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ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates data collected by the New England Program for Teacher Education (NEPTE) in order to propose guidelines for school/college student teaching partnerships. Related document (SP 005 852), "A Survey on Student Teaching Practices," presents data collected on current practicum arrangements and recommendations regarding the practicum from persons concerned with the preparation of teachers. This paper evaluates data relating to ten areas: early clinical experiences, school screening of student teachers, screening cooperating teachers, preservice orientation of cooperating teachers, stated programs of clinical experiences, guidelines for cooperating teachers, effective participation by cooperating teachers in evaluation of student teachers, pay for cooperating teacher service, seminars at schools for student teachers to relate practicum to other aspects of education and school/college supervisors. (Related document is SP 005 852.) (MJM)

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EVALUATION OF DATA COLLECTED BY THE N.E.P.T.E. RELATING
TO PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL/COLLEGE STUDENT TEACHING
PARTNERSHIPS

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I. EARLY CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Student teachers polled indicate the need for more time for actual classroom work with children providing the opportunity for many varied practical experiences before commencing student teaching. They feel that training for teaching is best accomplished by doing and that early and varied experiences with children are of greater value than course work. Student teachers feel that the ideal program for training teachers should provide many opportunities for extensive interaction between children and prospective teachers throughout the college years.

Almost all cooperating teachers responding indicate that previous exposure to classroom and children should be a prerequisite to student teaching. Most cooperating teachers feel as do the student teachers; that is, prospective teachers learn more in practicum type experiences than in college courses. The constraints operating against cooperating teachers; such as, student teachers not emotionally suited to teaching, student teachers not committed to teaching, lack of time during the student teaching practicum to diversify experiences for the prospective teacher, could be minimized through early and varied clinical experiences for the prospective teacher. The majority of cooperating teachers indicate that early experiences with children are essential to the ideal program for preparation of teachers.

About half of the college supervisors and directors of student teaching responding state that they require previous field work with children as prerequisite to student teaching. A few others specify that prior summer teaching is prerequisite to student teaching. Some state that success in working with children is a

competancy required as prerequisite to student teaching. The majority of college supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate that the ideal program should provide opportunities to work with students at all ages. (The majority of respondents indicate that earlier placement in schools coupled with community involvement are essential to the preparation of teachers in an ideal program.) Clinical centers and summer teaching are two of the mechanisms recommended to attain the goal of early and varied interaction with children.

II. SCHOOL SCREENING OF STUDENT TEACHER

Of the student teachers polled, approximately twenty-three percent met with neither college nor school personnel prior to assignment. Twenty percent indicate they were interviewed by the principal. Thirty percent were interviewed by the cooperating teacher. Seventeen percent were interviewed by some other member of the school staff. Nearly all the student teachers express their concern over the need to know the cooperating teacher. They express the desire to observe in many possible cooperating schools. They feel that student teachers and cooperating teachers should have the opportunity to interact and agree to work together prior to the assignment. Most student teachers feel that in the ideal program, student teachers and cooperating teachers should work together through mutual consent.

According to the cooperating teachers polled, forty-five percent have no established procedure for screening and selecting student teachers. The majority state that they have no role in the acceptance of student teachers. Only a small minority of cooperating teachers indicate that they interviewed the student teacher candidate

prior to assignment. The desire for assurance of compatibility of student teacher and cooperating teacher is frequently mentioned as the rationale for the pre-assignment interview. The overwhelming majority indicate that the process should be one of mutual selection thereby making an interview essential. In order to improve the process of screening and selection, the cooperating teachers indicate the need for information about the student teacher candidate; such as, student academic record and experiences with children. Only fourteen percent would require no data from the college. Some, a definite minority, indicate the colleges should assume the responsibility for screening the student teacher candidates. The ideal program is described as one providing mechanisms for continuous three way communication between and among the college staff, school staff, and student teacher; before, during and after student teaching. The ideal program should also involve the student teachers and cooperating teachers in the placement process, thereby making it a mutual screening process working to benefit all parties.

In contrast, the college supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate satisfaction on the whole with the present process. Many indicated there is an attempt to collaborate with the school in matching student teacher and cooperating teacher. Some indicate the use of interviews in this process. They describe the ideal program as one in which both student teacher and cooperating teacher are screened.

It appears on the surface that there is a difference in perception. However, the mechanisms for matching student teacher and cooperating teacher are not specified and in view of the data collected from cooperating teachers, the processes for screening do not include the cooperating teacher student teacher interviews which cooperating teachers and student teachers perceive as essential

to the screening process.

III. SCREENING COOPERATING TEACHERS

The case for screening the cooperating teachers is well made in the student teachers' responses to the questionnaire. They indicate that the cooperating teacher is the prime resource person for the student teacher. They stress the importance of the cooperating teacher's willingness to share her role with the student teacher. It is further indicated that the cooperating teacher is the most knowledgeable professional concerning the progress of the student teacher. Therefore, they feel the cooperating teacher is in the best position to evaluate the student teacher. They feel the cooperating teacher is the key person in the program. There is high praise for cooperating teachers who are supportive giving encouragement when needed, who are flexible and patient, who give student teachers the freedom to experiment. They indicate good communication skills are paramount. Student teachers also indicate that cooperating teachers have two years in a grade before acting as a cooperating teacher. Cooperating teachers should also choose to work with student teachers. According to student teachers, the ideal program would be one in which a mutual selection process is in operation, thus taking into account the needs of both the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

It is interesting to note in light of the stress the student teachers place upon cooperating teachers choosing to function as cooperating teachers, sixty-six percent of the cooperating teachers responding to the questionnaire requested student teachers. Twenty-three percent were assigned student teachers by a supervisor. Cooperating teachers also want a mutual agreement between student teachers and cooperating teachers to work together before assignment.

Cooperating teachers, in agreement with the student teachers, indicate that the cooperating teacher is the key person. They feel the cooperating teacher should be experienced, competent, enthusiastic, and eager to supervise prospective teachers.

The college supervisors and directors of student teaching recommend that more effective mechanisms be established for the matching of student teachers and cooperating teachers. They indicate the need to develop a cadre of cooperating teachers. Presently, in the majority of cases, the cooperating teacher is selected by the school. In a few cases some cooperating teachers are known through experience by the college. The vast majority indicate the need for a joint selection of the cooperating teacher by college and school. The criteria most often mentioned for selecting cooperating teachers are: excellence as a teacher, ability to supervise effectively, willingness to serve as a cooperating teacher, and three years teaching experience as a minimum.

IV. PRESERVICE ORIENTATION OF COOPERATING TEACHERS

The student teachers reflect the need for more effective preservice orientation of cooperating teachers in stating that there is much ambiguity in the student teacher role. They further stated that the cooperating teacher need to be informed concerning the expectations of the college.

Sixty-one percent of the cooperating teachers indicate that they lacked formal background in supervision. Twenty-seven percent of cooperating teachers have supervised two or less student teachers. Eighteen and eight tenths percent have supervised one or none. Eighteen colleges or universities are sending student teachers into the schools sampled. The cooperating teachers polled indicate a need for greater collaboration with the college, a need for relevant

training in supervision, and three way communication before, during and after student teaching.

College supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate that student teaching programs will be more effective if cooperating teachers are provided with a college seminar in supervision as well as an orientation session to student teaching. They indicate the need for closer cooperation between school and college. The major constraint operating to diminish the effectiveness of student teaching programs is indicated as the divergent viewpoints existant between college supervisor and cooperating teacher in regard to Philosophy of Education and Methodology. College supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate that joint planning is almost non-existent, yet the majority of respondents wanted no change in this regard. Only a few respondents indicate that there should be closer collaboration in determining the goals of student teaching.

V. STATED PROGRAMS OF CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

The median number of weeks of student teaching is twelve weeks with a range of from five weeks to one year. Of the responding student teachers, twenty one percent are graduate students; fifty four percent are seniors, twenty four percent are juniors and less than one percent are sophomores. The median number of teachers observed by each student teacher is three. Eighteen percent of the student teachers observed only one teacher and twelve percent observed six or more teachers. Fifty four percent of student teachers indicate they attended no faculty meetings, twelve percent attended one, eleven percent two, five percent three, and eighteen percent attended four or more. Fifty three percent of the student teachers indicate that they were not involved in any professional meetings or activities, only fourteen percent indicate they attended

department meetings, eleven percent attended PTA meetings, eight percent were involved in workshops, five percent were involved in school productions. The range of cooperating teachers that student teachers worked with is from one to five. Sixty seven percent worked with one cooperating teacher, twenty four percent with two, seven percent with three. The range in number of teachers in whose room the student teachers taught was from one to thirteen. Fifty two percent of the student teachers indicate they taught in only one classroom, thirty three percent in two, and fifteen percent in three or more. Approximately ten percent of the student teachers had student teaching experience in another school in the system. Twenty four percent have had a student teaching experience in another school system.

The highest frequency of responses by college supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate that the program of preparation for student teachers is mainly to meet course requirements. Next in frequency is the indication that an integrated and graduated program from the freshman year on is required of prospective teachers. A lesser number of respondents indicate that prior field work experience is the means utilized to prepare students for student teaching. Fewer still indicate that a summer teaching program is the mechanism for the preparation of students for student teaching. In describing competencies, experiences or learnings required before student teaching, almost without exception, the college supervisor and director of student teaching indicate satisfactory completion of course work as the criterion. Very few indicate success in working with children as prerequisite to student teaching.

The ideal college program is described by college supervisors and directors of student teaching as a cooperative effort with the school districts. It should be individualized. Clinical centers

involving students in reality should be set-up and utilized. Public school teaching centers are mentioned by many as essential to a program.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

Student teachers recommend that cooperating teachers have specific knowledge of the expectations of the college for the student teachers. Many indicate confusion on the part of the cooperating teacher as to her role. Many student teachers as well indicate that a clear specification of the roles of cooperating teacher and student teacher will minimize some of the problems encountered during the practicum.

Cooperating teachers want closer collaboration with the college. They feel their effectiveness as cooperating teachers will be improved if there are workshops dealing with guidelines for student teaching and seminars concurrent with the student teaching experience. A majority of cooperating teachers responding to the questionnaire indicate a definite need for more specific information concerning the objectives of student teaching as well as the college requirements for student teachers. The majority of cooperating teachers indicate that one of the more serious constraints in the practicum is the excessive and unrealistic demands made by some colleges. Others mention that they did not know what was expected of them. In the ideal program, procedures should be established to provide for closer collaboration with the college as well as opportunities for input from cooperating teachers. Greater specification of roles of cooperating teacher and student teacher is also recommended.

College supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate the necessity of guidelines as well as orientation seminars for the purpose of clarifying the guidelines. It is felt that this

orientation session plus a seminar on supervision of student teachers will improve the effectiveness of the cooperating teacher. College supervisors and directors of student teaching want to see a greater collaborative effort in planning the practicum, especially the goals of student teaching. The majority indicate there is very little done in this regard at present. This may be helpful in reducing the divergence existing between college supervisors and cooperating teachers in the areas of Philosophy of Education and Methodology.

VII. EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION BY COOPERATING TEACHER IN EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHER

Most student teachers polled are evaluated by both the cooperating teacher and college supervisor either together or singly. This evaluation is followed up by a conference. A few indicate that their evaluation is an ongoing process conducted by the cooperating teacher. Student teachers indicate that they feel this is not a gradeable experience. If a grade must be given, they feel the cooperating teacher is best qualified to give the grade due to her proximity to the ongoing situation. They further indicate that if this procedure is not feasible, then a grade arrived at jointly by the college supervisor and cooperating teacher is satisfactory. A "pass-fail" mark plus a written evaluation as a result of conferences between college supervisor, cooperating teacher and student teacher is the desire of the vast majority. They indicate that evaluation should be frequent and followed up by a three way conference.

The majority of cooperating teachers do not want any change in the present process. A few comment that the evaluation itself should be essay type or open-ended. Presently, the forms for

evaluation are provided by the school or college. The procedure for evaluation includes a conference with cooperating teacher and college supervisors. A few indicate there should be self-evaluation by the student teacher. Some also indicate the evaluation should be in terms of professional and personal growth of the student teacher. The highest frequency of respondents indicate that the grade should be jointly arrived at by the cooperating teacher and college supervisor. The next highest frequency include the student teacher in the process. Few indicate there should be no grade given. An insignificant number suggest that the cooperating teacher alone should have the responsibility of grading. The cooperating teachers report that the most serious constraint is the difficulty evaluating the average to poor student. Few mention that in the ideal program no grades will be given.

The majority of college supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate that the current procedure is the joint evaluation of the student teacher by the college supervisor and cooperating teacher. A few report that the evaluation include the student teacher in the process. The majority again indicate no desire to change the procedure. Few indicate that the student teacher should be included in the process or self evaluation or that self evaluation by the student teacher be included in the composite grade. In regard to the grade, college supervisors and directors of student teaching feel it should be arrived at jointly by the college supervisor and cooperating teacher. "Pass-fail" is frequently mentioned as being desirable. Some feel the grade should be determined through the combined effort of the college supervisor, cooperating teacher and student teacher. It is further indicated that the student's permanent record should have the grades of the cooperating teacher and college supervisor recorded. The grade should be in terms of "pass-fail."

There should also be included a written evaluation of the student teacher by both the college supervisor and cooperating teacher.

VIII. PAY FOR COOPERATING TEACHER'S SERVICE

The majority of cooperating teachers indicate that the tuition voucher is the form of remuneration they prefer. Next in order of preference is that additional salary be the manner of recognizing services rendered. Others indicate that release time should be a consideration. Hence the priority assigned by cooperating teachers to method of recognition is: (1) tuition voucher (2) additional salary (3) release time.

In contrast, the priorities set by the college supervisors and directors of student teaching are just the reverse: (1) release time (2) additional salary (3) tuition voucher. Each group apparently feels that it is the responsibility of the other to remunerate the cooperating teacher. Cooperating school personnel polled feel the college or university utilizing the school should provide the remuneration in the way of tuition free courses. The agencies utilizing the local schools, colleges, and universities, feel the local school district should provide the remuneration in the way of release time for local school personnel involved in practicum type experiences. The number of responses from each group, cooperating teachers and college supervisors, indicating staff or faculty appointment as a means of recognition are minimal and insignificant in number.

IX. SEMINARS AT SCHOOLS FOR STUDENT TEACHERS TO RELATE PRACTICUM TO OTHER ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

Some student teachers indicate the need for more relevant methods courses, as well as additional training and varied experiences with children prior to student teaching. There is the desire for

There is the desire for methods courses to be held during periods of student teaching. Many student teachers indicate a desire for seminars with cooperating teachers present to integrate the student teaching experience with coursework. They further indicate that they want the opportunity to share experiences with other student teachers. In the ideal program, the highest priority should be given to holding seminars with cooperating teachers, as well as meetings with specialists in reading and math.

The cooperating teachers indicate that they want to be involved in seminars with student teachers and college supervisors. This is one approach to closer collaboration between school and college. A very small number of cooperating teachers feel they have very little influence upon the training of student teachers. A small number also indicate that college courses have little correlation with classroom teaching.

A few colleges provide weekly seminars with student teachers and cooperating teachers as part of the supervisory process. One college has two teacher training centers with cooperative planning of methods seminars and practicum. The ideal program will have a clinical center wherein theory and practice can be interrelated.

X. SCHOOL COLLEGE SUPERVISORS

The student teachers indicate the need for greater and more frequent contact with college supervisors. They feel the college supervisor needs more specific knowledge of the individual school and school system. They feel that college supervisors need recent classroom experience at the grade and level they are supervising. Several stress the need for improved collaboration between college supervisors, cooperating teachers and student teachers. In the ideal program, there will be collaboration between school and college;

there will be more frequent visits from the college supervisor; there will be more three way conferences among student teachers, cooperating teachers and college supervisors. There must be an attempt to reduce the ambiguity of the student teacher role.

The cooperating teachers report the need for closer cooperation between cooperating teacher and college supervisor to establish goals and expectations for student teachers. Cooperating teachers feel their effectiveness can be increased through closer collaboration with the college as by a concurrent seminar with college supervisors, student teachers and other cooperating teachers. A very high number indicate the need for greater availability of the college supervisor and more frequent visitation of classes. They state that college supervisors need to be better informed on the policies of the school system. They further indicate that college supervisors need a more realistic view of education. They feel that supervision should be the only responsibility of the college supervisor. College supervisors should not be students for advanced degrees. Some suggest that the college supervisors should be jointly appointed by the college and school. Cooperating teachers feel that the constraints militating against their effectiveness are: (1) the unrealistic demands made upon them and the student teachers by some colleges, (2) the lack of involvement with college supervisors, (3) the lack of concern of the college supervisors. In the ideal program, there must be greater collaboration between college and school, continuous three way communication at the student teaching school. Many indicate that the college supervisors be teachers in the school systems with academic rank in the college. Their function should be to assume total responsibility for student teaching including weekly seminar.

College supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate that each student teacher receives three to four visits minimum from a college supervisor for an eight week experience. The majority indicate that each visit is followed by a conference between college supervisor and student teacher. One college has a liaison person in the schools, another has a person jointly appointed by school and college to work with student teachers and cooperating teachers. The college supervisors feel almost without exception that the college supervisor is the resource person who should be readily available to the student teacher. College supervisors feel the student teaching program can be made more effective by increasing the number of college supervisors, student teachers, and cooperating teachers contacts. Some feel more training or more recent classroom experience is necessary to increase their effectiveness. Lack of time is mentioned by most as the most serious constraint by college supervisors. Many indicate that the student teacher-college supervisor ratio is too high. Some indicate that the divergence between college supervisor and cooperating teacher in Philosophy of Education and Methodology is a problem. The majority indicate that there is no joint planning between college and school. Yet, in spite of the shortcomings in the student teaching programs, the majority of college supervisors and directors of student teaching indicate no desire to change. Only a minority indicate the need for a collaborative effort in planning the goals of student teaching.