Toward a Renewal of Supervisory Scholarship and Practice in Teacher Education: A Collaborative Self-Study

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Abstract

University supervision of teacher candidates is a well-recognized component of teacher preparation. However, teacher education has long devalued supervision, largely relying upon retired teachers, administrators, and graduate students to serve as supervisors, often with little training or support. Although clinical practice has received increased focus among accrediting bodies, supervision as a field of scholarship and practice continues to receive little support within institutions or attention in teacher education. As supervision practitioners and scholars, the three authors engaged in collaborative self-study, sharing and interrogating professional autobiographies and narratives related to supervision, to make sense of institutional and professional contexts and to interrogate the tensions of practice and legitimacy surrounding supervision in teacher education. Together, we acknowledged the complexity of supervision, challenged dominant narratives of supervision institutionally and professionally, and constructed new spaces of supervisory practice and learning. Learning from our experiences, teacher educators can better understand how to prepare and support future supervision scholars and practitioners.

Keywords

self-study of teacher education practices; collaborative self-study; teacher candidate supervision; clinical practice; teacher preparation

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Introduction

Schools and colleges of education have historically devalued supervision within clinical experiences and teacher preparation (Nolan, 2022). Teacher educators have disagreed about the value of supervision (McIntyre & Byrd, 1998; Zeichner 2005), with some suggesting the elimination of the university supervisor position altogether (Rodgers & Keil, 2007), while others have found the university supervisor critical in linking program goals to teacher candidates' instructional practices (Lee, 2011) and integral to successful educator preparation (Bates et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2014).

As teacher educators and supervision scholars, we have long been troubled by the lack of value placed upon teacher candidate supervision in higher education, and of misperceptions of supervision as simply technical practice and not a field of study. As such, we came together using collaborative self-study methods, which provided us with the necessary space to wrestle with the conceptual and structural dynamics of our institutions related to supervision, perceptions of our work as supervisors and supervision scholars institutionally, and the acceptance of supervision as viable scholarship in today's educational climate. We saw a clear contrast between expressions of support for strong clinical practice and the actual practices and views of supervision enacted in our institutions and the profession. For example, we observed – and in one case, work/ed at – institutions that espouse clinically-oriented programs but prevent or discourage faculty from serving as supervisors and do not provide sufficient training for those who do serve in supervisory roles. As the field of teacher education addresses calls to transform teacher preparation (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 2018; Council of Accreditation for Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2022; National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010), attention abounds as to how teachers are prepared and supported in clinical experiences.

As the focus shifts toward integrating clinical practice into teacher learning, teacher education would benefit from research that seeks to understand how supervision scholars/practitioners problematize the work of supervision, seek to design and leverage high quality teacher candidate supervision, and prepare current and future university supervisors. In this collaborative self-study, the three authors (Brandon, Rebecca, Craig) interrogated the tensions of practice and legitimacy that surrounded teacher candidate supervision in their institutions and teacher education at large, and how such collective interrogation can improve practice and understanding related to teacher candidate supervision. The research questions at the center of this investigation were: What tensions of practice and legitimacy are experienced by teacher candidate supervision scholars, and how does collaborative self-study help overcome those tensions?

Literature Review

While the terms supervision and supervisor are often used interchangeably, the two are not synonymous; one is a function and the other a role (Glickman et al., 2018). We draw upon the work of Burns et al. (2016a) when we define supervision of clinical experiences as the function of enacting tasks and practices to foster teacher candidate learning in clinical experiences and the teacher candidate supervisor as the individual in a university-based role who enacts the function of supervision. If the purpose of supervision in clinical experiences is fostering teacher candidate

learning, then we also subscribe to the notion that supervision should be enacted as a teaching or pedagogical function (Burns & Badiali, 2016), even though it is often practiced as evaluation (Basmadjian, 2011; Burns & Badiali, 2015). This conflation is understandable given the fact that the teacher candidate supervisor is in a role that requires the enactment of both supervision-as-teaching and evaluation-as-gatekeeping (Nolan & Hoover, 2010). Distinguishing between role and function and between supervision and evaluation requires sophistication and a deep sense of the knowledge and literature base of teacher candidate supervision.

Preparation and Professional Development of Supervisors

Supervising in clinical experiences is particularly difficult because teacher candidate supervisors must work within the negotiated third space between schools and universities (e.g., Cuenca et al., 2011; Williams, 2013; Zeichner, 2010). The difficulty and complexity of supervision in clinical experiences means that not only do teacher candidate supervisors need preparation, but they also need ongoing professional learning (Burns et al., 2016b; Haughton & Keil, 2009). That is, if professional learning is provided at all. Much of the work of supervision has been the domain of retired teachers and administrators, graduate students, and clinical/non-tenure track faculty. The low status assigned to supervision (Nolan, 2022), often results in supervisors being "left alone to establish and communicate their own pedagogical perspectives and beliefs about teaching and learning with their student teachers" (Cuenca, 2010, p. 29).

Historically, the dominant form of professional development for supervisors has been training (Areglado, 1998; McIntyre & Byrd, 1998), but new mechanisms for supervisor professional growth are emerging (Burns et al., 2016a). Ongoing, differentiated, and job-embedded strategies like having supervisors systematically study their own practice through inquiry (e.g., Jacobs et al., 2015; Kilbourn et al., 2005), self-study (e.g., Bullock, 2012; Butler & Diacopoulos, 2016; Williams, 2013), and working alongside other supervisors in communities of practice (Cuenca et al., 2011; Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010) are examples, but less attention has been given to the ways in which education faculty engage in sense-making around institutional and professional contexts and dynamics that surround the acceptance/valuing of supervisory preparation and practice, which is the focus of this self-study.

Self-Study and Teacher Candidate Supervision

Teacher candidate supervision has received increasing attention over the past decade among those who conduct self-study research (Bullock, 2012; Butler & Diacopoulos, 2016; Cuenca, 2010; Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020). For emerging teacher educators, conducting supervision provides an opportunity to move beyond the confines of their individual classroom teaching experience and observe the complexity of teaching and teacher education in real world settings (Cuenca, 2010; McCorvey & Burns, 2022). Because doctoral students often lack initial training in how to effectively support teacher candidates (Butler & Diacopoulos, 2016; Cuenca, 2010), self-study research methods have served as a vehicle through which these emerging teacher educators can purposefully and critically explore their developing identities and pedagogies as teacher educators (e.g., Bullock, 2012; Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020; Trout, 2008). What this literature has highlighted is how important formal and informal learning spaces are in the teacher educator learning experience (Butler, 2019). The collaborative exploration of past and present

practices as teachers and teacher educators, framed through the clinical experience, is central to understanding oneself as a supervisor and improving future practices (e.g., Diacopoulos & Butler 2020; Jacobs et al., 2019; Ritter et al., 2007).

It is this collective research base that served as the springboard for this article. Together, we are at points in our academic careers where we no longer conduct teacher candidate supervision on a consistent basis. However, as supervision scholars and teacher educators, we play roles in promoting effective supervision practices and learning institutionally – through hiring and/or training supervisors, or through responsibility for general oversight and advocacy in administrative roles – and professionally – through research and leadership work for national organizations. And, perhaps, we can positively impact future decisions related to teacher candidate supervision by collaboratively exploring our individual experiences with supervision and making those experiences public.

Methods

To collaboratively explore our experiences with supervision, we turned to collaborative self-study (Bodone et al., 2004). The goal of self-study is to improve teacher education practices by purposefully and critically reflecting upon one's development as teacher educators (Dinkelman, 2003; LaBoskey, 2004). For the purposes of this study, we used Pithouse et al.'s (2009) definition of collaborative self-study, which they saw as "two or more people intentionally [working] together as 'co-scholars'" to investigate a shared problem of practice (p. 27). For us, that shared problem of practice was teacher candidate supervision. Additionally, Bodone et al. (2004) saw collaborative self-study as a form of action through which we recognize "the work we do together can and must make a difference" (p. 777). Our hope is that by sharing our experiences, others can draw lessons to improve the state of teacher candidate supervision institutionally and professionally.

Context

At the start of data collection, we were each assistant professors nearing tenure. Brandon and Craig were at high-research activity universities and Rebecca was at a very-high research activity university. We each held administrative responsibilities at the program level and were involved in facilitating supervisor learning and practice opportunities at our institutions. Brandon facilitated the transition of doctoral students into teacher education supervision, as supervision was previously the sole purview of retired teachers/administrators. Craig had collaborated on the transformation of teacher education programs at his institution to focus on urban education, which instituted a strong clinical component. Rebecca administered several programs, was integral to her institution's Professional Development Schools, and collaborated on the development and instruction of several doctoral courses on supervision.

During the study, we each obtained tenure and promotion to associate professor, Brandon in the first year, then Craig and Rebecca the following year. Since the study, we have each taken on increased responsibilities and opportunities. Brandon has held several program administrator and faculty leadership positions, eventually serving as director of his department's doctoral program, whose full-time students serve as supervisors. Craig coordinated the elementary education

program for five years and was appointed chair of his department, providing leadership for eight teacher education programs, seven of which contain a supervision component. Rebecca made an institutional move that came with promotion to full professor and administrative responsibilities focused on school-university partnerships and clinical practice, and was recently hired as dean of a college of education at a master's granting (M1) university. These professional moves and increased responsibilities have given us increased oversight for supervision institutionally, while keeping us from much of the physical enactment of supervision. These moves and increased responsibilities occurred following data collection, but our experiences in these roles directly informed our analysis and consideration of the implications of our study.

Data Sources and Analysis

Data for this article were collected across two academic years. The first data were digital correspondence to initiate the collaboration. We then individually wrote educational autobiographies we shared with the group, which presented opportunities to dialogue in writing and conversation about our experiences as teacher educators and supervision specifically. Sharing these autobiographies provided us with a baseline from which we could construct meaning about teacher candidate supervision, but they also served as a catalyst for developing a scholarly community that critically interrogated supervision (Branyon et al., 2022).

After sharing and discussing our autobiographies, we kept a co-constructed narrative space using a shared Google Drive folder. During the data collection period, we collectively contributed 24 narratives that totaled 75,532 words. We covered a range of topics related to teacher education, but supervision received the most attention. Journals were co-constructed in that we would individually post a narrative and then engage in written dialogue back-and-forth within the digital document, with each new contribution to a narrative dated and color-coded.

In addition to the narrative space, we periodically met to discuss and critique our written narratives and to share recent experiences we had not had the opportunity to write in narrative form. These meetings occurred approximately once a month during the academic year, lasting between one and two hours each. Meetings were audio-recorded and transcribed, with transcripts serving as an additional dialogue point as we responded in writing. Additional data included documents such as programs of study and examples of student teaching observation documents used at our respective institutions.

For this study, we used constant comparative analysis. It is viewed as an appropriate form of analysis for collaborative self-study research (Coia & Taylor, 2010) and ensures trustworthiness by contrasting and comparing data "to previously validated research" (Mena & Russell, 2017, p. 115). We analyzed data collaboratively and inductively, beginning with the initial sharing of autobiographies and concluding with our final narratives and meeting transcripts. During this process, we searched for common patterns and themes (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). We then returned to the data to check for consistency with the existing literature on teacher candidate supervision (Charmaz, 2014; Coia & Taylor, 2010). This iterative and repeated critical analysis of our lived experiences with supervision was a conscious attempt to understand supervision as a practice and field of study, which gives the process an authority of experience (Ham & Kane, 2004).

Findings

Three themes emerged from our analysis that illustrated our experiences brokering supervision as a scholarly field and as a practice: 1) acknowledging the complexity of supervision, 2) challenging the dominant narratives of supervision practice, and 3) constructing new spaces of supervisory practice and learning.

Acknowledging the Complexity of Supervision

Our respective autobiographies and how we came to value the work of supervision shared some overlaps. Brandon and Craig both went through alternative teacher certification training programs, with Brandon attending a one-year master's program and Craig a Teacher-in-Residence program. Both had one visit from a university supervisor and little support from other educators. In fact, Craig reported the following about his experience as a teacher candidate receiving feedback from a university-affiliated supervisor, as compared to school-based supervision:

> I can vaguely remember one observation during my first year of teaching by my instructor, a contracted instructor affiliated with Western College [pseudonym]. The feedback provided during that observation was not memorable; I have no memory of this. I do, however, remember observations and sit-down meetings conducted by both my principal and assistant principal...I do remember it being more substantial and having a more significant impression on me and how I regularly thought about teaching.

Having had negative or uninfluential experiences with supervision, Brandon and Craig came to value effective supervision as a doctoral student and new faculty, respectively.

In Brandon's doctoral program, supervision "would give new doctoral students new insights into the world of teaching." And, although clinical experiences and the work of supervision were highly valued by program faculty, new supervisors received limited support in learning how to supervise and, especially, making connections to program curriculum and goals. Brandon and his peers were largely left to learn supervision by engaging independently with the scholarly literature and conducting self-studies of their supervisory practices. Craig did not take on the role of supervisor until he was a tenure-track assistant professor, when his institution shifted from the retired teacher/administrator as supervisor model to faculty and doctoral students serving as supervisors: "Intuitively and according to the research, I thought student teaching and other practicums were critically important to teachers' development into culturally relevant teachers that transcended the status quo." Rebecca, on the other hand, had positive experiences with supervision as a student teacher and doctoral student. As a teacher candidate, she attended a university with Professional Development Schools (PDSs) and a strong culture of university supervision. She later attended the same university for her doctoral degree, which reinforced her perception of supervision as an invaluable component of teacher education.

Despite these varied inductions into supervision, our dialogue surfaced two common themes. First, supervision itself is a complex endeavor, not least because of its historical positioning and

status in universities. The following is an excerpt from Brandon in a dialogue concerning the future of supervision as a legitimate component of teacher education:

> It is sad when teacher education as a field generally recognizes the complexity of teacher education and, therefore, the challenge of learning to be a successful teacher educator, only to respond to that challenge and complexity through a "sink-or-swim" approach to learning teacher education and little expectation of learning around the core areas of teacher education work like supervision...I don't see this mindset changing quickly. Unless you are invested in the work of supervision based upon experience or interest, you may have little exposure to the history of, contemporary issues related to, and theories and practices related to supervision.

Brandon's perspective, which generated agreement from Rebecca and Craig, characterized supervision as an afterthought. Indeed, there have been theoretical advancements that outline the complexity of developing teachers to work within diverse sociocultural systems. Yet, in general, there is not a collective will to support the scholarship and practice of supervision, when we know well the intense socialization into the profession that occurs during clinical experiences, particularly student teaching. This is increasingly problematic when we consider how teacher educators have struggled to challenge unproductive beliefs about children, community, and schooling (Willey & Magee, 2016), and how supervision is a prime opportunity to mediate clinical experiences to avoid the galvanization of deficit thinking. In another excerpt, Craig built on Brandon's ideas:

> Supervision itself - not to mention the development of supervisors - is an under-studied, critical (in both senses of the word) site of teacher development. It is where there is a confluence of factors and knowledge bases that combine to form this intense socialization process, where deeply held beliefs about teaching, learning, schooling, the "other," parenting, professional relationships, individual responsibility, etc. all are either confirmed/galvanized or challenged. I know folks have written about this, but I'm not sure teacher educators, most of whom hold a disciplinary identity first and foremost, get this. Or, at least they are not willing to shake up their own professional world enough to address it. To me, it is the most clear and influential site of cultural reproduction. I'm talking about racist, inequitable, meritocratic, anti-democratic, anti-intellectual reproduction.

Craig's comment captures the negligence he felt supervision suffered at the hands of teacher educators who prioritize disciplinary identity. It also leads to our final point about the complexity of supervision: although we had each served as university supervisors and studied supervision, we often considered the work through specific contexts and literature bases – Professional Development Schools (Rebecca), supervisor learning (Brandon), and equity/urban education (Craig). Sharing our experiences, perspectives, and research amplified the notion that the work of supervision is still not fully understood, given how much we learned from one another even though we considered ourselves supervision practitioners and scholars. This is illustrated in the following exchange between Brandon and Rebecca:

> Rebecca: With the call for clinically rich teacher education, I see supervision in teacher preparation (and hopefully supervision in teacher education) as a way to revive the field of instructional supervision. The struggle I see is that too few scholars cross the boundary lines.

> Brandon: You also have few people who are knowledgeable about supervision to lead the changes needed to address calls for clinical practice from CAEP and others.

> Rebecca: I think this is because there is lack of attention to "general" teacher education...and a lack of attention to supervision in doctoral preparation. Programs must be more deliberate about teacher education and supervision in teacher education, or we will continue to face these issues.

This exchange highlights how our respective backgrounds and unique institutional contexts affected the ways in which we considered the learning and enactment of teacher candidate supervision at a professional level.

Challenging Dominant Narratives of Supervision Practice

From an outsider perspective, we each worked in what might be perceived as highly successful teacher education programs. Our programs represented a range of structures and our scholarship was deeply embedded in those structures and programmatic practices. As such, we came to this collaboration with the mindset that we would gain insights into the successes of others so that we might correct the problems we saw within our individual programs. For instance, Brandon noted his reasons for collaborating with Rebecca was the strong presence at her institution of a Professional Development School (PDS) culture, doctoral coursework in supervision, and a teacher leadership program; and for collaborating with Craig, his institution's shift toward an urban teacher education program that was cohort-based and that provided a strong supervision model. In the first meeting, Brandon shared his reasons for entering the collaborative relationship:

> Rebecca, me highlighting a frustration and hearing from you the things that y'all are doing [with supervision], the things that you've done to change dynamics and practices of where we want to be in regard to doctoral studies… I think it's a valuable thing for me to hear and take away. From Craig, as I was listening to you present about your institution and how you have embraced urban teacher preparation, it sounds like you've done some interesting work in field experiences.

Brandon felt that these areas were largely absent at his institution and hoped to gain new insights into these practices. Historically, retired teachers and administrators were employed as university supervisors. They received minimal training and were provided with little oversight to ensure that college and educator preparation programs' visions and goals for teacher education were actualized. Brandon contrasted this reality with the one he perceived at Rebecca's institution, where doctoral students did the large majority of university supervision and doctoral students in her program - elementary education - were required to take a sequence of three courses on supervision. At one conference meeting during our study, Craig had shared deep insights into his

elementary education program that had recently undergone extensive revision. The new program was urban-focused, students were in cohorts guided by a specific faculty member throughout their program, and a significant field work component that had shifted from the retired teacher and administrator model to faculty and doctoral student supervision.

Having recently engaged in program revision, Craig was interested in the support he could receive from others through a critical exploration of programmatic and personal pedagogical practices, especially those related to supervision. He broadly noted, "The reason that I'm here is because we're working through some really thick and rich struggles, I think, in terms of what it means to develop urban teachers … and what we think is good teaching." Craig then extended his reasoning for the collaboration to answering questions around supervision: "Whose responsibility is it? How much value should be placed on it in institutions? And what should it look like when we have different kinds of goals?" As a faculty member deeply involved in the development and enactment of the urban teacher program, Craig was concerned with issues of disposition: "How do you handle resistance … and develop close relationships with prospective teachers?"

In contrast, Rebecca was interested in questions that went beyond pedagogical practices. Rebecca's scholarly focus was in supervision and Professional Development Schools, and as such, she had a long list of publications and presentations in the field. Of the three of us, Rebecca had the most comprehensive understanding of supervision. However, she was plagued by uncertainties that were the result of questions of legitimacy of supervision as a core teacher education practice and as a field worthy of scholarly investigation. In addition to learning a new research methodology, Rebecca felt that the collaboration would assist in developing a stronger identity as a teacher educator and researcher of supervision. She stated in our first meeting, "Here I am, a researcher who studies [supervision], who also practices it, but I have these issues of identity and who I am." She continued,

> I'm looking forward to our conversations because I feel like if we had this opportunity to talk, and we get to know one another, and we can learn from each other, then you can help me learn from that perspective [of identity development], because I know right now we have a lot of issues and tensions among our faculty.

This was the first Brandon and Craig had heard of any uncertainty from Rebecca regarding acceptance within her institution and the larger field of teacher education. Both had observed a colleague who, as an assistant professor, already held leadership roles in several professional organizations and her university, and was a member of what was externally viewed as a leading university in the work of supervision, Professional Development Schools, and teacher leadership - all of which Rebecca had some responsibility for. However, what emerged from conversations was a sharing of more complicated narratives related to supervision and programmatic practices. Rebecca highlighted the regular resistance she experienced from senior faculty for Professional Development Schools, teacher leadership, and the emphasis she placed on supervision in practice and as scholarship, even going so far as having an associate dean of research at her mid-tenure review try to redefine her research agenda since supervision, in the associate dean's mind, was not an acceptable scholarly field. Rebecca shared,

> Here I am, sitting in the dean's conference room with the dean and associate dean of research, nervous as can be because I am having my mid-tenure review meeting, and she's (the associate dean) telling me how I should be working with teachers and schools and what I should be studying. Basically, she was telling me that the work I do, the research that I study, doesn't count because, in her mind, I didn't have a "disciplinary field" like she did (mathematics education). The whole experience was surreal because outside of that room and outside of my institution, I am a recognized scholar in my field; I know who I am. But, these two individuals in positions of power have made me question everything that I thought I knew about who I was as a scholar simply because of their ignorance and their (mis)perceptions of supervision as a scholarly field and area of research. It makes me so angry because their ignorance controls my destiny.

These experiences with continuous resistance from senior faculty and college leaders created unnecessary doubt, uncertainty, insecurity, and identity struggle. But Rebecca was not alone in sharing such issues related to clinical practice. Craig noted the myriad challenges he and colleagues experienced in the shift to an urban program and in changing programmatic procedures related to course instruction and supervision. And Brandon highlighted institutional resistance to shifting teacher education programs from a more traditional mode of delivery to one that reflected current understandings of clinical practice and teacher preparation.

Prior to sharing our autobiographies and current narratives, we had perceived our institutional 'battles' as isolated conflicts. We saw the others in our collaborative group as having had great success professionally, institutionally, and with supervision specifically; the institutional battles and the emotional exhaustion we faced to regularly combat the legitimacy of our field were invisible. By sharing these tensions, we made them visible, which made us wonder how we could counter the supervision narratives that dominated our individual institutions. If others we perceived as successful were experiencing similar challenges, what good might we affect at our universities? The work of supervision was under-valued as practice, and as a form of scholarship, it was often given little recognition.

The dialogue we engaged in helped us as three supervision practitioners and scholars make sense of the dominant narratives we experienced institutionally and professionally while providing us the space to counter such narratives by witnessing what others experienced so we might avoid or replicate specific practices or initiatives related to supervision. The space we created also helped prevent us from succumbing to those dominant narratives as we generated new ways to interrogate supervision as a form of scholarship and developed more substantive insights into the work of supervision that a collaborative exploration could provide.

Constructing New Spaces of Supervisory Practice and Learning

Having begun to challenge our institutional narratives and understanding that those narratives were more than likely the norm than the exception within teacher education, we began to identify ways in which we could extend the influential work done on supervision. We shared our pedagogical successes with supervision, in particular the collaborations we had produced with fellow faculty and doctoral students and the lessons learned from those collaborations.

Through our dialogue, we were not only able to develop ways in which we might improve our institutional practices related to supervision, but we also provided forms of intellectual, pedagogical, and affective support as we sought to counter the dominant narratives (Logan & Butler, 2013). Rebecca noted that although she regularly experienced institutional tensions related to her supervision work, she increasingly saw the positive impact of that work, which has "touched teachers' lives - it has developed teacher leaders, it has produced high quality teachers, and it has shifted the culture of a low-performing school. There is something about supervision - of integrating teaching, research, and service in a school setting, that is truly rewarding." Rather than give in to the narratives around supervision that dominated her institution, she chose to challenge those narratives through a focus on what she saw as the real work of teacher education: "Working hand-in-hand with schools to solve real problems is rewarding - watching teachers feel empowered - watching them lead and facilitate meetings - watching them co-teach, truly co-teach, with their residents - is powerful." She continued, "Being a scholar and practitioner of supervision has afforded me the opportunity to stay connected to kids, teachers, principals, and schools. The work fulfills me emotionally (although draining at times), but I wouldn't have it any other way."

We also began to look outward toward the teacher education profession. For instance, we attend a small annual conference on instructional supervision, the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS). The conference rotates among members' institutions, but the conference is like most conferences – paper presentations and catching up with colleagues. Yet it is unique in that all attendees are together in one space and hear all presentations. Dialogue is the norm and the conference has historically been a space to share research, engage in intellectual conversation about research and practice, strengthen the scholarship and practice of supervision, and support doctoral students and young scholars of instructional supervision.

We saw such spaces as holding much potential. One is that the collection of prominent scholars all focused on instructional supervision should have a profound effect on our field. As we debated whether supervision was endangered or emerging in one of our narratives, Rebecca asked, "What do you see as the role and responsibility of COPIS in this picture given that we are getting a new, younger generation of scholars to carry forth?" We recognized that we were part of the future of this organization and had a great responsibility to the field of supervision. We also found this conference as a space for idea generation. Brandon shared, "I was at COPIS listening to presenters, and although I cannot remember who was presenting when the idea hit me, I suddenly had an idea for a project that would involve myself and a doctoral student." This project would result in several articles on supervisor learning (Butler & Diacopoulos, 2016; Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020), with the doctoral student elected a member of the instructional supervision organization upon graduation. The dialogic nature of the conference and the norm of scholarly argumentation created cognitive dissonance for us and caused us to think deeply about our scholarship related to supervision. In one of the narratives after the annual meeting. Craig shared, "Now, I am reminded of a comment from (a prominent scholar in the field) after my presentation - I think about it ALL the time!" The senior scholar's question of Craig's presentation caused him to reflect on his beliefs and assumptions about his work with students in clinical experiences.

We also saw the potential to consider supervision more critically with teacher educators beyond the COPIS conference. Using our collaborative space as a starting point, we hosted symposia on supervision practice and research at the Association for Teacher Educators for three consecutive years. These symposia brought together novice and expert supervision practitioners and researchers to interrogate the state of supervision and develop better understandings of practice. The energy and insights from participants, promulgated by our collaboration, suggested that we were on the cusp of new conversations, strategies, and collective action aimed at showcasing the importance of supervision practice and scholarship within teacher education. Such experiences led us to recognize that professional and scholarly learning spaces, whether found through conferences or learning communities like our collaborative self-study, provide opportunities for doctoral students and faculty to positively respond to calls for improved clinical practice by advocating for the professional learning of supervisors who are inevitably responsible for actualizing the success of clinical practice.

Discussion

As the field of teacher education focuses on preparing teachers through effective clinical practice, it is imperative to focus research, scholarship, and practice on quality supervision in clinical experiences. The purpose of this study was to share findings from a collaborative self-study of three teacher education faculty who are scholars and practitioners of supervision and how we made sense of our institutional and professional contexts and the dynamics surrounding the acceptance and value of supervision as a scholarly field.

While the findings are likely to provoke thought and trigger new considerations among teacher educators, the larger and more immediate impact is likely on the three participants; indeed, the impact on each of us as individuals is likely, also, to influence institutional changes in our respective contexts. Collectively, we developed a deeper appreciation for the complexity of supervision as a practice and field of study. We began to view supervision as situated in broader historical and professional contexts that limited the full acceptance of supervision as an integral aspect of teacher education, all while the profession espoused support for teacher candidates to learn through clinical practice. But, even with these challenges, we identified opportunities to renew supervision as practice and field of study institutionally and professionally.

Beyond our institutional contexts, however, by working together and engaging in subsequent analysis of our stories and experiences, we identified larger problems associated with supervision that have contributed to a cycle of marginalization (see Figure 1). These problems included, for example, a lack of understanding of supervision which contributes to less consideration of supervision practice and scholarship over time, which leads to a general lack of support, structures, and resources for those engaging in and learning the work of supervision. This ignorance of the scholarship and practice of supervision creates opportunities for misconceptions, like believing supervision is merely a technical practice, and for malpractices, such as relying predominantly on adjunct faculty to supervise without attention to their professional learning, assigning large numbers of teacher candidates to one individual, discouraging tenure-earning faculty from working in and with schools, to name a few. These malpractices are intimately connected to issues of power and positionality that perpetuate the status quo, marginalizing supervision as a field of study; and this marginalization contributes to

less consideration of supervision practice and scholarship, perpetuating the marginalization cycle.

Figure 1. The Marginalization of Supervision Cycle
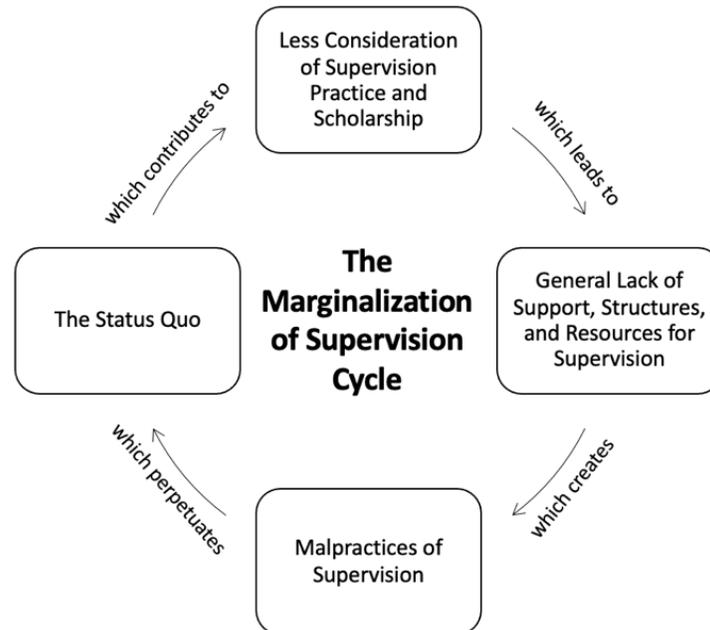
Thus, we contend that a renewal of supervision involves disrupting the marginalization of supervision cycle by deliberately dismantling institutional barriers. Dismantling such barriers involves: 1) Including supervision as part of doctoral preparation, 2) Preparing and hiring scholars of supervision, 3) Addressing misperceptions of and malpractices in supervision, 4) Calling out issues of power and positionality, and 5) Resourcing what matters. Renewing supervision by breaking the marginalization cycle ensures that future generations of faculty are knowledgeable about and equipped to enact clinically based teacher preparation.

Including Supervision as Part of Doctoral Preparation

While there are individuals who want to study supervision as their scholarly field of study, other scholars may stumble into supervision because it is part of their faculty load and, thus, engage in self-study to integrate supervision and research (e.g., Butler & Diacopoulos, 2016; Cuenca, 2010; Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020). Thus, all faculty who teach in teacher preparation programs, no matter the kind of institution, should have knowledge about supervision because even if it is not their area of expertise, they may be required to supervise as part of their faculty responsibilities. Thus, doctoral programs, whether they are granting doctorates of philosophy or of education, must include coursework on supervision, opportunities to supervise teacher candidates, and mentorship from faculty who include supervision as part of their scholarship in order to ensure that their graduates are well-equipped to become faculty in colleges or schools of education.

Another reason supervision should be part of doctoral preparation is because supervision is the keystone to connecting theory and practice. When enacted skillfully, faculty who supervise teacher candidates can help them translate what they learn in coursework with what they observe and experience in classrooms during clinical experiences. Nowhere is there a more powerful laboratory for learning than the possibility and potential of clinical experiences; and supervision is the essential function of teaching about teaching in the clinical context of schools that makes that learning possible.

Learning to supervise as part of doctoral preparation should not only involve opportunities for practice, but it should also be coupled with intentional coursework on developing a pedagogy of teacher education (Butler et al., 2014; Conklin, 2015; Crowe & Whitlock, 1999) and a clinical pedagogy of teacher education (Burns & Badiali, 2016; 2018). Thus, a comprehensive approach to doctoral preparation would include opportunities to supervise teacher candidates in school-university partnerships, teach methods or foundations courses to the same teacher candidates they supervise, take coursework on supervision and school-university partnerships simultaneously, engage in practitioner research or self-study of their supervision, and have faculty mentorship of all these experiences (Burns & Badiali, 2013; McCorvey & Burns, 2022; Yendol-Hoppey et al., 2019). When doctoral students supervise teacher candidates, their context of supervision becomes a laboratory for their own learning, providing opportunities to meaningfully integrate teaching, research, and service (Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020). Supervising teacher candidates gives doctoral students opportunities to systematically study their own teaching as teacher educators, innovate their teaching of teachers in clinical contexts, and contribute to program improvement (Jacobs et al., 2015).

Preparing and Hiring Scholars of Supervision

Attending to the preparation of scholars of supervision in teacher education and intentionally hiring such faculty in colleges of education is imperative because these scholars are well-positioned to understand, enact, and lead research and innovation for improved teacher education. There needs to be opportunities in doctoral-granting institutions (of both Ph.D. and Ed.D. degrees) to cultivate scholars who want to center supervision as the study of teacher and teacher candidate learning in schools as their area of expertise. Thus, institutions with very high research activity should have degree programs that emphasize the scholarship of supervision as part of clinically based teacher education. Doctoral granting institutions, especially research-intensive institutions that grant Doctor of Philosophy degrees, need to have faculty who study supervision in teacher education as an area of scholarship so that they can prepare the next generation of scholars who study teacher learning in schools. Likewise, institutions of high research that grant doctorates of education should also include opportunities for students to learn about and practice supervision. Doctorate of education degrees can include more than educational leadership degrees; they could include curriculum and instruction with emphasis in teacher education programs of study that explicitly include coursework and experiences in supporting teacher candidate learning through clinical experiences.

Because there is a lack of intentionally preparing faculty to have knowledge and skills in the field of supervision, there is a dearth of tenured and tenure-track faculty who understand how to support teacher candidate learning through clinical practice in schools. Because the study of

supervision is not encouraged nor does it even exist as part of scholarly preparation, many faculty do not even realize that such a knowledge base exists, so they perpetuate the marginalization of supervision, sometimes unknowingly. Such unconscious bias reinforces the marginalization cycle of supervision, which eventually may lead to extinction of this important field. If such faculty have not had explicit preparation in supervision, not only are they are ill-equipped to work in and with schools, but they are also less able to support meaningful connections between theory and practice that result in improved teacher candidate and P-12 student learning, thus, maintaining or even widening the theory-practice divide rather than closing it. Thus, intentionally hiring faculty who study and practice supervision is important because these individuals are well-equipped to support the professional learning of faculty who are not prepared to supervise.

Unfortunately, a more standard practice is hiring tenure-track faculty who specialize in more commonly accepted content areas like literacy education, mathematics education, science education, elementary education, educational psychology, and more. Thus, these faculty are often positioned to teach methods or foundation courses and are not positioned to supervise teacher candidates, even though faculty who teach a methods or foundation course coupled with supervising the same group of teacher candidates in their clinical experiences are best positioned to support teacher candidates in explicitly connecting theory and practice (Arndt, 2016; Baker, 2020). Intentionally hiring scholars who specialize in the research and practice of supervision can have significant benefits to colleges of education.

Addressing Misperceptions of and Malpractices in Supervision

One of the biggest institutional barriers is the pervasive misconception that supervision is merely a technical practice and not a field of study. As we have previously articulated, an empirical knowledge base exists about supervision both in schools and in teacher education. In fact, there is a long history of supervision as a field of study (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969) and even dating back further to almost two hundred years about supervision in teacher education (McIntyre & McIntyre, 2020). Literature reviews (McIntyre & Byrd, 1995), meta-syntheses (Burns et al., 2016b, 2020), and handbooks on supervision (Ponticell & Zepeda, 2019), for example, are evidence of the interest in and study of supervision as a scholarly field. However, the misconception that supervision is merely a technical practice prevails in institutions of higher education.

This misconception of supervision results in the dangerous assumption that anyone can supervise. Such misconceptions and assumptions manifest themselves in various malpractices in institutions of higher education, all of which we experienced. Those malpractices include: (1) relying predominantly on adjunct faculty to supervise without attending to their learning, (2) assigning large numbers of teacher candidates to one individual which leaves little time for engaging in research, and (3) discouraging tenure-earning faculty from working in and with schools. An assumption underlying these malpractices is that a good teacher of children and youth is automatically able to translate those skills to teach adults effectively. This malpractice dismisses the fact that there is a knowledge base and skillset about how to teach teachers. Loughran (2006) termed this knowledge base a pedagogy of teacher education and there is a

specific knowledge base and skill set to teaching teachers *in clinical experiences*. Burns and Badiali (2016, 2018) termed this knowledge base and skillset a clinical pedagogy.

Calling Out Issues of Power and Positionality

Another way institutional barriers that perpetuate the marginalization of supervision can be addressed is by noticing and calling out issues of power and positionality within the college. Supervision as a scholarly field faces a significant challenge due to what Nolan (2022) referred to as "nested marginalization." According to Nolan, supervision is marginalized in teacher preparation programs, viewed as less important than methods and foundations courses. Teacher preparation is marginalized within colleges of education, and colleges of education are marginalized within universities. Thus, the institutional barriers that continually oppress supervision as a field of study and scholars who situate their field of research as supervision run deep. Women scholars of supervision face an additional layer of marginalization due to gender bias within the academy (Niemi & Bozack, 2022). Those who supervise tend to be women and practitioners, not scholars or scholarly practitioners, who are often in clinical or instructor lines positioning them as easily expendable and not given the security and other affordances under tenure.

Therefore, when those who practice and study supervision are placed in clinical roles with high teaching loads, they have minimal voice and, potentially, serious consequences should they call out injustice in the academy (McCormack et al., 2019). Likewise, due to their clinical roles they have little power, often being unable to vote in curricular decisions, and if there are little to no tenured scholars of supervision in teacher education within the programs or in the college, the tenured faculty who already marginalize supervision continue to have power to make decisions that perpetuate the marginalization cycle. As a result, leaders at the college, department, and program levels must use the power associated with their roles to advocate for scholars and practitioners of supervision by identifying and calling out institutional barriers that perpetuate power and positionality to eliminate oppression and disrupt the marginalization cycle.

Resourcing What Matters

Finally, another way to disrupt the marginalization of supervision cycle is for leaders at the program, department, and college levels to resource what matters. First and foremost, they need to ensure that faculty loads are equitable across all faculty (inclusive of doctoral students, clinical faculty, tenure-track faculty, and tenured faculty working in and with schools). Loads should account for the additional time it takes to work in and with schools to support teacher candidate learning through supervision in clinical experiences. High numbers of teacher candidates to supervisor ratio make it difficult, if not nearly impossible, to support teacher candidate learning and engage in research in and on supervision in teacher education. Thus, ensuring that doctoral students and faculty who supervise and work in and with schools have equitable loads to others.

For leaders to create equitable loads, they must also ensure that clinical experiences have sufficient credit hours assigned to them that reflect the time spent in schools. Clinical experiences should be scaffolded, increasing in duration and opportunity across the teacher preparation curriculum (Hollins & Warner, 2021). Thus, early, mid-level, and advanced clinical

experiences should have credit hours that increase throughout the program to adequately reflect the expectations for clinical experiences as the essential laboratory for teacher candidate learning. Consequently, leaders must have awareness of faculty recommendations to reduce or eliminate credit hours for clinical experiences couched in ideas of "embedding" clinical experiences in methods or foundations courses to eliminate the essential student credit hour generation that allows leaders to make loads reasonable and equitable for faculty who supervise.

Conclusions

In this study, we set out to understand the nature of supervision institutionally and professionally. By collaboratively investigating our experiences as supervision practitioners and scholars, we hoped to unpack the tensions of practice and questions of legitimacy we associated with supervision. Through collaborative self-study, we developed a deeper understanding of the scope and complexity of supervision, we challenged narratives that dominated supervision discourse institutionally, and we constructed new spaces for supervisor learning and collaboration. In our self-study, we identified larger problems associated with supervision that have contributed to its marginalization. Factors include a lack of understanding about supervision, less consideration of supervision research and practice in teacher educator preparation programs, and a lack of support and resources for those engaged in supervision.

We also identified solutions that can help dismantle these barriers. Renewing supervision involves including supervision in doctoral preparation, preparing scholars of supervision, addressing misperceptions and malpractices associated with supervision, challenging issues of power and positionality that respond negatively toward supervision practitioners and scholars, and sufficiently resourcing the work of supervision. Our hope is that readers not only connect with our experiences with supervision, but that they also use our lessons and recommendations to challenge the status quo of supervision, institutionally and professionally, so we might collectively move toward a renewal of supervisory scholarship and practice in teacher education.

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