# REDESIGNING AND PROFESSIONALIZING TEACHER EDUCATION BY PILOTING ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL SUPERVISION: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

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## Abstract

The redesign of Indonesian teacher education is moving forward at a rapid pace and Indonesian teacher educators are now in a position to augment the top down reform efforts of the national government with redesign efforts from the ground up. Redesigning the supervision of student teachers by addressing local problems with local solutions is one way to do this. This article shares the redesign efforts of three teams of faculty working at universities in the United States and explains how these efforts might be adapted to the Indonesian context. Since local expertise is essential in redesign efforts, it is important that Indonesian teacher educators work together to create a mechanism for the redesign process. The redesign of Indonesian teacher education is moving forward at a rapid pace as unprecedented changes occur at both the national and regional levels. The size of redesign is massive because of the large population, the size and nature of the geographic area, the diversity of land and people, and the number of private and public schools and universities. There are a number of resources available to undertake such a large scope of work. Teacher educators who earned Ph.D.s at home and abroad bring a range of expertise to the challenge and a network of quality private and public universities exist. These institutions have prepared quality elementary school teachers in the past but under new government mandates now have additional years to prepare teachers with the hope of enhanced preparation and teacher quality.

Despite reforms mandated from the highest levels of government, some familiar challenges confront teacher educators at the local level. Salaries for both teachers and faculty are low and resources are stretched thin because faculty members' teaching and service loads are heavy. The nature of the partnership between universities and schools poses some challenges. Additionally, while there is international support for faculty preparation and other forms of partnership not everything that works in other countries will work in the same way in Indonesia because of the much larger scale of reform.

Given this unique blend of large-scale reform, limited resources, and limitations on the degree to which innovations in other settings can be transferred to Indonesia, Indonesian teacher educators need to consider their role in the redesign process. While governments design reform from the top down, teacher educators need to consider how to design change from the ground up. To undertake this work it will be helpful for Indonesian teacher educators to redesign teacher education by piloting alternatives to traditional supervision. Teacher educators will want to consider the role of quality supervision in the preparation of preservice teachers and will need to consider the importance of structure and culture in the redesign process.

**Key words**: student teacher, preservice teacher, cooperating teacher, university supervisor

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## Introduction: Factors Shaping Quality Supervision

There are at least two sets of factors that will shape the future of supervision in Indonesia. The first set of factors is perspectives on supervision that support the work and the second set of factors is the role of structure and culture in supervision.

## Perspectives on Supervision

A few years ago Wang and Odell (2002) completed a review of the literature related to mentoring, or the support of beginning teachers who had already completed their teacher preparation courses. Although this article is about student teachers and the Wang and Odell findings are related to mentoring, Wang and Odell's work is still helpful in understanding supervision practices. They suggested that different perspectives inform mentoring and two of these, the concept of the situated apprentice and the concept of the critical constructivist, also apply to student teaching.

In examining research on the situated apprentice, Wang and Odell found that the situated apprentice view is based on three components. The first is that as a situated apprentice, beginning teachers can move from book knowledge to skilled practice. The second is that experienced teachers who work with beginning teachers have strong teaching skills or can act as school-level experts with knowledge about how and what to teach. The third is that careful selection and training of experienced teachers who work with beginning teachers can focus on teaching and the context in which it occurs.

This perspective might be especially helpful for understanding the Indonesian context. Teachers have defined sets of teaching practices that they can share with a student teacher, and they have considerable expertise as to the local way of doing things. However, this view suggests that teacher educators will want to give a lot of thought into how experienced teachers are selected to host student teachers and also what training teacher educators could provide to experienced teachers to better help them train student teachers.

Wang and Odell also found that a critical constructivist perspective was important for considering how experienced teachers could work with beginning teachers. The critical constructivist perspective is based on two assumptions about learning. The first assumption is that the purpose of learning is to support people in changing their lives for the better even in challenging political or economic circumstances. The second assumption is that people learn through talking to and working with others.

This view is also helpful for understanding the Indonesian context. It suggests that the purpose for quality supervision is to support the development of powerful teachers who will have a significant impact on the lives of students and who support students in empowering themselves to make changes to their lives and pursue opportunities. The critical

constructivist perspective also reminds teacher educators that conversation and collaboration between experienced teachers and student teachers is essential if student teachers are to learn from those who are more experienced.

## Structure and Culture

In addition to the perspectives offered by Wang and Odell, Fullan (2007) has proposed the framework of structure and culture to understand reform. Fullan writes that "changing working conditions, in common with all successful organizational change, involves two components, structure and culture" (p. 292). In this section the characteristics of structure and culture are described, and the complexity of shaping these characteristics to accomplish change is considered. It should be pointed out that the characteristics discussed below are not the only characteristics relevant to structure and culture, but they are useful in looking across many cases, as can be found in Indonesia, so users should not consider them as a checklist but rather as an introductory tool to support thinking regarding change.

Fullan (2007) used two major sets of conditions for Professional Learning Communities identified by Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1995) as a way of discussing reform efforts. "One is 'structural—in particular, time to meet and talk, physical proximity, interdependent teaching roles, communication structures, and teacher empowerment and school autonomy" (p. 149). In other words, structural conditions include:

- use of time (such as time in the day to collaborate and time in the semester for planning between beginning and experienced teachers)
- arrangement of stakeholders in buildings (for example, the number of beginning teachers and experienced teachers within the school) and between buildings (for example, the distance between a school and the university)
- overlapping work (for example, experienced teachers working for both the university as supervisors and the school as experienced teachers).

In summary, using this helpful list would suggest that Indonesian teacher educators might consider how preservice and experienced teachers work together as a part of the larger reform effort in teacher education, and consider the importance of proximity in how teachers collaborate with the university.

Fullan (2007) goes on to say that the other condition is what Kruse, Louis, and Bryk call 'social and human resources' (or what we refer to as culture) and includes openness to improvement, trust and respect, cognitive and skill base, supportive leadership, and socialization (of current and incoming staff). They claim, as I do, that the structural conditions are easier to address than the cultural ones." (p. 149)

In other words, cultural conditions include:

- interest in and willingness to explore change that might lead to improvement,

- faith in the judgment of one another,
- knowledge about change, supervision, and quality teaching as well as the ability to put this knowledge into action,
- leaders interested in promoting and aiding the alternative supervision approach, and
- opportunities for current and incoming staff to buy into the reforms by learning about them and trying them out.

This list of bullets considering cultural characteristics would suggest that Indonesian teacher educators might consider identifying interested faculty and school personnel, ensuring the stakeholders involved are highly regarded both within the organization and by others outside the organization, activating opportunities to develop knowledge and skills, identifying and recruiting leaders into the initiative and sustaining this leadership over time, and creating renewal opportunities for current and incoming staffers.

Fullan (2007) adds one important caveat to this characterization of structure and culture which users will want to consider. When considering structure and culture, Fullan elaborates on the relationship between the two:

The former [structure] is important but also the easier of the two. Thus, providing more time for teachers to work together during the day, as many jurisdictions are doing, is necessary but not sufficient. If the capacity (culture) is not evident in these situations, the new time will be squandered more times than not…. In sum, new policies that promulgate high standards of practice for all teachers invite the possibility of large-scale reform. A corresponding set of policies is required to create many opportunities, in fact requirements, for people to examine together their day-to-day practice. It is through local problem solving with expanded horizons that new solutions can be identified and implemented. This represents a huge cultural change for schools, and as such it is going to require sophisticated new leadership. (pp. 292–293)

In other words, features such as time, physical arrangements, and the way in which the work of stakeholders overlaps is important and will need to be considered. In addition to this, effort will also need to be invested in building willingness to change, providing opportunities for buy-in, building faith in one another's knowledge and skill, and recruiting leaders who are invested in reform.

**Discussion: The Fundamental Challenge Posed by Indonesian Teacher Education and Possible Ways to Respond**

Indonesian teacher educators interested in reforming the role supervision plays in the preparation of preservice teachers may find it helpful to consider the state of supervision in Indonesia and to consider innovative practices used abroad. Given the special challenges posed by the size of innovation in Indonesian teacher education not everything that is done elsewhere will work in Indonesia, but it may point the way for developing

and researching innovations specific to Indonesia that may work on such a large scale.

### The challenge

Those interested in the challenge for Indonesian teacher educators may find the rationale for the International Conference on Teacher Education helpful. In the rationale announcing the conference which was held at the beginning of April, 2010 at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia the organizers summarized the "fierce debate" amongst Indonesian teacher educators by suggesting that a "central concern" in teacher education was developing "conceptual coherence [that] might include entwining theory and practice… [and the] "structural aspect of coherence [that] might include organizing and aligning… student teacher placement… in an effort to construct an integrated experience." In summary, the goal is …"the improvement of teacher quality [which] could be… continuous starting from student selection… until retirement." (Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, 2010)

Therefore, teacher educators might conclude that determining how to balance the theory in the university classroom with the practice in the school classroom is challenging and difficult but important for reform. This might be considered as the need to re-culture the role of supervision in preparing teachers. Additionally, teacher educators might conclude that re-structuring supervision so that it leads to improved teacher quality will also be a second important goal in reform. In summary, re-culturing and re-structuring supervision may help to professionalize teacher preparation to support the growth of a quality teaching force

### Possible Ways to Respond

In *Redesigning Supervision* Rodgers and Bainer Jenkins (2010) worked with three sets of partners across the United States to examine how those partners had restructured the traditional way in which student teachers are supervised. A key to all three alternative supervision models was the careful articulation of stakeholders so that they could work in proximity to one another and they could build on the creativity within their team. Since the three models relied on ongoing collaboration, faculty at all three institutions paid a lot of attention to how the work of the stakeholders could overlap. For example, faculty at Brigham Young University (BYU) relied on partnership between student teachers and the cooperating teacher, faculty at the University of Alabama (UA) relied on collaboration in a conference at the start of the school year, and faculty at the University of Toledo (UT) relied on collaboration between faculty, teachers, and student teachers. In all of these collaborations, cooperating teachers had significant and increased roles. To support these new roles, some models had to devise new ways of talking with one another while other sites built on existing communication tools.

**Brigham Young University (BYU) model.**

Key features of the BYU student teacher supervision alternative include placing two student teachers who fully shared the placement in one classroom with one cooperating teacher. Interestingly, not all potentially effective cooperating teachers wished to work with two student teachers and there are many ramifications of placing a second student teacher in one placement. These ramification include different roles for the student teachers and cooperating teacher and differences in relationships, time use, curriculum organization, and experiences.

The goals of the BYU model were to reduce the number of low quality student teacher placements and improve the quality of the remaining placements by increasing student teacher and cooperating teacher learning through increasing amounts of quality teacher interaction and reflection on teaching.

**University of Alabama (UA) model.**

Key features of the UA student teacher supervision alternative included special training for a cooperating teacher known as the Clinical Master Teacher (CMT), alternative responsibilities for a University Liason (UL), and a traditional role for the Student Teacher (ST). The selection process for the CMT included the use of a portfolio, a record of successful teaching, a masters degree, previous supervision experience, and recommendations from other educators. The use of a mandatory CMT Workshop, standardized evaluation forms for describing ST performances, and a reappointment procedure and special training for the CMT also worked to assure quality. The goals of the UA alternative are to support the empowerment of teachers by providing support to one another as they assume responsibility for supervision, evaluation, and assessment of STs. An additional goal is to create opportunities for collaboration between faculty and teachers leading to strengthened STs and teacher education programs.

**The University of Toledo (UT) model.**

Key features of the UT student teacher supervision alternative include eliminating University Supervisors who were not on a school staff, creating dyads of 1 Student Teacher and 1 Cooperating Teacher, and pairing two dyads together based on similar content and grade level (paired dyads). The roles and responsibilities of the US was given to the Cooperating Teacher in the other dyad and graduate-level course work was delivered at the school instead of at the university to teachers who were supervising since this was a new role for them. Additionally, an undergraduate Student Teacher seminar was delivered at the school to STs to support the alternative supervision approach. Faculty who taught both courses also collaborated to support quality supervision. The goals of this alternative were to foster supervision by individuals highly knowledgeable about local ways of doing things at the building level, create an opportunity to be 'known by insiders' in a district who

could be supportive in hiring, create an opportunity to take a university course at a school, and to support coherence in how course work is tied to field work. Additional goals included creating new roles for CTs, restructuring school time to provide opportunities to work outside the classroom, restructuring school time to provide opportunities to work with other teachers to discuss classroom teaching, restructuring school time to provide opportunities to work with other teachers to discuss college teaching, providing professional growth for experienced teachers regarding support of new teachers, and encouraging professional growth regarding how to support other teaachers.

Although these three alternatives have important goals, caution must be taken to avoid a situation where "tremendous efforts…of small numbers of committed educators…[which can produce] nationwide reform programs…[have only] pockets of success…. [The risk of] stalled effects [featuring]:

1. burnt-out teachers frustrated by the difficulty of, or lack of, progress;
2. problems in staying focused on, or clarifying, the vision in practice;
3. small groups of innovators being isolated from other educators in the school or school district – thus the failure to achieve whole school or whole district reform [or];
4. inability to disseminate the innovation on a wider scale without losing quality control" (Fullan et. al., 1998, p. 57) are a considerable risk.

Despite this emphasis on new roles for the cooperating teacher, all of the models relied on cooperating teachers working closely together with the goal of customizing the way in which cooperating teachers could work with the student teachers they supervised. A key component of these structures is careful collaboration amongst stakeholders. The BYU model relies on careful collaboration within the classroom between two student teachers and a classroom teacher; the UA model relies on the clinical master teacher working carefully with peers; and the UT model relies on cooperating teachers, student teachers, and faculty working carefully with one another. These socialization processes are significant for the redesign process.

## Current Supervision Practices Reported by Indonesian Teacher Educators

Although the alternatives pioneered at universities in the United States may be of interest to Indonesian teacher educators, care must be taken in the adoption of alternatives because of the challenges posed by the large scale nature of Indonesian reforms. In an effort to define some of the uniquely Indonesian challenges that confront teacher educators, the International Conference on Teacher Education held a group discussion where participants were free to pose problems and brainstorm solutions for further consideration (Furqon and Kadarohman, 2010).

The challenges identified by Indonesian teacher educators can be

divided into structural challenges to quality placement (See Appendix 1) and cultural challenges to quality placement (See Appendix 2). A significant structural challenge for placement felt by university administrators is the need to have faculty teach a large number of courses. Since one faculty member can teach a large number of students in a class at one time, but can only serve a very limited number of student teachers placed in the field, it is not a surprise that administrators would make teaching on campus classes a priority. At the same time, school administrators are grateful to have student teachers in their building since they offer additional support so they do not feel they can ask the university to require adequate supervision of the student teacher.

At the Furqon and Kadarohman (2010) session a number of Indonesian teacher educators said that cooperating teachers often are so lowly paid that they leave student teachers in the classroom, leave the school, and go to other jobs to make money. Obviously in these cases the cooperating teacher cannot offer support to the student teacher, and the professional growth that might occur between experienced and beginning teacher cannot occur. Another complicating factor is the problem that many elementary school cooperating teachers have less teacher training than the student teachers they supervise. It may be the case that in these scenarios the cooperating teacher feels that the student teacher is more than qualified and therefore feels comfortable in leaving the classroom

and school since they believe their class is in competent hands.

At the same time, Indonesian teacher educators attending the Furqon and Kadarohman (2010) session reported challenges for the University Supervisor (US). Many faculty reported that some University Supervisors do not travel to the field site either because they are temporarily delayed by on-campus duties, overwhelmed by on-campus duties and decide to not visit the school, or begin travel to the school but are lengthily delayed by traffic, especially in rural or urban areas.

In addition to the structural challenges, cultural challenges also complicate quality placement. Both administrators and faculty value teaching and inquiry into different facets of teacher education but not always into the scholarship of teaching. Therefore, since supervision is seem as something in addition to teaching it is little valued by university administrators and some faculty. For those teacher educators who do value supervision, they must of necessity place it at the bottom of a long list of priorities including teaching classes, writing grants, mentoring Ph.D. students, administering programs, and writing and publishing.

**Recommendations: Borrowing from Alternative Supervision Strategies to Support Indonesian Solutions as a Part of Needed Reforms**

Because of the large scale of reform in Indonesia some of the alternatives outlined above which are used in the United States may

not be suitable for the Indonesian setting. Therefore Indonesian Teacher Educators will need to use their expertise to determine how innovations may be altered or developed for their settings. It is essential that Indonesian teacher educators lead the redesign effort, and some suggestions for beginning the redesign phase are included in the last chapter of the Rodgers and Bainer Jenkins (2010) book. While there are limitations as to what can be transferred, here are some starting points based on the alternative supervision models that might serve as starting points for discussion.

**Re-structuring supervision from the ground up**

While the national government has considerable power to re-structure teacher preparation at the national level from the top down by lengthening elementary school teacher preparation, teacher preparation institutions have the power to re-structure preparation from the ground up. A starting point will be to impress on administrators that it is essential student teachers be supervised by a university representative. A way to do this might be to identify for administrators systems that could be implemented which will ensure some degree of university supervision even in the face of the challenges that Indonesian teacher educators face. These systems might include:

- Required documentation including observation of the student teacher by a university representative.
- Use of doctoral students or masters students as university supervisors.

- Selection of topics about supervision for doctoral dissertations and masters theses so that doctoral and masters students can use their supervision tasks to collect data for their studies.
- Use of video, cell telephone, texting and Facebook to support supervision by distance in rural or urban areas where travel times are prohibitive.

The University of Alabama (UA) redesign effort certainly made an extensive use of documentation and this seemed to help professionalize their innovation. Both the UA and The University of Toledo (UT) models shifted part or all of the responsibility of the US to a school-based person rather than a university –based person, but that school-based person still represented the university and was responsible for acting on behalf of the university. Additionally, both the UA and UT models used masters or doctoral students as University Supervisors (USs). In the UA model doctoral students worked with school partners and in the UT model the school-based USs both taught in the school and were enrolled at the university. Lastly, none of the alternatives described here used technological solutions to supervision but technology in the Indonesian setting is so widely used that clearly consideration of how it might be used to support supervision is essential.

A second set of possibilities for future study include the careful recruitment and selection of schools and classrooms where teachers model high quality teaching. These possibilities might include:

- Placing more than one Student Teacher (ST) in a room where they can be supervised by a talented Cooperating Teacher (CT) who models teaching techniques discussed in the university classroom.
- Providing special course work for CTs with the goal of high quality supervision.
- Offering such course work at area schools so that faculty can meet many obligations for the university on one school visit.
- Seeking input from STs to make sure that CTs are meeting their responsibilities by being present in the classroom and providing useful feedback to STs.
- Setting expectations for CTs at the beginning of the year.

The BYU model certainly relied on placing two student teachers with one carefully selected cooperating teacher and this meant the university needed to find only half as many classrooms for STs. Given that it is very challenging for University Supervisors (USs) to meet their responsibilities in supervising STs in the field, placing two STs in the same classroom could cut travel time in half since one US could observe two STs at the same time. The UA and UT models also delivered university courses at the school rather than at the university which were then taken by both STs and CTs. Indeed, Wang and Odell found that delivering courses to CTs helped them guide the Student Teacher more effectively. Additionally, offering courses at schools will help USs with travel time since instead of returning to the university to teach a class, they can observe STs at school and then teach a course there after school. All of the alternative models also sought feedback from the Student Teacher which was provided anonymously and this might be helpful in the Indonesian context.

**Re-culturing supervision from the ground up**

Although re-structuring supervision is important re-culturing supervision is also essential. It will be important to work with many stakeholders and have a lot of input since re-culturing is a process and not a product. Some starting points include:

- Supporting the development of scholarship in supervision so that it is seen as a scholarly line of inquiry by administrators and faculty.
- Identifying faculty and graduate students who have and want to continue school-based inquiry.
- Devising and teaching graduate level course work on supervision.
- Devising and implementing field work for graduate level students who take graduate courses in supervision.
- Identifying faculty around the world whose scholarship is in supervision and seeking them out as mentors, or emulating their work and career path.

Supporting the development of scholarship in supervision will occur only by piloting initiatives, posing research questions, gathering and analyzing data, and publishing

the results. In this way scholars will recognize and support teacher educators in devising systems that support quality supervision. Faculty who have worked in and know schools will have this responsibility, so it will be important to identify both faculty and graduate students interested in and qualified to undertake this work. Since heavy teaching loads conflict with supervision responsibilities, it might be helpful for faculty to devise and teach courses in supervision to masters and doctoral students at the university. As a part of such a graduate level course the masters and doctoral students might then have to practice what they learned by supervising STs in the field. In other words, university faculty could create a graduate level field experience about the undergraduate level field experience. By redesigning in this way, it may be that teaching university courses and supervising student teachers could compliment each other instead of competing with each other. As Cairns (2010) illustrates, it is possible to have a highly productive scholarly career based in part on inquiry into supervision and it is important that in redesigning supervision Indonesian teacher educators think about how to do this. Seeking out faculty who have succeeded and building on their work may be an important first step.

## Conclusion: Tailoring Resources to Fit Local Needs

When considering the transfer of alternatives attempted in one country to another there are of course many limitations that Indonesian teacher

educators will need to consider. The primary concern in a country like Indonesia is the large scale of innovation. Redesign efforts will need to be designed in a way so that they can work at considerable scale, work better, and all without significant cost (Wilson and Daviss, 1994). That said, it should be understood that in such a big country there does not have to be one national standard when it comes to supervision but rather local solutions to local problems. In devising local solutions it will be important to undertake local conceptual work since there are so many limitations on the work of experts from abroad who work in a very different context.

To address local issues it will be important to create a design process so that supervision can be studied from both a research and a policy perspective. To begin such a design process it may be useful to make small tests of small changes to rapidly test innovation (Morris and Hiebert, 2009). To share findings and decide on the next iteration of work, identifying teacher educators willing to serve as contacts who can organize within and across institutions, and using national events such as the teacher educators' conference, will be essential. The use of standing committees with representatives at different levels, including rectors, department chairs, faculty members, doctoral students, and school teachers who are cooperating teachers might provide useful input into the design process. Consultation of technical experts from within Indonesia and abroad can help

infuse ideas that support and move the agenda forward, so long as they do not derail the redesign process.

By linking supervision to problems of practice and the re-design of teacher preparation at scale, there will be the ability to innovate using public / private partnerships. This will provide an opportunity to consider the role of public universities and the role of private universities as sites that can explore, grow, and cultivate the redesign process over time. Hopefully each contributor will be able to leverage the work of the other with the goal of re-designing supervision so that it better supports the growth of preservice teachers and, in turn, supports the growth of student learning. This effort will be challenging, but properly done should also bring great rewards.

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Appendix 1: Structural challenges to quality placement
- University administrators need large numbers of courses taught

- School administrators need students taught and more Student Teachers can help
- Cooperating Teachers leave student teachers in the classroom and go to other jobs
- University Supervisors do not visit Student Teachers
- Experienced elementary school Cooperating Teachers have less teacher training than beginning elementary school Student Teachers
- Student Teachers act as a substitute teacher rather than as a beginner learning to teach because there is no Cooperating Teacher present

Appendix 2: Cultural challenges to quality placement
- Administrators need courses taught and supervision is an 'extra'
- Academics do not value the scholarship of student teaching
- Some academics have Ph.D.s in an academic discipline rather than in education and are therefore ill-prepared to collaborate or work in partnership in or with schools
- Teacher educators have heavy teaching loads conflicting with supervision responsibilities
- Doctoral students have limited or no interest in student teaching
- Teacher educators place super-vision at the bottom of a long list of priorities