

BUSINESS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS' CHALLENGES IN FULFILLING THEIR SUPERVISORY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Abstract

Background: Given university supervisors' critical roles in preparing student teachers to become effective teachers and the knowledge they hold from past experiences, more research is needed to examine their issues and challenges in fulfilling their supervisory roles as well as in mentoring student teachers. **Purpose:** Thus, the purpose of this research study was to identify the top three issues and challenges business education university supervisors encounter when fulfilling their supervisory roles as well as the top three issues and challenges they face when mentoring student teachers. **Method:** The Delphi technique was implemented examining the perspectives of a national sample of business education university supervisors. **Results:** The expert panel established consensus that time issues was one of the top three dilemmas they confront in performing their supervisory duties. **Conclusions and Recommendations:** Accordingly, colleges and universities need to acknowledge and recognize the substantial commitment university supervisors expend in performing their critical tasks.

Keywords: business education, student teaching, teacher education, triad relationship, university supervisor

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Introduction

University supervisors are one of the essential members of the triad relationship during student teaching internships (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003). This triad relationship is critical in terms of transforming student teachers into becoming effective classroom teachers (Hamman, Olivarez, Lesley, Button, Chan et al., 2006; Kent, 2001; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009). Research in the field of teacher education has emphasized the significance of university supervisors in the triad relationship by discussing the knowledge they hold due to their past experiences as former student teachers, K-12 teachers, prior mentor teachers (also known as cooperating teachers), and their current roles as teacher educators (Anderson & Radencich, 2001; Slick, 1997). In addition, mentor teachers (those that agree to host student teachers in their K-12 classrooms) have been cited as being the most influential individuals in terms of making impressions and modeling classroom practices for student teachers in which their interns will most likely follow and continue (Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2008; Killian & Wilkins, 2009).

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Despite the expertise that university supervisors bring to the triad relationship in terms of developing student teachers, very few studies have been conducted regarding their duties, roles, and responsibilities (Brown & Steadman, 2011; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Steadman, 2009; Whitney, Golez, Nagel, & Nieto, 2002). Moreover, research examining the duties, roles, and responsibilities of university supervisors is non-existent within the discipline of business education. Therefore, lingering questions persist as to not only the duties, roles, and responsibilities of university supervisors, but to what challenges and issues they face in executing their tasks and mentoring student teachers.

Purpose and Research Questions

To address this gap in research, the purpose of this study was to: (a) identify the challenges and issues business education university supervisors face while fulfilling their duties, roles, and responsibilities, and (b) examine the issues business education university supervisors encounter in the critical practice of mentoring student teachers. Thus, it is not only important to understand the challenges business education university supervisors face in fulfilling their complex roles and responsibilities, but it is equally important to understand the issues they encounter while mentoring student teachers (since mentoring is an essential component in the development of student teachers and constitutes more than performing supervisory duties). Accordingly, the research questions guiding this study included:

1. what are the top three challenges business education university supervisors face in fulfilling their duties, roles, and responsibilities; and
2. what are the top three issues business education university supervisors encounter in the critical practice of mentoring student teachers?

Review of Literature

University Supervisors

Student teaching internships are not only the most critical, challenging, rewarding, and insightful experiences for student teachers (Conderman, Morin, & Stephens, 2005; Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007; Grossman, Schoenfeld, & Lee, 2005; Pena & Almaguer, 2007; Weaver & Stanulis, 1996), but are most likely of equal importance and value to university supervisors. During student teaching internships, university supervisors are charged with periodically observing and evaluating student teachers' teaching performances (Anderson & Radenich, 2001). Yet, university supervisors oftentimes are perceived as threats to mentor teachers, and in some cases student teachers, because of their infrequent visits to the K-12 classroom (Slick, 1997). As a result, many university supervisors perceive themselves as outsiders. In addition, university supervisors are frequently pressed for time due to other varied demands such as research, teaching, and service

obligations (Anderson & Randencich, 2001). Consequently, many university supervisors are limited in the time they may spend in the field interacting with mentor teachers and student teachers as well as observing, evaluating, and offering feedback to their interns. Furthermore, the scholarship in teacher education has emphasized the added roles teacher educators, in general, have in terms of modeling the knowledge, skills, and dispositions teacher candidates' need to possess. These teacher educators are typically the same individuals that take on the role of university supervisor. For example, Hite, Fletcher, Bruening, Durr, Yontz, Zatezalo, Williams, and Wolf (2009) commented:

...the role of the teacher educator is vastly different from other collegiate faculty...Not only do education faculty have to understand and convey their content, and know and use effective teaching methods, they also have to be able to explicitly explain and reflect on their own teaching so that teacher candidates are able to see the instructional decisions and productive reflection that must continually take place. (p. 84)

Steadman and Brown (2011), using a qualitative-phenomenological approach, attempted to determine the roles and responsibilities of university supervisors. They stated, "...we designed a study to explore how individual university supervisors, operating within a teacher education department of a college of education at a large public U.S. institution, valued, defined, and enacted their supervision of student teachers" (p. 52.). Steadman and Brown found the university supervisor role as being very important. In fulfilling their roles, these individuals were required to integrate university coursework and practical classroom experiences to enhance the learning and skill development of student teachers. In addition, the university supervisors consistently provided feedback to their student teachers to mediate complex situations. However, significant variation existed in how supervision was carried out. For example, some university supervisors required unit plans as well as lesson plans, while others did not. And, some university supervisors required weekly reports from their student teachers, while others had no such requirement.

In addition to supervisory responsibilities of university supervisors, Bates, Ramirez, and Drits (2009) called for high-quality mentoring in the execution of supervision. They discussed the need for not only explicit instruction, but for modeling and critical reflection of the responsibilities and duties of K-12 classroom teachers. Bates et al. noted, "...very little is understood of how critical reflection in preservice teachers is fostered, especially by university supervisors and mentors" (p. 93). They found, in their study of 3 university supervisors and 12 student teachers, that critical reflection was indeed an important component in the development of teacher candidates. Practices implemented from the participants in regard to critical reflection included discussion and dialogue, opportunities for context-based critical reflection, and modeling and relationship-building. Further, they found that critical reflection is built over time for both student teachers and university supervisors as well as modeling and articulating the importance

of critical reflection helps to bring about critically reflective practices in student teachers.

Therefore, preparing teachers for their future careers requires university supervisors to do more than perform their instruction-related supervisory duties. These individuals must also provide high-quality mentoring to student teachers by modeling and reflecting on sound, research-based teacher education practices to transform student teachers' habits of mind. As such, more research is needed regarding the complex duties, roles, and responsibilities of business education university supervisors as well as the challenges and issues they confront when mentoring their student teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive Apprenticeship

As discussed previously in this manuscript, university supervisors have a tremendous role in the growth of student teachers. This relationship could be characterized by the theory of cognitive apprenticeship, which originated within the last two decades from the social constructivist learning theory (Dennen & Burner, in press). The process of mentoring utilized by university supervisors facilitates the learning process using social interactions among novices (student teachers) and experts (university supervisors). Through this mentoring process, student teachers benefit from observing, practicing, and reflecting upon teaching while at the same time developing cognitive and meta-cognitive skills through active participation in authentic and guided learning experiences. Theoretically, university supervisors are present to provide student teachers with coaching, mentoring, modeling, and scaffolding to build student teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions regarding teaching. As a result, student teachers are more apt to be able to transfer their learned skills to the real-world teaching context by connecting theory and practice. Notably, the student teaching internship and the triad relationship are critical for the development of student teachers and the enhancement of clinical experiences (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003; Hamman, Olivarez, Lesley, Button, Chan et al., 2006; Kent, 2001).

Methods

The Delphi technique was used for the conduct of this study, which implemented a multi-iterative process with the objective of gaining consensus among a panel of experts (in this case, business education university supervisors). The goal of the study was to identify the top three challenges business education university supervisors face in fulfilling their duties, roles, and responsibilities as well as issues they faced when mentoring student teachers. One of the benefits of using the Delphi approach is that it enables individuals to articulate their individual positions while also working toward consensus among the expert panel (Clayton, 1997).

Panel Selection

A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit panelists to participate in the study (Mertens, 1998). Established criteria were utilized based on the following: (a) each university supervisor had to occupy their supervisory role within the last three years; (b) each university supervisor was required to have mentored business education student teachers; and (c) each university supervisor should have a deep interest in the topic of the research. Upon completion of all three rounds, incentives (\$30 gift cards to Amazon.com) were provided for participants' time and effort.

The National Association for Business Teacher Education (NABTE) membership list of business education teacher educators was used to recruit members for the study from colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. A total of 92 NABTE members were originally identified, but 18 did not meet the requirements of the study (which included having served as a university supervisor within the past three years), one declined participation, and 42 did not respond. Therefore, 31 individuals participated and each participant completed all three rounds of the data collection process providing a 42% response rate. Since the purpose of this research was to gain consensus, the largest number of participants that is suggested for a Delphi study is 30 (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975). The majority of the university supervisors that participated in this study might be different than some that fulfill this role since not all universities utilize business education teacher educators in the supervision of their student teachers. Some colleges and universities rely on retired teachers, graduate students, and other personnel to perform this role. Further, all of the university supervisors in this study were active in the NABTE professional association.

Participant Demographics

The ages of the expert panel ranged from 35 to 70 with an average age of 56; while 68% were female and 32% male. The ethnicities within the group were rather monolithic with 30 of the participants identifying as Caucasian and one as Canadian. In terms of degree attainment, 19% hold Masters' degrees, 45% have Ed.Ds, and 36% have Ph.D.s. In regard to position rank, one was a graduate teaching assistant; six held positions as adjuncts, instructors, and lecturers; two were at the assistant professor level; seven were associate professors; fourteen were full professors; and one was emeritus. These individuals taught anywhere from 2 to 38 years and have mentored from 4 to 600 student teachers at the undergraduate (94%), masters (58%), and doctoral levels (13%). The business education university supervisors taught at a variety of higher education institutions with 52% teaching in small urban areas (2,501-50,000) and 48% in large urban settings (50,001-2,000,000). Their student teachers taught at a variety of levels from K-12.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Online surveys were crafted and disseminated using Survey Monkey for all three rounds of data collection. A panel of eight business teacher educators was asked

to examine all survey items and offer recommendations for revision as well as any additional items needed. This process assisted in the establishment of content validity, which is the determination of whether the items accurately represent each intended domain (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006). Appropriate revisions of the survey items were made based on the expert panel's recommendations. In terms of reliability, traditional ways of establishing reliability are not appropriate for Delphi studies since the method seeks to achieve consistency of responses by establishing consensus with the survey items (Hughes, 1993).

Round One. For the first round, participants were asked to respond to a variety of demographic questions. Respondents then were asked to identify three issues they faced when fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as university supervisors as well as three challenges they encountered when mentoring student teachers. Also, the expert panel provided written rationales explaining why they chose each item.

Round Two. In round two, respondents were asked to examine the results of round one, which was summarized by the researcher, as well as a list of the rationales and comments. Based on the responses from round one, the expert panel members were then asked to select the top three challenges, from the list, they faced in fulfilling their roles as well as the top three issues they encountered when mentoring student teachers.

Round Three. The last round presented the results from round two and asked the respondents to agree or disagree with the top three items in each area. The purpose of round three was to seek closure on the top three items for each area. Consensus was established when 80% of the expert panel agreed on an item since this is the benchmark typically used in Delphi studies (Ulschak, 1983).

Results

Round One Results

The expert panel responded to the research questions of this study in round one. Specifically, each participant listed three challenges they faced in fulfilling their responsibilities as university supervisors as well as three issues they encountered when mentoring student teachers. In addition, the respondents provided comments and rationales for choosing the three challenges and issues. As a result of round one, 63 challenges and issues were identified to be analyzed and summarized for the participants to select in round two.

Round Two Results

Challenges Faced in Fulfilling Responsibilities as University Supervisors (Round Two). In round two, each participant selected the top three items they believed were most prevalent challenges they faced as university supervisors (see Table 1). The list of items to select from was provided by the researcher, which was

categorized and summarized from round one. As a result of round two, 17 of the participants (54.8%) rated time issues as one of the top three challenges they faced as university supervisors. Second, 13 of the respondents (41.9%) chose preparing student teachers for challenging placements as one of the top three challenges they encountered as university supervisors. Third, 12 of the panel experts (38.7%) selected getting student teachers to use different teaching approaches as one of the top three concerns they experienced.

Table 1
Challenges Faced in Fulfilling Responsibilities as University Supervisors in Round Two

Challenges	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>
Time issues (i.e., fulfilling other responsibilities, distance issues, not enough time)	17	54.8
Preparing student teachers for challenging placements	13	41.9
Getting student teachers to use different teaching approaches	12	38.7
Issues due to having a small program; downsizing	10	32.3
Declining number of jobs for business education student teachers	8	25.8
Securing student teaching sites with diverse populations	6	19.4
Keeping up with current trends, techniques, technologies, and policies	6	19.4
Accountability compliance	5	16.1
Mediating personality differences between mentor teachers and student teachers	4	12.9
University/college desiring general supervisors with no business education expertise	4	12.9
Getting mentor teachers to fulfill their responsibilities	1	3.2
Lack of funding	1	3.2
Partnering with local school systems	1	3.2
Providing ST with the exact challenges (courses and other experiences) they desire	1	3.2

Note: $n = 31$; f = frequency; M = mean; ST = student teachers

Issues Faced When Mentoring Student Teachers (Round Two). In terms of problems the university supervisors encountered when mentoring student teachers, 10 of the respondents (32.3%) selected not having enough time as one of the top three items (see Table 2). And, 10 of the participants (32.3%) chose getting student teachers to better understand how to assess K-12 students as a challenge. Further, 8 of the members of the expert panel (25.8%) identified counseling out student teachers that might not be a good fit for teaching as one of their top three difficulties.

Table 2
Issues Faced When Mentoring Student Teachers in Round Two

Challenges	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>
Not having enough time	10	32.3
Getting student teachers to better understand how to assess K-12 students	10	32.3
Counseling out student teachers that might not be a good fit for teaching	8	25.8
Providing insight on classroom management	7	22.6
Preparing student teachers to teach in schools with more technology resources than university/college	6	19.4
Pressure from college/university for larger enrollment	6	19.4
Dealing with professionalism (appropriate dress, attendance, responsibilities, etc.)	5	16.1
Helping student teachers if they realize teaching is not a good fit for them	4	12.9
Dealing with the diversity of subjects student teachers teach	4	12.9
Getting mentor teachers to agree on competency of student teachers	4	12.9
Getting student teachers to understand how the program is a series of related courses	3	9.7
Keeping current	3	9.7
Getting student teachers to understand the importance of student teaching	3	9.7
Helping student teachers to deal with political aspects (turmoil in schools, disempowered teachers)	3	9.7
Helping student teachers with soft skills and dispositions	3	9.7
Helping student teachers when the mentor teacher is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities	2	6.5
Working with student teachers who do not listen to constructive criticism	2	6.5
Helping student teachers who lack instructional skills	2	6.5
Finding effective mentor teachers	1	3.2
Providing the right balance of information to student teachers in seminars	1	3.2
Working with student teachers who have organizational issues	1	3.2
Being out of the loop regarding teacher education changes and events	1	3.2
Communicating expectations for mentor teachers	1	3.2

Note: $n = 31$; f = frequency; M = mean

Round Three Results

For round three, the expert panel members were asked to agree or disagree with the rankings from round two. In addition, the participants were provided with a summary of the results from round two, which were summarized by the researcher. The summary included frequencies and means, from the results of round two, for each item. The goal of round three was to establish a consensus among the items. Consensus was determined when 80% of the expert panel agreed on an item.

Challenges Faced in Fulfilling Responsibilities as University Supervisors (Round Three). During round three, 27 of the participants (87.1%) agreed that a time issue was indeed among the top three challenges they faced in fulfilling their responsibilities as university supervisors; consensus was established with this item (see Table 3). However, consensus was not reached for the other two items. Only 21 of the respondents (67.7%) agreed that preparing student teachers for challenging placements should be among the top three issues they encountered. And, 15 of the university supervisors (48.4%) agreed that getting student teachers to use different teaching approaches was among the top three difficulties they encountered.

Issues Faced When Mentoring Student Teachers (Round Three). The expert panel members were not able to establish consensus on the top three issues they faced when mentoring student teachers. First, only 18 of the participants (58.1%) agreed that not having enough time was among the top three challenges they encountered when mentoring student teachers. Second, 14 of the respondents (45.2%) believed getting student teachers to understand how to assess K-12 students was a concern when mentoring their interns. Third, merely five of the members (16.1%) agreed that counseling out student teachers that might not be a good fit for the teaching profession was among the top three issues they confronted when mentoring student teachers.

Table 3

Top Three Rankings for Round Three

Challenges	Fulfilling Responsibilities		Mentoring Student Teachers	
	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>
Time issues	27	87.1		
Preparing ST for challenging placements	21	67.7		
Getting ST to use different teaching approaches	15	48.4		
Not having enough time			18	58.1
Getting ST to understand how to assess			14	45.2
Counseling out ST who are not a good fit			5	16.1

Note: n = 31; f = frequency; M = mean; ST = student teachers

Conclusions and Discussion

Findings of this study indicated that 27 (87.1%) business education university supervisors from the expert panel established consensus in regard to one of the top three challenges they faced in fulfilling their role, which was the lack of time. For example, one university supervisor, who will be identified as Darlene, stated in round one:

Time and travel are challenges that I face. Sometimes I will travel 3 or 4 hours to observe and evaluate a student who is teaching a 50-minute class. I have tried to observe using technology, but could not catch the interaction between the student teacher and the classroom students.

Similarly, Jill explained in round one:

With several colleges/universities in our area, it is becoming harder to place interns in a proximity close to where they live and where I live and teach. Also, there are so many other responsibilities we must undertake (committees, etc.) making travel hard some weeks.

Several members of the expert panel discussed the substantial time they must spend to travel long distances to supervise their student teachers and the varied faculty responsibilities they have in addition to supervisory duties, which limits the time available to really mentor their student teachers and meet with mentor teachers. This time issue has also been raised in the larger field of teacher education in terms of challenges university supervisors face with supervising, observing, and providing feedback to student teachers in the field (Anderson & Radencich, 2001), even though this time is needed to help novices learn to teach (Brown & Steadman, 2011).

Further, many of the members of the expert panel in this study shared how their university colleagues seemed to devalue the role of supervision as less than academic work and it was not highly recognized and legitimized. For example, Cindy, in terms of her role as a university supervisor, commented in round one: “The most important role I have at this university, regardless of what my colleagues think.” As such, this suggests that colleges and universities in teacher education need to reexamine the role of university supervisors and provide structures that recognize and accommodate the time demands and needs of those who perform these positions, especially given that student teaching is considered as *The* most pivotal experience student teachers encounter (Conderman, Morin, & Stephens, 2005; Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007; Grossman, Schoenfeld, & Lee, 2005; Pena & Almaguer, 2007; Weaver & Stanulis, 1996).

It was quite unexpected that the expert panel members were not able to establish consensus among the other items that comprise the top three challenges they faced in fulfilling their supervisory responsibilities as well as the top three issues they faced when mentoring student teachers. A plausible rationale for this could be due to the varied and complex roles and responsibilities university supervisors confront, which might be due to the diverse settings and student teachers they mentor.

In terms of the issues and challenges business education student teachers face when mentoring student teachers, prior studies revealed the unique and individualistic challenges that business education student teachers encounter based on their varied abilities and contexts in which they teach (Fletcher, Mountjoy, & Bailey, 2011; Fletcher, Mountjoy, & Bailey, in press). Slick (1997)

argued that university supervisors have highly complex roles and discussed the need to conduct further studies to examine these tasks. She indicated: “we must better understand perceptions, expectations, and obligations of the supervisor as well as those of the cooperating [mentor] teacher and student teacher to better understand the student teaching experience” (p. 713). However, to date, very little research has been done on this topic and the research that has been conducted is outdated (Brown & Steadman, 2011). Further, it was unexpected that issues such as facilitating critical reflection and the transformation of beliefs and dispositions among student teachers about the expectations and roles of K-12 classroom teachers and teaching and learning were not raised by the expert panel members. Since critical reflection is oftentimes a key element of teacher preparation programs, it seems essential that university supervisors should foster this dialogue during clinical practice: student teaching.

In terms of the connection between the findings of this research study and the theory of cognitive apprenticeship, it was unpredicted that the expert panel members were not challenged so much with the mentoring aspect of their roles. However, the business education university supervisors did indeed believe they were limited in their mentoring capacities due to time restraints which impacted their abilities to mentor, coach, and provide feedback to their student teachers. Therefore, more research is needed to qualitatively examine the unique and complex roles faced by university supervisors, their individualistic challenges in fulfilling their duties, their experiences with mentoring student teachers, and their interactions with mentor teachers. This is particularly due to the fact that all of the university supervisors in this study seemed very passionate about their supervisory roles and believed the student teaching internship was the quintessential component of teacher preparation. To that end, it is important to share several of the comments articulated by the expert panel. To explain the passion university supervisors oftentimes possess, Janet shared:

Serving as a university supervisor is a great opportunity. It allows me stay in touch with today’s classrooms and students. It also gives me the opportunity to develop our future. It is the best part of my job as a University Teacher Educator. I wish we had the money and instructional time to do all that is needed to fully develop business education teachers.

John articulated:

Overall I feel the student teaching experience is a good one and is invaluable. Without this experience students would not be prepared to enter the classroom as teachers. For the most part, I feel cooperating teachers do a good job and desire to provide a meaningful experience. Positive change is always possible.

And, Linda echoed: “It is a pleasure to watch a student teacher grow and mature in their profession during their student teaching experience. It is much like launching one’s own child.” Further, William articulated: “Student teaching as the capstone

experience should capture the essence of preparation for the field at the moment the student is most prepared. I believe we accomplish that” Kimberly indicated:

As a university supervisor I am there to be a teacher, ambassador, leader, counselor, coach and friend. It is a very rewarding role but also very time consuming. Thankfully, the student teachers make my role of university supervisor not only worth the time but a very rewarding experience. Each of the student teachers that I have worked with are excellent teachers, ambassadors, leaders, counselors, coaches and friends too.

Recommendations for Teacher Education Programs

As a result of this study, there are a few recommendations that resonate for colleges and universities as well as teacher preparation programs to implement for the development of student teachers. First, college and university administrators should acknowledge and support the work and time demands required of faculty university supervisors. Examples of institutional support could include reduced teaching loads commensurate with the number of student teachers supervised and supervision being considered as teaching and service commitments. University supervisor faculty might also consider connecting their research agendas to their supervision responsibilities wherein student teaching placements could be a source of data collection.

Second, administrators responsible for the hiring of business education university supervisors should carefully select individuals that have the expertise and experience to mentor student teachers, given the importance of the student teaching internship. In fact, the expert panel members were very explicit and consistent in their responses in terms of the value they place on student teaching supervision. They all believed that the university supervisor in concert with the mentor teacher play a significant role in the development of the student teacher. The value of the triad relationship was also communicated by Debra when she stated: “Student teachers are not expected to have perfected their techniques. They are in a learning situation and need the university supervisor and cooperating teacher to provide them with guidance, encouragement, and advice”. Many members from the expert panel thought the knowledge and skills needed to be a university supervisor were highly specialized and could be best executed by faculty in the business teacher education program. Examples include Robert who stated:

Business education student teachers should be supervised by individuals who understand the teacher education program which has prepared the student teacher. These supervisors should have a broad knowledge of identity and teacher development as well as the role teachers play in creating and delivering high quality business education programs.

Likewise, Dorothy emphasized:

This is a crucially important part of our program, and it's our job to keep up with those whom we enlist to mentor our student teachers. Too often, though, universities hire grad assistants or part-time/adjunct faculty to supervise student teachers. Sometimes this must happen due to limited faculty resources.

Third, teacher education faculty and those that participate in the supervision of student teachers need to emphasize the importance of critical reflection about teaching and learning as well as model these critical teacher behaviors. It is equally important to transform student teachers' thinking beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning. Teacher education faculty and university supervisors might consider implementing action research projects, portfolios, and reflective journals to elicit discourse regarding classroom practices and teaching behaviors.

In conclusion, business education university supervisors have consistent perceptions of the value and importance of the work that is required to supervise student teachers as well as the limited time they have to adequately assist in the development of their student teachers. However, the perceived challenges and issues they encounter as well as the problems they face in mentoring student teachers is quite inconsistent. This inconsistency might be due to the fact that student teachers are quite unique and have individualized concerns and issues. Despite this plausible rationale, the results of this study raise questions regarding how much we know about the supervision of student teachers in terms of the roles and responsibilities of university supervisors, particularly given its importance. It is quite possible that the university supervisors in this study have highly different notions of what constitutes university supervision.

Colleges and universities across the nation that prepare students for teaching all utilize the term "university supervisor" and it is assumed that its definition as well as the requirements to carry-out the duties for the position are well understood. However, Steadman and Brown (2011) remind us that informed practice is needed to reform teacher education programs, instead of the anecdotal nature of much of what is done in many teacher education programs today. They argue: "by pursuing a scholarly and reflective path to informed decisions on salient aspects of student teacher development seems applicable in exploring the supervision of student teachers" (p. 67). To that end, larger studies exploring the supervisory and mentoring practices that are most helpful to student teachers would help build our understanding of this critical stage of teacher education.

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