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ABSTRACT

During the internship year, every new teacher (intern) in the Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program is assigned a resource teacher who serves as a mentor and model. The resource teacher is responsible for assisting the intern in instructional activities and techniques, classroom management, tests and interpretation of test results, teaching exceptional children, working with parents, planning, scheduling, organization, and identification of needed resources. A comprehensive, structured telephone survey was conducted to evaluate the resource teachers' performances of their responsibilities. A total of 98 teachers were interviewed. Specifically, the objectives of this research study were to: (1) identify the responsibilities which resource teachers performed frequently or in which they felt deficient; (2) identify training needs of the resource teachers; and (3) identify procedural, administrative, logistical, and other similar problems and determine their impact on the resource teacher's performance. Findings are selectively reported and discussed according to these research objectives. (JD)

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Evaluation of Resource Teachers:

Kentucky Beginning Teacher

Internship Program

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Evaluation of Resource Teachers: Kentucky's Beginning Teacher Internship Program

The Beginning Teacher Internship Program is a major step toward the continued improvement of education in Kentucky. During the internship year, every new teacher (intern) is assigned a Resource Teacher who is to serve as a "mentor" and "model". The Resource Teacher is specifically responsible for assisting the intern with improvement in instructional activities and techniques, classroom management, tests and interpretation of test results, teaching exception children, working with parents, planning, scheduling, organization and identification of needed resources. In general, the Resource Teacher is charged with the responsibility of developing an intern into an effective and successful teacher and professional.

The responsibilities of the Resource Teacher clearly show that they are the key to the success of the Beginning Teacher Internship Program. The competence and quality of Resource Teachers would have a significant impact on the future teachers. A study was therefore conducted to evaluate the Resource Teacher's performance of their responsibilities. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Identify the responsibilities which Resource Teachers performed frequently or in which they felt deficient to determine the effectiveness of their performance.
2. Identify training needs of the Resource Teacher, if any, related to observation, consultation, communication, interpersonal and other skills to evaluate the performance of responsibilities.
3. Identify procedural, administrative, logistical, and other similar problems and to determine their impact on the Resource Teachers' performance of their responsibilities.

Method

A comprehensive, structured telephone survey was conducted by the presenters in Summer, 1986. The telephone survey approach was chosen to assure higher "return" rate, more indepth and refined responses, and to facilitate more accurate data recording and interpretation, since the researchers conducted the telephone interviews themselves. Telephone interview was selected in preference to personal interview because of cost and time effectiveness.

Subjects

One-sixth of the approximately 750 Resource Teachers who served in the 1985-86 Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Pro-

gram were randomly selected for this survey. Of those selected, some could not be reached on the telephone. A total of 98 Resource Teachers representing 65 counties were interviewed. Table I presents some pertinent demographic data of the interviewees.

Table 1. Selective Demographic Data of
Resource Teachers Interviewed (n=98)

<u>Grade Taught</u>		<u>Teaching Experience (yrs)</u>				<u>Mismatch with Intern's</u>	
<u>G-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>0-5</u>	<u>6-10</u>	<u>11-20</u>	<u>20+</u>	<u>Tchg. Area</u>	<u>Sch. Bldg.</u>
62 (63%)	36 (37%)	3 (3%)	19 (20%)	64 (65%)	12 (12%)	12 (K-8) 19%	15 (K-8) 24%
						14 (9-12) 38%	4 (9-12) 11%

Instrument

A "Resource Teacher Survey Questionnaire" was specifically designed for this survey. The Questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I yielded demographic data. Part II was based on the "Duties and Responsibilities of the Resource Teacher" detailed on page 27 of the Handbook for Beginning Teachers and Beginning Teacher Committee (1985-86); and the insight developed by the presenters while working with Resource Teachers. There were 33 items, most of which were forced-choice (for quantification purposes), with open-ended follow-ups (for qualification purposes).

Procedure

- The survey study was conducted by the following steps:
1. On July 3, a letter was sent to each of the randomized teacher samples, explaining the purpose and the procedures of the questionnaire-based telephone survey, and requesting their participation. A copy of the questionnaire was enclosed for the potential respondents' preview.
 2. About a week following the letter-mailing, the researchers began the individual telephone interviews. The survey was completed in 3 weeks. Responses were recorded on individual questionnaires by the interviewers. Each interview averaged about 20 minutes.
 3. Responses were categorized, tabulated, and analyzed for interpretation, some manually and some by computer.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was the major means for data analyses,

both for the demographic data in Part I and the forced-choice items in Part II. Responses were grouped together according to the three research objectives. Teachers of grades K-8 were separated from those of grades 8-12 to identify differences, if any, on responsibilities and needs. A Chi-square was performed to test for statistical significance in differences. Responses to open-ended items were noted and categorized to supplement, qualify, or yield specific information in their respective areas.

Results and Discussion

Some important findings are selectively reported and discussed according to the research objectives:

1. Responsibilities frequently performed by Resource Teachers at the "minimum of 50 hours outside of class time working with their interns" (Handbook, p. 27, #1,4).

Resource Teachers' performance on their required responsibilities were rank ordered according to the frequency percentages. These are reflected in Table 2 for the whole group and also separately for K-8 and 9-12 grades Resource Teachers.

In general, the performance of K-8 Resource Teachers was similar to those of grades 9-12. Resource Teachers very frequently assisted the interns with "classroom management", "instructional activities and techniques", and "locating resources". They ranked 1,2, and 3 respectively. "Instructional activities and techniques" ranked second because fewer Resource Teachers reported helping interns with instructional content. This was specially obvious when there was a mismatch between the intern's and Resource Teacher's teaching area. The most common reason given was unfamiliarity with the field (e.g. Special Education) or content area. There was a sharp decrease in frequency relating to the rest of the responsibilities. According to the interviewees, a large number of the interns did not need help with "parent conferencing", "planning", "scheduling", "teaching exceptional children", and with "testing, interpreting test results". The reasons were usually that interns were not required to perform such duties, or interns were competent in those areas. We also speculated that, at times, Resource Teachers themselves were less proficient to recognize the need or to offer guidance in some of these competencies. Since many Resource Teachers complained that the 50-hour requirement was excessive, perhaps they could spend some time with their interns in these areas. If they were inadequate, they may need training in these areas.

Statistically, significant differences were found between K-8 and 9-12 Resource Teachers on "teaching exceptional children" and "scheduling". The reasons could be that there are more handicapped students mainstreamed in the elementary schools, whereas fewer of them are in high school chemistry or algebra classes. Scheduling in high schools are generally structured and handled by administrators; while in self contained elementary classrooms it demands skills on the teachers. This partially supports some interviewees' suggestion for differential training for the two groups of Resource Teachers.

2. Training needs related to observation, consultation, communication, interpersonal and other skills for the 20-hour in-class observation and other requirements. (Handbook p. 27, #1,2,5).

All Resource Teachers, especially K-8, reported high frequencies and competencies in consultation, communication, and interpersonal relationship with their interns and other committee members. Their overall perception of their performance was excellent. All of them perceived themselves as good models and mentors. Most of them expressed no need for additional training. Of the few who identified training needs, three specified conferencing skills, and three wanted training in the Formative Instrument. Such success and confidence could be attributed to the fact that 64% of them had 11-20 years of teaching experience, while only 3% had taught fewer than six years. These veterans could have a lot of expertise and practical wisdom to share with the young interns. No wonder 90% of the 98 interviewees wanted to serve again, some rather enthusiastically. Most of them mentioned the desire and opportunity to help young teachers as their main reason for willing to serve again.

As to the observation skills, a few were critical of the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS) Summative instrument. However, some had not observed their interns for "other purposes" even though it was specified in the Handbook. Of those who did observe for other purposes, very few could describe what they observed. Perhaps, other observational skills could be added in future training.

3. Procedural, administrative, logistical problems.

Many Resource teachers who complained about the excessiveness of the 20-50 hours requirement, or about problems in scheduling in-class observation or out-of-class work sessions, did so because of logistical problems. Problems occurred more often in high schools where substitute teachers in certain subject

areas were difficult to obtain, or when there were mismatches in buildings and teachers had to travel long distances. Some principals were not flexible nor supportive. A few did not provide substitute teachers. Quite a few Resource Teachers felt shortchanging their own classes. In fact, several did not want to serve again because they did not want to travel or leave their own students so frequently.

Conclusions

The Resource Teachers provided most assistance in the areas of classroom management. It was followed closely by help given for instructional techniques and location of resources. Perhaps teacher education programs at the preservice level need to pay additional emphasis on these three areas. Very few Resource Teachers observed the interns for other purposes. They would perhaps gain from training in observational skills which could be incorporated at the inservice level. A few Resource Teachers identified a training need in the area of conferencing skills which should perhaps also be addressed at the inservice level. It is possible that improved conferencing skills would result in better teacher-parent relationships and greater involvement of the parents in school. The training need in the Formative Instrument of FPMS also needs to be addressed.

With the exception of eight Resource Teachers, all others thought that the 20-50 hours required of them were far too excessive. A majority of them qualified their remarks by saying that the time was excessive because their "intern was so good" and did not need help. It appears that the Resource Teachers feel quite competent in performing their responsibilities.

NOTE: Copies of the questionnaire and complete data are available from the first author upon request.

Table 2. Responsibilities Performed
By Resource Teachers (50-hr. Requirements)

	<u>f(%)</u>	<u>K-8</u> <u>rank</u>	<u>f(%)</u>	<u>9-12</u> <u>rank</u>	<u>All</u> <u>rank</u>
<u>Assistance in</u>		<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Management Tech-</u>					
<u>niques</u>					
Conduct	94	2	84	4	4
Others	92	4	95	1	3
<u>Instructional Skills</u>		<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Activities	93	<u>3</u>	95	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Techniques	95	1	91	3	1
Content	82	7	70	8	7
<u>Locating Resources</u>		<u>3</u>		<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Professionals	90.2	<u>6</u>	76	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
Materials	90.3	5	84	4	5
<u>Parent Conferencing</u>		<u>4</u>		<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
	81.0	<u>8</u>	67	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Planning, Schedul-</u>		<u>6</u>		<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>ing, etc.</u>					
Lesson Planning	76	9	73	7	8
Organization	74	10	47	12	11
*Scheduling	61	13	30	14	14
<u>Exceptional</u>		<u>5</u>		<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Children</u>					
*Teaching	74	10	47	12	11
ex. children					
<u>Assistance In</u>		<u>7</u>		<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Tests and Inter-</u>					
<u>pretation</u>					
Testing	71	12	70	8	10
Interpreting	57	14	51	11	13