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## Empowering Teachers as Leaders: A Hard Sell

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## **Empowering Teachers as Leaders: A Hard Sell**

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Kevin Walsh, Hilary Wilder, Dorothy Feola

William Paterson University  
Wayne, NJ

This presentation will focus on how five master's degree programs at William Paterson University, four in the Department of Educational Leadership and Professional Studies and one in the Department of Special Education and Counseling, prepare teachers to take on leadership roles in schools. By leadership roles we refer to a variety of responsibilities including preparing to become principals, moving into department chair or coordinator positions, running professional development programs for colleagues, becoming team leaders or coaches, and/or just having a voice in the selection of curriculum. Each of our programs takes a developmental approach in this preparation in that we see our courses and field experiences as enabling teachers to take incremental steps toward assuming increased leadership functions as they move through their programs and after they graduate.

We will begin our presentation with an overview of what we mean by empowering teachers to become leaders and what some of the obstacles are in that process. Then each of us will describe a part of our program in which we try to overcome those obstacles and provide experiences for teachers that enable them to see themselves as educational leaders as well as to transition into leadership roles and responsibilities. Finally we will end with a report on some preliminary alumni survey data we have across several programs regarding our success in achieving these goals.

## **Teacher Empowerment: The Need for Developmental Supervision**

**Kevin Walsh, Ed.D.**

### A Case for Differentiation – Children and Adults

It has become common practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for educators to acquire knowledge and develop skills needed to differentiate instruction for children. Teachers work hard and explore varied approaches and strategies to reach out to individual learners at their varied points of readiness, interest and learning preferences (Tomlinson, 1999). This is done with the belief that all students can learn and be successful. The importance of this belief system is reflected in the comments of Levine (2002) when he appealed to “parents, teachers, and policy makers to recognize how many kinds of young minds there are and to realize we need to meet their learning needs and strengthen their strengths and in so doing preserve their hopes for the future” (p.15).

Tomlinson (1999) describes differentiated classrooms as those where the teacher recognizes in children the myriad needs shared by human beings and understands that students satisfy those needs through different paths and following different timetables. She states “In a differentiated classroom, the teacher unconditionally accepts students as they are, and she expects them to become all they can be” (p. 10).

Given the current educational climate characterized by the recognition of the important role human differences play in achieving excellence, it is somewhat surprising and concerning that the common practice of instructional supervision doesn't reflect this same philosophical belief in differentiation with respect to adults. Educational leaders are often reticent to embrace the same principles that reflect the importance adult growth and development have to teacher success and the improvement of instruction. Despite what has become common practice in the

classroom, supervisors of instruction often fail to differentiate their approach in the school house when it comes to the supervision of adults with whom they work?

There are a number of factors that may be affecting this apparent contradiction. Glickman (2007) suggests there are several elements that influence teacher improvement. Among them are: a) individual teacher learning and development, b) adult learning and development, c) the work environment of the school, and d) the characteristics of the teaching profession (p. 79). These factors and others could be organized and viewed from three general perspectives: a) the history of supervision and the related culture of education, b) principles of adult learning, and c) the issue of balance with respect to control or power. These three factors are among the many issues that potentially make teacher empowerment a hard sell.

#### The History of Supervision and Culture

The culture of our schools reflects many of the long standing practices emanating from our early “one room school house.” The cultural legacy of the one room school house is often reflected in current beliefs and the behaviors of teachers and supervisors including: a) isolation, b) psychological dilemma and frustration, c) routine, d) inadequate teacher induction, e) inequity – physical and human resources, f) inverted beginner responsibilities, g) lack of career stages, h) lack of curriculum and instructional decisions, and i) conservatism (Glickman, 2009, pgs. 16-25).

The inherited school culture historically supported a belief system that was hierarchical rather than collegial and was often focused on teacher compliance rather than professional growth. Teacher evaluation was viewed as an event rather than an ongoing process aimed at improving student learning outcomes. Supervisor directed monologues characterize pre and post observation conferences rather than the reflective dialogues that advance professional growth and development.

## Adult Learning and Development

There is ample evidence that adults, like children, neither develop in all areas at the same rate nor to the same level. Glickman (2007) summed it up when he wrote,

Teacher or adult development is not monolithic, linear, or eternal. The research on developmental stages provides lenses for viewing teachers individually and collectively as to their current levels of thinking and commitment. Through such lenses, we can explore possible interventions to assist teachers individually and collectively to move into higher stages of development. (p. 78)

Bradford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) present considerations for learning that can be used as guideposts for ensuring that instructional supervision, professional development, evaluation and assessment of teaching is developmentally appropriate and differentiated for adults.

- Effective supervision responds to the principles of adult learning.
- Effective supervision responds to and fosters teachers' stage development.
- Effective supervision recognizes and supports different phases with teachers' life cycles.
- Effective supervision helps teachers to understand, navigate and learn from life transition events.
- Effective supervision recognizes and accommodates teachers' various roles.
- Effective supervision takes into account the socio-cultural context of the teacher as an adult learner.

## Control

In reference to a long standing view, Glickman states “throughout most of its history supervision has operated from within a conventional paradigm (worldview), attempting to control teachers’ instructional behaviors” (p. 6). This view increasingly has come under scrutiny and in some instances direct attack. For many educational leaders, the closely guarded secret of ineffective and routine supervisory practices of the past has more recently been discussed in open forums and public circles. This is in stark contrast to the previously well guarded comments spoken quietly only behind closed office doors. It can be argued that the merits of the legacy of our cultural heritage have come into question and a new view has been increasingly embraced by educational leaders. This perspective is echoed in the words of Hoy W. (2007) when he wrote “Traditional supervision in which the principal rates the effectiveness of teachers is an outmoded concept, one that was always more ritual than reality” (p. xvi).

Effective teacher supervision must be directed by a belief system that empowers teachers to self-direct their professional development. It changes the role of the supervisor to that of a facilitator rather than an individual who presupposes to have the knowledge and all the answers. In this capacity the supervisor would become much more than an individual who engages in meaningless rituals. They would become something other than those school leaders described by Wiggins (personal communication, July, 2007) as individuals who rent “space in a mall to self employed entrepreneurs!”

Because those who supervise instruction work directly with the most important resource in our schools—teachers—it is important to identify core beliefs that motivate supervisory behaviors. These beliefs will challenge and reshape the conventional purposes and practices of teacher performance appraisal and will offer a new perspective on the supervision of instruction.

The goal of teacher supervision is instructional improvement. This perspective is reinforced by Nolan and Hoover (2008) who argue that “the purpose of supervision is to promote individual teacher growth beyond the teacher’s current level of performance.” (p. 8). Glickman (2007) provides further insight into this position when he makes the case for a developmental and differentiated view of the supervisory process.

Instructional improvement will take place when teachers improve their ability to make decisions about students, content, and pedagogy. The process of improving teacher decision making is directly related to the process of adult learning. Thus, research and theory of adult learning is an important component of the knowledge base for instructional supervision.” (p. 52)

In reference to the importance of collaboration and reflection, noted educator Roland Barth (2009) made the following observation:

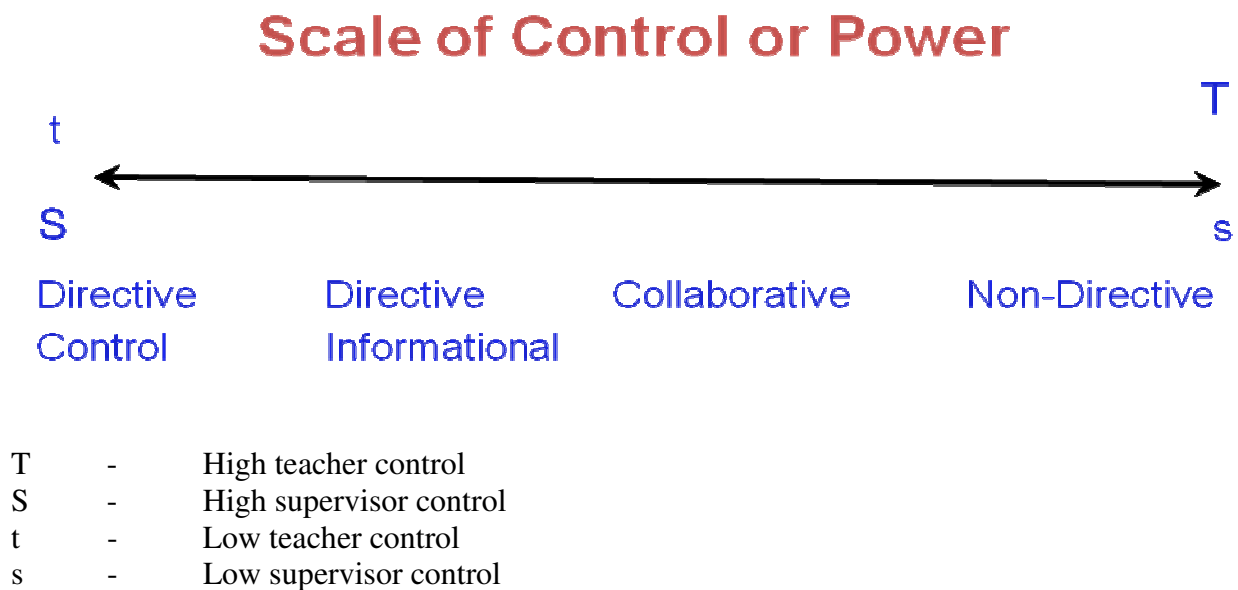
The most powerful form of learning; the most sophisticated form of staff development, comes not from listening to the good words of others, but from sharing what we know with others. Learning comes more from giving than from receiving. By reflecting on what we do, by giving it coherence, and by sharing and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning, we learn.

In his research on reasons why teachers leave the profession, Richard Ingersoll (2003) concluded that one of the most significant reasons both new and experienced educators leave is due to the external control of teachers’ work lives. The importance of addressing this issue cannot be underestimated.

The transfer of control from the supervisor to the teacher can be viewed along a continuum in which the customary behaviors of supervisors are modified and control moved

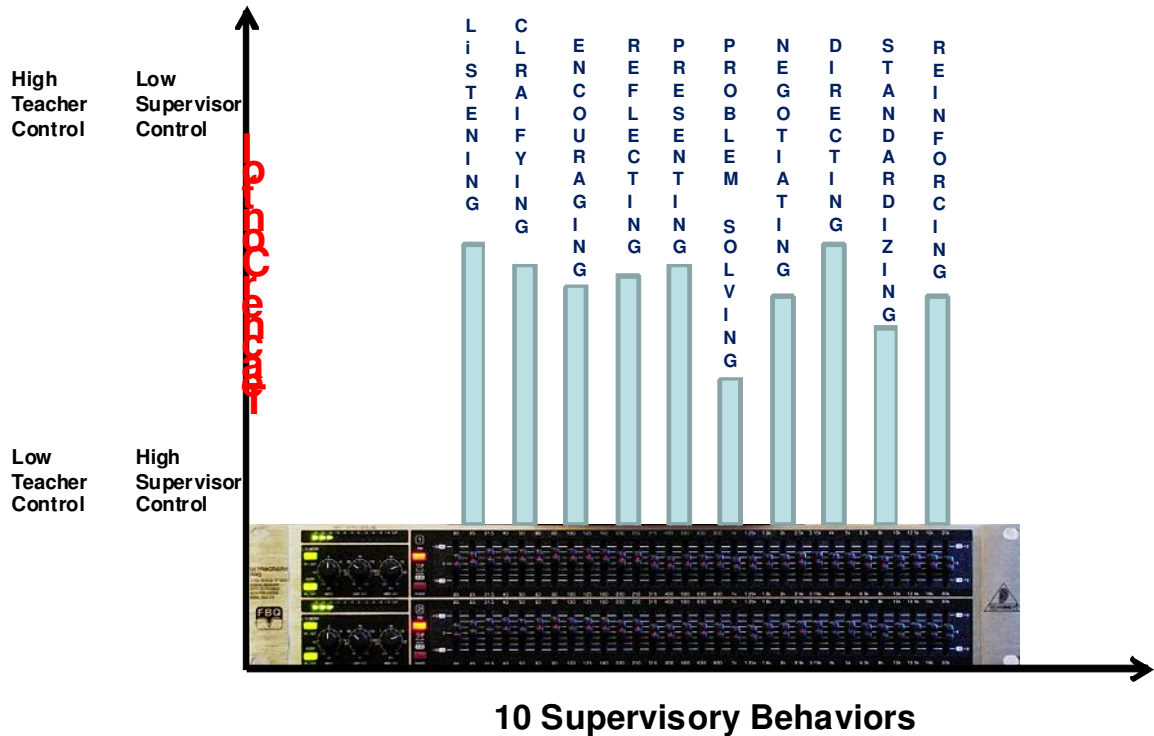


from the supervisor to the teacher. These behaviors can be characterized as: a) listening, b) clarifying, c) encouraging, d) reflecting, e) presenting, f) problem solving, g) negotiating h) directing, i) standardizing and j) reinforcing. Glickman’s model of the developmental supervisor embraces the notion that the outcomes of supervisory conferences could be viewed along a continuum characterized as directive, directive informational, collaborative and non-directive. (Glickman, 2007, chapters 6-7). These outcomes can be viewed from the perspective of a scale of control or power. Figure 1 depicts this continuum.



Accordingly, the role of the supervisor would be viewed metaphorically as an individual who carefully and effectively uses a “behavioral equalizer” through which the critical supervisory behaviors are increased or decreased from the context of control.

**A Behavioral Equalizer  
Metaphor for Supervisory Behaviors  
Creating Just the Right Balance for Professional Growth**



directly related to the developmental level of the teachers involved. The ultimate goal in almost all situations would be to empower the teacher to take control of their own professional development. This would take the form activities such as action research for instructional improvement.

Trying something new moves everyone out of his or her comfort zone. But if what is new ultimately empowers teachers and transforms the teacher observation process resulting in real self improvement and professional development, the effort is well worth it. If we are to make real differences in teacher development and instructional improvement, it's time to base our decisions and behaviors on an understanding of our cultural legacy, the theory of adult learning, and the courage to share power. Ultimately, it is the student who benefits from this collegial approach to teacher supervision. Teacher empowerment may be a hard sell at first, but the dividends will

make it worthwhile and effective. The short term change and the long term transition associated with this view will have lasting and powerful effects for both teachers and students.

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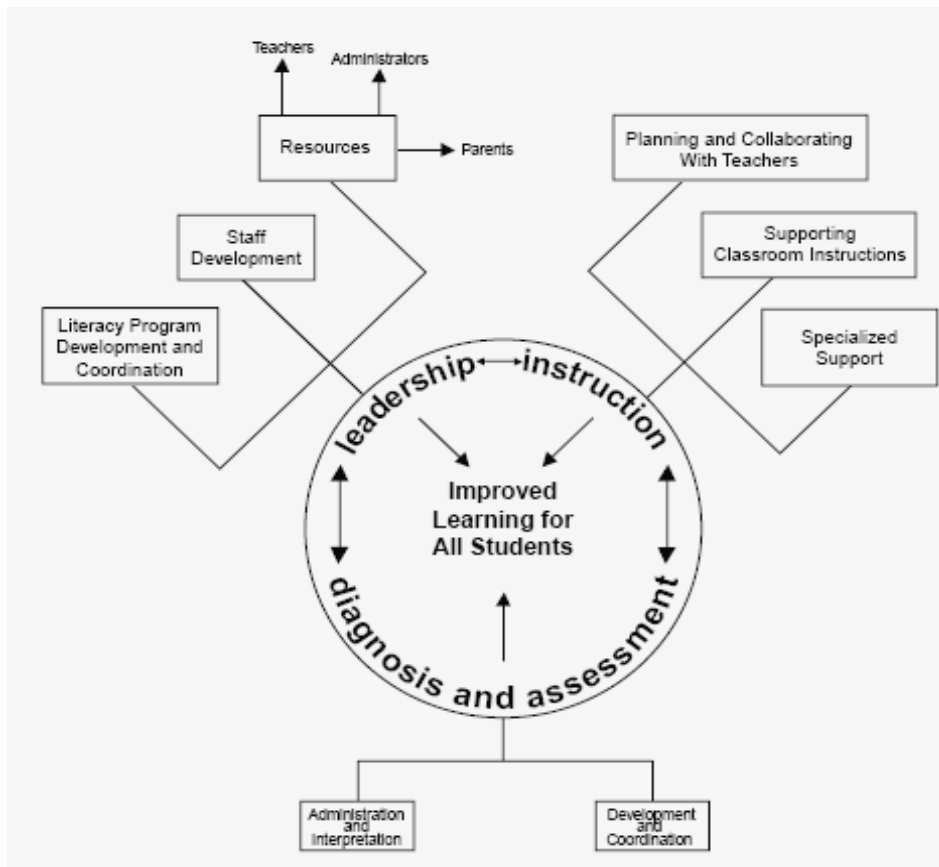
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## Reading Specialist: The Shift to a Leadership Role

Geraldine Mongillo, Ph.D

The Master's of Education in Reading Program prepares candidates to become certified reading specialists whose role is to become leaders at the grade, class, district, and state level. Currently, the role of the reading specialist has undergone change spurred by increased attention to literacy achievement (e.g., NCLB, 2001; Reading First, Report of National Reading Panel, 2000). In response (see Figure 1) to these changes The International Reading Association (IRA) has revised the *Standards for Reading Professionals (2003)* to specifically address the need for leadership stating "the balance of their [reading specialists] activities has shifted away from direct teaching and toward leadership and professional development roles" (IRA, 2004).

Figure 1.



In alignment with these changes preparation must now include the ability to participate in, initiate, implement, and evaluate professional development programs. The new role calls for the reading specialist to step away from classroom teaching to become mentor. Currently there is a high need for reading specialists/coaches which often leads to a swift move from a classroom teacher to a reading specialist/coach position. This expeditious change presents some obstacles for teacher-educators and candidates. First is the design of effective learning experiences that provide the required depth of knowledge and skills where “working with classroom teachers to ensure that there is quality ‘first’ teaching” (Pipes, 2004). Second, and more challenging is the cultivation of the mindset that empowers candidates to become effective leaders. To this end, we have systematically designed a course embedded fieldwork experience (within the required course Supervision and Administration of Reading Programs) that provides an optimal setting in which to experience, first-hand what it means to plan and implement a professional development session. Using a model known as a “developmental supervision approach,” the Reading program requires candidates to research, create, and implement a literacy workshop for peers that are evaluated by both peers and faculty,

**Group Workshop Presentation Assignment:**

*You will work in groups of 2 or 3 to prepare and deliver a professional development workshop. The workshop participants will be recruited through the WPU Institute for Teaching, Learning and Leadership, peers in the M.Ed program and undergraduates education student. Topics for the workshops will be identified by the class. Each workshop presentation will require that you submit and obtain approval on a workshop proposal.*

This student learning outcome has evolved over several years incorporating changes based on peer and faculty feedback. Initially, the assignment required the candidates to create a literacy workshop and present it to peers at the school where they were working. Assessments

showed that the candidates had difficulty gathering volunteers to attend their workshop and frequently candidates presented to only a handful of willing peers usually during a lunch or prep period. This scenario mirrors the situation that often occurs in schools where teachers have been ‘forced’ to attend less than *professional* development workshops. Unfortunately teacher reluctance to attend professional development workshops is a common problem in schools and one in which the reading specialist will need to address in their position as leaders.

To overcome this problem the assignment was revised to provide a wider, more authentic audience by inviting other students in the M.Ed. reading program as well as offering these workshops through the university’s Institute for Teaching, Learning and Leadership, a professional development initiative. Although the workshops were better attended through this venue attendance was still low. During the Spring 2008 semester the audience was expanded to include undergraduates registered for an Emergent Literacy course. The feedback (see Table 1) from their evaluations yielded valuable data showing how much they learned from the hands-on experience. Feedback from the faculty evaluations was equally important. The data was viewed using the WPU advanced programs competency for leadership which is aligned with the IRA Standards.

<p><b><u>Table 1: WPU Competency Leadership:</u></b> Demonstrates competence as practitioners, leaders, mentors, and advocates who function as collaborative agents of change in professional settings.</p>
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<p><u>Feedback from Faculty Evaluators</u></p>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>☉ “All presenters were well prepared and knowledgeable. It was a meaningful experience for the UG students from the emergent literacy class. COE should consider tapping into this wealth of excellent workshops for the continuing education, professional workshops for the continuing educations, professional development workshops. Well done.”</p> </li> </ul> |
|---|

- ⦿ More than competent, extremely well prepared, passionate, knowledgeable, pedagogically sound, relevant, meaningfully, value-added, overall presentation was outstanding!”

### **Feedback from Graduate Peer Evaluations**

- ⦿ It was wonderful to see what other teachers are doing
- ⦿ A great way to share
- ⦿ Important topic

### **Feedback from Undergraduate Evaluations**

- ⦿ Awesome job and very informative
- ⦿ Great activities I would use in my future classroom
- ⦿ Great literacy center...”The story sentence w/cards specifically camping should have female words not just male (son, boy, male).
- ⦿ Very good, very knowledgeable...thanks for the handouts and ideas!
- ⦿ Great workshop...held my interest
- ⦿ I'd like to be in your class

The Standards for Reading Professionals (2004) requires at the minimum that reading specialists/coaches should be excellent presenters and group leaders; be able to model, observe, and provide feedback about instruction. Evaluator feedback suggests that these standards are being met. It is interesting to note that the graduate students in the program offered less meaningful feedback which is probably because they were reluctant to critique their peers in the

program (similar to the initial response when the candidates were only presenting to their peers at school) .

Finally, collaboration led to growth of both the graduate and undergraduate students that actively participated in these workshops. The graduate candidates had the opportunity to present to an authentic audience and benefit from the experience and their feedback. The undergraduate students were exposed to a model of professional development that they will eventually participate in as in-service teachers and also provided hands-on experience and “great activities, ideas, and handouts.”

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## **M.Ed. Learning Technologies Experiences**

**Hilary A. Wilder, Ed.D.**

The goal of the Learning Technologies concentration is to prepare teachers to become technology integration specialists in their schools and/or districts. Although New Jersey does not have an explicit requirement for those in Technology Coordinator or similar positions, standards for this type of job have been developed by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) at both a Technology Facilitator level and a Technology Leadership level<sup>1</sup>. William Paterson's Learning Technology program is based on the ISTE Technology Facilitator standards.

In addition to TF-VIII, which deals specifically with Leadership and Vision, all the standards aim to create facilitators who do not just know how to integrate and use technology in their own teaching, but more importantly, how to model, develop and boost those skills in their colleagues. Our students therefore not only need the technology skills but also the confidence and strategies which will help them move into a leadership role (either formally or informally) in regards to the use of technology in their schools and ensuring that their colleagues are helping all K-12 students meet the required national and state technology literacy standards<sup>2</sup>.

Throughout the Learning Tech program, students complete many assignments that demonstrate their Technology Facilitator competencies and ability to support fellow teachers.

These assignments include:

- Trouble-shooting guides for technologies located in their classrooms or schools

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[http://www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/NETS/ForTechnologyFacilitatorsandLeaders/NCATE\\_Standards.htm](http://www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/NETS/ForTechnologyFacilitatorsandLeaders/NCATE_Standards.htm)

<sup>2</sup> NCLB, Title II-D; NJCCCS 8.1

- Leading peers in online discussions of social, ethical, legal, and human issues surrounding the use of technology in education
- Mentoring peers in the instructional design process to create a web-based learning experience which incorporates student-centered models for technology integration
- Sample curriculum and assessment package that could be used by a district for the NJ Technology Assessment for Proficiency and Integration (NJTAP-IN<sup>3</sup>)
- Web resources pages for specific content areas and grades
- Technology integrated lesson plans aligned to NJ core curriculum standards
- Grant proposal for a project to address one or more benchmarks in the NJ Educational Technology Plan<sup>4</sup>

All of these assignments become part of an electronic portfolio which student must put together at the end of the program. The e-portfolio is posted on a public web server so that students can use it when interviewing for Technology Facilitator openings and also as a way of sharing the resources they've created during the program with colleagues and administration in their districts. In this way, the e-portfolio positions them as leaders in their schools and students often add additional resources and support materials created outside of the program. A rubric is used to score the e-portfolio, with many of the items looking specifically at the usefulness and relevance of the e-portfolio for fellow teachers and at the level of professionalism and leadership that the e-portfolio conveys.

In addition to the assignments, students are also asked to create a chart which links each assignment to one or more ISTE TF performance criteria, and demonstrates their competencies on all of the TF standards. The chart also includes a short reflection for each assignment-standard

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nj.gov/education/techno/techlit/tapin/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nj.gov/education/techno/state\\_plan.htm](http://www.nj.gov/education/techno/state_plan.htm)

link, explaining how/why that assignment best demonstrates their competencies. Once they have completed the chart they are then asked to write a personal statement answering six questions derived from William Paterson's advanced competency standards:

1. How have you increased your professional and content knowledge, (including contemporary trends and current standards) in educational technologies? For example, ways you have used technology to help your students meet the NJCCCS standards and acquire technology literacy skills; examples of technology-infused lesson plans or applications that you have developed.
2. How have you increased your understanding of educational technologies as they exist in evolving and diverse social, political, and economic contexts? For example, ways you've used technology to meet the needs of diverse learners (social class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age and special needs); examples of challenges you have found that may face diverse learners in their access to or use of technology.
3. How have you implemented and assessed educational technology applications within your classroom/school/district or personal situation? For example, ways you have evaluated the effectiveness of a technology that you have used in your teaching.
4. How have you increased your knowledge for conducting research and assessment in applied contexts? For example, skills that you have developed which have let you look comprehensively and critically at educational technology and the way it is being or will be used in your school/district/community.
5. How have you increased your understanding of educational service and professional practice, including ways that you continue to practice and model ethical and professional behaviors as a technology facilitator? For example, ways you were able to use your ISTE Technology Facilitator skills to help your school/district/community. This may include workshops you have

given, technical support you have provided for colleagues, or your contribution to your district's technology plans or grant proposals.

6. How have you grown to become a practitioner/leader/mentor/advocate and/or agent of change for educational technologies in professional and community settings? For example, ways you have helped students in your school/district/community become effective 21st century citizens and ways you have helped your fellow teachers accomplish this goal.

In their responses, we have found that students often talk about specific experiences in which they assumed leadership roles, based on what they had learned in the program, for example:

“I have helped my colleagues with the setup, implementation, and operation of the hardware and software available to use. I am currently a mentor to a new teacher who entered the teaching profession after years in the business world. I have helped educate him and other teachers by providing tutorials and teaching strategies for hardware applications including the Activboard, the LCD projectors, Net TV television sets, Palm Pilots, and on the Internet Video Server my district provides. I was also asked to pilot and assess a new grading software for one school year before the software was later required to be used by every faculty member in the high school. I then assisted in instructing and helping other teachers with the operation of the software. I constantly voice my opinion of the importance of providing educational technology for the classrooms.”

“Although I am not the technology facilitator in our school, I feel that I am able to assist with technology related issues as well as help educate my peers in different types of technology applications. For example, I help administer internet based surveys that are given to evaluate our workshops.”

“I am a leader and mentor to my students as well as to the special education department. I am their go to guy for assistance and problems in regarding computers. With learning the necessary tools and the continued research about computers, I feel competent enough to assist anyone if there are questions.”

“As an educational leader in my current school district and by pursuing my Master’s in Education with a learning technologies concentration, I believe I have become a practitioner, leader, mentor, and advocate for educational technologies. My school district is very progressive in its mindset regarding technology. Within my school, the administration in conjunction with the teachers, have purchased various hardware and software to be implemented into our curriculum. With these acquisitions, a committee was formed to train teachers in the use of these new technologies. I am one of four technology trainers that meet with respective gravel level groups monthly to discuss, plan, and assess present uses of technologies and how to effectively implement aspects in the curriculum. In addition to this school committee, I am a leader and mentor daily for my students by utilizing the technology available and modeling how to use it effectively. Furthermore, I have become an advocate to promote more professional development district wide for technologies presently being used and new acquisitions. Because of my graduate work at William Paterson I have been appointed to several district wide technology committees that have dealt with topics from computerized report cards and attendance to a universal software evaluation form.”

“I was able to use my ISTE Technology facilitator skills to help my district and school by giving professional development classes on multiple topics. I've given classes on using the SmartBoard, creating a grade book in Excel, using Brainpop.com for teaching, and making lesson plans in Word. I have also provided technical support for teachers in areas such as printer

services, troubleshooting for programs in the district such as Successmaker and Ultimate Writing, and helping teachers save files to a flash drive. I have also written two mini grants for the district to receive a classroom set of novels and a grade level group of calculators. In learning about new technologies available I created a presentation for my district for the purchase of Tablet PC's. I have created a website for teachers' reference that can help teachers find websites, lesson plans, and some research.”

“I have grown a lot as a practitioner and leader for educational technologies in my school. I model using technology with my classes in meaningful ways, help those teachers that are less confident in their use of technology, and use technology to build a bridge to home and the community outside of school. I have been an advocate of the use of technology by assisting the technology coordinator of my school with the district's technology plan, and in recommendations for software the school should purchase. The Learning Technologies program at William Paterson has prepared me for these various roles to help my students and colleagues become effective, and technologically literate, 21st century citizens.”

Of course this self-report data needs to be followed up with further evidence that Learning Technology students continue to provide mentoring and leadership in their schools and districts. Over the years, a number of students have contacted me after graduation to let me know that they were promoted to technology coordinators in their schools as a result of the program, however a more substantial follow-up survey is needed. What is clear is that students come into the program thinking that it will provide them with a variety of technology “tricks” that they can use in their classroom (essentially thinking that the program is a series of technology workshops) but leave with an understanding of themselves as technology leaders with a bigger picture of the role of technology in their schools and in education.

## **Empowering Mathematics Teachers to Become Leaders**

**Rochelle Goldberg Kaplan, Ph.D.**

My research comes from a master's degree program in Curriculum and Learning and specifically is about its Teaching Children Mathematics (TCM) concentration. The TCM program at is part of a 33-credit master's degree for teachers who teach mathematics at any grade level from preschool through high school. The program has three main goals:

- 1) to enable teachers to be better informed about mathematics curricular content and methods for teaching mathematics,
- 2) to regard teaching mathematics as an exploration of students' thinking processes and ways of understanding within the content area,
- 3) to "grow" in-house mathematics education leaders who will serve as curriculum developers and reformers, provide professional development to colleagues, and move on toward full or-part time supervisory and coaching roles in mathematics education.

Today I will focus on how we use a classroom research master's thesis project to empower teachers to regard themselves as mathematics education experts who can lead other colleagues forward in increasing their teaching competence.

The master's thesis experience takes two full semesters to complete and is intended to result in a change in self-perception of themselves as teachers who teach as best they can through a curriculum that is handed down to them by committees, administrators, and "the district" to a view of themselves as agents of change and teachers who are in control of the learning of their own students. This is one aspect of empowering teachers as leaders.

The master's thesis in the TCM program takes teachers through a developmental process in which they:

a)First investigate their own beliefs and assumptions about the what, how, and why they teach mathematics as they do. Teachers then link their beliefs to some larger issues and practices in the field of mathematics education in general.

b)This is followed by a decision-making process in which the teachers have to move from a completely open-ended range of potential questions about their classroom practices to a structured, goal-directed inquiry of some particular research questions that can be answered by an intervention and observations of learning among their own P-12 students.

c)Finally, they carry out the proposed project, take data on themselves and their students, and then report and reflect on what this all means for their own and others' educational practices in the future.

Their final project is written up as a full 5-chapter thesis and culminates in the presentation at a research poster session attended by family, university faculty, and other students.

One way we have for evaluating these teachers' demonstrations of readiness for assuming new leadership roles in their schools is through two measures of performance outcomes that are linked to our NCATE Critical Assessments for the program as a whole. The elements of leadership that these assessments address are a)becoming a knowledgeable expert in the research, standards, and practices of the discipline in order to later be able to mentor others and b)becoming an expert at gathering and interpreting evidence from one's own teaching in terms of the impact on P-12 students in order to subsequently mentor and evaluate the pedagogical effectiveness of others.

We believe that by grounding their teaching in established research and theories, that teachers are able to view themselves as self-regulated professionals who are responsible for their own decisions and the learning outcomes of their students. This is the foundation of their leadership



potential. Further by documenting the learning and assessment process of their own students, these teachers come to realize that they are in control of their own classroom environments, can make changes in the way they teach, and ultimately can pass on what they are now expert in to other colleagues with whom they work.

These two leadership qualities are assessed in the following two measures.

**Assessment 1 - Demonstration of Comprehensive Content and Pedagogical Knowledge in Field of Specialization as Evidenced in Chapters I and II of Master’s Thesis**

	Target	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Coverage of research literature	Comprehensively explored with all references appropriately related to topic of study within area of candidate’s specialization; major research studies in the field are reviewed.	Review extensive with most references appropriately related to topic of study within area of candidate’s specialization; references are research-based and comprehensively cover the field.	Literature review sparse with references included that are not appropriately related to topic of study or not clearly research-based
Theoretical background and rationale	Rationale for study articulated; assessable research questions posed; variables defined and consistent with research questions. Demonstrates full knowledge of major theories in field, trends in field, and standards in field of specialization.	Rationale for study attempted; research questions posed; variables defined but not fully consistent with research questions or weakly defined in assessable terms. Demonstrates partial knowledge of major theories in field, trends in field, and standards in field of specialization.	No rationale for study attempted; research questions not posed in answerable formats; variables not defined in assessable terms and/or not consistent with research questions. Demonstrates weak and very incomplete knowledge of major theories in field, trends in field, and standards in field of specialization.

**Assessment 5 – Evidence of Candidate’s Impact on P-12 Learning as Evidenced in Chapters III, IV, and V of the Master’s Thesis**

	Target	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Methods Used	Methods revised and reflects actual data collection; clearly written and enough detail to enable replication- methods include clear plan for assessing P-12 student learning in relation to research questions posed	Methods revised and reflects actual data collection; clearly written and enough detail to enable replication - methods include some plan for assessing P-12 student learning in relation to research questions posed	Methods minimally revised; may not reflect actual data collection; poorly written with not enough detail to enable replication - methods do not include a plan for assessing P-12 student learning; methods do not clearly address research questions posed
Results	Data described and analyzed reflecting answers to posed research questions; detailed reporting of questions raised and observations made during the course of the study; results include clear evidence of impact on P-12 student learning	Data described and analyzed reflecting answers to posed research questions; minimal or no extension of results to include questions raised and observations made during the course of the study; results include some evidence of impact on P-12 student learning	Data poorly described and presented; analysis does not reflect answers to posed research questions; no reporting of questions raised and observations made during the course of the study - results do not include evidence of impact on P-12 student learning
Discussion	Results tied to research questions, literature, and theories that were previously articulated with logical interpretations of evidence found/reported and strong emphasis on specific implications for future practice in the specialization; recommendations tied to specific findings of the study in terms of implications for P-12 student learning and implications for further instruction	Results tied to research questions, literature, and theories that were previously articulated, but little interpretation of actual findings and little emphasis on specific implications for future practice in the specialization; recommendations not well tied to specific findings of study; recommendations tied to general findings of study in terms of implications for P-12 student learning and further instruction	Results not tied to research questions, literature, and relevant theories; no interpretation provided with only restatement of results previously reported; vague generalizations referring to future research and practice in the specialization; recommendations not tied to actual findings of study; recommendations are not tied to specific findings of the study in terms of implications for P-12 student learning and implications for further instruction

### **Data Reported**

Data on these two assessments were collected over two years for 11 TCM program completers.

### **Assessment 1 - Demonstration of Comprehensive Content and Pedagogical Knowledge in Field of Specialization**

<b>Assessment 1 (N= 11)</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>
Coverage of research literature	7	3	1	2.55
Theoretical background and rationale	7	3	1	2.55
Total				2.55

### **Assessment 5: Candidate's Impact on P-12 Learning**

<b>Assessment 5 (N= 11)</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>
Methods Used	10	0	1	2.82
Results	8	3	0	2.73
Discussion	7	3	1	2.54
Total				2.70

As the limited data indicate, most of the teachers reach target or near target levels of competence in all most areas assessed.

On *Assessment 1*, 5 of the 11 teachers scored 3.0; 4 of 11 scored 2.5; one scored 2.0 (still acceptable) Only one teacher scored as unacceptable (1.0). Scores were evenly distributed across the two elements.

On *Assessment 5*, 5 of 11 teachers scored 3.0; 4 of 11 scored 2.67. Only one teacher scored below the acceptable level (1.67). The group mean on all elements was 2.70, between acceptable

and target. The lowest mean score (2.54) was on the third element, projecting the implications of the research findings for professional practices in the future.

We noted that the overall mean for Assessment 5 (2.70) was a little bit higher than the overall mean for Assessment 1 (2.55). This seems reasonable in that planning a research method and carrying it out followed by assessment of student performance is very much like what good teachers usually do. On the other hand, searching the literature and formulating testable hypotheses is a bit out of the realm of teachers' everyday practices. In addition, the relatively lower scores on the discussion and reflection aspect of Assessment 5, may simply be a function of not having sufficient time to see what is going to happen after the research is completed because the teachers have just finished their reports in time for graduation and have not really had sufficient time to reflect on and implement changes in the classroom yet.

There also may be a gap between the teacher's ability to write about what occurred accurately and reflectively and to actually experience success. Some of my weakest writers have expressed extreme levels of satisfaction about what they actually accomplished in the classroom research and many have also indicated informally that because of their research they have been asked to lead workshops or assume curriculum leadership positions in their schools. Others have volunteered for leadership positions such as for coaching positions which they did not feel capable of doing until after they completed their research.

Virtually all teachers who complete this process successfully verbally report that they feel empowered by this experience. When they do their poster presentations, attended by family, faculty, and peers, they are feeling very accomplished and able to do almost anything, having come through such an arduous professional task successfully.

These teachers essentially have come to know themselves and become “known” by peers and principals as movers and shakers who can get results in student achievement. This is really a great thing. The fact that they are able to document what they say will happen and even if results are unexpected, that they are able to reflect upon and understand a teaching-learning experience in which they were completely in charge, seems to provide them with a sense of empowerment and expertise as teachers that they did not have before doing this project.

## **The Changing Role of the Special Education Teacher: Teacher Consultants**

**Christopher Mulrine, Ed.D.**

Current reform is changing the field of special education from one that is driven by process to one that emphasizes student outcomes (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002). New leadership roles are emerging in schools and teacher leadership is quickly becoming recognized as a critical factor in meeting recent federal and state educational mandates, such as No Child Left Behind (McCay et al, 2001).

These changes affect the entire special education system, including service delivery models and teacher roles. The daily contact with students, other teachers, and the instructional programs places special education teachers in a unique position to influence these school reform efforts (Buckner & McDowelle, 2000). These reform efforts will also have an impact on the special education teacher's role in the development and implementation of the Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.)

### **Teacher Leadership**

Teacher leaders demonstrate skills in an effort to adapt to emerging trends in school improvement and accountability and teachers at all levels are assuming greater roles of responsibility and leadership in this process of change (Harris & Muijs, 2003). The literature suggests the work of teacher leaders varies greatly across contexts and can take many forms; including team or organizational leaders, department heads, mentors, staff developers, peer coaches, and evaluators. Teacher leaders also participate in making decisions at the school and district levels, such as making decisions about curriculum, instruction and assessment, the selection of new teachers, and the interpretation of assessment results and educational research (Yarger & Lee, 1994).

In order to achieve these leadership roles teachers need a specific set of dispositions. Marzano (2005) & Collins (2001) discuss the actual dispositions associated with being a teacher leaders as a people who are accountable, accepting, accessible, collaborative, decisive, disciplined, empathetic, ethical, fair, focused, global thinker, honest, intelligent, involved, organized, perceptive, positive, resourceful, risk-taker, and visionary. In addition, teacher leaders' value teaching knowledge and hold complex beliefs related to the implicit theories of teaching ability <http://www.teacherscount.org/teacher/topic/topic-rogers.shtml>

### **Special Education Teacher Leaders**

There is little research on how special education leadership tasks and activities are being distributed among professionals in schools (Billingsly, 2007). Special education teachers in today's schools must show competence at teaching everything (Mastropieri, 2001). They work in various settings, teaching, modifying, and adapting content across all levels. Special education teachers often work in included general education classes and co-teach with, assist, or consult with general education teachers. Zigmond et.al. (1995) state that special educators' typical responsibilities go beyond co-teaching and co-planning, to leadership roles in the weekly problem-solving meetings attended by school faculties and in the school-wide implementation and interpretation of curriculum-based assessments.

Examples in the literature being used to illustrate how special education teachers can contribute to new leadership roles are in the areas of collaboration, roles within Professional Development Schools (PDSs), through leadership roles in mentoring new teachers, and in the implementation of instructional programs (Billingsly, 2007). Through these types of activities, teacher leaders develop a broad perspective for needs within and across schools, encourage reflection about their own practices, and provide variety in their work and recognition of their

expertise (Washburn-Moses, 2005). Teachers in collaborative settings can solve problems together to create a more collaborative culture in which not only general and special educators but all related support personnel work together toward meeting students' needs. Teachers, who work in collaborative environments, where all school staff understands the importance of their role in serving students who have disabilities, will likely have more success serving as leaders (Billingsly, 2007).

### **Related Services Videotaped Interviews/NCATE Critical Assessment**

As described in this narrative the role of the special education teachers is changing. Special educators are now being asked to take leadership roles in many areas associated with student learning; especially their expertise in the implementation and coordination of the Individual Education Plan (I.E.P). Special education teachers need to have an understanding of the diverse roles and responsibilities for the related services providers listed in the I.E.P. These key players include the general education teacher; speech pathologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, nurse, transition specialist and technology consultant.

So how can advanced programs create opportunities for teachers leaders to better understand these roles? One way is to use a cooperative learning technique called the "Jigsaw Approach" that involves interviewing and videotaping these professionals and then having class members present these interviews in class. It is a great way for students to learn about these professions and how they impact students with disabilities. Having this knowledge provides valuable insights into the development and implementation of the I.E.P. In addition, this assignment is also used as a critical assessment for NCATE Standard 1 depicting the knowledge base for an advanced program.



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## **Alumni Survey Data**

All advanced programs at WPUNJ in the College of Education have to meet six areas of competence. One overall competency that we try to foster for all teachers completing Master's in Education degrees at is:

*The demonstration of competence as practitioners, leaders, mentors, and advocates who function as collaborative agents of change in professional settings.*

By this we mean that leadership may be seen as supervision, but it may also be more widely seen as any role taken by teachers in which they act collaboratively with others in the interest of making changes in their professional settings. We see the ability to be able to take such roles as emerging or developing skills that need to be fostered throughout our programs. With this skill or competency developed, teachers then perceive themselves as empowered or able to make significant curricular, pedagogical, and administrative changes in their own school settings or new school settings which they find after graduation.

In order to assess the extent to which our intended outcomes are being met, we have just begun to collect information from graduates who completed an M.Ed. program 2 or more years ago. One part of the survey we used asked alumni to rate the extent to which they felt their programs had prepared them in the 6 areas of our expected outcomes for program graduates. The scale used a 1-3 scoring system with 3 being the highest (Target) score and 1 being the lowest (Unacceptable) score.

For the 27 returns we received (only about a 10% return rate) for all of our master's degree graduates between 2002 and 2006, the following Table indicates that the leadership outcome (tied with the knowledge outcome) was rated as the highest of the six, reaching almost perfect target scores.

<b><u>Ratings of Alumni 2002-2006 on 6 Outcomes for Advanced Programs (n= 27)</u></b>		
<b><u>Outcome</u></b>	<b><u>Total Ratings</u></b>	<b><u>Mean Score</u></b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	73	<b>2.703</b>
<b>Diversity</b>	70	2.592
<b>Technology</b>	61	2.259
<b>Research</b>	68	2.518
<b>Dispositions</b>	72	2.666
<b>Leadership</b>	73	<b>2.703</b>
<b>Overall</b>		2.57

**1= Unacceptable**

**2= Acceptable**

**3= Target**

These data suggest to us that at least in a limited way, we are achieving our goals for promoting teachers as leaders. However, what comes later needs to be followed up to see what happens in practice after graduation. To do this we need to work more on documenting these successes and also refine our measures for assessing teachers' growth in confidence and senses of expertise that will enable them to become leaders. Finally, we need to take a hard look at our own processes as professors for empowering our students with feelings of self-efficacy that enable them to seek out and accept increasing responsibility for leadership in their schools. Clearly, sustaining their changed feelings and attitudes toward assuming leadership roles may be a problem after teachers leave the supportive program environment and return to "the one room school house" with a top-down supervision orientation.

## Discussion

**Dorothy Feola, Ph.D.**

The conference organizers have asked discussants to limit their role this year so that there is much more time for real discussion about the presentations than perhaps has been in the past.

The sessions have been lengthened and discussants have been asked to keep their commentary short and to provide feedback to individual presenters outside of the session.

So in keeping with this new format, please allow me to say that ...

I'd like to thank the presenters for sharing the work they are doing in their programs to empower teachers as leaders and support them in their changing roles.

Each presenter shared a particular aspect of support for leadership within their programs, including action research in mathematics and reflection on self as learner and leader, technology portfolios as a demonstration of new skills, strategies and leadership abilities, literacy professional development design and implementation as a "real world" leadership responsibility, developmental mentoring for teachers who take on more traditional roles as building leaders, and special educators who perhaps by "default" in their changing roles within schools, find themselves in leadership positions.

While each presenter focused on an experience unique to a program, there are commonalities in these approaches that speak to a philosophical orientation to leadership that all of them have demonstrated. I see that as the following:

*A recognition* that the term "leader" in the context of educational settings is changing to reflect new roles for classroom teachers, including special educators, as experts, and mentors for novice teachers and for each other, (in most recent issue of AFT's American Educator), there was a great article on the Peer Assessment Review process that is gaining popularity because it does exactly

what these presenters are talking about and that is to empower teachers to be responsible for their own learning and professional development and that of each other)

*A recognition* that the traditional role of building leader is changing to become more of a facilitator of best practice instruction and collaboration within a building to help empower teachers self-direct their own learning and support each other.

*A recognition* of “adults as learners” and the need to differentiate their instruction and provide the same kind of rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences for them that we do for P-12 students.

*There are challenges to this shift in our thinking about these changing roles for teachers:*

*Our own history* as a profession where teaching was an isolated “act”, you do your thing, I’ll do mine, and a competitive rather than collegial atmosphere prevailed; changing how people think and what they *believe* is really hard work.

Historically, teachers have left their classrooms to become building administrators which may or may not have led to becoming a district-level administrator. Now we see *new roles* emerging for teachers as *coaches* and *mentors* and *facilitators*, and with these new roles come challenges for the professionals taking on these responsibilities and also for the professionals who will benefit from these new roles. We hear it all the time, “Who does she think she is?” “How did he get that cushy job?”

Question posed to presenters:

How are we helping teachers in their new roles deal with these kinds of beliefs and attitudes?

And how are we helping all professionals, regardless of their official roles, to work together collaboratively to improve instruction?

Another question for discussion:

Another challenging area I see is that of recognition and reward systems that exist or do not exist in our current bureaucratic structures; we are all familiar right now with a move toward pay increases for teachers who improve test scores, but that's not what I am talking about and I find it rather scary. I am not talking about a structure that recognizes *expertise and leadership* and not just an accumulation of graduate credits to move up a pay scale. In addition to coach, mentor and facilitator, perhaps there are other leadership roles, yet to be designed, for teachers who will take on a variety of responsibilities in addition to their classroom teaching.