roles in both schools and universities. For instance, Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., (2004) stated, “While they meet frequently with the district Liaison to whom they directly report, they also meet monthly with a second Liaison who is responsible for coordinating all CFA work” (p. 436), and, “They were also expected to attend weekly supervision meetings with other GAs and clinical educators and to hold weekly focus group meetings with their interns, clinical educator, and mentor teachers” (Christenson, et al., 2008, p. 84). Despite the complexity, challenge, and time-intensive nature, the empirical literature was clear that an integral component of boundary-spanners roles and responsibilities was enacting the task of Collaboration and Community.

*Individual support.* Individual support involves practices and activities aimed at supporting the psychological and emotional demands of learning to teach (Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). We found that boundary-spanners not only provided individual support for preservice teachers, but they also provided individual support for inservice teachers and other peers in boundary-spanning roles. They became “critical friends” (Ferrara & Gomez, 2014). This means that perhaps the demands of working in a clinical context as a preservice teacher, inservice teacher, or boundary-spanner requires support. Sometimes providing Individual Support meant agreeing with individuals but sometimes it also meant ensuring that the work of everyone was valued despite issues and tensions that arose, “PDS liaisons in community schools often take on the additional responsibility of ensuring that teachers value the work of school partners, that all partners value each other’s work and that all of us focus on what is best for children’s education. (Ferrara & Gomez, 2007, p. 113). Perhaps by deflecting differences in opinion that arise while working in a PDS and instead directing the focus back to the common purpose of “what is best for children” is a practice of providing individual support. While it is possible that providing individual support is an extensive part of a boundary-spanner’s role, it was cited infrequently in the literature.

*Equity.* The task of equity involves practices and activities aimed at ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to achieve to their fullest capacity. This often involves bringing up issues connected to race, social class, gender, ethnicity, ability, and social orientation (Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Studies rarely described equity as a task, but one study stated that boundary-spanners’ responsibilities included, “helping school-university partners understand each others’ orientations and values so effective relationships are created and maintained” (Fisher & Many, 2014, p.51). Interestingly, descriptions associated with the task of equity were rare. Only one study recognized that the work of boundary-spanners fell into this task. Fisher and

Many (2014) said, “In schools, boundary-spanners provide guidance for understanding cultural differences, work to create bridges across diverse perspectives, and act as change agents in helping to implement educational policies” (Fisher & Many, 2014, p. 51). They go on to add, “Such individuals play critical roles in helping school-university partners understand each others’ orientations and values so effective relationships are created and maintained” (Fisher & Many, 2014, p.51). Even though the references to boundary-spanning work involving the task of equity were practically non-existent, the fact that it was mentioned is significant. It means that empirical literature regarding boundary-spanners who bring a lens of equity needs more attention.

*Targeted assistance.* Targeted Assistance is a supervisory task associated with practices and activities that provide technical support or feedback to improve practice (Burns & Yendol-Hoppey, 2015). The empirical literature was very vague with regard to this task. The most common descriptors were various forms of the word supervise like “supervise interns,” (Christenson, et al., 2008; Walters, 1998), “supervise student candidates” (Christenson, et al., 2008), “supervise student teachers” (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004) or the more generic “supervising.” (Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004; Christenson, et al., 2008). For example, one description outlined the activities of doctoral student boundary-spanners, “Each year, we had four to six doctoral students supervising 25-34 students” (Christenson, et al., 2008, p.84). Whenever these generic terms like “supervising” and “supervision” were used, they were never defined. Rather their meaning was connoted as being practices and activities associated with observation and feedback, which is very similar to what Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey (2014) found in their investigation of preservice teacher supervision. In preservice teacher supervision, “supervising” was used synonymously with giving observation and feedback and sometimes being associated with evaluation (Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). The empirical literature indicates that boundary-spanners engage in targeted assistance by observing preservice teachers through “supervising.”

*Curriculum development and support.* In PDS contexts, curriculum development and support is defined as “practices aimed at negotiating, facilitating, and developing a curriculum that reflects the shared understandings of a meaningful, relevant, and coherent PreK-12 curriculum” (Burns & Yendol-Hoppey, 2015). The empirical literature indicated that boundary-spanners engaged in this task by using descriptors such as “meet with tenure track faculty responsible for courses that they teach” (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004) and “co-planned with teacher candidates” (Burstein, 2008). The indication of collaboration in curriculum planning alluded to the fact that boundary-spanners were required to engage in negotiating, facilitating, and developing a shared curriculum. Other evidence of curricula negotiation, facilitation, and development was found in the use of terms like “program design” and “course design” (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004). Again, the element of collaboration was alluded to



through the use of committee work, “Liaisons teach courses, work intimately in program and course design, and participate on various university and district committees” (Bullough, Draper, Erickson, et al., 2004, p. 435). Even though the task of Curriculum Development and Support was not as apparent as other tasks, it still existed in the descriptions indicating the boundary-spanners engage in Curriculum Development and Support.

*Research for innovation.* The task of Research for Innovation involves practices associated with scholarly and practitioner inquiry for the purposes of improvement of practice and the generation of new knowledge (Burns & Yendol-Hoppey, 2015). The empirical literature was clear that boundary-spanners engage in the task of Research for Innovation, particularly through inquiring into their own practices (Bullough, Draper, Smith, et al., 2004; Simmons, et al., 1999) and supporting preservice and inservice teacher inquiry (Simmons, et al., 1999). Boundary-spanners also engaged in research activities associated with developing and funding research endeavors. For instance, one study noted how the boundary-spanners were responsible for facilitating meetings where decisions about research were involved, “The meetings serve to also coordinate efforts among the four schools with regard to research, grants, or conferences that may be forthcoming” (Rodriguez & Breck, 1995, p. 89). In another study, the boundary-spanner was considered a research liaison, indicating that her primary task was Research for Innovation (Neapolitan, 2004), even though the description was not linked to this task. Boundary-spanners were responsible for analyzing data collaborative with teachers (Neapolitan, 2004), conducting research projects on site (Neapolitan, 2004; Simmons, et al., 1999), locating relevant research related to research projects (Rodriguez & Breck, 1995), securing external funding (Rodriguez & Breck, 1995), and facilitating collaborative dissemination of research projects (Neapolitan, 2004; Rodriguez & Breck, 1995).

## Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to use findings from empirical studies to generate new knowledge about boundary-spanners in PDS contexts. Our study revealed that there is no agreed upon terminology or definition for formalized boundary-spanning roles. This lack of common nomenclature is problematic for PDS work. First, paramount to the success of PDSs are boundary-spanners and the work that they do on a daily basis (NAPDS, 2008; Sandholtz & Finan, 1998). Without common nomenclature, we lack an understanding of what those roles entail. A lack of common nomenclature has pervaded teacher education and has contributed to its low status among other fields (Soder & Sirotnik, 1990; Zeichner, 2005). In fact, Zeichner’s (2005) framework for teacher education programs was an attempt to help teacher education elevate its status while simultaneously preserving individual program’s contextual specificities. This same issue pervades PDSs. In fact, like teacher education, PDSs have been critiqued as having a lack of fidelity particularly due to its struggle with defining itself

(Fields, 2009; Goodlad & Sirotnik, 1988; Nolan, Grove, Leftwich, Mark, & Peters, 2011; Teitel, 1998). Perhaps the lack of common terminology and the lack of common understanding of the critical roles that traverse the borders of schools and universities may be contributing to the dilution of PDS as a construct. This means that the field would benefit from a common conceptual framework to guide the description and understanding of formalized boundary-spanning roles. For that reason, we propose a conceptual framework that would preserve the contextual specificities of terminology while simultaneously providing structure to foster common understanding. This conceptual framework can be found in Figure 1. Three major components compose the framework: (1) Role Identities, (2) Role Characteristics, and (3) Role Responsibilities.

On the far left of the figure is the term that would be given to a formalized boundary-spanning role. That term could be ones such as those found in this meta-analysis like clinical faculty associate, partnership facilitator, or liaison for example. In this way, PDSs would be able to preserve names for roles that are specific to their context while simultaneously connecting them to bigger concepts to guide their descriptions.

*Role identities.* The first major component of the framework is called Role Identities. This component contains descriptors that are related to addressing the question: Who assumes this particular boundary-spanning role? To provide clarity in understanding the who component, we recommend that definitions include descriptors relating to the home institution and the position of the individual within that home institution. The description of home institution should be described as either university-based or school-based. Given the fact that formalized boundary-spanning roles are by nature boundary-spanning, it may appear that this distinction could be challenging. One possible way to determine the home institution could be connected to finances. The home institution is determined by who provides the paycheck to the boundary-spanner. Regardless, naming the home institution should be included in the definition of the boundary-spanning role. The second descriptor for the Role Identity Component would be the position. As Figure 1 points out, there are four position categories. They include university faculty, graduate students, reassigned teachers, and administrators. These four positions resulted from the data of this study, but perhaps there may be additional formalized boundary-spanning roles with other positions than the four identified position categories. For instance, mentor teachers are school-based teacher educators because they work daily to support preservice teachers’ learning in the field. It seems that they, too, should be included in the framework even though they were outside the scope of this study. More research is needed to determine if there are additional descriptors that could be added to this framework.

*Role characteristics.* The second major component of the framework is called Role Characteristics. This component contains descriptors that are related to addressing the question: What are the specific logistical details of the role that distinguish it from other roles? To provide clarity in understanding the what component, we propose that definitions include the descriptors

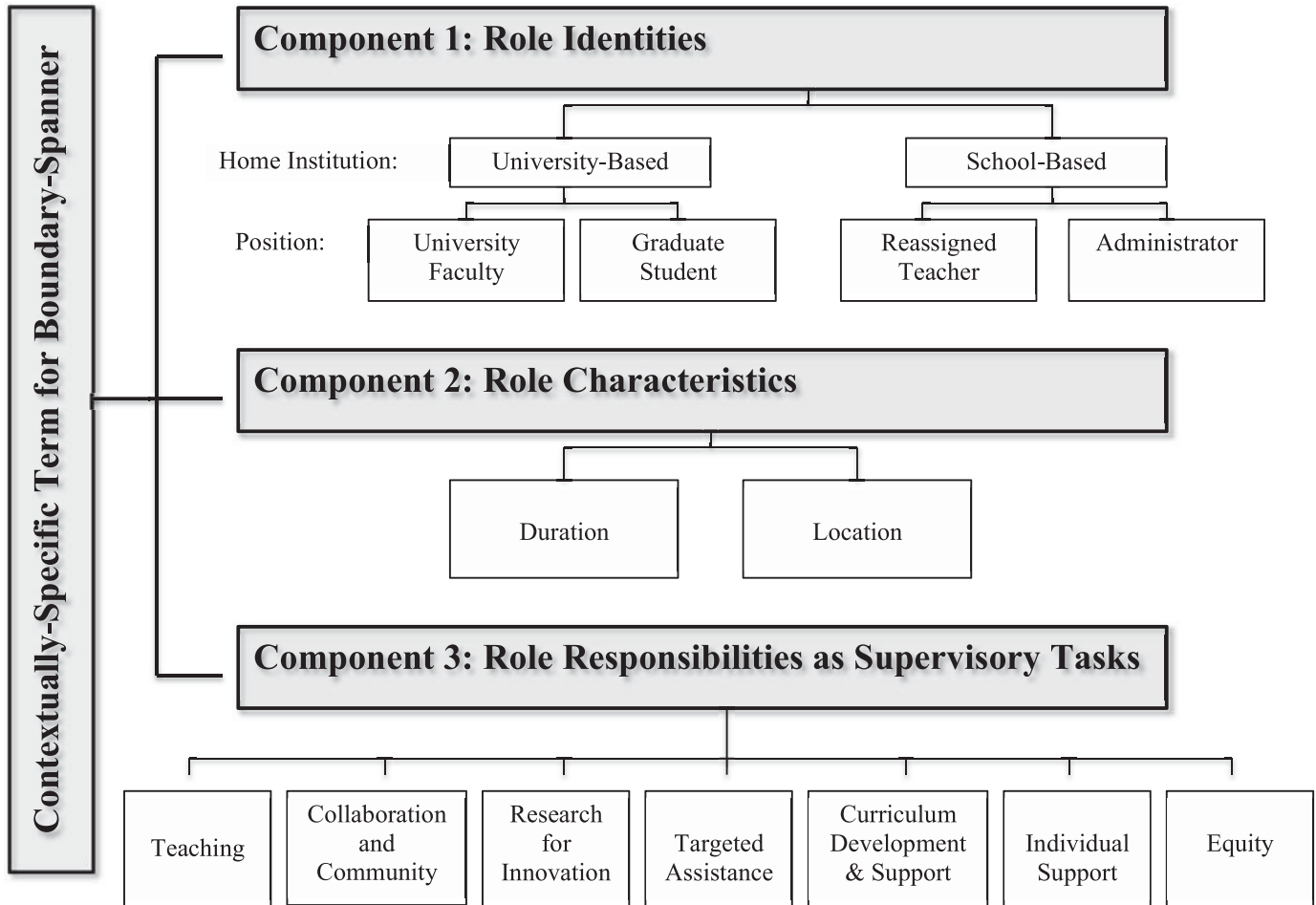


Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework for Describing Boundary-Spanning Roles in PDS.

of duration and location. With regard to duration, information regarding whether or not the role is permanent or temporary would be helpful. If the role is temporary, providing information about how long individuals are in the role would also provide clarity. With regard to location, it would also be helpful to include information regarding where the individual spends most of their time. For example, is 90% of the boundary-spanner's time in schools and 10% at the university? Are the boundary-spanners located primarily on site at the school or on site at the university? Like role identity, the fact that the role is boundary-spanning may complicate the determination of these descriptors but including this kind of information in definitions would provide clarity in developing a more universal understanding of these roles.

*Role responsibilities.* The third major component of the framework is Role Responsibilities as Supervisory Tasks. This component contains descriptors that are related to addressing the question: What are the individuals doing in these roles? This study found that the boundary-spanning roles are supervisory by nature. Meaning, even though "supervisor" is not a label in the name of the role, the tasks in which the boundary-spanners were engaging were connected to what Burns and Yendol-Hoppey (2015) identified as tasks of supervision in PDSs. Supervisors and

supervision are not synonymous; supervisors are a role and supervision is a function aimed at improving practice for student achievement (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014). Given the fact that this study found that boundary-spanners are enacting the function of supervision, the field stands to benefit by connecting the tasks in which boundary-spanners engage to a larger theoretical framework of supervision in PDS. While boundary-spanners are not necessarily called supervisors, they enact functions of supervision. We propose that future descriptions of the role should connect the work of boundary-spanners to the tasks of supervision in PDS. In accordance with scholarship of preservice teacher supervision (Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014) and scholarship of supervision in PDS (Burns & Yendol-Hoppey, 2015), those tasks would include Teaching, Collaboration and Community, Research for Innovation, Targeted Assistance, Curriculum Development and Support, Individual Support, and Equity.

## Conclusion

With the current movement in teacher education towards increased school-university partnerships (AACTE, 2010;

NAPDS, 2008; NCATE, 2001; NCATE, 2010), the field of PDS is well positioned to be a leader in supporting teacher education programs in their quest not only to build robust school-university partnerships and but also to clearly define and articulate the critical boundary-spanning roles that are the heartbeat of success of the school-university partnerships (NAPDS, 2008; Sandholtz & Finan, 1998). Unfortunately, previous scholarship on boundary-spanning roles in PDS has suffered from a lack of common terminology and conceptual understanding of these critical roles. Yet, the future of PDS is promising. By using a common conceptual framework, such as the one described in this paper, the field can unite future scholarship and deepen understanding of the role of boundary-spanners and the function of their work as supervision in PDS contexts. This means that both scholars and practitioners can have a common language and understanding of these critical roles in their ongoing investigation and application. **SUP**

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