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DOI: 10.1177/0022487110396096

Navigating the Terrain of Third Space: Tensions With/In Relationships in School-University Partnerships

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Abstract

Using theoretical conceptions of third space and hybrid teacher education, we engaged in a collaborative self-study of our practices as university-based teacher educators working in student teaching partnership settings. We sought to understand the ways in which the hybrid teacher educator fosters and mediates relationships to work towards a collective third space. In this article, we describe the nature of relationships in our work, the tensions wrought by complexities of these relationships, and ways we negotiated tensions in order to foster relationships that productively mediated processes of teacher education. In addition, we propose a framework for moving beyond traditional notions of oppositional triadic relationships of student teacher, mentor teacher, and supervisor in recognition of complex social interactions in the third space.

Keywords: supervision, teacher education, student teaching partnerships

In the quest to deepen the quality of field experiences, teacher educators have focused on development of partnerships between universities and P-12 schools (Darling-Hammond, 1994, 2006; Teitel, 2003). Yet twenty-five years after Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann (1985) discussed problems of the "two-world pitfall," challenges of bridging boundaries in order to support beginning teacher development remain (Zeichner, 2010). Even when partnerships have developed over time to bridge gaps, disconnects occur between what is taught in coursework and the learning opportunities in field experiences (Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Birrell, 2004; Bullough et al, 1997; Zeichner, 2010). For example, despite efforts to revamp components of a teacher education program at one university, Valencia, Martin, Place, and Grossman (2009) noted "lost opportunities" for teacher learning during student teaching experiences. The complexities of teaching and learning to teach present formidable challenges to those who work to support and guide teacher learning.

Using the theoretical construct of hybrid or third space, Zeichner (2010) calls for a paradigm shift and renewed focus on the "hybrid spaces in teacher education where academic and practitioner knowledge and knowledge that exists in communities come together in new, less hierarchical ways in the service of teacher learning…" (p. 89). Zeichner argues that within these hybrid spaces, establishment of conditions for "learning in and from practice to be educative and enduring" (p. 91) can occur. As he notes, one such hybrid space is that of the hybrid teacher educator, a university-based teacher educator who works to establish partnerships with K-12 schools that support development of student teachers.

As three university-based teacher educators, serving as liaisons to partner elementary schools, we work as hybrid teacher educators. In agreement with Zeichner (2010), our hybrid work builds from the premise that mediation of student teaching experiences through interactions within a partnership context has a transformative potential--for teacher candidates, as well as school-based and university-based teacher educators. Identifying ourselves as hybrid teacher educators simply from the roles we take up, however, does nothing to illuminate either challenges of our work or complexities of working towards third spaces in partnership settings. Understanding interactions of supervisors, student teachers, cooperating teachers, and others in the social contexts of student teaching is critical to understanding how learning conditions are established and maintained in support of teacher learning (Cole & Knowles, 1995; Slick, 1998a, 1998b; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1983). Recent reports of partnership programs have described the shifting roles of mentoring teachers and university-based liaisons in partnership contexts (Grisham, Laguardia, & Brink, 2000; Weiss & Weiss, 2001; Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007), but scant reference is made to the challenges of working together within more egalitarian reconfiguration of these roles.

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To understand the challenges that hybrid teacher educators face in efforts to foster third spaces in partnerships, we engaged in a multi-year collaborative self-study of our practices. We investigated the ways that the university-based teacher educator fosters and mediates relationships to work towards a collective third space (Gutiérrez, 2008). The questions we asked include:

- What challenges do I face in the school settings as I work towards developing and navigating a collective third space in a partnership setting?
- What challenges do I face in the university setting?
- What practices do I utilize to work towards developing and navigating a collective third space in a partnership setting?

In answering these questions, we investigated the relationships we encountered in our partnership contexts, the challenges and tensions we faced in these relationships, and ways we negotiated tensions and worked to overcome impediments to developing third space over time. In addition, we propose a framework for moving beyond traditional notions of oppositional triadic relationships of student teacher, mentor teacher, and supervisor in recognition of complex social ecologies in the third space.

Perspectives on Third Space and Education

Theoretical perspectives on third space are founded on concepts of "in between spaces" (Bhabba, 1994) that reside in the "overlap and displacement of domains of difference" (p. 2). Conceptions of differences, as divisive binary oppositions, are rejected in favor of "both/and also" (Soja, 1996) notions of a hybrid space. In this hybrid space, partial understandings, held within each of the oppositions, give way to realignment—a going beyond customary boundaries. In the openness of third space, ensuing creative combinations and restructuring of ideas through selective and strategic processes can provide new alternatives to oppositional thinking (Soja, 1996). Moje and her colleagues (2004) suggest that in third space oppositions are reconceived to generate new Discourses (Gee, 1999), as well as new knowledge. Furthermore, fundamental to these perspectives are understandings of third space as socially produced through discursive and social interactions (Bhabba, 1994; Gutiérrez, 2008; Moje et al, 2004). Third spaces are thus sites for collaboration as well as innovation (Bhabba, 1994). Indeed, Gutiérrez (2008) refers to collective third space, in which both collective and individual sense making occurs.

In line with these theoretical perspectives, educational scholars have conceptualized pedagogical implications of third space. For instance, in third space practices,

> …cultural, social, and epistemological change in which the competing knowledges and discourse of different spaces are brought into 'conversation' to challenge and reshape both academic content literacy practices and the knowledges and Discourses of youths' everyday lives. (Moje et al, 2004, p. 44)

Some have described third space as a site from which to assist students in negotiating, bridging and navigating across differences--such as the helping students to expand abilities to link discourses of home with those of academic disciplines (Moje et al., 2004). From this vantage, third spaces are constructed through educational practices that provide and mediate rich learning opportunities, within complex and often conflicting social contexts.

Conceptions of Third Space in Hybrid Partnership Work

In conceptualizing the work of university-based teacher educators in school settings, we draw from each of the views above. Bridging boundaries in this work provides potential opportunities to overcome the traditional divide between university and field-based education (Zeichner, 2010). Fundamental to our conceptions of hybridity in partner schoolwork are notions that school and university-based educators, working in tandem to scaffold and guide teacher candidates, can lead to a collective third space in which both individuals and the collective develop. New and shared understandings and practices evolve through coordinated activity (Gutiérrez, 2008).

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Within the collective third space, conversations between university-based and school-based teacher educators can serve as sites in which to grapple with understandings of teaching practices and challenges of learning to teach. In this way, reconciling academic and practitioner knowledge, as seemingly oppositional points of view, can generate both new understandings and enhanced practices in support of teacher learning. In essence, through discursive and social processes, a new community of practice (Bullough et al., 2004; Wenger, 1999) develops in the third space. In these communities of practice, teacher educators work together to thoughtfully enhance and guide learning opportunities for teacher candidates.

Significantly, teacher candidates, as participants in apprenticeship roles in the community of practice, are immersed in the collective third space as well--providing potential sites for high-quality student teaching experiences. The collective third space can offer teacher candidates explicit opportunities to grapple with and discuss issues of practice with others in the community--enhancing potential for integration and expansion of knowledge learned in coursework with that learned through engagement in classroom settings. On-going examination of and reflection on practices becomes an integral part of learning to teach. The third space is also a place where teacher educators further refine integration and application of practical and theoretical understandings. In sum, the collective third space in partnership settings is a "transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened" (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152) for all involved.

Theorizing such a third space and its possible benefits, however, is neither the same as establishing collective third spaces nor navigating within this boundary-spanning territory. Negotiating social interactions inherent to collective third space presents challenges. As Gutiérrez (2008) points out, processes of building new practices within collective third space are historically and socially complex, messy, and fraught with power differentials for all involved. Individuals participate with significantly different backgrounds and understandings. Not surprisingly, on-going difficulties and contradictions need "continual re-mediation" (p. 154). Overcoming the challenges to processes of third space requires that "participants persist in a conscious struggle for intersubjectivity, a shared vision…achieved in a range of ways and degrees" (p. 154).

If teacher educators are to work toward third space communities of practice, we need to understand new roles and responsibilities of the involved university-based teacher educator. Rather than just linking university and K-12 contexts, the university-based teacher educator works as a liaison bridging boundaries to foster relationships that support coordinated activity. The university-based teacher educator takes an active, pivotal role in building communities of practice. To that end, understandings of how university-based teacher educators actively work towards bridging boundaries and establishing collaborative relationships are critical. We turn our attention towards empirical and conceptual perspectives on challenges faced by university-based teacher educators.

Conceptions of Roles of University-Based Teacher Educators

Historically, university supervisors provide the link between university-based teacher education programs and the school classrooms in which candidates do their practice teaching. Supervisors typically serve as the representative for the university—transmitting expectations for certification (Weiss & Weiss, 2001), communicating expectations for preservice and the mentor teachers (Zimper, deVoss & Nott, 1980), and evaluating students in final stages of their educational programs.

At the same time, supervisors, as teacher educators, work in P-12 contexts with obligations to support preservice teacher development. They fill multiple roles of "guides, trouble-shooters, counselors, negotiators, consultants, and ambassadors of good will" (Marrou, 1988. p. 19). Furthermore, some advocate that supervision include a curricular component in which supervision is guided by particular understandings--such as reflective practice (Freese, 1999; Zeichner, 1990) or cultural understandings of the classroom (Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Waite, 1995).

Understandings of supervision are also rooted in notions of the triadic relationship of university supervisor, preservice teacher, and cooperating teacher (Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Slick, 1998a, 1998b; Zimpher, deVoss, & Nott, 1980). Earlier notions of this triadic arrangement, like binary perspectives, led to understandings that highlighted oppositional positions and the dominance of academic knowledge. Zimpher and her colleagues (1980), for example, found that university supervisors provided constructive feedback which cooperating teachers did not. These researchers felt that without this feedback, the student teaching experience would be one in which the "student teacher attempted, as

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quickly as possible, to replicate all that the cooperating teacher did without analysis or reflection about the teacher's role" (p. 13).

As educators moved away from notions of student teaching as unmediated apprenticeship, (e.g. Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann, 1987), focus shifted to understanding how to scaffold and guide preservice teacher development (Zeichner, 1990). Consequently, reformers to traditional models of teacher education advocated for partnership settings in which collaborative relationships between teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and university-based teacher educators were valued (Boyle-Baise & McIntyre, 2008). Attention to conflicts within the triad gave way to understanding collaborative interactions of supervisors, student teachers, and mentor teachers and the ways preservice teachers are supported in their development (Cole & Knowles, 1995; Slick, 1998a, 1998b;).

Focus on collaborative contexts for professional development in partner schools has altered both understandings of triadic interactions and conceptions of responsibilities of teacher educators within these interactions. Understanding the changing roles and expectations for university-based teacher educators in promoting coordinated action is crucial to newer conceptions of student teaching. Grisham and colleagues (2000) described the critical importance of the *enhanced* role of the university supervisor. Enhanced supervision included participation in mentor teacher study groups, facilitating group meetings with preservice and mentoring teachers, serving as resource to teachers engaged in action research projects, and interacting with the principal. Whitehead and Fitzgerald (2007) discussed the positive effects on preservice teachers' reflective abilities when the university-based educator worked with the mentor teachers to scaffold reflective practices through think-alouds during jointly viewed videotapes of mentor teacher instruction. Significantly, all parties work together within a situated context and share developmental conversations based in that context and professional learning (Clark, 1999). Thus, fostering development of trust, communication, and collaborative interaction is central to the work of hybrid teacher educators (Book, 1996; Boyle-Baise & McIntyre, 2008; Freese, 1999; Grisham et al., 2000; McIntyre, Bird, & Fox, 1996; Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007). Not surprisingly, the work of enhanced supervision comes with significant challenges.

Challenges to the Work of University-based Teacher Educators

Institutional and economic structures, as well as the complexity of interpersonal interactions serve to constrain the efforts of teacher educators taking on new roles. Brookhart and Loadman (1992) discuss three areas of difficulty for these university-school partnerships: (1) theoretical focus of university versus the practical concerns of schools, (2) issues of time, issues of power, and (3) differences in the way school-based and university-based educators are rewarded for their work. Undoubtedly, each of these areas has implications for the work of hybrid teacher educators in partnership settings. Hybrid teacher educators must negotiate and straddle both public school and the university contexts (Slick, 1998a, 1998b). Multiple obligations to the university program, students, school, cooperating teachers, and self must be balanced in one's efforts to provide appropriate support for preservice teachers (Rex, 1989). Efforts may be further constrained by such factors as lack of status and poorly defined roles within the university setting (Fulwiler, 1996, Zeichner, 1990), outsider status (Richardson-Koehler, 1988), and the inherent conflicts of the evaluative and educative aspects of supervision (Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008).

Furthermore, researchers who examined interplay of triad members found dynamics of these relationships to be complicated and challenging contexts for the educative aspects of supervision (Goodman, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman & Stevens, 2009; Slick, 1998a, 1998b). Within these relationships, the work of the supervisor is complex, interpersonal, and often ambiguous in nature. Reflecting on her practices as a supervisor, Richardson-Koehler (1988) discussed how lack of time constrained development of a trust level with both preservice and mentor teachers necessary for the "rigorous analysis of teaching" (p. 33). Few studies, however, have explored the relational dynamics within these social contexts (Slick, 1998b), specifically within partnership settings. Recent reports of partnership programs have described the shifting roles of mentoring teachers and university-based liaisons in partnership contexts (Grisham, Laguardia, & Brink, 2000; Weiss & Weiss, 2001; Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007), but scant reference is made to challenges of working together within this reconfiguration of roles.
If we are to move towards more egalitarian social practices and relations in order to enhance the educative value of student teaching experiences, we will need to understand more about how hybrid teacher educators go about establishing multiple relationships and then negotiating challenges and tensions of complex social contexts. It is time to focus more on new kinds of roles for university-based teacher educators (Zeichner, 2010). As hybrid teacher

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educators, we engaged in a systematic self-study of our professional practices in order to understand what those roles might be and how hybrid teacher educators can work to overcome inherent challenges for these roles.

Methodology

In order to examine our practices as university-based teacher educators and how we worked towards developing and navigating a collective third space in partnership settings, we employed a collaborative self-study. We view self-study of teacher education practices as a reflective mode of inquiry focused on critical examination of the space between self and practice (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001), with purposes that are "improvement-aimed" (LaBoskey, 2007) and involve a "moral commitment" to improving practice (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2007). Self-study of teacher education utilizes multiple methods, although most studies are situated within the epistemologies and practices of qualitative/ interpretive traditions (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2007; LaBoskey, 2007). A collaborative investigation allowed us opportunity to explore across cases and to question individual understandings of practice more critically (LaBoskey, 2007; Loughran, 2007).

Self-study of teacher education practices emerged in the early 1990s from the work of teacher educators attempting, intentionally and systematically, to better understand issues of teaching and learning that were of importance to their own practices and the broader teacher education community (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2000; Loughran, 2007). Self-study, as practitioner research, is recognized as a genre of empirical teacher education research (Borko, Liston, & White, 2007), in which researchers fill dual roles as practitioner and researcher. Boundaries between these roles can blur—"creating unique opportunities for reflection on and the improvement of teacher education" (p. 6). Essentially then, those who conduct self-study of teacher education practices occupy a hybrid space that straddles intimate knowledge of both teacher practices and contexts and practices associated with scholarly research (Loughran, 2007, Elijah, 2007). Elijah (2007) suggests that "self-study of teacher education practices attempts to bridge artificially distinct spheres…in order to create personally and contextually relevant ways of knowing in the teacher-ly world" (p. 251). We agree with Zeichner (2007), that self-study research can "open up new ways of understanding teacher education" (p.43).

Participants

When we began this study, all of us were in our third year as pre-tenured assistance professors at our institution. We are white females of varying age and elementary classroom experience. Although, at the beginning of the study we did not have the exact language, we each held strong convictions regarding our roles as hybrid teacher educators and the value of constructing collective third spaces in partnership settings. We recognized the critical role of developing strong relationships as fundamental to a collective third space in order to support teacher learning. We endeavored to engage those involved--ourselves as well as preservice and mentor teachers--in addressing issues of practice.

While we had prior experiences with what we call *drive-by supervision*, traveling between several schools, each of us had had positive experiences in school-university partnership settings as well. Cheryl had done partnership building while a teacher-in-residence at the local university. As a doctoral student, Jennifer was involved as a Professional Development Associate, spending four days a week in two elementary PDS sites. Susan spent two days a week of an adjunct position supervising a cohort of practicum students within a supportive school setting. Furthermore, we had had prior experiences in partnership grant writing (Cheryl), research on PDS settings (Jennifer), and research on student teaching contexts (Susan). Opportunity to spend time in schools and in the supervision of Professional Year students, preservice teachers entering their final year of field experiences in classroom settings, was something that attracted each of us to our positions during this study. As Cheryl commented:

> One of the draws to my position was the promised institutional support and focus on partnerships with K-12 schools and the room to develop such partnerships and Professional Development Schools.

Contexts

Partnership schools served as field placement sites for elementary preservice teachers. These schools had a mutual commitment with the university to teacher education. Each partnership school typically hosted six to eight Professional Year students as well as numerous preservice teachers in earlier field placements. The Professional Year

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consisted of one semester of 250 hours in a partner school and then one semester of full-time student teaching in the same school. Professional Year students worked with at least two mentor teachers during this time, so they could gain experiences in both primary and upper elementary classrooms.

Due to constraints on the university, supervision was accomplished through adjunct supervisors, (retired administrators and teachers) as well as tenure-track faculty.

Supervisors met as a group monthly. A Field Guide established expectations for Professional Year students, mentor teachers and supervisors. In lieu of teaching one course, as tenure-track faculty members, we were assigned liaison positions to partner schools. We observed and provided feedback to Professional Year students, conducted seminars for students, met at least monthly with mentoring teachers as a group, and, of course, conducted evaluations of students. We led three-way evaluations involving mentor and preservice teachers both at midterm and at the end of the semester.

Procedures, Data Sources, and Analysis Procedures

To gain in-depth understanding of complex practices, we moved cyclically (Griffiths, Poursanidou, Simms, & Windle, 2006) between individual and team examination of our practices over a span of three years. In this way, production and analysis of data were intimately intertwined through iterative processes. Documentation for this self-study included individually written self-reflections, transcriptions of audio taped group conversations, email conversations, individual descriptive memos, and early outlines/papers from which the findings of this study emerged.

We began by individually generating questions for our work. Each of us then addressed the agreed upon questions: How do I view my role(s) as a liaison/ supervisor? What do I see as my purpose in schools? Individual (re)reading and informal coding of the three written responses through methods of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) led into our first discussion of the data. We filled a large white board with emerging themes, quotes, and ideas. At this point, we were working from a broad perspective and themes developed from the ground up. Emerging themes included: the complexity of our work, role of relationship building, theoretical foundations for our work, tensions in various shapes and forms, activities we did, development of agency and voice, and K-12 student learning as bottom line for us. We discussed these themes and how they might be related to each other. We agreed to delve deeper into recoding and refining the three strongest themes: relationship building, complexity of our work, and tensions in our work. This joint conversation also became data, as it was transcribed and coded.

We reverted to individual work, writing descriptive memos based on recoding our initial reflections and the transcript of our first meeting. Then, we again moved onto collaborative analysis – both in subsequent conversations and through shared Google documents. This cyclical work was messy, as individual understandings butted up against those of others. For example, Jennifer pushed the negotiation of formative and summative assessment as a critical point. However, in collaborative discussion, it was noted that this theme was more about the complexity of role and relationship negotiation. Eventually, we worked through several rounds of individual and collaborative work, as we continued to construct understanding through on-going reflexivity, discussion, and analysis. Over time, we talked and wrote ourselves towards knowing (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2010), building and analyzing data as we went.

Analysis thus occurred both individually and jointly. As we triangulated our evidence, we shifted constantly between analysis of our own experiences and those of the other two. We wrote analytical memos (Miles & Huberman, 1994) on emerging themes across the three cases and discovered areas in which we did not have enough data on specific issues. For example, we realized that we all had important relationships with our partner school principals. We discussed this often, but it did not necessarily enter into each of our individual data sets. Therefore, we agreed to think more about this relationship in particular to determine if it was an important relationship in our roles as teacher educators. Additionally, constructing a visual display (Miles & Huberman, 1994) that highlighted the categories of individuals and groups with whom we interacted as liaisons, aided us in synthesizing and identifying clear patterns of the data. It served as a way to organize and discuss the complexity and tensions of relationship building in our work. We then again examined the complete corpus of data for confirming and disconfirming evidence. Finally, we focused on analyzing the complexity and tensions of relationship building through the lens of collective third space. Continued writing and discussion fostered further refinements to our understandings, as our grounded theories became integrated with those of our conceptual framework. Sense making of our hybrid roles and purposes were highlighted for us, as

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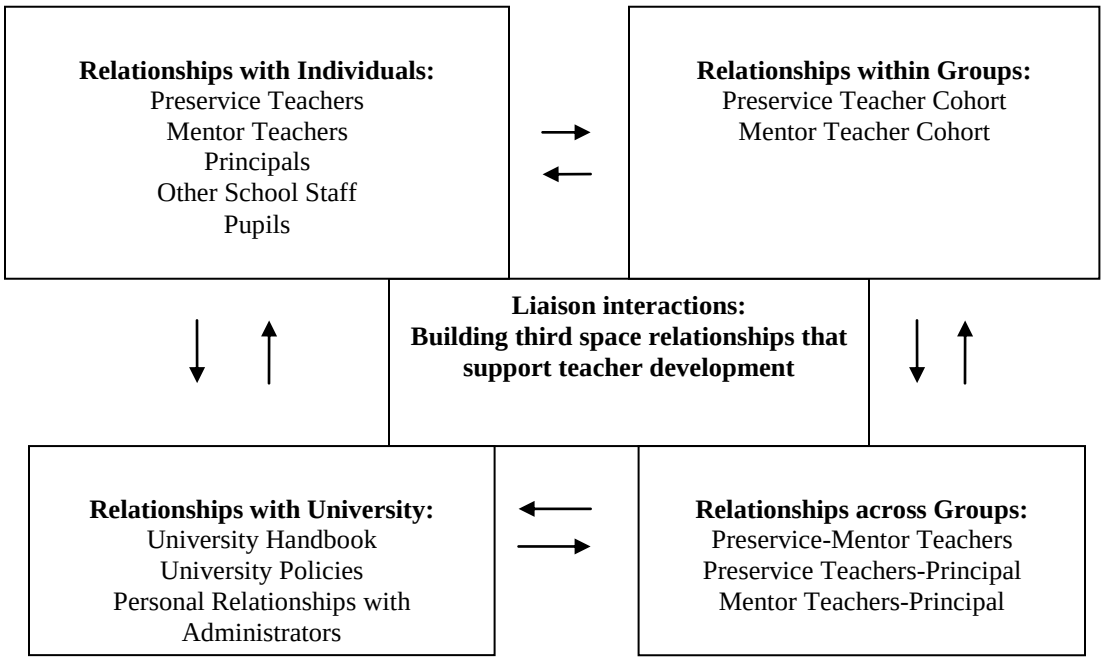
collective third space provided the structure to extend our analysis (Glesne, 2006). For instance, we had developed a visual to represent our understandings of all those involved in the partnership focused on learning as the primary goal. The concept of "coordinated activity" (Gutiérrez, 2008) helped us probe more deeply in interpreting these initial understandings, the impediments to this common focus, and the ways in which we worked to create a common focus for all involved.

Despite our efforts to work from a foundation of trustworthiness and integrity, like all studies, our work was limited in several ways. The three researcher-participants in this study may not be representative of all teacher educators, and the contexts investigated may not be representative of all supervisory field experiences. As a result, continuing research is needed within the teacher education field among those who work within third space. Additionally, although the researchers strived to maintain balance between self and practice engaged in (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001) this may not have been accomplished.

Findings

Our analyses revealed that building and navigating relationships in university-school partnerships entailed more complexity than expected. Understandings of the typical triad did little to explain our interactions in schools as we worked to support teacher development. Four aspects of liaison relationships emerged as foundational to this complexity: three within school settings (relationships with individuals, relationships within similar groups of people, relationships across groups of people) and interactions within the university-elementary school interface (see Figure 1 below). These four areas are discussed below, as we describe how we worked to build and navigate these relationships in efforts to work towards collective third space. For purposes of clarity, discussion of relationships within and across groups occurs in one encompassing section below. Although we provide attribution on many comments taken from data, others are directly woven into the narrative.

FIGURE 1: Building and Navigating Relationships in Partnerships



Cultivation and Navigation of Multiple Relationships

By being in schools one day a week, we became familiar to those in the school setting; even students greeted us by name. We developed relationships with multiple individuals in different roles in the school, enhancing the capacity for cultivating communities of practice. In addition to mentoring and preservice teachers, each of us established

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relationships with principals, and other school staff. Developing these relationships facilitated our familiarity with settings, level of comfort in schools, access to resources, and entrée into classrooms in roles other than supervisor. In this way, we began to know and be part of school contexts: "Being a liaison to me, means becoming an integral part of a school culture" (Jennifer).

Interactions with preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and principals were particularly critical to coordinated support of teacher development. When working in the school contexts, we shifted our attentions continually from one person to another; one purpose to another; and from individual to group interactions. We may have been discussing an issue with the principal one minute, and then providing feedback to preservice teachers the next. In addition to these perpetual changes in interactions, cultivating and navigating multiple types of relationships presented challenges: each required something different from us. We constantly shifted roles in these interactions, moving through varying degrees of intersubjectivity and distributions of power.

Principals

Our first interactions within the partner school context were with the principal.

Data clearly indicated that development of good working relationships with site administrators was pivotal to liaison work. Principals were an impetus for school support of partnerships. They decided whether the school would be a partner site, interviewed and selected preservice teachers, designated mentor and preservice match-ups, observed and provided feedback to preservice teachers, wrote letters of recommendation, and, in some cases, led seminar discussions. Cheryl's first-year experience underscored the importance of the principal in building partnerships. The principal at the site, although gracious to her, was authoritative towards teachers. He once yelled at preservice teachers in a meeting. Cheryl found it difficult to build a collaborative program in such an environment. This principal rendered the site an unfruitful environment for teacher development. Cheryl transferred to another school the next year where she was able to build a successful partnership in conjunction with the principal.

Through on-going interactions, principals also became strong supporters whose interests allied with ours. They discussed the power of nurturing beginning teachers in partnership settings--a "grow our own" philosophy. They hired teacher candidates when possible. Principals were also aware of potential for professional development of their staff in partnership settings. In discussing his purpose for selecting mentor teachers, one principal stated that he hoped that by working with preservice teachers some mentor teachers would be exposed to new practices. Principals also publicly acknowledged our work with mentor teachers in positive ways.

Despite development of successful interactions with principals, however, issues of the power principals wielded emerged from the data. We worked on their turf. On her first day in the building, for instance, Susan was told by the principal that she needed to report weekly. Navigating issues of undefined power within the liaison-principal relationship necessitated a "tread lightly" approach in order to build productive relationships. At the same time, we worked steadily towards more equitable distributions of power. Communication became an important tool for this purpose. Susan used weekly meetings to communicate expectations of the university, share research on teacher education, and discuss teaching practices. She invited the principal to lead seminar discussions. By fostering understanding and inviting participation, eventually a trusting relationship grew. Over time, we were included in more decisions regarding placements and professional development for the staff. We engaged in increasingly coordinated activity.

Mentor teachers

Each of us clearly recognized the nature of our relationships with mentor teachers as critical to our roles in schools and in meeting needs of preservice teachers. Cheryl voiced this as the core of liaison work:

> I spend more time with building relationships with mentor teachers and the staff at the school site than I do building a long-term relationship with the Professional Year students. I think I work towards building relationships with them, but I don't look at is as though five years from now I'm still going to have a strong relationship with you.

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Although perceived as fundamental to our work, interactions with mentor teachers were challenging. We navigated the terrain with several people who varied, not only in their skills, knowledge, and dispositions as classroom teachers, but as teacher educators as well. They differed in the ways in which they perceived their roles as teacher educators and the ways they work collaboratively with preservice teachers.

Because of these dual roles, relationships with mentor teachers were perhaps most difficult to negotiate. On one hand, we had a vested power (or a sense of power) from our university in roles as teacher educators and professional developers. On the other hand, they were our colleagues--each of us was once a classroom teacher. We had lived the norms of teacher interactions in school settings. We continued to tread lightly as we worked with mentor teachers in their settings. Within these relationships, dealing with power issues required a sensitive balancing act on our parts. Working with mentor teachers to develop understandings of their roles as teacher educators was the least difficult for us, as they explicitly asked for advice--wanting to know how to best support preservice teachers. Jennifer, for instance, was asked to facilitate a discussion of the differences between being a "mentor teacher" as opposed to a traditional "cooperating teacher" at her first mentor teacher meeting in a school. We provided articles and facilitated group discussions about mentoring. Perhaps because of district policies regarding collaborative work among teachers, mentor teachers also understood the purposes and value of collaborative support for preservice teachers. Mentor teachers voiced their appreciation when we gave support and took the lead in dealing with preservice teachers who needed extra guidance in their practices.

We did not feel comfortable, however, providing unsolicited feedback to teachers who might not be as adept or committed to mentoring as others. We held our tongues when we saw classroom practices with which we disagreed. We dealt with some of these issues with principals and teacher candidates, but never in direct interactions with mentors. Instead, we sought to focus on the strengths each mentor brought to his/her work. Developing collaborative relationships with mentors also depended on how they perceived us. We considered it counterproductive to be thought of as either being in an evaluative role or coming from the "ivory tower." One mentor teacher was surprised Cheryl had a doctorate because she "talked like a teacher."

In sum, establishment of trusting relationships with mentor teachers began with us striving to fit into the context, work in manner seen as collegial in the school setting, and support mentor teachers in their teacher education work. As noted in other PDS studies (e.g. Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007), building trust overtime was fundamental to collaborative work with mentoring teachers. Cheryl commented that, "It has taken three years [at partner school] to have earned the trust and have access."

Having done critical groundwork to establish strong relationships, we worked towards coordination of understandings and practices between mentor teachers and ourselves. We became bolder in addressing issues both directly and indirectly with mentoring teachers through feedback in three-way conversations, classroom demonstration lessons for candidates, and mentor teacher cohort meetings. As mentors and we became experienced in our roles and more comfortable working with each other, collaborative efforts aimed at teacher candidate learning began to take on a life of their own. Mentors began to seek us out: "Working with some of the same people over time definitely earned me the honor of being asked what I thought sometimes" (Jennifer). We were asked to engage in professional development that was once met with disinterest. A mentor teacher working with Susan noted publicly, "I'm always willing to try anything that you suggest!" Furthermore, *we* began to eagerly seek out mentor input. Jennifer and Susan recently worked with mentor teachers to create field guides, unique to their school settings, containing jointly conceived understandings and practices to better support beginning teachers' development.

Preservice Teachers

The complexity of our relationships with preservice teachers was a strong theme in the data. As we developed relationships with them over a school year, interactions were personal and emotion-laden, for them and us. Preservice teachers varied in terms of their novice teaching skills, abilities to self-reflect and accept feedback, and levels of confidence--leading to development of several unique relationships. Similar to other studies (e.g. Cole & Knowles, 1995: Marrou, 1988) relationships with preservice teachers were further complicated as we shifted continually through various roles. Preservice teacher development over time also complicated the ways in which we interacted with them throughout the year. We worked to consciously negotiate these complexities as we adapted to meet unique and changing needs. Susan articulated this negotiation:

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> I feel that I need to find the zone of proximal development for each and support them within that zone. The problem is, that because teaching is so complex, there are multiple zones of proximal development, and I need to sometimes make judgments about what it is that takes priority in addressing the needs of future teachers.

Intent on immersing preservice teachers in developing communities of practice, we were ever cognizant of power differentials in our relationships. Coming from a position of power with respect to the preservice teachers was significant for us:

> One thing, I think, is to take the time to develop relationships based in equity… Clearly, the intern has less power, but one of my main goals as a liaison is to help interns develop a sense of agency, where they would feel comfortable sharing why they do what they do, what they believe, how they believe it is helping the student learn. If I silence that as a liaison/supervisor, I find that somewhat hypocritical. (Jennifer)

Even though each of us saw ourselves, as Cheryl indicates, "…as a liaison more along the lines of a collaborative partner, a coach, a facilitator..," we had to contend with teacher candidates' perceptions of the relationship as well. As Jennifer pointed out, "The student teachers see us as someone they *have* to have a relationship with." Although we endeavored to "flatten the power structures" of these relationships, establishing collaborative interactions with preservice teachers was problematic. This was often a hit-and-miss affair that seemed to have more to do with development and capabilities of student teachers, than anything we actually did to foster collaboration.

Negotiating a Web of Relationships

In order to develop collaborative partnerships in support of teacher development, each of us grappled with the issues of operating within a web of these relationships. A major facet of our work was to orchestrate shifts from individual dyads (preservice and mentor teacher) to a collective engaged in coordinated activity. We took on roles at the school sites designed to strengthen collaboration and foster relationship building both within and across the different groups. Negotiating this resulting web of relationships seemed, to us, much like a complicated dance that involved on-going decision-making processes situated in specific contexts: the complexity arising from the "variety of perspectives, needs, and interests of the many involved parties" (Cheryl).

Relationships within groups

Each of us held group meetings with preservice teacher cohorts weekly and with mentor teachers several times a semester. Although specific content varied, these meetings presented opportunities for groups to engage in conversations regarding student learning and teacher practices. Novice teachers had opportunities to discuss issues of practice with each other. University-required activities were discussed and explicitly linked to their emerging classroom practices. Mentor teacher meetings provided teachers opportunities to discuss roles and practices as teacher educators. In one meeting, for instance, mentor teachers discussed issues of providing student teachers with opportunities for trying out different instructional approaches. In addition, these meetings allowed mentor teachers to discuss issues, including those related to university requirements and policies, and to engage in joint problem solving with liaisons. In essence, meetings provided a vehicle for moving towards coordination of purpose and action in partnership settings.

In order for these meetings to serve these purposes, we consciously worked to develop norms of trust and respect within these groups in order to facilitate sharing and support for individuals. Each cohort, as a unique set of individuals, demanded differently of us as facilitators.

Preservice teachers typically had not worked together before, while relationships and norms of interaction with mentor teachers were already established from prior school interactions. It was a relief when groups gelled thus enabling critical conversations to occur between participants. This was especially challenging with a group of teacher candidates who perceived us as *the* teacher, and the setting as a transmissive, rather than discursive one. Again, working to flatten power structures was an important to interactions with preservice teachers.

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Although preservice and mentor teachers expressed gratitude for these discussions, *public* conversation inherently provided opportunities for self-comparison, especially with insecure preservice teachers. We needed to explicitly address issues of the individual nature of development and the different classroom situations in which preservice teachers found themselves. Jennifer, for instance, told preservice teachers, "It's o.k. if one is teaching all of reading and another is not." Diversity of situations caused insecurities among mentors as well as among interns. Some mentors felt uncertain if others were allowing student teachers "to take over," while they felt that their student teacher was still not ready. Fostering collaborative interactions in group settings required explicit focus on issues of diversity within the groups.

Relationships across groups

Reconfiguring professional year experiences within on-site communities of practice requires building collaborative relationships across groups of people in varying roles. Willingness of individuals to embracing collaborative roles is crucial, but inevitably, despite the best of intentions, conflicts arise. As liaisons to the partnership setting, it fell upon us to foster development of and continual re-mediation (Gutiérrez, 2008) of relationships across groups: mentors and preservice teachers, mentors and principals, preservice teachers and principals. We faced two critical issues in dealing with cross-group relationships: not meeting expectations for joint activity and issues of power. Each of these problems positioned people into working at odds with each other, rather than in coordination. Not surprisingly, on-going re-mediation was a challenge, especially early on as we were learning the complexities of this work.

*Expectations for joint activity.*Expectations for preservice teachers to develop professionalism and teaching skill went across school contexts. We heard comments about student teachers from students, parents, staff members, principals, as well as mentor teachers.

In particular, working jointly in apprenticeships settings presented challenges to both mentor and preservice teachers. Each began their work together with expectations for themselves and each other (Valencia et al., 2009). At times, these expectations did not match up. As liaisons, we dealt with the ramifications of this.

That we walked a fine line as an advocate for preservice teachers while at the same time a colleague of mentor teachers clearly emerged from the data. We were often privy to information and attitudes not known to each participant in this relationship. How we chose to deal with tensions within partner match-ups varied based on our perceptions of the degree of threat to the relationship and teacher learning. At times, we just backed down from these tensions, acknowledging difficulties and lending a sympathetic ear rather than try to negotiate concerns raised by an individual: "I just listen to both sides, and perhaps say what they want to hear" (Susan). Other times we gave advice and recommendations for action/communication to either candidate or mentoring teachers. Occasionally, we were asked to be a go-between, bringing up issues as a neutral third party or in group meetings. As we grew more experienced, we found it was often best to address issues with both preservice and mentoring teachers.

In a few difficult instances, we were positioned into dealing with significant issues between mentor and preservice teachers. For instance, when preservice teachers' complaints about a mentor teacher indicated unproductive behavior patterns, we enlisted cooperation of principals to ensure that no further teacher candidates would be placed with those mentors. Conversely, a few student teachers grappled with the complexities of learning to teach and didn't display growth. Mentor teachers expressed feelings of both being let-down and uncertainty of what to do. The inevitable breakdown of mentor and preservice teacher relationships in these situations came with emotional fall-out. Multiple relationships were placed at risk. Recently, Susan dealt with such a situation. Neither mentor nor student teacher decided to opt out of the situation. So, while simultaneously working to deal with emotional issues, she engaged the mentor and student teacher in development of a plan of action for improvement. She informed both the principal and the university of the situation. In this case, the student teacher eventually improved and passed. Significant here, is the coordinated activity aimed at problem solving in order to work towards a satisfactory resolution. Additionally, at the end of the school year, the liaison and all mentor teachers met to discuss the complexities of this challenging situation and to brain-storm ways to deal with these issues even more proactively in the future.

Issues of power. Inevitably, we dealt with power differentials across the groups of people Jennifer spoke for the three of us: "But a major role of liaisons, I think, is to take the time to develop relationships based in equity. We all have power coming from different sources. We can use it fairly without over-powering any other one partner." In such a

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role, we found ourselves responding in diverse ways as we carefully negotiated specific contexts. To this end, we found ourselves in the position of advocating for others. Analysis of our first memos revealed that elementary student learning was "bottom line" for each of us. Thus, student learning was an ever-present concern in our on-going feedback to preservice teachers. In essence, we served as advocates for children, guiding our preservice teachers to understand student perspectives.

Each of us also experienced difficult situations in which we had to advocate for some at the risk of jeopardizing other established relationships. Especially difficult were those times when we had to advocate for teachers with the principals. In a few instances, principals used coercive means to situate teachers as mentors, potentially undermining collaboration and developing communities of practice. Preempting this, Jennifer worked closely with her principal and mentor teacher group to generate a schedule where mentor teachers could rotate years being assigned preservice teachers, so that they could each have a "break" if needed. In another instance, the principal, without any conversation with Susan, asked preservice teachers to work every morning before school on a school reading intervention program. They were already stressed from full-time student teaching, but did not feel they had the power to say no to the principal. Susan viewed this as an expedient move by the principal at the expense of the candidates. Placing them in this situation would be counterproductive to their learning. With much trepidation, she had to confront this situation head-on in order to advocate for the student teachers. This conversation was extremely uncomfortable, but the principal altered her decision. Fortunately, facing this issue head-on proved to be a turning point in the relationship and balances of power. Soon after this, the principal included Susan in decisions regarding placement of student teachers.

In essence then, the web of relationships across parties proved to be full of entanglements: "inevitably, operating within this panoply of roles creates tensions as the needs or desires of one stakeholder becomes in conflict with those of another, including ourselves" (Jennifer). We responded to tensions and conflicts in ways that promoted development of communities of practice engaged in coordinated action. We avoided confrontations that might be counterproductive to establishment of these communities, but took up roles and wielded our own power in order to maintain appropriate participation of and balances of power among community members.

Navigating the University-Elementary School Interface

The interface of the university teacher education program with our work in school settings figured significantly in efforts to build strong partnership relationships. Initially, historical contexts created the most difficulty for our work. Each of us was placed in an established partner school our first year. Classroom teachers were familiar with having preservice teachers in their classrooms. These schools, however, had strained relationships with the university, as university processes seemed to impede partnership work. As Cheryl lamented, "There are times when I am surprised that schools even continue to want our presence." These sites had experienced a string of adjunct supervisors who provided little guidance for them. Communication with the university was negligible. Each of us heard complaints from principals and teachers alike. Our dismay and embarrassment to be in this situation was clearly noted. Jennifer spoke for all of us:

> They [the school site] have been burned in the past. They haven't been shy about sharing their unhappiness with the University historically. I've outright apologized for some past transgressions.

In order to build the relationships with principals and teachers we were seeking, we had to overcome these programmatic tensions. As we worked to develop personal relationships within school settings, we listened patiently to complaints. We found ourselves in the position of "running interference due to lack of communication" (Cheryl). Each worked to foster connections between the university and school site for the betterment of educative field experiences. By doing so, we hoped that principals and teachers would develop a sense that they were in a true partnership with the university. Susan, for instance, invited principals, teachers, and the school counselor to participate in preservice teacher seminars in hopes that they would "feel the connection with the university program." All of us have experienced a shift in the principal's perspective over time. Cheryl pointed out that, "I have this principal who is very high on the university who ten years ago would not take an intern." Susan suggested that: "The principal's support of the university program is in part, because she respects the work I do. I have been a presence in the school—reliable and knowledgeable."

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University policies and expectations also created challenging situations for us in partnership settings. As with other studies of supervision, we experienced tensions between what we saw as the mentoring aspects of our work and formal institutional assessments (e.g. Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). While assessment processes created challenges for us, each of us found ways to complete formal assessments in ways that (we hoped) reduced stress on preservice teachers and maximized opportunities to promote formative and self-assessment. We conducted assessments in face-to-face settings that included mentor teachers as well. Clearly, the preservice teachers were not always comfortable in these three-way evaluations, but they were involved in conversations about teacher practices.

Additionally, the content and form of university assessments caused consternation among mentor teachers. As we listened to mentor teacher complaints and suggestions, we were troubled by these assessments as well, aligning ourselves with them in this regard. Based on this feedback from school sites, we advocated for revisions of the assessments at the university. Eventually, we were involved in making revisions to the assessments and designing of a portfolio assessment.

University policies, or actually lack of them, also vexed us in our work. Although we appreciated the university support we received for our liaison work, at times it was problematic, especially early on. For instance, given budgetary constraints, faculty load is based on number of teacher candidates. Each of us has been accountable for more than one school during a semester. We felt this prevented us from doing the partnership work in schools that we envisioned. We proactively worked with both the director of field experiences and school principals to garner support for development of PDS. Over time, our efforts yielded some positive results. For example, Jennifer worked only with teachers one semester as she worked to establish a PDS. We felt the tenuous nature of this support, however, since it was not based on specific university policies, but on personal relationships.

Additionally, university accountability for liaisons was minimal. Likewise, we received little institutional support in how and what to do in seminars or working with students individually. We each grappled with lack of guidelines and mentoring for our work. Again, we became advocates for school partnerships at the university. Among other actions, we lobbied for monthly supervisor meetings. We were successful in these efforts and continue to work for changes within teacher education.

In sum, in order to help bridge the gaps between university and school contexts, work of university-based teacher educators importantly includes working within each of the contexts to bring knowledge and understandings in alignment. The hybrid teacher educator importantly can foster two-way communication in processes of reconfiguration of policies and practices focused on transformative teacher education.

Discussion and Implications

Our work clearly highlights the ways in which we found ourselves embroiled and entangled in multiple roles and the resulting relational complexities of hybrid work. Deliberate and thoughtful construction of P-12-University partnerships, as transformative learning sites for novice teachers, must be based on deep understandings of the social complexities of partnership contexts. Our analyses suggest that conceptions of social interactions must go well beyond understandings of the traditional triad. Broader conceptualizations that include others in the school setting, relationships within and across groups, as well as institutions, are fundamental to efforts in providing novice teachers with rich educative opportunities. Furthermore, the emic perspectives of this collaborative self-study significantly contribute to understanding how university-based teacher educators' leadership can impact student teaching contexts in school settings and bridge gaps between university and school contexts. These findings suggest important directions for understanding student teaching contexts, the work of hybrid teacher educators, and university settings.

Understanding Student Teaching Contexts as Social Settings

Analysis of liaison work within partner school settings, based on notions of collective third space, advocate that attention be given to the complex ecologies (Valencia et al., 2009) of student teaching contexts. Although analysis did not focus on the social ecology of the third space in our partnership settings per se, findings regarding liaison work suggest a complex web of social interactions that mentors, student teachers, and others negotiate. Taking an ecological perspective on these complexities is important for several reasons. First, as analysis revealed, we experienced how the work of teacher education is situated in multiple hands across several contexts: schools, classrooms, and universities.

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Educators need to embrace notions of moving beyond conceptions of the triad as an isolated social setting in order to understand the complexities of student teaching contexts. Additionally, as we discovered, those engaged together in the work of promoting teacher learning are also situated in other contexts (Gutiérrez, 2008) with diverse, and often competing, funds of knowledge (Moll & Greenberg, 1990), interests, and values. Construction of partnership settings as contexts for teacher learning involved clashes between differing understandings of roles and norms for social interaction. Only concerted efforts of negotiation and coordination of activity over time served to level hierarchical interactions and foster development of third space communities of practice. Clearly, these findings suggest that supporting teacher development is neither a simple matter of making sure to engage student teachers in clinical experiences, nor of providing just the right practice-based learning activities. Attention to and understanding the social complexities of student contexts can potentially enable richer and coordinated contexts for school-university partnerships that guide and scaffold teacher development. Certainly, this is an area for further inquiry.

Understanding Complexities and Challenges of Hybrid Teacher Educators' Work

Analyses revealed that, complementary to the research of others (e.g. Bullough et al., 2004; Slick, 1998a; 1998b), the work of university-based teacher educators occurred in multiple social contexts. We faced varied responsibilities and multiple duties as educators and institutional representatives. Boundary-bridging efforts situated liaison work in contexts well beyond notions of the singular triad. Redefining the nature of university-based teacher educators' work adds further dimension to its complexity, as processes of building and negotiating complex relationships in student teaching contexts are central to the work.
We faced on-going challenges as we constructed and reconstructed relationships through processes of negotiation (Winograd, 2002), with individuals and groups of individuals. We sought to influence the nature of interactions between others, by fostering norms of interaction in which trust could develop among all members of the group (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). As our findings indicate, development of collaborative and trusting relationships is a complex and ever-shifting process; one fraught with challenges that required proactive and conscious effort.

Working towards third space requires an embracing of complexity and uncertainty in social contexts, rather than control and power. Yet, as we worked towards stronger collaboration in our schools, issues of real and perceived power differentials across relationships hampered our efforts. Fostering balances of power between actors in the student teacher settings fell to us as university-based teacher educators. As we sought to create these balances, we consciously and explicitly worked to distribute power to create equity between those involved.

We worked to give up some power and give voice to others in our decision-making. For us, helping both preservice and mentor teachers feel empowered to take risks was a major goal. Working with student teachers was especially challenging, as simply trying to empower them, did not always lead to a more equitable distributions of power. Instead, it may be more effective to envision student teachers as legitimate peripheral participants in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), who are increasingly empowered as they develop. In direct contrast, we also worked to gain more power for ourselves and others. These interactions proved particularly challenging, especially with principals. Strong relationships with principals and mentor teachers, developed over time, providing a foundation for interactions that could lead to more equitable distributions of power.

In addition to dealing with norms of interaction, negotiating and bringing together diverse understandings was an important aspect of our work. Achieving a "working consensus," (Hargreaves, 1992) in which goals of those involved are at least partly achieved, was central to liaison work in this inquiry. Certainly, a critical aspect of liaison work might be to develop explicit understandings of the various goals held by those in student-teaching contexts and efforts to come to some agreements that lead to coordinated activity.

In sum, through individual and group conversations with others in the school settings, we, as university-based educators, played critical roles in developing and fostering interactions that could move the student teaching context from one of *cooperation*—in which the school simply agrees to take students teachers and comply with university expectations-- to one of *collaboration*—in which "university faculty and P-12 teachers work together for joint aims…" (Boyle-Baise & McIntyre, 2008, p. 311). Through these processes, we played a critical role in bringing together diverse interests and groups of people into a common focus—teacher and student learning. Furthermore, the work of facilitating collaborative interaction and bridging gaps between university expectations and school contexts, demonstrated concerted effort to foster focused, coordinated activity. School settings became much more than a place

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for student teachers to practice teaching (Zeichner, 2010). These contexts provide opportunities for analysis of learning and mentoring, as well as teaching (Richardson-Koehler, 1988).

Implications for University Settings

As others (Boyle-Baise & McIntyre, 2008; Teitel, 2003) have reminded us, school-university collaboration can, and should, result in transformative change at the university as well as schools. Several implications for teacher education programs and university-based teacher educators arose from this inquiry. Most obvious is the need for both teacher education programs and university-based teacher educators to understand the complex nature of liaison work. This work has moved far beyond notions of the solo supervisor armed with evaluative forms marching into classrooms to observe student teachers in action. Furthermore, as expectations increase for the educative (and subsequent relational) aspects of the liaison work in university-school partnerships, so, too, will there need to be increased opportunities for liaisons to develop understanding of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of this challenging work. Time and institutional support are critical for development of effective practices that can support transformative teacher education.

As demonstrated in this study, however, the nature of the work accomplished by university-based teacher educators is not something that can be found outlined in checklists or in a university handbook that enumerates the roles and duties of liaisons. It would be difficult to suggest one "right" response for university liaison work in partnership schools. Instead, making sense of the complexities and uncertainties of practice (McDonald, 1992) can only be dealt with increasingly conscious competence through on-going experience and reflective practices—both individual and collaborative. Our collaboration has provided a wonderful opportunity for us to understand our work, to consider more critically our own practices, and make changes in what we do. We sought out these interactions outside of our designated obligations as liaisons, however. We believe that these collaborative opportunities should have been institutionally supported, embedded in our work as liaisons, through the cultivation of another community of practice.

If Colleges of Education are to work towards teacher education that considers the needs of P-12 settings (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010), they must also provide opportunities for university-based teacher educators to provide input on decisions having to do with policies and practices of teacher education. As our findings revealed, bridging contexts of partner schools and universities, places them in position to understand perspectives and gather information from both sites. University-based teacher educators are boundary-spanners, inhabiting in-between spaces that provide the terrain for reconfigurations and creation of new ideas.

Finally, the findings of this inquiry bring us to issues of *who* should work in these critical hybrid teacher educator roles. Currently, in many institutions supervision is conducted by graduate students or former principals and teachers. As Zeichner (2010) argues, supervisors in these situations are typically peripheral to the contexts of teacher education at universities. Many of them are not knowledgeable about or interested in teacher education. They are hampered by lack of knowledge about university programs, purposes, and school settings. Undoubtedly, they lack understandings necessary for the boundary-bridging roles in which we found ourselves. Furthermore, many in these positions do not stay involved in this work over a long period. Our analyses clearly indicate both the development of communities of practice over time and on-going development of our abilities to meet the challenges of this complex work. As in any-complex work, continual reflective and adjustments are needed to develop capability and confidence in one's practices. Even in this past year, the seventh in our work in partnerships settings, we continued to try out new ideas and change things in working towards third space partnership settings.

Conclusion

Recently, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) published the report of an expert Blue Ribbon Panel (2010) focused on clinical preparation and partnerships. This report recommends a restructuring of teacher education around clinical practice. Implications of this study, however, suggest that focusing attention simply on creating structures to provide clinical practices is not enough. The structure is not the content, nor the processes. Going hand-in-hand with these new calls to implement clinical-rich teacher preparation, must be understandings of how to construct and support rich, clinical contexts that serve as transformative settings for teacher learning. Viewing clinical contexts as potential collective third spaces, and preparing, supporting, and utilizing hybrid teacher educators to facilitate development of these third-spaces appears to be a promising path for further consideration and

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investigation. Despite all the challenges we face as university-based teacher educators, continued work in partnership settings, keeps alive our passion for transformative teacher education and our commitment to fostering winning situations for preservice teachers, mentor teachers, P-12 students, and the university.

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