Changes in Roles and Relationships in a School-University Partnership

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A boom in school-university partnerships is currently taking place in American education. One of the key assumptions underlying the efforts to build school-university partnerships is the need to honor the knowledge, skills, and experiences of individuals from both schools and universities (Carriuolo, 1991). Educators have also recognized the need to negotiate the changing roles, statuses, and relationships that go along with co-reform projects designed to foster renewal and development in teaching and teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Goodlad, 1994; Sirotnik & Goodlad, 1988). The following paper provides an interpretive examination of changing roles and relationships from the perspectives of cooperating teachers, student teachers[1], and univer-

sity faculty who participated in the first four years of a school-university partnership associated with the University of Georgia.

Advocates for school-university partnerships such as Ann Lieberman (1991) have observed that research on the changing roles and relationships of partners is still in the formative stages. Specifically, we know little of the needs, abilities, capacities, and demands influencing changing roles and relationships. Kenneth A. Sirotnik (1988) has argued that we need to examine whether schools and universities are maintaining traditional boundaries or instead, participating jointly in decisions around common interests and exchanging staff and resources. Similarly, he suggests that we need to consider the extent to which teachers, student teachers, and others are involved in agenda-setting activities and if they are included routinely as valued participants in dialogue, decision making, action taking, and evaluation.

The Holmes Group (1986), has advanced the notion of clinical faculty roles as a means for expanding the roles for classroom teachers in teacher education. These suggested changes for cooperating teachers have been more fully developed than ideas for changing roles for university faculty and student teachers (Zimpher, 1990). Catherine Cornbleth and Jeanne Ellsworth (1994) have provided one of the first studies to critically examine the implications of broader participation in teacher education on the part of classroom teachers. They outline three major changes in roles and relationships for classroom teachers found in their analysis of reform programs at several large state universities: "(a) enhancement of the traditional role of the cooperating teacher through title changes, increased preparation and perks, and role differentiation; (b) classroom teacher involvement in teaching university courses; and (c) broad classroom teacher participation in teacher-education program planning, admissions, and other decision-making" (p. 52). Cornbleth and Ellsworth conclude with recommendations for more fully integrating classroom teachers in partnership relationships with university teacher education faculty, but do not discuss changes in roles for university faculty or student teachers.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1991) has focused closely on the changes in roles and relationships for student teachers and cooperating teachers in a "reinvented student teaching" approach she has studied in which students work collaboratively with teachers who are committed to changing their practices. In her study, student teachers and cooperating teachers mutually negotiated roles and relationships, constructed learning and teaching opportunities for each other, and transformed their professional identities in the context of collegial student teaching. Cochran-Smith's and Cornbleth and Ellsworth's analyses have provided us with insights into changes in roles and relationships for student teachers and cooperating teachers but there is still a need to further analyze roles played by university faculty in school-university relationships and the ways in which the three groups interact in teacher education. Lee Teitel (1992) has reported that professors in the sites he studied noted changes in the ways they thought about and work with schools, cooperating teachers, and student teachers. Kathy Short (1992) has considered the dilemmas of

challenging the hierarchical relationships between school and university faculties from the perspective of analyzing her own efforts to collaborate in creating a learning community among educators.

Each of the researchers studying school-university partnerships has called for the continuation and extension of collaborative relationships among university faculty, classroom-based teachers, and teacher education students and has contributed to our understanding of these relationships. In order to further our understanding, comprehensive studies of all participants' perspectives on changing roles and relationships in the intersecting contexts of school-based and teacher-education program reforms are needed. The central purpose of the following study was to examine public school teachers', university students', and university faculties' perspectives on their changing roles and relationships within a school-university partnership that included an alternative teacher education program linked to a professional development and curriculum reform component.

Context and Data Collection Procedures

The study was conducted over a four-year period with four distinct groups of student teachers, and a group of cooperating teachers that expanded from an initial group of eight to a group of 35. A core of seven university faculty members worked with the program for two of the years, while three others worked for shorter periods. The first (1991) and second (1992) cohorts consisted, respectively, of eight students and 11 students, ranging in age from 21 to 27. The third (1993-1994) and fourth (1994-1995) cohorts each included 22 students aged 21 to 35. The majority of the students were female and European American, with the exceptions of one male student in the first cohort and one African-American student in the third cohort. Thirty-five cooperating teachers, whose years of teaching experience ranged from two to 25, participated in the study. Interviews with four university faculty members, conducted by faculty from outside the program and graduate student members of the program research team, were included in the data set that was analyzed. The four who were interviewed were faculty members who had worked with the program continuously over a three year period, and included the second and third authors of this paper.

The Alternative Teacher Education program (ATE) in the College of Education at The University of Georgia was the setting for the study. Three school sites provided field placements for the program. Two of the sites were located in a rural county adjacent to the university and one was in the small city. The two rural schools contained predominately low-to-middle-socioeconomic status European American students. The third school contained both African and European American low-to-middle-socioeconomic status students.

Data analyzed in the study were drawn from response journals (Schön, 1983) and interview guide approaches (Spradley, 1979). Open-ended questionnaires (Patton, 1990) provided further data on emerging themes. The stimuli of partici-

pant-initiated topics, primarily personal and professional stories of experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) in college-based teacher education programs and fieldwork internship settings served as the touchstone for data collection. The following specific questions guided our examination of the salient theme of participants' changing roles and relationships:

1) What were the processes and structures that were introduced to facilitate changes in roles and relationships?
2) What were the student teachers', cooperating teachers', and university faculty's perspectives on their changing roles and relationships in the context of the alternative teacher education program?
3) What challenges emerge in partnerships that foster changes in roles and relationships? and
4) What are the implications for others attempting to make sense of school-university partnerships at a practical level?

Data were analyzed to build theoretical categories between and among the relationships discovered in the data.

Processes and Structures Facilitating
Changing Roles and Relationships

Stage Setting: The First Two Years

The study of changing roles and relationships in teacher education that is reported here was conducted in the context of a school-university partnership that focused on co-reform in teacher education and school renewal and was funded by a grant from the Coca Cola Corporation. Our definition of co-reform is rooted in John Goodlad's (1990) "conviction that the necessary renewal of schools is most likely to be advanced when renewal efforts are closely linked to the teacher education and research activities of universities." In Figure 1 we provide a sequential overview of the processes and structures that emerged in the partnership to facilitate changes in roles and relationships among participants. In the following sections we elaborate this overview.

The co-reform initiative began when one school faculty that had undertaken a shared governance process decided to work with a small number of university faculty to change from a basal, skill-based approach to reading and writing to one that was based on the whole language philosophy (Edlesky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). During the first year, university faculty in language education served as resources for the literacy-based reform efforts. University and elementary school faculty participated in classroom observations, in-service sessions, and the teaching of demonstration lessons focused on the whole language approach.

As the first year of the co-reform initiative progressed, cooperating teachers who were participating in the literacy-based reform volunteered to work with student interns and student teachers. At this time the university teacher education

Figure 1

Co-Reform in Teacher Education: Fostering Changing Roles and Relationships

Stage Setting	◆ shared governance in schools
	◆ co-reform partnership initiated
	◆ professional development programs at school sites
	    ● involvement of university teacher education faculty
	    ● integration of field experiences with co-reform efforts

Initial Implementation	◆ university faculty planning group ◆ extension of field experiences ◆ inclusive planning group ● university faculty, student teachers, and school faculty
Beginning Partnerships	◆ changing roles and relationships for cooperating teachers and student teachers ◆ improved communication among all participants ◆ teachers' expanded roles in teacher education ◆ student negotiation of curriculum and participation in program development
New Partnerships	◆ teachers' and student teachers' action research ◆ graduates' mentoring roles ◆ school and university curriculum innovations

program consisted of a four quarter sequence of professional preparation courses. These courses were organized by subject matter. Field experiences were included in the third quarter before the last quarter that consisted entirely of student teaching. Since the student teachers assigned to the co-reform school had previously participated in university courses on whole language, participants worked to link the students' field experiences with the ongoing whole language inservice classes. For example, the university supervisor worked with the cooperating teachers and university students to integrate the professional development classes for teachers with the whole language practices the student teachers had learned in their teacher education classes.

Initial Implementation

    The collaboration that developed during the first years with the first two

cohorts of student teachers was established in only one school, focused on literacy instruction, and only included university faculty in language education and early childhood supervisors of field experience. Subsequent collaborations were in the second, third, and fourth years of the co-reform initiative. During the second year, a program planning team was established that included faculty members from all subject area courses as well as the original group of teacher education and language arts faculty who had been involved in the initial literacy co-reform initiative. University faculty developed plans for a comprehensive teacher education program based on the three themes of reflectivity, constructivism, and multiculturalism. At the end of the second year two additional elementary schools joined the co-reform initiative. This expansion led to inclusion of a larger number of cooperating teachers and student teachers. For the professional development component, one of the new schools chose to implement the whole language approach to literacy instruction, while the second school chose to implement a student-centered teaching approach known as Foxfire (Wiggington, 1985).

The program planning team decided to increase the amount of field experiences in the teacher education program from two to four quarters. The increase in field experiences required more collaboration between and among the university faculty and cooperating teachers in the three schools. As the university faculty prepared to implement the alternative program, a broader collaboration that paralleled the schools' implementation of a shared governance process emerged.

During the third year, the university faculty members decided to include cooperating teacher and student teacher representatives to work directly with them in the ongoing program planning efforts. As the expanded planning team worked together to construct a program, teachers, students, and university faculty negotiated new roles and relationships. University faculty attempted to operationalize their roles as resources, facilitators, and supporters for cooperating teachers and student teachers. Students and teachers developed a sense of how to serve as liaisons to their respective constituencies in facilitating school and university reform efforts. They also negotiated active roles for themselves in planning the teacher education process. As they took part in the planning team, cooperating teachers and student teachers made recommendations for field experiences and course curricula. The university faculty members worked to facilitate and support teachers and student teachers' communication and negotiation of their new and emerging roles.

Beginning Partnerships: Focus on Literacy Instruction

Student perspectives from the first two years. Student teacher responses to interview questions and their daily journal entries indicated that the initial co-reform efforts fostered changes in roles and relationships between student teachers and their cooperating teachers. For example, student teachers reported that teachers were seeking their input in planning whole language activities. This apparent role reversal occurred at a time in the field experience when in the past cooperating

teachers had taken more of a modeling role, with the student teachers functioning more as apprentices. One student teacher discussed teachers' fears about adopting the whole language approach:

> When we were in our levels and we had to do units and projects and things, it all revolved around whole language. So we got our practice in then. And, these teachers that have been working out of teacher's editions for ten or 15 years, it is like, you know they're taking away everything they've ever known, and I can see how that can be really scary.

Other student teachers' talked about how their cooperating teachers felt secure with the basal approach that had been used to teach reading in the past and were afraid of trying something unfamiliar such as the whole language approach.

During these initial stages of collaboration when teachers were beginning to implement literacy reform, it appeared that student teachers were not only influenced by their cooperating teachers' beliefs about whole language. It also seemed that student teachers influenced cooperating teachers as the students were eager to try whole language approaches to literacy instruction. In some cases student teachers served as models for teachers who were less familiar with the new approaches and apprehensive about making changes.

Cooperating teachers' perspectives from the first three years. As partnerships were established between university faculty, cooperating teachers, and student teachers, the cooperating teachers identified a number of changes in the roles they were asked to fulfill and the relationships in which they became engaged. Many teachers remarked on the improved communication among all program participants that they felt had resulted from the alternative teacher education program. Relationships with university faculty were described as being more collaborative. Several teachers felt that this approach indicated respect for teachers and a recognition of their contributions in teacher education. One teacher commented:

> For a long time the university people pretty much treated us like "You're offering, you're letting us have a place to put this student, thank you," and that's it. And now, the university very much treats us in a partnership and we feel real valued, our input is important and [I feel] that we're a team working together with the students. So, when somebody values you that way, then you in turn value the next person. It just feels more like a team approach now.

Another teacher commented, "I appreciate the opportunity to be heard and to really feel that my role is a valuable one." The cooperating teachers felt that they were valued for their day to day interactions with students as well as their input and feedback about new techniques and methods to improve teaching.

In addition to changed relationships between university faculty and cooperating teachers new relationships with student teachers were noted by teachers. Their efforts to plan and teach collaboratively with students were considered to be

significantly different from the relationships they had maintained when participating in the program that had preceded the alternative program. The preceding program included assignments designed by university faculty to be carried out in the field by student teachers in classrooms hosted by cooperating teachers. As one cooperating teacher who had graduated from the previous program stated:

> When I went through, I don't remember working real closely with the teacher. Whereas, now I see it's more we're working together incorporating what will work in my room and what will work for her. I think it's more of a working together, whereas when I went through it, it wasn't.

Several of the teachers' comments reflected their recognition of the ways in which the alternative program fostered the development of roles and relationships. For example, one teacher stated, "I believe the university is the reason why I felt she and I were such a team, that she had been prepared that way and that she had been given the freedom to work with me." One of the cooperating teachers who served on the program planning group stated, "Being a liaison, I've gotten a better understanding of how they've studied in the campus classes and how they've gone about working in small groups and all. So I thought that was a plus." This comment reflects the cooperating teacher's awareness and understanding of how the use of cooperative learning that had been studied at the university was later applied by the student teachers in their classrooms.

Teachers spoke of collaboration, working together, and partnerships with university faculty members. They spoke of feeling that they were now being "heard" or listened to. Similarly, faculty spoke of teachers' voices in the planning process that were associated with their new roles. Faculty saw teachers' roles changing and developing as they participated in the planning group and as teachers took more active roles in mentoring students in the schools. One commented on teacher representatives to the planning group:

> I feel that the teachers in the planning group have a real strong commitment to this program, to their roles in helping to plan this program, a level of comfort with working with us as faculty and with them having a strong voice.

Another discussed teachers' roles in the field experience setting:

> I have seen—just one teacher really comes to mind—someone who grew in confidence in her role as a teacher educator. And [she] also grew in confidence as a teacher innovator [believing], that was a valid thing to be doing, not only for herself, but because she was a wonderful role model for a student teacher.

As the partnership expanded teachers moved beyond working with student teachers specifically with the school literacy reform efforts to take on more active roles in the teacher education process as a whole. They worked as part of the planning team with faculty from all subject areas and took on mentoring roles with students, co-planning with them and modeling curriculum innovation in mathematics, science,

and social studies as well as literacy education.

Student perspectives from the third and fourth years. When asked about their experiences working with teacher education professors, students in the third year of the ATE program wrote of closeness, sharing, caring, and helpfulness. One student, for example stated, "I feel I can talk to my professors anytime. I know they are there for me and will help me out wherever I need them." A third student stated, "I am thankful for the closeness of this program with some fellow students and professors—it [has] helped."

Just as teachers suggested that they saw new relationships between student teachers and cooperating teachers, and among university faculty, student teachers reported new roles for themselves in relation to faculty and teachers. When asked how she saw her role in the teacher education program, one student stated succinctly, "I'm part of a team. I sometimes lead, follow, or conform." Another student elaborated:

> We have been made to feel that we have just as much to offer to the program as the professors do—(I hope that's accurate). I realize we complain a lot, but sometimes I felt we were justified. Our role is to learn and grow and at the same time offer suggestions to make the path for the next crew a little smoother. [My role is] to represent students in meetings and try to mediate some kind of understanding for both sides, although this can be difficult with a couple on each side [students and teachers and faculty]. Also I try to present alternative view points.

Not all students saw themselves as team members; half of them responded to this question about roles by discussing their roles as students and learners who were becoming teachers. Approximately eight to 12 students in each cohort took active roles as student representatives each year. One university faculty member discussed student representatives' roles on the planning team:

> I think that the students hit the deck running in terms of that role. They just all wanted to be representatives to the planning group. The three that chose to do it [first quarter] sat down from the first day of our planning meetings feeling that they had a place at the table, that they had a voice, and organizing their ideas and making presentations about what they thought about things.

The student teacher perspectives reflected an appreciation for the sharing and caring that they felt typified their relationships with faculty. They also appreciated the opportunity to express their views and beliefs to university faculty and cooperating teachers and many saw themselves as active members of the program development team.

Faculty perspectives on changes in relationships. Collaborative relationships with colleagues were highlighted by all four faculty members as an important benefit of the ATE program. One commented:

> The best outcome for me is building a relationship with other faculty members that I never would have had.... That's part of what makes this profession rewarding is being able to work not only with other faculty members who are interested in doing

the same thing that you're doing, but in their own areas. It's this cross-fertilization kind of thing that occurs where you get to talk to [a language education faculty member] about whole language and how that interfaces with social studies; where you get to work with [an early childhood faculty member] and [talk about] how she is approaching topics within elementary education that involve multiculturalism and how you can work with her in your own efforts to improve social studies instruction that involves multiculturalism.

A language arts faculty member, when asked to characterize what was different about the ATE program said, "It's just the fact that I actually see the other people who are working with the students and talk to them on some sort of regular basis." She continued in a later interview:

Getting to know the people I'm working with...allows for, I don't know if integration is the right word in all of the courses, but it allows us to eliminate some redundancies, to develop dialogues. It's just a very important part of the program.

This faculty member also saw working with colleagues as a means of deepening her understanding of teacher education students' needs:

I'm thinking about other kinds of things just in the broader sense of what it takes to get teachers prepared to be early childhood teachers. I think I can recognize more all the other expectations, they've got to be a math teacher too, and they've got to be social studies teachers and science teachers and of course I was aware of that, but I didn't intend to evolve that much.

Beyond relationships with colleagues, university faculty also spoke of the value they saw in developing long-term relationships with students over a year's time. One faculty member spoke of this long-term contact facilitating the mentoring relationship he wanted to develop with student teachers. As another faculty member stated it, "I think that the potential for knowing students quite well, and through working with them long term, is a satisfying thing for me." A third faculty member compared her work with regular and alternative program students:

I felt that I played a completely different role with the Alternative Teacher Education program students [during student teaching] because they had worked with me for three prior quarters, and we knew each other. So we had a level of trust, and we had a level of common understanding of language and expectations. Then, when I had to push them or challenge them about something in terms of their teaching and what they were doing, there was that rapport and trust there, and that common understanding so that they could move and change and develop in a way that [was different from what happened with] my students that I didn't have the relationship with...I had really different expectations of my alternative program students because I knew they'd had all this grounding. I knew that they had those field experiences, and I could expect them to build upon that. And they responded. They were very responsible and they were curious themselves as teachers. And they also had that relationship with teachers who were trying to change and challenge themselves.

Relationships with colleagues and students are highlighted in the preceding discussion of faculty perspectives. In earlier sections, university faculty efforts to facilitate cooperating teachers' and student teachers new roles in the field and in teacher education program development were noted. Other changes in university faculty roles and relationships are discussed in the following section where new partnerships are analyzed.

New Partnerships

As the fourth year of the alternative program drew to a close, new partnerships between and among student teachers, cooperating teachers, and university faculty were emerging. In earlier years, teachers in the co-reform schools had conducted action research projects analyzing the results of the curricular reform in literacy education and the integration of educational technology in the curriculum (Allen, Cary, & Delgado, 1995). Student teachers had designed and carried out action research projects also, but they were generally unaware of teachers' action research efforts. In the fourth year, teachers in the co-reform schools were invited to share the process and results of their action research studies in university classes. They also shared the studies in informal presentations at the school sites, and invited student teachers to collaborate and assist with data collection. Student teachers, in turn, collaborated more with teachers in seeking input on the design of their studies, and also shared the process and results of their studies with classroom teachers.

Partnerships among students and former students began to develop when graduates were invited to take on mentoring roles in the alternative program. The graduates participated in quarterly program orientations and served as mentors during field experiences. Graduates who were first year teachers returned to teach university class sessions on preparing for the first year of teaching and building family-school partnerships.

Initially, university faculty had worked closely with schools in professional development programs for improving literacy instruction. As co-reform continued, and school faculties moved beyond institutionalization of new approaches to literacy, university faculty in mathematics, science, social science, and technology education were invited to consult, develop inservice workshops, and teach demonstration lessons in these new curricular areas. Teachers and university faculty collaborated in constructing projects and research incorporating common concerns with multimedia portfolios, teaching problem-solving in mathematics, improving instruction and performance in history and geography and enhancing reform of the science curriculum through integration of technology. Teachers' and student teachers expressed confusion about the application of multicultural education in classrooms which led to their recommendations for demonstration lessons and inservice workshops from university faculty. Common interest in developing student and professional teaching portfolios led to a summer workshop for selected cooperating teachers and student teachers who committed to serving as mentors for

their peers in order to share models and techniques for multimedia portfolios.

The new partnerships emerging in the fourth year of the ATE program involved cooperating teachers, student teachers, and university faculty as co-learners in curriculum development at the schools and in teacher education. In addition, a new role was created for beginning teachers (former student teachers) to develop partnerships with student teachers, university faculty, and cooperating teachers.

Conclusions and Implications

We began by noting the boom in school-university partnerships and the inherent complex web of roles and relationships involved in reforming teaching and teacher education. Our analysis of the perspectives of participants in the ATE suggests that a process of co-reform formed the foundation for development of new roles for student interns, classroom teachers, and university faculty in both school and university settings. The participants made sense of the changing roles and relationships that developed across contexts as they negotiated new curricular directions, planned collaboratively, and took on new mentoring roles. Our findings suggest that when different partners work collaboratively, there is an increased appreciation and respect for each constituency.

During the early phases of the project we strived to develop mutual trust and ownership through agenda setting conversations at weekly planning meetings. These conversations helped blur traditional allegiances to schools and universities and proved a critical departure point in our growing understanding of our roles as mutually enhancing and complementary. We began learning that what had often divided us in the traditionally separate domains of school and university could potentially bind us in our emerging common concerns about teaching and teacher education.

What was unique about the emergent program was the tripartite nature of the changes in roles and relationships among the different participants. The changes developed in interactive, complimentary, and mutually constructed ways. Cochran-Smith (1991) analyzed a partnership in which she discussed changes between cooperating teachers and student teachers. Cornbleth and Ellsworth's (1991) review of several school university partnerships discussed how cooperating teachers took on new roles in teacher education. In line with the work of these authors we have attempted to extend the challenges of reforming teaching and teacher education beyond single, parallel, or dual relationships towards a more integrative conceptualization. Our conceptualization highlights the ways in which changing roles for student teachers are pivotal in mediating the co-reform of teaching and teacher education. When student teachers have a voice in teacher education program development and implementation they carry news of continuities and discontinuities between the school and university settings. As students share stories and experiences and raise questions in each setting they stimulate dialogue and problem solving that fuels a continuous process of co-reform.

Time and opportunity for meeting and planning collaboratively are essential for cooperating teachers and university faculty as they participate in coreform. A formalized structure such as biweekly planning meetings can provide the setting for constructing common language and understanding. Just as important as establishing a structure such as a planning meeting is initiating a process focused on action that engages all participants. In our case the process was one of co-reform in which all participants were engaged in curriculum change in both the school and university settings. Finding time, establishing structures, and developing processes for collaborative work are all challenges for those seeking to create new roles and relationships in teacher education.

Another challenge is to find ways for facilitating the inclusion of all participants in the co-reform process. Given that flux is an inevitable feature of large-scale institutions, there will always be participants joining and leaving school-university partnerships. In our case a principal moved, teachers changed positions and took leaves, student teachers became teachers, and university faculty left the program to pursue other research interests and take part in other program development projects. We need to orient new participants to new roles and assist them in building on existing relationships. Developing common language and understanding and engaging in collaborative action are essential to this process.

Our findings suggest that there are three interrelated future directions for research. The first suggests that we need to examine how changes in roles and relationships broadly are maintained, sustained, and continue to interactively fuel curricular renewal and development. This includes considering not only the durability but the vulnerability of old and new structures and processes over a longer time span. Secondly, our experience suggests that future research on school-university partnerships should more closely examine the roles that student teachers play in mediating co-reform and the ways in which changes in student teachers' roles interact with changes in university faculty's and cooperating teacher's roles. Finally, we argue that there is a need for research to examine specifically how collaborative team planning around a common agenda and expanded mentoring roles for all participants in school and university constituencies serve as a foundation for fostering positive roles and relationships and the continuous renewal and development of teaching and teacher education in school-university partnerships.

Note

1. We use the term "student teachers" throughout this paper to refer to teacher education students during their entire teacher education experience, including but not limited to their quarter of full-time student teaching.

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