

The Field Experience Journal

Volume 3 Spring 2009

Editor: Kim L. Creasy, Ph.D.

Reviewers: Dr. Raymond W. Francis	Central Michigan University
Ms. Margaret Kernen	University of Akron
Dr. Jim LaBuda	Nevada State College
Dr. K. Sue Peterson	Emporia State University
Mr. Guy Pomahac	University of Lethbridge
Dr. Anne S. Varian	University of Akron
Dr. Mary T. Vetere	Slippery Rock University
Dr. Michael J. Vetere	Edinboro University
Dr. Debra Warwick	Ferris State University

Cover:

"If you plan for a year, plant a seed. If for ten years, plant a tree. If for a hundred years, teach the people. When you sow a seed once, you will reap a single harvest. When you teach the people, you will reap a hundred harvests."

Kuan Chung

Submission Guidelines:

1. Manuscripts should be no more than 15 pages of narrative (excluding references, tables, and appendices), using the latest APA style, and double-spaced on one side of 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper with justified margins.
2. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically via email attachment to kim.creasy@sru.edu containing name, position, place of employment, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, and a 2-3 sentence description of background and experience for each author. The title of the article should also appear on page 1 of the manuscript, but do not include the author(s) name(s).
3. Pages should be numbered consecutively including the bibliography, but the author's name should not appear on the manuscript itself.
4. Charts or illustrative material will be accepted if space permits. Such materials must be camera-ready. Photographs will usually not be used unless they are black and white and of high quality.
5. Authors are expected to take full responsibility for the accuracy of the content in their articles, including references, quotations, tables, and figures. The editor reserves the right to edit articles accepted for publication.
6. Authors of manuscripts accepted for publication are expected to make a presentation about their article at the next National Student Teaching Supervision Conference.
7. There is no remuneration for articles accepted for publication, but each author will be mailed a complimentary copy of the journal. There is no fee for the review of the manuscript.

Table of Contents

- iv From the Editor
Kim L. Creasy
- 1 Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers through Meaningful Field Experiences:
A College Directed Community Literacy Center and School-Based
Coursework
Jim LaBuda and Clairin DeMartini
- 17 Honing Their Skills: Tier 2 Workshops for University Supervisors and
Cooperating Teachers
Sally Winterton and Tina Selvaggi
- 23 The New 3 R's: Replacement, Remediation, and Removal
Ellen Ashburn, Wendy Weiner, and Sharon Porterfield
- 38 Evaluating the Empirical Electronically: Trends Discovered from Head
Start Assessment Data
Patricia S. Scheffler
- 45 Educational Law: What Teacher Candidates and Supervisors Need to
Know
Michael J. Vetere, Jr. and Mary T. Vetere

From the Editor

Dear Readers of *The Field Experience Journal*:

This issue begins with *Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers through Meaningful Field Experiences: A College Directed Community Literacy Center and School-Based Coursework* submitted by Jim LaBuda and Clairin DeMartini. This submission provides an account of a field-based model with a two-fold purpose. First, pre-service teachers served as tutors at an urban middle school under the mentoring of in-service teachers and college faculty. Second, pre-service teachers enrolled in college literacy courses on the middle school campus and worked directly with their college/university instructor to apply literacy strategies from their coursework.

Sally Winterton and Tina Selvaggi provide *Honing Their Skills: Tier 2 Workshops for University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers*. This article shares the format and information used to provide a variety of observation skills for the participants seeking to capture teacher candidates' instruction in meaningful ways.

The New 3 R's: Replacement, Remediation, and Removal by Ellen Ashburn, Wendy Weiner, and Sharon Porterfield addresses the collaborative effort necessary once a determination is made for re-placement, remediation, or removal of a teacher candidate in a field placement.

Patricia Scheffler analyzes data gathered from Head Start Progress and Outcomes Reports to determine if there were any statistical significant interactions between student demographics, such as gender, ethnic background, primary language, and grade level in *Evaluating the Empirical Electronically: Trends Discovered from Head Start Assessment Data*.

In the submission titled *Educational Law: What Teacher Candidates and Supervisors Need to Know*, Michael and Mary Vetere provide an overview of essential topics for teacher candidates.

Sincere thanks to our webmaster Junko Yamamoto. Her time and talents make this journal available online. Your work is appreciated.

On behalf of the reviewers, webmaster, and this editor, our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. C. Jay Hertzog, Dean of the College of Education at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania for his continuing support of this endeavor.

Finally, my thanks to those who have contributed their manuscripts for our consideration.

Kim L. Creasy

Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers through Meaningful Field Experiences:
A College Directed Community Literacy Center and School-Based Coursework

Jim LaBuda and Clairin DeMartini

Nevada State College

Abstract

Schools of Education aim to provide meaningful field experiences for their pre-service teachers. Nevada State College's School of Education collaborated with an urban middle school to form a partnership under the auspice of a federal grant funding literacy training for in-service and pre-service teachers. One objective was to design and develop an innovative field experience model for pre-service teachers.

The project's field experience model was two-fold. First, pre-service teachers served as tutors in a college-based literacy center at an urban middle school under the mentoring of in-service teachers and college faculty. Second, pre-service teachers were able to enroll in college literacy courses on the middle school campus and work directly with their college/university instructor to apply the literacy strategies from their coursework within the middle school classroom. These two experiences directly linked content knowledge and instructional practices.

Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers with a College Directed Community Literacy Center

Many school districts see mentoring as an important retention strategy. Mentoring by experienced teachers encourages reliability for workforce capacity (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999). Reliable mentoring programs reduce attrition of beginning teachers and better prepare them for the teaching profession.

One of the most effective ways to improve the quality of teaching is to facilitate an increase in teachers' learning. Little (1990) attests to a mentoring approach that benefits transitioning beginning teachers into the classroom, to a specific school and to communities where they gain employment. Therefore, intrinsic merit lies between a partnership between an institute in higher education and K-12 school.

Reading clinics have traditionally provided practicum experience for college/university students in graduate reading programs. Historically, such clinics are located on a university/college campus; the master's level student applies the theoretical knowledge and teaching practices to K-12 clients. One of the deficits of such a model is that a group lacking personal or public transportation remains unserved. The clinic's main purpose is to serve the students in higher education over the client's needs.

Traditional teacher preparation programs in Nevada have focused on university coursework followed by extended practicum experiences. The content knowledge was obtained in the courses but not directly linked to the application of the knowledge. College/university students applied their knowledge within the practicum experiences but were not able to receive immediate feedback from their instructors about pedagogy and methods. Hence, there was no direct link between coursework and practicum experiences.

Background

At Nevada State College, the state's newest institution, the teacher preparation program requires a series of undergraduate courses and accompanying field experience hours. Each education course requires 5-20 hours of classroom observations. Pre-service teachers complete the observation hours, at an assigned school site, over the course of the semester. An arranged schedule allows pre-service teachers to gain content knowledge in their coursework and directly apply the knowledge within the classroom.

During the classroom observations, the pre-service teachers conduct interviews with a classroom teacher, observe lessons, work with small groups, and present lessons. Each observation is framed within the context of four domains: 1) Planning and Preparation, 2) Classroom Environment, 3) Instruction, and 4) Professional Responsibilities (Danielson, 1996). Danielson's framework structures an approach directly linked to course content and field experiences.

In 2007, Nevada State College was awarded a Nevada Collaborative Teaching Improvement (NeCoTIP) grant. Funding was allocated by the U.S. Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and replaces the program formerly known as the Dwight D. Eisenhower Program for Professional Development. The award provided NSC pre-service teachers with the opportunity to attend method courses in literacy at the middle school campus and fulfill their observation requirement at the same school.

Organization of Study

For the purpose of this study, we describe the field experience as both the pre-service teachers' participation at an on-site middle school literacy center, tutoring

students in grades 6-8, and classroom experiences linked directly to their undergraduate coursework. The new arrangement to the required field experience facilitated learning in a practical approach. The setting afforded pre-service teachers a variety of opportunities to exercise their content knowledge under the tutelage of both NSC and middle school faculty.

First, the NeCoTIP grant objectives predicated a need for a reading center on the campus of a middle school. The model maintained a college-based reading clinic 23 miles off campus at an urban school site. The center furnished a learning environment for both middle school students and pre-service teachers. The project director, a school of education faculty member, coordinated the program and facilitated the mentoring between the middle school faculty and the school of education's pre-service teachers. As a model for performance assessment, this grant project created tangible outcomes directly related to the needs of the students (Marzano, Pickering, & Tighe, 1993).

The literacy center is a concrete example of a comprehensive and collaborative approach to address pedagogical knowledge of reading and writing instruction. "A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program will also initiate or augment collaborations with out-of-school organizations and the local community to provide more broad-based interactions and greater support for students" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006, p.22). Over a sixteen week period, pre-service teachers, who are undergraduate students enrolled in a teacher preparation program, collaborated with in-service licensed teachers. The two groups met weekly, at the school site, to work toward adolescent literacy development. Darling-Hammond (2000) recommends collaboration between school districts and institutes of higher education, "to develop preparation programs that include

yearlong clinical training in professional development schools, pathways into teaching for paraprofessionals and mid-career changers in addition to college students, and supported internships for beginning teachers” (p.29). This model further develops a relationship between a local education agency (LEA) and institute of higher education (IHE) working towards school-community collaboration to improve quality of life for students and families. School buildings ought to be the sites for providing services to students and families (Shedlin, 1990).

The collaborative project, between a middle school and school of education, provided a much needed service within the community at no cost to the children and their families. This was an important factor in the success of the center because 100% of the students at the urban middle qualified for free and reduced lunch. Also, 492 of the 1117 students enrolled at the school were limited English proficient with 95% of student population were reported as second language learners to English. The discrepancy in English language proficiency highlighted the need for additional literacy instruction.

The following services were provided:

- free tutoring services to striving readers in a comfortable and caring environment;
- diagnostic testing to determine appropriate instruction and to accurately measure progress;
- structured opportunities to apply various reading strategies;
- effective instruction based upon the most current research;
- one-on-one interactions between students and pre-service teachers; and

- practical experience for pre-service teachers in teaching small group and individual instruction in literacy.

The principal of the middle school designated a room that would be used for the community literacy center, as well as the classroom for NSC courses. The center provided services during a 12 month period including two semester sessions and a summer session. Middle school students enrolled for services at the literacy center. They registered through an after-school program as an academic option. The hours of operation were 2:30 p.m. through 3:30 p.m., during the school year, two days a week. Students were able to receive one-on-one assistance from the NSC pre-service teachers. Average attendance consisted between 10 and 15 middle school students.

The NSC pre-service teachers were required to meet with their mentor at 1:00 p.m., each day they were scheduled to tutor. They reviewed literacy strategies and lesson plans. From 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. students arrived to receive individualized instruction.

The sixty minute session included both assessment and instruction. *Reading Next* proposed the application of strategic tutoring, a model “which provides students with intense individualized reading, writing, and content instruction as needed” (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, p. 4). Pre-service teachers prepared lesson plans based on students’ interests and content area literacy. The lesson sequence followed a Read To, Read With, Write With, Word Study, and Talk With to present a developmental approach to literacy instruction (Bear, Helman, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2007). To address the complexity of reading, research shows that both spelling and reading follow a developmental model (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2007; Bear &

Templeton, 1998). After the tutoring session, pre-service teachers reconvened with their mentors for a debriefing and reflection session.

A summer session was offered in the morning. The literacy center provided services 9:00 a.m. - noon, two days a week. Two in-service teachers were hired to provide mentoring services to the NSC pre-service teachers. One NSC student, with a higher class standing, was also hired to assist in mentoring. As with the school year model, NSC pre-service teachers met with their mentors one hour prior to the start of the tutoring session. Again, time was set aside for debriefing and reflection followed each tutoring session.

Second, college prepared education courses were offered on the middle school campus. The opportunity united field experience and methods of literacy at one location. Pre-service teachers engaged in Socratic formed seminars held in the school site literacy center. Following the weekly student-led discussions, pre-service teachers were able to study literacy strategies in the classroom and then immediately visit classrooms within the middle school to link their in-class instruction to practice. *Reading Next* (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004) lists text-based collaborative learning as one of the 15 Elements of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs (p. 4). Pre-service teachers prepared lesson plans to model Question the Author, Literature Circles and Reciprocal Teaching (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton & Kukan, 1997; Daniels, 2002; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). One assignment required the pre-service teachers to prepare a lesson plan based on a book talk. An example of a lesson integrated facts from The Great Depression, from a 7th grade U.S. History class, along with the novel *A Long Way from Chicago* by Richard Peck.

Practical experiences for the undergraduate students are imperative to link theory with reflection (Evensen & Mosenthal, 1999). Practicing teachers work as mentors and receive on-going professional development in key areas of literacy while pre-service teachers construct their own knowledge of literacy-based instruction (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). The purpose is to provide relevant and practical instruction to prepare and recruit teachers to meet high quality teacher standards.

Through the opportunities provided by the partnership's objectives, the pre-service teachers were able to work directly with an at-risk population, have immediate application of course knowledge within a school setting, receive regular mentorship from in-service teachers and gain valuable literacy instruction experiences. The experiences gained in the at-risk school may promote partiality in pre-service teachers to work with an at-risk population as they enter the teaching profession.

During the implementation of the grant, four NSC courses were offered on the middle school campus. These included: EDRL 427 Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum, CBL 400 Community Based Learning, EDRL 461 Diagnostic Assessment and Instruction in Literacy and CI 361 Language Arts and Literature Gr. 4-8. NSC pre-service teachers attended the classes for approximately 50 minutes, then observed and participated in the middle school classrooms. Following this, the pre-service teachers returned to the classroom. Class meeting prepared the NSC students to learn course content, immediately apply the newly acquired skills, and then share their experiences within the classroom setting. The NSC faculty member was also able to observe the students as they participated in the middle school classrooms. Students received immediate feedback on the application of the strategies. Various middle school in-service

teachers participated in the program. One such example was the history and geography teachers worked closely with the NSC pre-service teachers who were enrolled in EDRL 427 Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum.

This model of instruction is being utilized by NSC in partnership with other schools. The opportunity for students to work within a classroom while receiving direct support from their instructor has yielded many benefits.

Data Analysis

An electronic survey assessing the outcomes of the partnership was sent to 30 middle school teachers who were on staff throughout the grant. The survey consisted of 15 outcome statements related to the objectives, which required the respondents to “agree” or “disagree”. The respondents also had the option to select N/A (not applicable) if they were unfamiliar with the particular component of the partnership or it did not apply to them. The survey also included four open ended questions, which offered the respondents additional opportunities to provide feedback. An additional 5 surveys were sent to administrators associated with this project consisting of 5 open-ended questions.

Results

A total of 15 faculty members and 1 administrator logged on anonymously to the survey. A total of 12 people completed the survey. This resulted in a response rate of 29%.

92% of all respondents felt the grant did provide partnership opportunities between the college and the school site. Of those familiar with the components of the grant, 100% of the respondents felt: the project focused on effective instructional literacy strategies embedded within the content instruction providing the middle school students

additional literacy instruction; the center provided individualized literacy instruction and extended opportunities for participating adolescent students; and interactions with college/university teacher candidates motivated students to read and learn. Additionally, the respondents unanimously agreed that pre-service teachers were able to gain experience in designing literacy instruction for at-risk students.

Of these same respondents, 91% “agreed” that additional literacy materials were provided for academic departments and library. 88% agreed that the materials were utilized by the teachers. While 75% of them stated the project promoted discussion and examination of literacy practices among middle school faculty.

The majority of the responses agreed that the most effective components of the project included: the availability of supplemental resources for middle school teachers; the effectiveness of the tutoring; and the support from the college faculty/literacy center director. A respondent expressed appreciation for the one-on-one assistance from the college’s faculty and another stated that the college’s faculty provided “great energy, leadership and ability to inspire others.” Positive comments were directed to the motivating factors of the reading tutoring and also the effectiveness of the in-service teachers and pre-service teachers working and learning collaboratively.

The respondents overwhelmingly believed that the objectives of the project were achieved, 65% of the respondents marked agree, 7% marked disagree and 28% of the responses were marked “N/A”. The large percentage (28%) of the responses marked N/A to this item, indicate that many of the staff members not aware of the full scope of the partnership between the college and the middle school. However, when focusing only on the “agree” and “disagree” responses to the remaining survey items, 91% of the responses

were marked “agree” compared to 9% which were marked “disagree”. These responses indicate that the faculty felt the objectives of the project were achieved in the areas in which they participated. The overview of the partnership and project objectives needed to be clearly presented to the entire staff of the middle school. On-going communication was needed in order to provide updates and offer additional opportunities made available through the grant funds and joint venture.

Within an 18 month period, the change in school site principals and the large staff turnover (18 teachers) of the school certainly affected the communication of project information. This factor certainly affected the attainment of all objectives and goals related to staff development. For example, literacy training was provided to many teachers who left the school. Most of these teachers continued to work within the same school district, but their positions were filled by incoming teachers who had not participated in the literacy training.

Despite the turnover, the surveyed faculty members identified many areas of success with the collaboration between the college and middle school site. The partnership between entities was viewed as positive. The grant supplied literacy materials, workshops and tutoring services. The workshop strategies and materials were utilized in the classrooms and tutoring center. The focus on literacy instruction benefitted the teachers and students of the middle school.

Limitations of Study

Although the present study has supplied much useful information about field experiences for pre-service teachers from an in-service teacher perspective, it has several limitations that must be acknowledged. This study provided little information about the

pre-service teachers' outlook. Thirty-seven pre-service teachers participated in this project over the duration of three separate semesters. Yet, the time commitment from semester to semester varied. Seven pre-service teachers spent 16 hours a semester engaged in small group and individual practices, 15 pre-service teachers met with students four hours a week for 6 weeks, and 15 students attended the literacy center over a period of 16 weeks but did not follow a consistent schedule. With so many inconsistencies in participation, the educational needs and goals of pre-service teachers may differ by geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral segmentation; these differences need to be explored further.

While our qualitative research design worked well when gathering data about middle school students, it was seriously hampered in the overall school setting. A change in administration and teacher turn-over encumbered the selection of informational data including survey responses. Future investigations need an alternative research design, consisting of more extensive ethnographic fieldwork.

Implications for Future Projects

Increase Pre-service Student Opportunities.

Pre-service teachers were involved in the grant. They observed teachers, worked in in-service teacher classrooms, enrolled in undergraduate classes on the local education agency (LEA) campus and instructed students in the literacy center. Their involvement was valued and appreciated.

The LEA recommended that the number of pre-service teachers on campus be increased in future projects. The pre-service teachers were not only an asset to LEA teachers and students, but assisted in promoting the partnership between college and

school site; the more institution of higher education (IHE) students on campus, the better link between the IHE and LEA.

IHE Participation of LEA Committees.

During the duration of this grant, the college faculty member was a member of the school site's School Improvement Team. The membership of this committee includes department chairs, staff representatives and parent representatives. This committee focuses on efforts within the school to improve academic performance. Inclusion on this committee brought insight and input into school programming.

Future projects should promote the participation of the IHE within LEA committees. IHE faculty will gain first hand insight to the challenges and efforts made by the LEAs. Joint ventures provide an avenue for IHE faculty to share their expertise with the LEA.

Student Interventions and Instruction.

The NeCoTIP grant helped to fund a tutoring center which provided services during the school year, as well as the summer. Pre-service teachers were able to work with students individually and in small group settings to provide additional support. The strategies and materials from the grant were applied and utilized. The tutoring center also resulted in authentic practices in instruction and assessment (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Pre-service teachers gained valuable experience working with students and received mentoring from experienced teachers. Overall, the literacy center benefitted experienced and pre-service teachers, but the end product focused on the improvement of student literacy skills.

Local Education Agency (LEA) Administrative Commitment – Longevity.

The LEA principal, who accepted the grant, wavered in her support of its implementation. The grant director met with her various times, and garnered the support of the Institute of Higher Education (IHE) Dean and Associate Dean to personally meet with the LEA principal to discuss the implementation of the grant. Though some progress was achieved, the LEA principal left at the end of the first year of the grant. The departure of the principal was an interruption in the grant. Not only did the lead administrator leave the school, so did several (18) teachers. The principal's replacement was very appreciative of the efforts made with the grant and supported continuation of the grant.

The departure of the LEA principal and the large number of staff members made it difficult to establish continuity with the staff. It is important that future projects be implemented with a committed staff and an LEA with a high teacher retention rate.

Collaborative Assessment.

The LEA and IHE must collaboratively prepare well-defined objectives and evaluations. In this study, the IHE developed, implemented, and assessed each objective. The LEA embraced some objectives and their components, but was reluctant to implement others. Additional involvement and accountability would support the implementation of all project objectives.

Future projects should specifically define the role of the LEA in the assessment of the grant. Formative assessment would promote ongoing involvement and result in increased participation in the summative assessment.

References

- Bear, D., Helman, L., Templeton, S., Invernizzi, M. & Johnston, F. (2007). *Words their way with English learners: Word study for phonics, vocabulary and spelling instruction*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Bear, D., Invernizzi, M, Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2007). *Words their way* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson.
- Bear, D. & Templeton, S. (1998). Explorations in developmental spelling: Foundations for learning and teaching phonics, spelling, and vocabulary. *The Reading Teacher*, 52, 222-242.
- Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., Hamilton, R. L., & Kucan, L. (1997). *Questioning the author: An approach for enhancing student engagement with text*, Newark, DL: International Reading Association.
- Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups* (2nd ed.). Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Danielson, C. (1996). *Teaching evaluation to enhance professional practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Solving the dilemmas of teacher supply, demand, and standards: How we can ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child*. New York, NY: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

- Darling-Hammond, L. and McLaughlin, M. (1999). Investing in teaching as a learning profession--Policy problems and prospects. In L. Darling-Hammond and G. Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching as the Learning Profession: Handbook of Policy and Practice*. New York: Josey-Bass. 376-412.
- Darling-Hammond, L. & Snyder, J. (2000). Authentic assessment of teaching in context. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, 523-545.
- Evensen, D. & P. Mosenthal. (Eds.). (1999). *Advances in Reading/Language Research: Reconsidering the role of the reading clinic in a new age of literacy*. Stamford, CT: Jai Press Inc.
- Little, J.W. (1990). The mentor phenomenon and the social organization of teaching. In C.B. Cazden (Ed.), *Review of research in education*, 16, 297-351. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D., & McTighe, J. (1993). *Assessing student outcomes: Performance assessment using the dimensions of learning model*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Peck, R. (1998). *A long way from Chicago*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.
- Palincsar, A. S. & Brown, A. (1984). Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Fostering and Comprehension Monitoring Activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1, pp. 117-175.
- Shedlin, A., Jr. (1990). Shelter from the Storm. *The American School Board Journal*. 8, 12-16.

Honing Their Skills:

Tier 2 Workshops for University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers

Sally Winterton and Tina Selvaggi

West Chester University

Abstract

Responding to participants' suggestions in the first year of the Cooperating Teacher and University Supervisor Workshops, a second tier of professional development was created. First year participants, particularly classroom teachers were interested in learning different ways to capture teacher candidate's teaching in a meaningful way and ways to share the information during a post observation conference. University Supervisors also indicated a need for a "brush up" course in the variety of observation skills since many university supervisors are former public school administrators with training in observation. This article shares the format and information used to provide the skills for the participants.

The Background

“I strive for the best and I do the possible” – Lyndon B. Johnson

In striving to achieve excellent results in creating a strong connection between cooperating teachers and university supervisors at a large regional university, and as a response to suggestions from both constituencies, an adjustment resulted to the cooperating teacher and university supervisor workshop offered. During the second year of implementation, the original Cooperating Teachers and University Supervisors Workshop continued under the title of Tier 1 Workshop. These sessions continued to focus on the College of Education Conceptual Framework; the teacher candidate evaluation tools: Pennsylvania Department of Education 430 form (PDE 430); the College of Education Teacher Intern Performance Rating (TIPR); their interrelationship; as well as including Charlotte Danielson’s “Four Domains of Teaching Responsibility” as the underpinning of the PDE 430. In an attempt to create lasting and sustained professional learning for the cooperating teacher and university supervisors, an additional workshop was developed made available. These sessions became Tier 2 Workshops.

The Task

Having completed a successful year of Tier 1 Workshops for cooperating teachers and university supervisors, the task was to continue the learning while deepening the participants’ knowledge of observation and mentoring skills. Suggestions from both constituencies requested practice or review of observation skills. Thus, the focus for cooperating teachers would be introduction to and practice of a variety of observation and conferencing skills, while the format for the university supervisors would in general be a review of observation and conferencing skills.

The Plan

Campus-based, two session workshops for the university supervisors were created and offered on days that coincided with their teaching responsibilities. Cooperating teachers could choose between one of three locations in the five county area where the university's teacher candidates are placed. Just like the Tier 1 Workshops, the Tier 2 Workshops involved attendance at two after-school sessions. Cooperating teachers and university supervisors received invitation letters to attend the workshops, with an incentive of Act 48 credits offered for those attending all sessions of the workshops. In addition, participants who attended both sessions would receive a copy of Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching, 2nd Edition* and a certificate of completion from the Dean of the College of Education.

Session One of the Tier 2 Workshops would focus on the use of observational tools to foster reflection and conversation between cooperating teachers or university supervisors and teacher candidates. Participants would first share the observation method they currently use and then watch a video of a third grade language arts class using that method. Next, participants would share their observation notes and analysis of the teaching. Participants would examine qualitative tools such as the Detached Open-Ended Narrative Tool, Participant Open-Ended Observation, Child-Centered Learning Observation, Nonverbal Techniques and Detached Open-Ended Narrative Tool (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004). Additional observation tools such as: selective verbatim or script taping, and focus questions about the learning would be presented. These focus questions would include: Were the children learning/thinking? What types of questions were asked? How were the children treated? What opportunities

were provided for children to learn in different ways? Session One also would include the examination and application of quantitative tools including Teacher Verbal Behavior, Teacher Questions, Student On Task/Off Task Behaviors, as well as templates for Gardner's Model of Performance and Johnson & Johnson's Cooperative Learning Criteria (D'Arcangelo, 1987).

After examining the Quantitative and Qualitative Observation Tools and learning the purpose of using each, the participants would apply them right away by selecting one of the observation tools for data collection and viewing another teaching video. They would be encouraged to share their findings; make connections to their own experiences; and engage in comparing their results to others in order to begin to foster inter-rater reliability.

During Session Two of Tier 2, participants learned about mentoring skills. In order to gain practical experience in the area of mentoring, the participants viewed a video about facilitating mentoring conferences effectively then applied this information to four categories of mentoring: conferring, questioning, mirroring, and modeling/reflecting. After sharing and debriefing, both the supervisors and cooperating teachers saw the value of adopting a mentoring posture when working with their student teachers.

The Outcome

To date, 10% of cooperating teachers and approximately 38% of university supervisors have participated in these workshops. The post video observation sparked a variety of opinions and comments regarding the viewed teacher's instruction. In many cases, this was the first time for cooperating teachers to use an observation tool and to

discuss an observation with other professional educators. University supervisors also valued the opportunity to observe a teacher and discuss the observations with other supervisors.

According to workshop evaluations, cooperating teachers valued the ability to develop a common language for use with their teacher candidates to outline their expectations. The cooperating teachers also stated that they enjoyed and appreciated the open conversations with colleagues rather than receiving a lecture. The university supervisors, in their evaluations, stated the importance of gathering with the other supervisors to discuss concerns and brainstorm ideas about being a more effective mentor. They also appreciated the methods of modeling for their teacher candidates and helping them see ways in which they may be reflective about their teaching. Both constituencies stated that sharing with others is always a valuable way to reflect on one's own practice.

Next Steps

In an effort to increase the number of cooperating teachers who attend both Tiers 1 and 2, we plan to lengthen each session and add one additional session to Tier 1 Workshops. This new format of three, two-hour sessions is to be offered for cooperating teachers at three different locations as in the past and on campus for university supervisors.

References

- Borden, J., Johnson, M., Niday, D., & Potts, J. (2000). *Mentoring Beginning Teachers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Danielson, C. (1996). *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Danielson, C. (2007) *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- D’Arcangelo, M. (Producer). (1987) *Another Set Of Eyes: Techniques for Classroom Observation*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. (2004). *Supervision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach* (6th ed.). Columbus, OH: Allyn & Bacon.

The New 3 R's: Replacement, Remediation, Removal

Ellen Ashburn, Wendy Weiner, and Sharon Porterfield

Chatham University

Abstract

Despite our best efforts, sometimes a teacher candidate must be removed from the student teaching placement. These circumstances have the potential to create confusion for students, feelings of insecurity and failure for the teacher candidate, and ill will from the school administration and cooperating teacher. To ensure a positive outcome for all parties involved, a collaborative effort must be used to determine if the situation calls for re-placement, remediation, or removal.

There are effective precautions that can help avert negative situations in the field placement: a thorough teacher candidate handbook outlining many of the suggestions that have been generally recognized as necessary for success during the student teaching experience (Roe & Ross, 2002) and an itemized teacher candidate agreement that is in accord with the National Education Association Bill of Rights for Student Teachers (Parkay, 2006). The Chatham University Handbook for Student Teachers includes the processes, expectations, and evaluation procedures currently recommended as best practice (McNergney & McNergney, 2009). Teacher candidates receive this booklet at a meeting during the semester prior to student teaching. At that time, teacher candidates receive the highlights and are apprised of their responsibilities as outlined in the handbook. The itemized teacher candidate agreement includes sixteen statements which the teacher candidates must read and initial. Items in the teacher candidate agreement include such areas as hours of the field placement, expectations for lesson plan submissions, communication protocol, as well as prerequisites for the student teaching placement. This process focuses the teacher candidate on expectations and responsibilities. The signature component assures that teacher candidates will read each item and acknowledge it. When teacher candidates attend the first seminar of their student teaching semester, they receive a copy with their signature and the program director's signature.

The teacher candidate agreement sets the stage for possible removal from the field placement with the following statement: "I understand that failure to fulfill any student teaching obligation may result in my removal from the student teaching experience." By putting a fine point on the potential for removal, teacher candidates are attentive to the

details of expectations. However, regardless of reflective practices like those described in *The Art of Learning to Teach* (Beattie, 2007) and the due diligence for covering expectations and requirements, upon occasion, teacher candidates must be removed from a student teaching placement.

For student teacher supervisors, nothing is more wrenching than failing a teacher candidate during an internship; teacher candidates who fail face an often devastating loss of money, time, self-esteem, and career focus. Additionally, since student teaching supervision generally requires a one-to-one coaching experience, the financial investment made by teacher education institutions is substantial. Because colleges of education rely on host schools and master teachers to facilitate the student teaching process, reducing the number of failures will ensure continued amicable relationships with local school systems. Every teacher education program faces the challenge of working with teacher candidates who fail or at risk of failing (Harwood, Collins, & Sudzina, 2000).

The four most common reasons for extracting teacher candidates from the field placement include the following: an inappropriate cooperating teacher, a poor grade level fit for the teacher candidate, unsatisfactory progress as a teacher candidate, and reluctance of the teacher candidate to become a teacher (Rickman & Hollowell, 1981). All supervisors must work hard to maintain the dignity of those with whom they work (Aseltine, Faryniarz & Rigazio-Digilio, 2006). Therefore, the best course of action must be considered carefully. The four major considerations for action are the following:

- What is best for the children in the class?
- What is best for the teacher candidate?
- What is best for the cooperating teacher?

- What is best for the school/university partnership?

Once this is determined, the education program director and the college supervisor cooperatively devise a plan that will be optimum for all involved. When this is arranged, the teacher candidate is brought in for a consultation in order to implement the plan. Depending on the reason for extraction, the plans will vary. A review of student teacher handbooks reveals student teacher removal protocols ranging from a vague statement that removal is possible (*Teacher Candidate Internship Handbook*, 2006, p. 22) to a specific itemization of sources of initiation, conferences, and outcomes, as well as an appeal process (*Student Teaching Handbook*, n.d. retrieved Oct.16, 2008 <http://www.clarion.edu/21585/>).

Because narratives can serve as testimony to the complexities of becoming a teacher (Beattie, 2007), what follows is a series of vignettes that will serve to demonstrate the most common reasons for removal from the field placement and the strategies for implementation.

Amber's Story

Amber was a student who frequently exhibited her insecurity about her skills and abilities. She entered the Master's program for teaching with no prior education experience or course work. Almost immediately when placed in her student teaching site, Amber voiced concerns about her cooperating teacher's poor treatment of her and negativity. Amber was upset that she was paying tuition money and being treated badly by the site teacher. She talked about being upset over the cooperating teacher's erratic behaviors, continual changing of the daily schedule, and turning over of the children to her on an unannounced basis when the cooperating teacher became upset with the class's

performance. Amber had become fearful and anxious about making any mistakes for fear of reprisals from the cooperating teacher and Amber's crying and frustration was evolving into anger.

Diagnosis

An inappropriate cooperating teacher was the diagnosis for Amber's situation. This was determined through a series of observations and conferences within the first week of the student teaching experience. The college supervisor instructed the teacher candidate to keep detailed notes of actions and conversations that had become troublesome. Additionally, the college supervisor observed the classroom, as well as overheard classroom activity from a location outside the classroom. She followed up with discussions with the cooperating teacher and also a triad that included the teacher candidate in order to get a more complete picture of the situation. Finally, she read the student's electronic journal for further student reflection on the situation.

Solution

Once the college supervisor confirmed the source of the problem, it was clear that removal was the best solution for the teacher candidate. During the week's investigation, the college supervisor was keeping the Director of the Education Program updated on the findings. In collaboration, they examined options and worked out a plan for the teacher candidate's removal from the school and subsequent placement in another location. One of the most difficult aspects of the change was working with the school administrator to be sure he understood what was transpiring and so that the teacher candidate could be placed in another school without the stigma of having been removed from a classroom.

Outcome

Amber had a wonderful experience with her new class and cooperating teacher who reported that Amber was the “best teacher candidate” he had ever worked with. Due in large part to the college supervisor’s quick response and investigation, this teacher candidate went from a no-win situation in which she was reconsidering her goal of becoming a teacher, to a highly successful field experience that reaffirmed her desire to become a teacher. Finally, the first group of children had little experience with the teacher candidate and it appeared that they had already developed coping mechanisms with the cooperating teacher that enabled them to accept the change. For them, there was no disruption to their learning and their daily routines.

Fred’s Story

Fred, a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) student seeking elementary certification, had been an extremely enthusiastic full-time student throughout his program. He demonstrated a commitment to teaching with an exceptional earnestness and enthusiasm while always a bit tentative. In courses where demonstration lessons were required, Fred would prepare and present lessons that were thoughtful and imaginative. He listened intently to critiques and incorporated suggestions in his revisions. When critiquing others, Fred would be the one giving “warm fuzzies.”

Fred’s student teaching assignment was first grade. After two weeks of observing his cooperating teacher and doing some opening and closing sessions, it was time for him to begin taking over entire classes. It was a disaster.

Within a matter of days of beginning teaching, Fred started becoming physically ill. He was suffering from headaches and nausea. His self-esteem dropped and he became

hesitant to even submit lesson plans, fearing rejection from the cooperating teacher. When he did submit them, the cooperating teacher was highly critical. He was not getting any “warm fuzzies.” The self doubts, physical ailments, and seeming lack of preparedness had this student in a downward spiral.

Diagnosis

Poor grade-level fit was the diagnosis for Fred’s situation. Despite his caring personality, he was having trouble relating to first graders. Fred failed to understand how concrete one must be with six- and seven-year-olds. For instance, when he used manipulatives in teaching mathematics, he did not overtly tie that activity to a concrete explanation. Instead, he relied on abstract lectures for his first graders.

By the end of week three, the college supervisor had several conferences with the cooperating teacher and then with the teacher candidate following several observations. After assigning him specific areas of concentration for improvement, this once promising teacher candidate seemed incapable of following the plan.

Solution

By the second week, the college supervisor met with the program director to consider the next steps. When the teacher candidate was unable to implement the plans for more concrete instruction, the administrator and supervisor began working on extraction plans. This plan included working with the teacher candidate to determine if he did, indeed, wish to continue with student teaching. Following confirmation of his desire to become a teacher, a new student teaching site was arranged where Fred would work in a third grade classroom. The new cooperating teacher was one that had worked well with previous teacher candidates.

Fred was informed when his last day would be at site one. He was instructed to say his farewells to the first graders and to tell them that part of his teaching assignment was at another school with older children. This allowed him to leave on a positive note. As decided in the meeting with the Director of the Education Program, the college supervisor met with the cooperating teacher and made it clear that Fred was being moved to give him an opportunity to work with another age group. Next, the college supervisor met with the school principal to discuss the situation and make it clear that the problem was not of their making and that the university was concerned about interfering with the progress of the first graders.

Outcome

Fred successfully completed his student teaching experience with third graders. With the help of a nurturing cooperating teacher and a vigilant college supervisor, Fred received the support he needed to become a successful teacher and to reach the understanding that there is a broad range of teaching levels within the elementary school. His health has improved and he is now seeking a job in upper elementary grades.

Jean's Story

Jean was a graduate student seeking elementary certification. She loved children and felt strongly about her aspirations to become a teacher. She managed her paperwork, was attentive in class, and produced excellent work. However, she was learning disabled in math and over the years had enjoyed receiving accommodations.

When Jean entered student teaching, she was assigned to a school that was set up by content area. So her first few weeks focused on language arts, then social studies, etc. She stayed in one pod, with one content area to focus on at a time.

Jean had the usual start up of student teaching, observing, taking over the teaching duties in steps, and developing her lesson plans and units. In the math rotation, it soon became apparent that despite her love of the children and her caring interactions, things were not working out. The cooperating teacher complained at length about Jean's ability to teach math and the school assistant principal began to express concerns about the educational program of the students.

Jean's responses:

- *Defensive about criticism*
- *Failure to implement suggestions for improvements*
- *Frequent bouts of tears*
- *Belligerent and defensive with school staff*
- *In denial: "I'm a good teacher."*

Diagnosis

Unsatisfactory progress as a teacher candidate was the diagnosis for Jean. She was not able to handle the content and, not surprisingly, could not teach it. Jean was also unwilling to admit that she was having difficulty with the mathematics content.

Solution

After consultation among the student teaching supervisor, the Director of the Education Program, and the vice-principal, the first step was to place Jean with a willing teacher in the host school who volunteered to "coach" Jean with the mathematics content. He felt empathy towards Jean because he said that he had needed intervention when he was a teacher candidate and as a result was able to become quite successful in his chosen profession. Jean agreed to work with the "new" math teacher and to follow his

directions. There was close communication between the new cooperating teacher and the supervisor, but after several weeks it was evident that Jean was still unable to handle the demands of the math curriculum. It was agreed by the school administrator, cooperating teacher, student teaching supervisor and the Director of the Education Program that the students' educational program was in jeopardy so Jean was removed from the placement.

After meeting with Jean, the student teaching supervisor, and the Director of the Education Program, it was mutually agreed that Jean would be placed in an eight-week practicum with a seasoned cooperating teacher who had successfully coached other teacher candidates. Jean was given specific areas of concentration to work on during the practicum and she also agreed to take a course in mathematics to increase her content knowledge.

Outcome

Upon successful completion of her practicum, Jean vowed to continue to pursue her goal of becoming a teacher. She also completed the course to improve her math skills. She did, however, get married and move to another state. She has recently been in contact with the university to arrange a student teaching experience in that state.

Meredith's Story

Meredith, a fine arts major, was advised that elementary education would be a good "fall back" if she was unable to find employment in her major field of fine arts. Meredith completed course work in both fine arts and elementary education and was placed for student teaching at an excellent suburban school that had successfully hosted many teacher candidates from the university's education program.

Her host teacher was experienced, kindly, and excited to work with a teacher candidate from the university's education program because of the well-prepared and eager teacher candidates who had previously been placed in this elementary school.

The first observation indicated that the teacher candidate was having serious classroom management problems in addition to using poor teaching strategies. The college supervisor and the host teachers immediately met with Meredith to establish specific areas for improvement with suggested approaches to remedy the problems.

The second observation took place two weeks later with no improvement even though the host teacher had been modeling, providing extensive written and verbal feedback, and making arrangements for Meredith to observe other teachers in the school.

At the post-observation interview, Meredith began weeping and seemed unable to focus. It was difficult for the supervisor to determine why she was distressed. However, by the end of the meeting Meredith said that she was willing to "try her best" to improve.

The college supervisor and the host teacher remained in contact via E-mail and it was obvious that the situation was getting worse. The supervisor conducted one more observation and no improvement had taken place. The situation had actually become worse. Earlier, the principal had conducted an observation and requested a meeting with Meredith who avoided going to meet with him.

Diagnosis

Although successfully completing the required course work and field placements for her elementary certification, Meredith found through the student teaching experience in the "real world" of the classroom that she indeed did not want to be a classroom teacher.

Solution

After several meetings with the cooperating teacher, the student teaching supervisor and Meredith to discuss classroom management problems and pedagogical deficiencies, a specific plan of intervention was devised. The intervention included observations of other teachers in the school, modeling by the cooperating teacher of specific strategies, immediate and frequent feedback by the cooperating teacher, and frequent contact with the student teaching supervisor. In spite of the interventions, there was no improvement.

The student teaching supervisor requested a private meeting with the teacher candidate and asked for a candid assessment of what Meredith saw as the problem. At that point, she openly admitted that she thoroughly disliked classroom teaching, did not want to ever be an elementary teacher, and just wanted to concentrate on her fine arts endeavors. The student teaching supervisor and the Director of the Education Program met to discuss possible solutions for a successful end to Meredith's undergraduate experience. A meeting was held with Meredith, the student teaching supervisor, and the Director of the Education Program to discuss Meredith's future plans. At the meeting, Meredith repeated her wish to discontinue her student teaching assignment and to concentrate on her artistic agenda. The Director of the Education Program met with the Registrar to ensure that Meredith would be able to graduate without completing student teaching. Meredith did have the necessary credits to graduate due to her double major status. The cooperating teacher and principal of the host school were assured that Meredith's desire to leave her placement was not due to anything lacking at their classroom or school.

Outcome

Meredith was extremely relieved to be released from her student teaching placement and responsibilities. She was able to concentrate on her final artistic projects required for graduation, she received her undergraduate degree, and was accepted into a graduate program to further her artistic career.

Conclusion

Despite the safeguards to prevent failure at student teaching, protocols for extraction must be in place with the focus on optimum results for all parties involved: the children, the teacher candidate, the cooperating teacher, and the school partnerships. To ensure that this happens, there must be collaboration with all involved parties. In this collaborative environment, it is necessary to examine all available options, finalize the plan, work out concrete details including the time frame of events, and set the plan in motion. If everyone does not follow the plan precisely, possibilities for additional fallout exist.

Governing the entire process is the imperative that the college supervisor be vigilant and communicative early in the semester. By alerting the program director early on, the supervisor and director can begin working on strategies for success in the current situation while also working on options should those strategies fail.

One vital component of the extraction process is to include the teacher candidate. Since the student teaching experience is the capstone to the entire program, the teacher candidate should be given the opportunity to discuss what outcome they wish to have. As was the case with Meredith, the student's response can be a surprising one. Also, by

asking that important question, the teacher candidate can feel more in control and less victimized by the circumstances.

Finally, for those who find themselves in circumstances where a teacher candidate must be re-placed, remediated, or removed, establishing a supportive, positive environment will enhance the possibilities for success for all parties involved.

References

- Aseltine, James M., Faryniarz, Judith O. & Rigazio-DiGilio, Anthony J. (2006). *Supervision for learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Beattie, Mary (2007). *The art of learning to teach: Creating professional narratives*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Harwood, A.M., Collins, I. & Sudzina, M. (2000, April). *Learning from student teacher failure: Implications for program design*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- McNergney, Robert F. & McNergney, Joanne M. (2009). *Education: The practice and profession of teaching*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Parkay, Forrest W. (2006). *Political foundations for becoming a teacher*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Rickman, L. W. & Hollowell, J. (1981). Some causes of student failure. *Improving College and University Teaching*. 29 (4), 176-179.
- Roe, Betty D. & Ross, Elinor P. (2002). *Student teaching and field experiences handbook*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Student Teacher Resources*. Retrieved October 16, 2008, from <http://www.clarion.edu/20701/>.
- Teacher Candidate Internship Handbook*. (2006). (Available from Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA).

Evaluating the Empirical Electronically:
Trends Discovered from Head Start Assessment Data

Patricia S. Scheffler

Grove City College

Abstract

A study was conducted with educational partners including a countywide Head Start program and Grove City College. At the request of the Head Start educational manager, the college researcher sought to determine if there were any statistically significant interactions between student demographics, such as gender, ethnic background, primary language, and grade level. The data was extracted from electronically stored Head Start Progress and Outcomes Reports for ages 3-5, derived from *The Creative Curriculum*[™] Developmental Continuum Assessment System over a three year period. The analysis of the data revealed moderate to strong interactions between student outcomes and age and virtually no interactions with any other demographic variable. Results did indicate that the teacher was the strongest indicator of outcomes. In terms of specific outcomes, students scored lowest in associating sounds with written words and recognize words as a unit of print. Students scored highest in using increasingly complex and spoken vocabulary and physical development over the three year period under study. Further study is needed in order to identify the characteristics of high teacher quality in this setting.

Context

Head Start is the primary, federally funded provider of preschool education to young children living at lower socioeconomic levels in the United States. Studies show that high-quality early educational experiences help children from this demographic be better prepared for kindergarten and generally more successful in school (Bryant, 2005). Research has demonstrated that quality pre-K programs, improve students' preparedness for school based on the results of the Perry Preschool Project (Ypsilanti, MI) and the Abecedarian Project at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Additionally, children who participate in high-quality prekindergarten programs require less special education and are less likely to repeat a grade or need child welfare services (Lynch, 2007). It only follows that an important question to be answered is: can the early education provided by Head Start be characterized as high-quality?

Since 1965, this comprehensive child development program has served around 21 million children. At the national level, the program was reauthorized in March 2007 as "The Improving Head Start Act" through 2012. Research has shown that higher quality prekindergarten programs provide greater benefits than lower quality prekindergarten programs.

There are several indicators of high quality utilized in the field of early childhood education. A study by Pianta, Howes, Burchinal, Bryant, Clifford, Early, and Barbarin (2005), who developed the CLASS assessment system for early childhood classrooms, demonstrated that quality was lower in classrooms with more than 60% of the children from homes below the poverty line, when teachers lacked formal training (or a degree) in

early childhood education, and held less child-centered beliefs. Based on these results, since Head Start classrooms are characterized by children living at low socioeconomic levels the factors that can be indicators of quality are teacher preparedness and developmentally appropriate practice when analyzed conversely.

The Problem

The Head Start program studied was limited to a single county in northwestern Pennsylvania. This countywide program encompassed approximately 400 students in 22 classrooms that utilized *The Creative Curriculum*®, the curriculum used by 39% of all Head Start programs (Lambert, 2004). Three times yearly, each teacher assessed the progress of enrolled students to determine outcomes from *The Creative Curriculum*® Developmental Continuum Assessment System. The Continuum is a teacher assessment tool that includes a demographic breakdown of each child, along with each child's quarterly progress. Progress is measured using the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) goals and objectives that address all levels of development in the areas of social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development on a four-point rating scale (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE 2003).

Methods

This data was collected over a five year period and was collated and archived using commercially available database software (Microsoft Access) which was subsequently used to produce state and federal mandated progress reports. However, the structure of the database archive did not facilitate examination of potential trends within and across all recorded school years. Therefore, complete data was only available for three of the five years of collected data. Simple and cross tab queries were applied to the

database archive to extract anonymous demographic data per child by classroom, along with each child's progress in the above cited developmental areas. This extracted data was in the form of symbolic representation of achieved levels which did not lend itself to statistical analysis. Therefore the symbolic data was transposed into ordinal numeric data. Simple and advanced statistical techniques such as analysis of variance, analysis of covariance, and regression analysis were applied to determine statistically important trends within the archived data.

Results

The original purpose of this study was to search for and uncover statistically significant interactions between student demographics and student outcomes, which might be intuited to exist, as all classrooms utilized common curriculum and assessment tools. Such demographic factors might include gender, age, ethnic background, or primary language. Based on the results, the analysis of the data revealed moderate interactions between student outcomes and age and virtually no interactions with any other demographic variable. The interplay of the various factors was studied by analysis of variance (ANOVA) and other statistical techniques. The null hypothesis (H_0) in these studies assumed that there was no statistical difference in mean outcomes by any of the demographic factors analyzed.

The statistical analysis ($\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.80$) revealed a strong interaction between student outcomes and the specific teacher and classroom the student was assigned. This was apparent even though the Creative Curriculum was supposedly utilized uniformly across the county in all 22 classrooms. This result indicated that statistically important interactions existed between the student outcomes and the particular classrooms students

were assigned to. Strong trends were not apparent in the mean progress among students when analyzed with regard to demographic factors. This appeared to imply that teacher quality was the most significant factor in the students' outcomes.

Over the three years, trends in student outcomes were apparent. Students scored lowest in associating sounds with written words and recognize words as a unit of print. Students scored highest in using increasingly complex and spoken vocabulary and physical development.

Implications

The conclusion reached by the researcher from the results reported above indicates that further study is needed. There are several avenues that could be further explored. First, it is necessary to investigate if the teachers were employing the curriculum differently, were substantiating assessment results with recorded classroom observations, and if they were conducting the assessment with varying degrees of training.

The implications of the strong teacher interaction require further investigation to determine where the teacher was placed during each of the three academic years studied. An additional piece of information showed that teachers were often moved around from placement to placement and year to year during the period under investigation. This information requires further study in order to determine the exact placement of the teacher during each of the three years.

Since students scored lowest in associating sounds with written words and recognizing words as a unit of print, it appears that students are struggling in phonemic awareness. Therefore, future program planning, quality improvement, and teacher

development should focus on early literacy skill development. This could be a focus for professional development and a future area of collaboration between the college and the Head Start Program.

References

- N. A. Barnett, W. S., & Hustedt, J. T. (2005). Head Start's Lasting Benefits. *Infants & Young Children, 18*, 16-24.
- Barnett, W. S., & Hustedt, J. T. (2003). Preschool: The Most Important Grade. *Educational Leadership, 60*, 54-57.
- Bryant, D. Clifford, D., Early D. Little, L. (2005). Who are the pre-k teachers? What are pre-k classrooms like? Early Developments: NCEDL Pre-kindergarten Study. Sp.2005, Vol. 9 (1), pp. 15-19.
- Lambert, R. G., (2004). The Developmental Continuum Assessment System for Ages 3-5: The Assessment Component of *The Creative Curriculum®* for Preschool.
- Lynch, R. G. (2007). *Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation Public Investment in High-Quality Prekindergarten*.
- NAEYC & NAECS/SDE (National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education). (2003). Joint Position Statement. Early childhood curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation: Building an effective, accountable system in programs for children birth through age 8. Online: www.naeyc.org/resources/position_statements/pscape.asp.
- Pianta, R., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Clifford, R., Early, D., and Barbarin, O., Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interactions? *Applied Developmental Science* Volume 9 (3) July 2005, pages 144-159.

Educational Law: What Teacher Candidates and Supervisors Need To Know

Dr. Michael J. Vetere, Jr. and Dr. Mary T. Vetere

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

Today's educational settings operate in a complex legal environment. Legal issues influence the lives of teachers, students, parents, and administrators on a daily basis. Decisions dealing with issues of classroom teachers as they perform required assignments influence how others may implement daily classroom and school building responsibilities. Teachers entering the profession for the first time have an opportunity to bring about success for students and themselves. Issues, such as school board authority, supervision of students, special education, teacher accountability and ethics will play a large part in the success or failure of a new teacher. This article, which does not take the place of any legal advice, provides an overview of school law and the following topics are discussed: The School Environment, Health Related Issues, Religion and Schools, Child Abuse, Parent's Rights, Liability, and Confidentiality.

As first year teachers or a teacher candidates prepare themselves for the educational part of their teaching responsibilities, they must also prepare for the legal aspects of teaching as those actions can influence how to teach, what to say, and how to act. It is important to remember that all legal decisions are interpretations of the law. The law, unless changed by the appropriate governmental body, does not change. However, the interpretation may change. In Pennsylvania, as in other states, there is a listing of the laws that affect education. Within this listing in Pennsylvania, Purdon's Pennsylvania

Statutes is a commercial publication offering codification of all the various laws enacted by the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Education can be located in Purdon's Title 24. Although this is an excellent source to locate and investigate different aspects of law affecting education, it should not be the only source of research to determine a legal issue affecting a particular educational issue. As a general rule, beyond the use of understanding the law and its implications, common sense will help in determining what course of action a teacher might follow in lieu of an in-depth knowledge of the law. This will not protect a teacher in most cases, but at least it may give a defense of what a prudent individual might do in a particular situation.

The School Environment

Teachers are responsible for everything that goes on around them during the course of the school day. A misconception for some teachers, both novice and experienced, is that a teacher is only responsible for teaching the lesson of the day. In reality, a teacher must be aware of the safety and security of their classroom, and all areas that they supervise. These areas may include the playground, classroom, cafeteria and general hallways in addition to their classroom. In addition, students on a field trip are also the responsibility of the teacher in terms of maintaining a safe and secure environment. A teacher must know their classroom, where everything is, as well as recognize and be aware of any safety hazards that may injure or prevent the students in the area from learning to their fullest potential. If a teacher knows that something is broken in the classroom and does not address this issue, then the teacher may be liable if a child is injured. In the same sense, if a teacher walks through the cafeteria and sees an

environment that is unsafe and ignores the situation, and a child is injured, the teacher may be liable.

In today's world of heightened tensions over terrorist or emergency situations, teachers must also be aware of the crisis management plan for the classroom and school. A teacher needs to also develop a plan in case of an emergency on a field trip. If an emergency does occur, it will be too late to review the plan and take appropriate action to protect students. In conclusion, the environment that a teacher works within affects the safety of the students in the teacher's care.

Health Related Issues

The teacher/teacher candidate must listen and document carefully all complaints of students regarding specific health issues. School personnel need to be aware of the medication policy for the school and to carefully implement this policy to prevent any adverse medical situations. If teachers are to hold any medication for students, make sure it is kept in a safe, secure location that only the teacher has access. The key issue for all faculty members is to remember that confidentiality of all health related issues is paramount to a quality learning environment. When you know a specific issue about a student, it is your responsibility to maintain confidentiality and not to discuss this with anyone who is not on a need to know basis. An example of this would include having a discussion in the faculty room about a particular student. This may violate the confidentiality of a student's privacy with individuals who do not need to know.

Religion and Schools

Teachers are one of the most influential individuals that a child may come in contact. What a teacher says and what they may wear could influence what a child

believes and what a child learns. With that in mind, teachers need to recognize that they need to stay neutral in many areas of their teaching. In the No Child Left Behind legislation, it is guaranteed that a school district may not make any policy to permit or deny participation in constitutional prayer or they will lose all federal funding. What this means is that teachers, administrators, and other school officials is that there is a need to protect the student's rights to prayer, but teachers and school personnel may not participate. They may be present to protect the school environment, but may not to be an active participant in the prayer session on school property. In addition, any wearing of religious paraphernalia is prohibited due to the fact that it may influence student in a particular religion. With that said, in some districts, the mores of the community may dictate the appropriate behavior of teachers in this type of situation. New teachers need to understand what is acceptable in their community and what the community members will permit.

Child Abuse

School personnel have the responsibility and obligation to make a report to the appropriate designated school official when they have reasonable belief that a child has been abused. This procedure must be completed within the appropriate school policies addressing child abuse. Under the law, the appropriate school administrator must make an immediate report to the appropriate county agency by telephone and then follow up this communication with a written report. The reporting teacher is immune from civil and criminal liability under state law as per a person participating in a good faith report of child abuse. The reporting individual will remain confidential to the school official. Failure to report may result in criminal charges against the faculty member who knew

and failed to report child abuse. Schools must be able to protect their students from all predators both inside and outside the school environment. Without that protection, a child may not be safe in any environment and may be unduly harmed. As a school employee, teachers need to protect all students within their charge.

Liability

Many times, a teacher may leave their room for a few moments. At that time, two students may enter into “harmless” horseplay. In so doing, they may injure themselves or other children around them. If the presence of a teacher or other official school employee could have prevented the incident or prevented the injury, the individuals and the district could be held liable. The key to understanding the responsibility of a teacher and liability is reviewing a clear definition of liability: If the faculty member is present, could the situation been avoided? If the answer is yes, there is liability. If the answer is no, then there is no liability on the part of the school or faculty member. This may not relieve the teacher or school from civil suit, but it will protect the individual from criminal charges. This also carries over to knowledge of a dangerous situation. If a teacher knows of a dangerous situation and fails to act to prevent injury, the teacher can be held responsible. As a new teacher, it is always prudent never to leave a class unattended.

Confidentiality

All teachers have been entrusted with the education of their students. Each child is special and each will have their own positive attributes as well as areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the teacher to identify these areas and to strengthen the weaknesses and improve the strengths. The information/background knowledge of a child must be kept confidential. To share information about the child in any venue that is

not part of the educational learning environment or to help in the growth of the child should always be avoided. Speaking about a child in the faculty room, the grocery store, or anywhere else needs to be avoided at all costs. Speaking about an individual child outside of a professional setting not only betrays that trust, but places the educator in a serious compromising position. Educators must remember to maintain a high degree of ethics and responsibility in regards to all students and to maintain an irreproachable level of confidentiality.

Family Rights

Teacher candidates and teachers are partners with the school, the families, and the community to help children reach their potential. It is through this partnership that great things can begin to occur. Families have the right to be part of the education of their child and need to share in educational decisions that are made. All families/guardians have the right to review the curriculum that their child will be taking. They do not have the right to demand that you change the curriculum, but to actively be involved in the implementation of that curriculum. If they wish for that curriculum to change, the request would occur at the Board of Education level. Parents have the right to review their child's school records and the child's personnel file. All parents have the right to be included in their child's discipline plan and to work with the school for a successful end. They do not have the right to overrule the school or its policies, but rather request a hearing on any issue that may occur. A teacher must affirm that parents are part of the team needed to educate the child. Even in the case of divorced or separated parents, they still maintain their educational rights unless these rights are specifically removed by the courts. Only when a legal document that removes any educational or visitation rights

from either parent is presented to the school, may the teacher deny access to records or refuse to permit one parent from seeing or removing that child from the school. Parents must be included in the development of Individualized Educational Programs for Special Needs children and must also be part of any discipline plan that is developed for students with special needs. Laws have been enacted that give parents and schools equal responsibility to ensure a quality and responsible education for the child. Educational personnel need to work in cooperation with all appropriate school employees to develop a specially designed instruction plan to meet the needs of a child with a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. All children are entitled to receive, under public supervision and direction, specially designed instruction (free and appropriate public education) and services at an appropriate setting (least restrictive environment).

Conclusion

These education topics are only a few of the many areas of school law that teacher candidates/new teachers should become familiar with. As the legal system continues to redefine issues, new government policies are put into place, and communities become more involved in their schools, new laws will be developed and different interpretations of current laws will evolve. It is imperative that teachers know the legal system and what their responsibilities are. For then, they will be able to concentrate more fully on their primary responsibility of educating students to their fullest potential.