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AUTHOR Navarro, Virginia
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ABSTRACT

This narrative recounts the process of developing and implementing a field component in a preservice course on the psychology of teaching and learning at a large urban school of education. The professional development model of integrated school reform was used as a theoretical base. The field component of the course had two strands: reflective observations and mentoring students identified by teachers as at-risk. Data include survey feedback from: (1) a team of 5 middle school teachers; (2) 14 mentored seventh graders; and (3) the 25 university students in the course. Other sources of information and interpretation are the preservice teachers' final papers in the course that analyzed the field experience in terms of a psychological principle of teaching and learning, and notes from initial meetings as well as a followup meeting with the middle school teachers and several university students after the semester ended. Looking at the data from a cost/benefit ratio perspective, this small Professional Development School (PDS) initiative reveals both intended and unintended benefits and also reveals specific contextual barriers to implementation in a nonresident, noncohort school of education. Challenges to implementing this field program in a subsequent semester highlight the dynamic nature of working in PDS settings. Appendixes contain notes on fieldwork experiences, the student survey, and the assignment from the university class syllabus. (Contains 2 tables and 31 references.) (Author/SLD)

Running head: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AS MENTORS



# Developing a Psychology of Learning in the Field:

# Pre-service Mentoring of At-Risk Middle School Students

Virginia Navarro

University of Missouri, St. Louis





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E-mail: Virginia_Navarro@umsl.edu)

## Abstract

This narrative recounts the process of developing and implementing a field component in a pre-service course on the psychology of teaching and learning at a large urban school of education. The professional development model of integrated school reform was used as a theoretical base. The field component of the course had two strands: Reflective observations and mentoring students identified by teachers as at-risk. Data includes survey feedback from a) a team of five middle school teachers, b) the mentored seventh graders, and c) the university students in the course. Other sources of information and interpretation are the pre-service teachers' final papers in the course which analyzed the field experience in terms of a psychological principle of teaching and learning, and notes from initial meetings as well as a follow-up meeting with the middle school teachers and several university students after the semester ended. Looking at the data from a cost/benefit ratio perspective, this small PDS initiative reveals both intended and unintended benefits but also reveals specific contextual barriers to implementation in a non-resident, non-cohort school of education. Challenges to implementing this field program in a subsequent semester highlight the dynamic nature of working in PDS settings.

Developing a Psychology of Learning in the Field:

Pre-service Mentoring of At-Risk Middle School Students

Designing opportunities for pre-service teachers to bridge theory and practice through guided field experiences is an essential component of a Professional Development model of preparing teachers. As part of efforts to restructure schools, the model of a professional development school (PDS) has emerged as a form and process that integrates pre-service education, in-service professional development, and school reform with research in schools of education (The Holmes Group, 1992, 1995; Goodlad, 1990; Lieberman, 1995). A body of qualitative literature and case studies documents the PDS process, both challenges and opportunities that evolve in situational contexts (Hoy et al., 1996; Black & Davern, 1998; Mandtle & Bromley, 1998; Trubowitz & Longo, 1997; Miller & O'Shea, 1996). What is clear is that no one template can address the diverse needs of many shareholders in such a multi-layered paradigm.

My own lived experiences inform my beliefs about the efficacy of the PDS process. As a former high school English teacher, I respect the work of teachers. As a parent of four children, aged 12 to 26, I feel comfortable around young people and schools. As a researcher with a sociocultural orientation, I believe in situational context-bound meaning-making and the power of engaging in dialogue with others. Instructional conversations are pivotal to teacher growth. Despite extensive research in the teaching and learning process, "best practice" remains elusive. I believe instructional conversations, informed by both theory and skills in reflective practice, provide a powerful model for building complex teacher knowledge. As a relative novice to university teaching, I am actively rethinking the curriculum of my courses and designing ways to construct knowing in experiential and reflective tasks rooted in one's own social history.

Often a valid idea such as a developmental apprenticeship in teacher education gets appropriated and implemented by requiring blocks of time spent in the schools without well-defined activities or goals. Requiring field time in university courses without a coherent developmental plan for skill building and in depth reflection and deconstruction of the experience can be counter-productive to teacher learning. This text analyzes my experience introducing a field component to a required psychology of teaching and learning course in a large

urban university using PDS literature as a theoretical framework (Watson & Jacka, 1996; Draft standards for PDS, 1996; Professional development schools: A strategy for educational reform in Missouri, a concept paper, 1997).

This paper will be organized in four sections: First, a discussion of the methodology and perceived benefits and difficulties in planning and implementing field experiences, second, an analysis of survey data from various shareholders, third, content analysis of student papers for evidence of complex constructions of teaching and learning concepts, and fourth, sharing lessons learned and next steps for others who are engaged in implementing a PDS model of simultaneous renewal of teacher education and school practice.

## Methodology

After attending a conference on teaching educational psychology in Spring, 1996, at which there emerged a consensus that undergraduate students were generally not able to construct teacher knowledge from studying theoretical positions isolated from practical applications, I began attending Professional Development School Collaborative (PDSC) meetings. An umbrella organization for local university and school partnerships in the St. Louis area, the PDSC, with the support of the Danforth Foundation, has fostered rich dialogue among many stakeholders trying to improve educational quality through PDS initiatives of school renewal and reform. At the same time, a new Dean at my institution, affiliated with the Holmes group, initiated an eighteen month Futures planning process which supported collaborative efforts.

### Doing it by the book- and other mythologies of success

When I wrote the AERA proposal for this session after reviewing the survey data and my student papers from this first fieldwork semester, I was convinced I had a success story to share on how to plan and implement a field model for pre-service teachers. But I still had much to learn about the politics of working in schools. My naivete resulted in shock when I learned right before Christmas break, after many efforts to contact the seventh grade team of teachers I had worked with, that the group had decided not to extend the invitation for university involvement in the 1998 winter term. This was puzzling because survey feedback from the teachers indicated that only one of the five teachers did not wish to continue with the model; I had not expected a problem. This PDS middle school principal actively supports collaborative efforts including having

university interns for each teacher, providing an in-building classroom, and supporting building teachers becoming major PDSC players, some even teaching for the university as clinical faculty.

So where had I gone wrong? Informal networking suggested that some of the teachers took offense with comments in my students' papers about how different classroom environments and relationships helped or hindered the learning of mentored students. After scrambling to identify another team to work with, I initiated a conversation with the original team's leader to try and understand what I had missed. Asking directly, "What did I do wrong?" and "How can we learn and build on the past?" I was told that I had not done anything wrong, but that the team did not have an extensive group of students this year needing the extra tutoring help. Therefore, they had decided they did not wish to continue the mentoring program with my class. She concluded with saying that she hoped we might work together again when the team felt they had a group of students who needed extra help. I felt the reasons for discontinuing were probably more complex than this explanation.

I knew that one of the teachers on the original seventh grade team has been moved to a sixth grade slot this year, and I began to ponder who might have had access to my students' papers outside the group. Another professor who spends time in the building indicated that perhaps the shared papers written by my students had been the real cause of the decision not to continue the collaboration. A brief aside by the principal at another meeting aroused my curiosity; might he have had access to these papers intended only for the team of five teachers? I learned that trying to initiate honest and constructive dialogue between pre and in-service teachers is fraught with risk and liabilities, yet I still believe we need to orient new teachers to the central role of such dialogue in their ongoing development as teachers. I chose not to probe the issue further because I am now working with other teams in this building, but I am trying to be more sensitive to the climate. Deciding on whether to risk sharing my students' papers again is a hard decision although I did distribute copies of my observation analysis assignment to the teachers at the beginning of the term.

The initial plan

Acting on my belief that my students would benefit from a well-structured experience in the field at an established PDS site, I started to gather feedback from students while casting around for an appropriate location

to begin this PDS adventure. A first step was to survey the students I was then teaching on the nature and quality of past experiences in the field. These comments suggest a need for better defined roles to play and a desire to match field experiences with both methods and subject domain interests (See summary, Appendix A, p. 25). One candidate for partnering was a large suburban middle school in an affluent district with two teams of 150 students for 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The university had partnered with the school for several years extending an intern program to every classroom. These pre-student-teaching internships involve 20 hours a week in the field, a $750 stipend, and three hours university credit. At present, they are a voluntary component of the teacher education program.

Believing in the value of teacher initiated programs that are truly collaborative in nature, I began dialogue with a seventh grade team leader at this middle school whom I had met at a PDSC meeting because she had vocalized an interest in teaming with a university partner. We set up two meetings with the team of five teachers she worked with to plot constructive ways to involve my students. How could we design this learning experience so that everyone would benefit: Classroom students, in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and university professor? The teachers and I jointly constructed a plan for university student involvement with two strands: 1) focused observations on concepts about teaching and learning, and 2) mentoring at-risk students identified by the unified team. For a total of five two-hour blocks spread over the semester, my students would shadow an seventh grade student in two classes, offering academic and personal support in whatever ways seemed appropriate. Contact time would emphasize the diagnosis and remediation of skill deficits while building caring relationships. Two university students were assigned to one seventh grade student so a total of ten help sessions would be possible. These students, labeled at-risk, were generally not receiving special services but were students identified as not thriving either academically or socially. The teachers identified a group of fifteen students who they felt needed this extra support and help. Many of these students were participants in a court mandated desegregation program that provided bus service between city students and county schools. Several were ESL students. I wrote a letter to all those enrolled in my course informing them that a field requirement was part of this course and posted flyers around the building to

advertise the course. By winter term, 1997, we were underway with 34 university students, fifteen mentored students, and five seventh grade teachers.

Class time and field time: Striking a balance

The educational psychology course met twice a week for a 16 week semester. Because of the urban setting, almost all our students have transportation resources to commute to a field site. To compensate for the time added by a field requirement, four of the one-and-a-half hour regularly scheduled university classes were eliminated. I feel such a trade-off is a reasonable compromise and indicates to students that fieldwork is an important class objective while being respectful of the complexity of contemporary lives. A block schedule to provide both class time and field time at a PDS site, perhaps paired with a methods course, would provide a more efficient way of combining the two pieces. The time demand of PDS work is also a cost for the university professor and eventually professors might team with building teachers to teach such courses. A university classroom is available this year at the middle school and one of the building teachers is now an adjunct professor at the university. Scheduling requests from 34 students making five two-hour visits with specific targeted students is a frustrating and time-intensive process. Many asked to use a school close to their homes, but I feel using a PDS school is an important component of developmental field involvement because of the common point of reference in dialogue. Another suggestion for conflating multiple fieldwork demands is spending longer blocks of time in the school during a visit but using the activity for several courses.

Start-up strategies and resources

Two university students teamed to mentor one middle school student, which allowed for sharing insights and strategies with a partner during class time. Field notes using thick description (Geertz, 1983) and interpretive reflection (Lancy, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hammersley, 1990) were collected, read, and commented upon. These field notes constituted the data for a culminating observational analysis paper on a psychological concept such as motivation, attribution theory, or classroom climate or management; the paper was worth a fourth of the course points. Some students had greater access to their "mentored" student than others depending on the class pedagogy of the teachers they observed and the absentee patterns of the mentored

student. The final papers could, therefore, focus on either the observation strand and/or the mentoring strand of the field experience (See assignment, Appendix C, pp. 40-41).

The logistics of getting my students started involved several actions. For example, one of my students offered to print name badges for everyone. I then purchased holders for these, and a sign-in system at the middle school's central office was devised to verify attendance. I feel classroom teachers should not be asked to be responsible for such administrative details including any formal evaluation of my students' performance. A survey and frequent informal conversations were used for on-going feedback, however. A packet from the parent handbook was distributed which provided information on policy issues at this school, expectations for performance and behavior, and available outside activities and supports at this middle school. Samples of ways to observe classrooms were also included (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968; Good & Brophy, 1991).

Feedback resources

Survey data from all participants were collected at the end of the term to get feedback on the perceived positive and negative aspects of the program. I designed separate instruments (Appendix B, pp. 31,33, 35) for each group of shareholders including a) the five team teachers, b) the fifteen mentored students, and c) the pre-service teachers in my class. I also spent one morning a week in the field observing in the five classrooms to acquire a better knowledge base to interpret student comments. After the term was over a final meeting was scheduled with the participating teachers, several volunteer pre-service teachers from my class, and an intern from our school who had been working with this team and who had functioned as a facilitator for my students.

At this meeting I shared the survey data and several observational analysis papers from my students (with permission) with the seventh grade team of teachers; identifying names were removed before duplication. The teachers appeared very interested in my students' analyses of these students they had labeled at-risk. I later learned that comments made by my students about issues of teaching and learning did elicit some defensive reactions in some teachers.

Survey results: In-service teachers, mentored students, and pre-service teachers

Three participant groups were surveyed. Completed forms from 1) five middle-school teachers, 2) fourteen mentored at-risk students, and 3) twenty-five university students are summarized and interpreted with

suggestions for improving the experience in the future. The most prevalent complaint by all the groups was the lack of contact time between the mentored students and their university partners. I encouraged my students to consider applying for internships at this school which would be a logical next step in field involvement. The issue of balancing course content with field time is complex; this account of benefits and costs to various shareholders is an attempt to illuminate the choices of others attempting to discern how to structure field experiences within course content. In general, the survey responses indicated positive feelings about the collaboration.

In-service teachers

Four experienced teachers with years of teaching experience and one younger male in his third teaching year comprised this seventh grade team. Survey questions (p. 31) focused on behaviors of my students and outcomes for the mentored students. The most positive aspects of this effort from the teachers perspective was the increased hopefulness of mentored students toward school success (4/5) and a belief that the mentor cared about their school performance (3/5). What surfaced later in the decision to discontinue the program was these teachers' ambivalent feelings about the presence of other adults in their classrooms. When asked if the program should be continued, three circled "yes", one "no", and one left it blank. All but one of the teachers commented on the need for expanded contact time and more consistency in the times university students are present. Another problem perceived by the teachers was the lack of motivation in the mentored students. In general, the survey comments by the mentored students themselves, however, do not express such an indifference to school success. Many university students chose motivation as the topic of their observation analysis papers and reiterated the significance of motivational issues in these students' performance, but probed the situational reasons blocking school achievement.

Mentored students

From the mentored students' perspective 12/15 claimed that being part of the program was a good experience and gave reasons that connected the university students' activity directly with increased learning and understanding. One ESL student who filled out the survey with a few check marks rather than numbers wrote, "I beg you please make me pass. Just give me one chance I can do it," in response to a query about how

the program could be improved. The survey (p.33) asked the students to respond by ranking ten items on a Likert scale from 1 (high) to 5 (low). If they had no opinion, they put NA.

**Responses of seventh grade mentored students (14/15)**

| Survey issues (Commenting on university students) | NA | 1 high | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 low |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. help get organized | 2 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| B. friendliness | 0 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| C. personal interest | 1 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| D. teach study strategies | 0 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| E. worked w/teacher | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| F. enthusiasm | 0 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| G. contact time amount | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| H. time to work together | 0 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| I. more interest in schoolwork | 0 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| J. material more understandable | 0 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

These responses point to a generally strong interpersonal connection between the mentored pairs as shown in the high ratings of B, C, and F. Help getting organized, using study skills, and, in general, scaffolding explanations, found in items A, D, and J, also get relatively high marks from these students. A few comments expressed embarrassment with friends when trying to explain the relationship and special help received. One female student expressed discomfort with being "followed around" by a male student from my class. He too had questioned this attitude and had consulted with me during the semester; we agreed to have him back off because of her feelings. The other partner to this student was a female of the same race with whom the student was willing to converse with. When asked if being part of the program was a good or bad experience, the mentored students did support the teacher observations of becoming more hopeful. Here are some typical remarks (See Appendix B, pp. 33-34 for complete list):

"It help me realize what I need to do, work."

"It was a good experience because now I look forward to coming to class."

"A good experience because they helped you learn a lot and whenever you had any questions they were glad to answer."

A few students felt more ambiguous:

"Neither. She did not help or hurt me."

"It was okay but I don't like it if someone is just going to help not much because if your (sic) going to help me please come more than 1 or 2 times." This same student, finishes her comments with, "But they did a kind of really great job (Thanks!)".

As I reflect on the effort these students seem to put forth to offer positive feedback, I wonder if the same courtesy and caring has been extended to them when being assessed. What these mentored students' responses suggest to me is that even at the middle school level, students still want to get the help necessary to experience school success. They perceive the pre-service mentors as genuinely supporting their success as well as having knowledge that can help them move forward in their learning. Except for occasional personality conflicts, these students send an unequivocal message - "Send help!" Being perceived as helpful to these individuals, in turn, is a powerful motivator to pre-service teachers who often are attracted to the profession for altruistic reasons. Teaching should be about making a difference. The survey responses highlight the integral part being in relation to another plays in the teaching and learning paradigm.

Pre-service university teachers

A group of 34 students, signed up for a required psychology of learning three hour class, were informed by mail that a field component had been added. A class pre-requisite was being acceptance into the teacher education program. This group represented elementary, middle, and high school programs including physical education majors. The survey questions (p. 35) formulated for pre-service teachers were designed to assess the fieldwork process as well as the learning outcomes. The most common complaint about process issues was the distance of the school from their homes and, again, the lack of contact time to facilitate learning outcomes. They generally praised the teachers they worked with given the constraints of a classroom setting, but did request more one-on-one time with their student labeled at-risk. Classrooms that used group work or activities that left the teacher free to roam to assist individuals worked better for structuring opportunities to use extra hands-on-deck than a more traditional teacher-led setting in which any talk between the mentored partners was awkward and potentially disruptive. Usually the first few visits were more observational in nature. Later, the university students often used the atrium or hall for individualized help.

Some students also expressed confusion about what their role in the field should be and how to take field notes and write their observation analysis papers. They had been given models in the readings but more class dialogue is probably warranted. The comments suggest that these expectations became clearer as the term went on and issues were discussed in class. I have spent more time this semester orienting my students to the rationale behind a PDS model of teacher training (Tomorrow's Schools, 1992) and have added some select readings about how to observe in classrooms, (Smith, 1968; Patton, 1987; Good & Brophy, 1991).

Despite the fact that class composition included elementary and secondary pre-service teachers as well as three physical education majors and one art major, many students found working with middle school students useful to their learning. One pre-service teacher wrote that the experience opened the door to considering middle school certification; for another, the experience affirmed an assumption that this is not the age they prefer to work with. Here is a summary of the range of responses to the questions posed. (A compendium of my students written responses to each question appears in Appendix B, pp.36-38.)

**Responses of pre-service students (25/34)**

| Questions | 1 high | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 low |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. clear expectations of role in field? | 4 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| 2. would you recommend fieldwork to peer? | 8 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 3. were the teachers accommodating? | 16 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. did you get help in meeting student? | | 7 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| 5. do you feel you helped your student? | 3 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| 6. was school good choice to observe in? | 13 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 0 |
| 7. was this a good age group to work with? | 12 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. was 8-10 hours about right? | 7 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. personal learning from field component? | 8 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| 10. observation analysis paper/ knowledge integration? | 10 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 0 |

The positive responses to questions 9 and 10 sustain my willingness to commit the time and energy to scheduling students and spending time in the field myself. In informal conversations in and out of class, especially with mature and focused students, the message I get is that guided reflected observation and practice in field settings helps increase understandings and insights. The assignment to write an observation analysis

paper from field notes using a psychological concept about teaching and learning did seem to accomplish its primary goal of bridging theory and practice in thoughtful ways. A typical comment was "Very helpful in organizing my own thoughts on what I had just observed."

My hope is that as I develop this field experience, I will identify an elementary, middle, and secondary PDS site from which to choose. My belief is that by having experiences in a common field setting, the dialogue when applying principles of educational psychology will be more focused and detailed. Ideally, I would like to see blocked sections of this course and perhaps the psychology of the exceptional child offered to specific cohorts of elementary, middle, or secondary school pre-service teachers with a more extensive field component. This would allow for using case studies and field examples appropriate to a specific developmental age.

Content Analysis of Student Papers

The content of the pre-service teachers' final observational analysis papers provides a window into their conceptual understandings of how learning is empowered or constrained by a multitude of complex factors that interact simultaneously in a particular sociocultural context They learned different things depending on their own social histories and other factors, but all of the papers reflect an awareness of how difficult it is, in a short amount of time, to diagnose issues and offer appropriate support to one individual learner. Many papers commented on the situational and relational nature of motivation (i.e. "Johnny does great in Mrs. L's class but is failing Mr. G's class because..."). The majority of students identified teaching strategies used by the observed teachers which they either wish to emulate or would avoid in their own practice.

What I look for in the language of pre-service students is their ability to imagine themselves in the teaching role with a focus on student learning outcomes. I had hoped to challenge their perceptions of the teacher's role in reaching out to the student who is not thriving, is perhaps acting out, or who may challenge classroom control. By personalizing this student with a face and social context, I hoped that my students would take on an advocacy role, acting as mediators with the schooling system. Many university students exchanged phone numbers with the middle schoolers; one talked about taking his mentored student to a baseball game after school was out. Many expressed personal caring for these young students, modeling Nel Noddings'

(1995) concept of school nurturance. Some written analyses went beyond issues of caring to advocacy, recognizing problems of pedagogy and power in regard to disenfranchised students.

Topics of observation analysis papers

The topics chosen for focal points of the papers included such areas as motivation, classroom management issues, scaffolding in a student's zone of proximal development, attribution theory, metacognition, study strategies, transmission vs. constructivist models of learning, effective learning environments, questioning strategies, and cognitive processes. Using notes they had written in the field or immediately afterward, students tried to explicate the teaching and learning concepts they had chosen to reflect upon in light of real practice.

One pre-service teacher whose mentored student was not available very often chose to explicate the classroom management styles of two teachers concentrating on five variables: "arrangement of classroom, creating an effective classroom climate, setting limits, planning classroom activities, and staying aware of what students are doing." Jerry[1] noted that his mentee sat in a corner out of the sight line of the teacher, most questions were directed to those students in this visual field to the exclusion of others. Of particular interest to me, given the outcome of sharing these analyses, was the general empathic stance toward observed teacher behaviors acknowledging the limited exposure to classrooms:

> "I realize that I'm making statements about environments in which I'm not present in very often."
>
> "I'm a little uncomfortable with this but I'm writing on what I directly observed in a short period of time."

To help or not to help – that is the question

Acknowledgment of how one's own psychology of teaching and learning influences choices of instructional strategies was highlighted in several papers. A team of two pre-service teachers assigned to help one mentored student often diagnosed both problems and solutions differently:

> Depending how one views the relationship with the mentored students and the role the observer was to play may affect how we interact with them. The idea of this difference could be a possible explanation

[1] The names of all participants have been changed.

> for our very different ways of scaffolding with Jill. (She then refers to her university partner's choice to tutor by more actively writing down assignments and giving directives rather than this student's more facilitative role, giving clues and minimal directives).

Another pre-service teacher struggling with this issue shares her insight:

> One thing I learned from the project is that when I give a learning-disabled student more help than they really need, I am conveying that I expect low performance from them. Now that I am aware of this, one question still remains—how much help is too much?!

Recognizing that such questions do not have pat answers, but moving toward a psychology of learning that might inform the decision about how much help is the right help in a given context reveals problem-focused strategies that are important for teacher growth.

A further instance of problem-focused analysis comes from one pre-service teacher's effort to repair deficient study skill knowledge. A recommendation is made to direct-teach techniques of using key words to find information, and to use questioning to help the student monitor her comprehension of the material read: "If she can not identify the important information, she might not know what to study. Furthermore, if she is not monitoring her comprehension, she might not even know what to study."

Benefits of a collaborative process

Besides the explicit learning task to develop an effective psychology of teaching and learning, an implicit goal of this course was to expose pre-service teachers to the merits of collaborative processes in constructing teacher knowledge. The realities of schooling (like medicine and law?) are too complex and multi-layered in a systems sense to expect isolated individuals to be effective without input and support from many quarters. The following comment articulates advantages of field collaboration from a pre-service voice:

> Sometimes a new pair of eyes and ears can see and hear things that others have missed.... We could have seen things that others may have missed. It was definitely a great learning experience. Students have to be challenged for them to learn. That is our job. Unfortunately, some students may fall through the cracks, despite our best efforts.

What I see in such statements is an understanding that the school enterprise of teaching and learning needs many voices and perceptions to be effective. The writer goes on to say how he would enjoy attending a team teacher meeting as they try to solve a class problem. He concludes with his belief that "Team teaching could definitely be a plus for students, and for the teachers as well." I like to think that a seed has been planted about collaboration that may bear fruit later in this teaching career.

Another example of "seeing the problem with new eyes" appears in Susan's observations. Studying with her mentored student, Susan notes that the student is unable to process the text and relate it in her own words:

> . . . but she was actually looking at the text and rewording it. I caught on to her trick when, upon suspicion, I covered the text and she was suddenly at a loss. She laughed at my discovery, but I decided that in order for her to overcome this deception to herself, I had to monitor this closely from now on.... I began incorporating the strategies of rehearsal, organization, and elaborating to help Dora.

Drawing on previous experiences working for a telecommunications firm in LA, this student explicitly mentions how her work with lower income African Americans helped her gain insight into the issues of the desegregation student she was working with. She concludes, "I became kind of attached to Dora and I worry that she may not make it to eighth grade." She adds that Dora's parting remarks saying that she was definitely going to high school were hopeful, however.

Motivational strands

A realistic perspective on the complex network of motivational strands that influences learning was a theme in several papers that shared the frustration of knowing that teachers can not change all of the pieces, but have limited scope in some cases. Trishina writes of her frustration with a voluntary transfer student who seemed bright but was rude to a substitute, and sometimes manipulative of the mentors:

> The short time I was there I really could not help Kate with her self-worth and motivation. I would tell her I felt that she was really bright but needed to work harder. What a cliché!. . . With Kate I felt frustrated. Richard DeCharms in his book said that as teachers we must help our students take

ownership of their education. How do you get Kate who does not value education to take ownership of it?

Gone are the rote platitudes and wisdom of text learning uninformed by reality. My students consistently raised serious and meaningful questions. They used problem-posing strategies to voice their thoughts about the complex nature of teaching and learning. They also demonstrated a willingness to take on the responsibility of being "teacher", of playing a role in someone's life that they had never met before. I think that processing the field experience contributed substantially to internalizing a multi-level complex model of the teaching learning process.

## Conclusions and Reflections

The need to share many stories about PDS work from multiple perspectives is supported by Linda Darling-Hammond's (1998) claim that "What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what children learn" (p.12). She sees the nexus of change rooted in infusing "new knowledge about learning and development in teacher preparation that includes extended clinical work in restructured schools" (p. 12). Ashton (1996) also states, " (W)e need experiments with ways of integrating content with field experiences that require prospective teachers to act on their knowledge and evaluate their experiences in terms of their developing visions of their role and responsibilities as teachers" (p. 22).

Developing a psychology of teaching and learning is a primary task for pre-service teachers. Without the opportunity to witness a variety of classroom cultures, it is difficult to reconceptualize the possibilities of teaching practice outside one's own social history. One of my students from a small rural school spoke of how entering this large suburban middle school was initially foreign and threatening. As he acclimated to the large suburban setting, he came to realize that young people are alike as well as different in varied cultural contexts.

### Emergent themes

Three themes emerged as I reflected on my process of instituting a PDS experience for pre-service teachers:

1. Building trust and communication networks requires face to face time among shareholders and a mutual ongoing reflective assessment of experiences.

- many current teachers feel vulnerable when teaching practice moves into a more public forum and perceive dialogue with pre-service teachers as an added burden to an already demanding load.
- institutionalizing university-school partnerships is essential to long-term development of PDS sites that transcend individual affiliations and initiatives.

2. A strong belief in the superiority of the PDS model over traditional models of teacher education provides the motivation to invest the time and energy needed to negotiate programs at specific school sites over time.
    - pre-service teachers' analyses of their field experiences reveal complex understandings of the principles of educational psychology.
    - playing the role of advocate for one struggling student sensitizes the pre-service mentors to complex factors involved in school failure.
3. Field experiences should build developmentally to achieve specific goals reflected in assigned projects and papers and should include a component of practicing reflective inquiry and action research techniques.
    - new and creative ways to use pre-service teachers in classrooms to effectively support learning must emerge from dialogue that is situationally bounded; each set of contacts will be unique in some ways because of the dynamic nature of classrooms.
    - ideally classroom teachers should collaborate on the construction and evaluation of pre-service teachers' assignments; observational feedback on teaching and learning opportunities should be shared in sensitive ways as a basis for further dialogue.

In conversations over the past two years with professors engaged in PDS work, I am struck by the unique and creative collaborations that have blossomed. The advantages to pre-service teachers seems strong but the logistics of implementing partnerships takes precious time and energy that can disadvantage teachers and professors already stretched thinly. District and university resources together with outside funding are critical to carve out some space for reflective progress. The alternative is that programs will be tied to the overload

work of a few true believers, but will not be sustained over time and changes in personnel. School boards must buy into the appropriateness of joining with university faculty to develop teachers at every level of service. Ultimately, lowering attrition rates of new teachers while providing training and opportunities for reflective practice are the most cost effective ways to improve student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Steinberg, 1998). The district in which this PDS middle school resides is now developing a 0-30 year support initiative to insure lifelong professional development for their teachers. They believe the PDS collaboration can provide important support for this effort.

Identifying alternative teams at this middle school to work with my students this semester necessitated changing some of the goals and structures significantly to accommodate a new set of needs. Because I had only a few weeks to organize the field component the second semester, I had insufficient time to meet with the new groups at length in order to hammer out expectations. The result is more of a top-down feel than the first initiative. As often happens with situational constraints in a real world, optimal planning is not enacted. My schedule this term has also been a barrier to spending as much time out at the school. At a recent PDSC meeting I asked one teacher now working with my students if she would be interested in seeing some of the final observational analysis papers and she indicated positive interest. I am ambiguous about risking this again, yet do not want to foster "off-stage" dialogue in an authentic PDS relationship. Schedule confusions, unscheduled school closings because of asbestos found under wet carpet, and frequent absences by the students identified as "at-risk" have all been part of the continuing saga of working in the PDS style. But as I eavesdrop on the animated give-and-take in class between partners about their students, I see growth in action as soon-to-be-teachers struggle to unlock the mystery of one small cog in the schooling wheel with such passion. I'll stay the course for now.

For me the PDS model goes beyond using classrooms and teachers as vehicles for preparing future teachers. The university-school collaboration must seek to find non-threatening ways to open dialogue about classroom curriculum and practice. By sharing my students' papers, including my comments to them, I hope to build such bridges for future dialogue. Teacher behaviors were not the focus of my student papers but rather how one child learns in a complex system called schooling.

This narrative is an attempt to reflect on a PDS process of instituting a fieldwork component in an educational psychology course. The demands on urban pre-service teachers who often work, have family responsibilities along with attending class make fieldwork requirements difficult to coordinate. Despite such challenges to PDS participation, I am impressed with these pre-service teachers' willingness to go beyond the minimal requirements once they become engaged with a real person who needs help. As more schools of education engage in such a model of teacher education[2], pre-service teachers in the future will be more oriented to a PDS model and, hopefully, will support the expansion of the model in their buildings as they mature in the profession.

[2] A web site claims that there are 344 individual preK-12 schools in 84 partnerships. www.aacte.org/glance.html.

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**Appendix A**

Notes on fieldwork experiences from class in educational psychology during the semester before implementation of a PDS component

November 20, 1996

The first comments asked for better cooperation and coordination between secondary subject areas and pedagogy courses; there is a perceived disconnect- little that relates domain knowledge to teaching process explicitly.
There was talk that we require 30 contact hours in an introductory class but the junior high certification requires 42. Another early fieldwork class was also discussed and stories shared about how much useful non-curricular material is learned, such as how to teach kids to line up etc.

There was also talk about the ambiguity of roles to play out in the field. Some teachers welcomed them and gave them more responsibility; some felt they stayed pariahs and outside observers. I think few saw the benefit in this role but training in classroom observation might help them value at least one experience as a non-participant. Most felt they wanted to try out some of their own ideas in these settings. They definitely did not like being invisible in these settings. Many said that clear objectives were helpful; many did not know what they were supposed to be doing and neither did the teachers whose room they were visiting. There was much anxiety around this issue.

Several talked of the math methods observations and said there were many levels of involvement.
When asked what should be dropped from this course to accommodate field observation time, several suggested group presentations. Others did not wish to give up the behavioral change project or the case study although they thought the assignment might coordinate with the fieldwork. They also thought that dropping the objective tests would free them up to do more integrative applied thinking on the course content.

All agreed on the importance of having the field requirements clearly stated in the course catalogue. They liked the idea of having a professor on site to facilitate their work there. A few mentioned that a whole semester of PE was an easy A but not productive of their time; they would prefer spending the credit time in the field. A semester would be sufficient for the concepts. They need more information of learning the 'how' of teaching. Post AB folks in early childhood said that no introductory fieldwork in a classroom was required in their program b/c of degree requirements although most did have time in preschool classrooms.

Another issue was what type of school they should observe in. Many preferred having a diverse student population b/c contact was important before they had their own classrooms. Others wanted to observe in schools with quality teaching modeled.

A final piece that emerged was that the counselors in advisement were not informed enough or communicative enough. They should be able to tell students things such as if you take these two or three classes extra, you could get this certification as well, etc. Too often this advice was not available.

If the fieldwork component and the focus of the learning in the experience is published in the course work, students could select courses that insured that they had a minimum of x hours before student teaching covering a range of objectives. In other words, not everyone would get fieldwork component x in Course A; mix an match would give some flexibility while still insuring contact hours in a prioritized developmental frame.

Letter to students informing them that a field component had been added to the educational psychology course they had enrolled in.

December 5, 1996
School of Education

Dear Student:

I am excited to inform you that I am arranging a fieldwork component at a Middle School for the winter, 1997, psychology course for which you have registered. As you know the Psychology of Teaching and Learning is a required course for teacher and counselor certification. As the School of Education moves toward a Professional Development Model of teacher education, we recognize the importance of providing students with opportunities to connect theory and practice. This effort will help students gain insight into classroom learning theory by seeing it in practice.

As part of the curriculum, you will be spending 8-10 hours in the field during the semester; you will be interacting with middle school students while observing and dialoguing with an experienced team of teachers. A minimum of four two-hour blocks will be required in the field, so we will reduce our regular meeting time by four classes.

The observations are tentatively scheduled at Middle School. The fieldwork will be in the mornings generally and will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester.

I am writing you now so that you can begin to consider how to accommodate this aspect of the course. If such a demand is impossible to meet with your schedule, you might want to consider registering for one of the other four classes being offered. If just one date seems to be thorny, we will set up alternative days. If this is the only time you can fit this class into your schedule, but the fieldwork component is a major problem, I will work with you to set up an individualized program. Please call me (phone numbers are above) with questions or concerns. I am looking forward to an innovative semester working with you both on and off campus.

Sincerely,

Virginia Navarro

The psychology of teaching and learning/PDS field work sheet

The Middle School has formed a collaborative relationship with our university.
Please sign up on the following sheets for a minimal of four two-hour time blocks to observe and mentor.

The seventh grade team will provide a profile list of students who need some extra attention. You will choose a partner from this class to work intensively with this student in whatever ways seem to be appropriate and helpful. Enclosed in this packet are some guidelines to orient you to this school and its policies. **Read them carefully so you understand procedural issues.**
Observation dates are on Tues and Wed mornings in two hour blocks from 7:30-11 a.m.

| Tuesday | Wednesday |
|---|---|
| January 28 | January 29 |
| **February 4** | **February 5** |
| February 11 | February 12 |
| **February 18** | **February 19** |
| February 25 | February 26 |
| **March 4** | **March 5** |
| March 18 | March 19 |
| **March 25** | **March 26** |
| April 1 | April 2 |
| April 8 | April 9 |
| **April 15** | **April 16** |
| April 22 | April 23 |

Winter 97 Observation Issues / Brainstormed by students

- 15 minute observation of your student; tell minute to minute whether student is on or off task
- Observe the answer to this question, "Why is this student considered at-risk? What actions/body language does the student have that might make them seem at-risk?
- What is the student reaction, attitude, or response to the extra help?
- Can you see/notice any relationship to where the student is seated in the class and who they interact with to their learning ability and performance?
- Is the student willing to learn? How does this student react or relate to the teacher?
- Environment: teacher interaction w/children
  - Student behaviors
  - Participation w/teachers
  - Organization skills
  - Classroom management issues
  - Motivational issues
  - Curriculum
  - Does the teacher promote creative thinking?
  - Classroom setting (desk and where the teacher stands)
  - Do teaching style and learning style/match?
  - Opportunities for peer interaction?
- What is the general layout of the classroom?
- Interaction b/t teacher and student
- Interaction b/t students
- Movement of teacher and students around classroom
- How are situations handled
- Class demographics? Insiders/outsiders?
- Questions
  - Is the student organized/prepared?
  - Appearance
  - Teacher student ratio
  - Teacher Interaction
  - Student attentiveness
  - Eye contact w/teacher others
  - Participation by student(s)
  - Think time
- Teacher Traits
  - Use of manipulative
  - Wait time
  - Proximity
  - Equitable distribution of questions
  - Encouragement
  - Was teacher instruction clear?
  - Appropriateness of content for developmental stage of student
- Classroom environment
  - Student contributions
  - Teacher contributions
  - Teacher correlation w/curriculum
  - Diversity needs

Letter to volunteers who met with team to discuss the semester.

May 1, 1997

Re: Meeting with teachers at Central Middle School

Volunteers:

Thank you so much for offering to continue the dialogue about how pre-service teachers can effectively participate in a PDS model course.

If you are able to make it, we will meet on **Wednesday, May 7, 1997 from 1-2 p.m.**. (Meet outside the 7th grade pod).

I would appreciate a call to let me know if you will be able to attend or not.

The thoughtful analyses of students in the course convince me that a dialogue with these teachers will be productive for everyone.

Thanks again for your time and effort,

Sincerely,

Virginia Navarro

Appendix B

Survey Instrument for Seventh grade Team

PDMS Collaborative/ Winter, 1997

In order to reflect on, evaluate, and improve the observation and mentoring program, I would appreciate some feedback on your experiences this semester. The following questionnaire asks you to rate various components of the program as well as share your own subjective perspective on the usefulness of this endeavor for students, in-service teachers, and pre-service teachers.

Please respond to the following set of questions about the participation of the pre-service students.

1. What benefits for the mentored students resulted from this collaboration? (Circle ALL that apply)

- improved academic performance
- better attitude about doing the work
- more hopeful about school success
- belief that mentor cared about performance
- other_____

Comments:

2. What problems were experienced? (Circle ALL that apply)

- attendance of UMSL students
- attendance of mentored students
- opportunities for individual help
- amount of contact time
- unclear goals
- lack of professionalism in UMSL students
- lack of motivation in mentored students
- other_____

Comments:

3. Should the program be continued? Yes No

Comments:

4. How could the program be changed? improved? expanded

Comments

Comments by seventh grade team of teachers

1. Benefits for mentored students:
   - more hopeful about school success (4)
   - better attitude about doing work
   - belief that mentor cared about performance (3)

2. Problems experienced
   - opportunities for individual help
   - amount of contact time (5)
   - lack of motivation in mentored students (3)
   - unclear goals
   - attendance of students

3. One respondent said the program should not continue.

4. How could the program be changed? Improved? Expanded?

All but one responder agreed more contact time is needed with an expanded program.

Comments:
   - Two students complained that they needed more help in more hours.
   - More time needed with kids.
   - Some students only had help from UMSL students for say periods 3 & 4 and no help for their other classes.
   - I feel that the UMSL students received valuable experience. However, the mentored students need much more contact time.
   - More consistent contact time needed.

Survey for the Mentored Students

PDMS Collaborative/ Winter, 1997

We would like you to share your thoughts about your experience working with pre-service teachers from the University of Missouri, St. Louis during the last few months. If you worked with more than one student, you may fill out two surveys, one for each. This information is to help us develop a better mentoring program to work with other seventh grade students. Thank you for being part of this new program.

I. Please complete the following form using a ranking system of 1(highest) to 5(lowest)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **lots** | **some** | **a little** | **not much** | **none** |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **great** | **positive** | **okay** | **weak** | **poor** |

**If the item does **not apply** or you have no opinion, write in **NA** for not applicable.

_____A. Helped you get organized

_____B. Friendly

_____C. Interested in you personally/got to know you

_____D. Taught you some study strategies

_____E. Worked with your regular teacher

_____F. Was enthusiastic about helping

_____G. Amount of contact time/ @ 4 contacts per student

_____H. Had opportunities to work together

_____I. Helped make you more interested in your schoolwork.

_____J. Helped make the material more understandable with explanations.

II. Below are some other questions about the program. Please complete them using the back of this page if you need more space. Thank you.

1. Was being part of this program a good or bad experience? Why?

2. What was most helpful? Least helpful?

3. What would you change to make the program better (given that the students can not be there every day but only about 10-12 hours per semester)?

Comments by mentored at-risk students:

1. Was being part of this program a good or bad experience
   - It was good but all my friends would ask who they were and I didn't want to tell them because they might make fun of me.
   - It help (sic) me realize what I need to do, work.

- It was a good experience because now I look forward to coming to class.
- A good experience because they helped you learn a lot and whenever you had any questions they were glad to answer.
- Neither. She did not help or hurt me.
- I think it was a good experience because it helped me find out I can be an A student if I worked harder.
- I was a good experience because they really helped me on stuff I didn't understand.
- Bad because he always following me.
- Good because it helped me a lot.
- Good because I did raise my grade 10% higher than it was.
- Good-they helped me with a lot of my work.
- It was okay but I don't like it if someone is just going to help not much because if your (sic) going to help me please come more than 1 or 2 times.

2. What was most helpful? least helpful?
   - Because I like teachers that give be knowledge that why I want to be friendly with teachers.
   - Study for test / NA
   - There weren't least helpful but most I like was learning.
   - When they taught us about no put downs.
   - Most helpful they taught you some ways to study and get a lot more work done.
   - Nothing
   - What was most helping to me was saying what I was good at and that I should get good grades. There wasn't anything that wasn't helpful.
   - The most helpful was studying for my unified studies test. The least was helping me with my homework.
   - None because he didn't help me.
   - Helping me with my work.
   - NA
   - Her just coming to help me out. Not long enough time.
   - Most helpful – my homework. Least helpful-none.
   - The way they explained to me a lot about Zeus and the Greeks in unified studies.

3. What would you change to make the program better (given that the students can not be here everyday but only about 10 to 12 hours a semester)?
   - I beg you please make me pass test give me one chance I can do it.
   - They help other kids also
   - Nothing.
   - I wish that they can come more often.
   - Nothing really cause there (sic) in the classes that you are felling (sic) in.
   - I don't know,
   - I would make it so that the student and pre-teachers would spend more time together.
   - I'll let them be here more than that to help us.
   - It ain't the point that I didn't like him the point is he always looking staring like something is wrong so I said I'm going to talk to him. Thanks anyway.
   - I would change nothing about the program.
   - Nothing
   - I'll try to help myself out more / some the teachers wouldn't have to help me a lot.
   - When ever he or she needs help just ask / They only came once!
   - That they come more than 2 times a piece and help me with my four main class science, math, unified studies, and skills. . But they did a kind of really great job (Thanks!).

Survey of Pre-service Teachers at University

1997 Survey of Students on Field Work Activity

Please answer the following questions about your experiences at the Middle School this semester.

Complete the following form using a ranking system of 1(highest) to 5(lowest)

| high | | | | low |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| great | | | | bad news |

**If the item does **not apply** or you have no opinion, write in **NA** for not applicable.

_____1. Did you feel the expectations of what you were to do in the field were clear?
Comments:

_____2. Would you recommend to your friends that they take this course with the field component?
Comments:

_____3. Were the teachers at the school accommodating in letting you observe?

_____4. Were the teachers at the school helpful with meeting and talking to your student?
Comments:

_____5. Do you feel your presence and activity helped your student? Explain.
Comments:

_____6. Was this a good school to do observations in?
Comments;

_____7. Was this a good age group to work with?
Comments:

_____8. Was the 8-10 hour requirement about right? More? Less? Why?
Comments:

_____9. How would you rank the field component of this course over-all in terms of your personal learning?
Comments:

_____10. Did writing the observational analysis paper help you integrate your learning from the text and field?
Comments:

11. Please share your ideas about how to improve the experience (place, time, assignments, other) Use other side.

Comments from pre-service teachers:

General Comments:
I did learn about attribution theory
I received a great deal from the field exp.
I'd rather work with younger ones - my specialty.
I learned how to deal with motivational issues.
Yes It actually all came together when I wrote the paper.
Location was out , & tech was not commensurate w/other MO schools

Nice school
It was a good program if it were planned out better.
We were not really there enough to help students

Comments after questions, by number.
1. Became clearer as we discussed observational analysis (OA) paper.
1. I wasn't really sure what I was suppose(sic) to do.
1. Not sure exactly how beneficial it was.
1. I was unsure the whole time of what to do.
1. I felt very unclear about what I was supposed to do, especially with my student.
1. A little unsure, Sometimes I did not know when to step in.
1. I was a little uneasy at first but after the 1st session, I was more comfortable.
1. The student and I related more on a friendship level than a student-teacher relationship.
1. I did not fully understand until near the end. This was my fault, but I was able to observe more.
1. At first I wasn't quite sure how I was supposed to work with the student and how I was supposed to make things clearer. Having a partner helped.
1. I thought I was going to observe Sally* before I tutored her, but since I did not meet her until my second visit, I began tutoring her right away.

2. Very helpful to experience. I learned a lot of helpful hints and teaching strategies to help me when I become a teacher.
2. I think it is a very interesting and worthwhile project. I learned a great deal about the needs of at-risk students, etc.
2. Maybe if better organized.
2. I would not recommend this fieldwork simply because it is difficult to carry a full load of classes, work, and attend fieldwork once a week.
2. Really prepares you for becoming a teacher.
2. If done appropriately, could be a wonderful learning experience.

4. Very open in letting me take him in hall or even talk in class with him.
Most of the teachers were helpful and then there were some who didn't really say anything so I was not sure if they wanted me there.
4. They were great letting us observe our students, but one time I was there I only got to work one on one with my student.
4. The teachers were occupied with the other students. I drew my own conclusions about the other students.
4. I didn't feel he wanted me around very much and he didn't act as though I was helping him.
4. Heard some facts but also distasteful remarks.

5. He always seemed to participate more, pay attention to his studies, seemed more interested when I was there.
5. Because I feel he did learn how to study better.
5. Yes, for the few hours I was there, however, each time I left, I think she regressed.
5. I felt the student and I had a special relationship. The student I started to work with was never there-which was a hard thing because I had to attend the school well over 10 hours.
5. Sally* works well one on one and when she is challenged. She has potential to do well in school if she had more help.
5. I wish I could have gotten to work more with Andrew.
5. There was not much help that my student needed. He needs someone to care about him/his work long term.
5. No, not really, because she seemed more interested in what I did rather than trying to get help.
5, I did not really get to meet with my student.
5. Did not have enough time with student to help him or her.
5. She did not want to be helped, It probably only benefited her while e I was there.
5. A little but I only had him one day, then an exit interview..

5. My student was not real cooperative with the suggestions I made.
No, gender barrier w/history of student in foster care.
5. Worked with student twice Felt I helped, but wish I could have spent more time.
5. Not enough time in the school.

6. Great district-maybe allow students to pick grades to observe (drive too long)
6. I would have rather been in an elementary school.
6. Hard to get out there.
6. It would have been better if we could of got (sic) to pick our own school, maybe closer to where we live.
6. I like the team of teachers concept.
6, It was hard to find time to go to that school all the time.
6. Yes!! Great multiculturalism

7. I would rather get more experience w/the age group I will teach HS.
7. At-risk students at this age may be almost too old to help. I understand that it may be helpful to help them at earlier stage.
7. Very transitional.
7. Not used to working with this age but was a good experience, Would be nice to choose age and grade level.
7. Since I am studying elementary I would of (sic) loved to observe elementary student.
7. Work with seventh grade made me sure that I don't want to work with them.

8. More. 8-10 hours is not enough time to really get to know the students.
8. Just right for student if we could spend more time with them, but for our sake -I would never have had more time to give as I'm observing in 213 too.
8. About right for our schedule but not right for the students.
8. There are other classes and it is difficult to get to.
8. Just right, but maybe be able to pick when we can go visit the school.
8. If the two students assigned could be put together based on the days they could go so that there would be a more consistent approach for the student.
8. I needed more time with my student to make a difference.
8. Need more to gain better insight.
8. More time needed.
8. Enough to gain the needed knowledge.
8. Possibly a little more, esp. for those who did not see their student the first few times.

9. Besides sub teaching, some students won't have any classroom experience. This gives you a real feel for just how teachers and parents effect students.
9 Very helpful to make issues in class more salient.
9. I walked away with a lot.
9. It gave me a great opportunity to work with the students.
9. I applied many of the terms and theories to develop my paper. Made this real to life vs. text. .very good.
9. It helped me see how the students worked in the classroom setting.
9. I thought this was helpful to distinguish what I wouldn't do and where I would have made changes.

10. If we could be taught in class before on specific things to look for and connect our class to the observation that would make it more meaningful.
10 Very helpful in organizing my own thoughts about what I had just observed.
10. Absolutely.
10. I was a little confused because I didn't really have a student the whole time to watch.
10. I applied my prior and newly acquired knowledge to help Sally. This paper was a lot of work that covered a huge amount of material but it was good to put it all together.
10. I had trouble writing down what I want to say. But it help describe (sic) how you felt toward the students.

10. My analysis paper helped me get my thoughts and ideas about my observations clear. Having to develop a thesis made things clear.
10 Very good exp. Helps us to realize the importance of issues discussed in class in a functional way.
10. Yes It helped me learn a lot, esp. about how students lean with various teachers.
10 It helped me understand the text a little better seeing the students interact with each other and teachers.
10. I tied it to what the book said

11. We should be able to choose a location close to home. We should work more one-on-one with student instead of just observing.
11. I wish we could have met with Andrea's* teachers for a few moments to understand what her needs were. The notes we received were not professional or sufficient. We basically went in there blindly - relying on the students to supply us with all the information we needed.
11. I think that more time with the student would be beneficial, However, with busy schedules I know it would be next to impossible.
11. I think the program was realistic, and authentic. This motivated and forced me to apply terms and reflect on what I saw.
11. Think there needed to be more time with the students to work privately. I had a hard time finding the appropriate time to work with the students without distracting them from their teacher. It seemed as if I was afraid of my student missing out on the teacher's important lesson. There needed to be extra time set aside for aiding.
11. The 4 hour block I did shouldn't be allowed for the next block because you only go 2 times. You almost need to go 3 or 4 times to really help!
11. Highly recommend Bellow's* classroom techniques.
11. It would be nice to be able to pick the school you want to observe. Be able to pick the days and times you need to go observe. Have the teacher at the school you visited pick a student for you.
11. Might have more than one age group for the students to observe and you may want to try a school that is a bit closer.
11. It should be stated in the schedule when we register that observing was required, also It was not really clear what we were suppose (sic) to be doing.
11. I think a student should be assigned to the UMSL student from the first field experience.
11. We need to help these students when they are not in class. Let students bring their homework to us and we can work with them with no distractions. These students need tutors everyday or at least 3 times/wk. Repetition. By doing our observations it did not give them enough help.
11. The teachers should be more aware of our presence and tell us what's going on in class and specifically tell us about any problem areas of our child. In other words, they should not leave it up to the students.
11. Instead of going to just one school, maybe have a couple to choose from. It was hard at times to go to that school.
11. I think that observing a variety of teachers would more educational than observing just one student. I also think that time should have been set aside for us to work with our student.
11. Students should be able to choose school closer to them.
11. It was a good school-the time was flexible-but maybe before a student goes in to observe-they can choose a topic and focus in on this during their observations. This may help w/the paper. But overall, I think this was a good experience.
11. Maybe for 10 weeks observe 2 hr. a week so we can observe a noticeable change in our student.
11. Make sure everything is organized on time. Make clear directions on what to do and why.

Appendix C

Assignment as it appeared in syllabus for field notes and observation analysis paper

EP 000 / Navarro
Winter, 1997

Psychology of Teaching and Learning

Requirement #2: Field notes from observations and mentoring (5 pts).
Requirement #3: Observation analysis (20 pts)

Purpose: Identifying a school setting to observe and participate in learning experiences with teachers and students supports the belief expressed by the Holmes group that professional development is an on-going process that should link theory and practice in meaningful ways. There are two strands to the field work component:

**1. Reflective observation of and participation in a seventh grade classroom.**
**2. Mentoring and helping an at-risk student in partnership with one or two of your 000 classmates.**

Procedures: The seventh grade team at Central Middle School has graciously agreed to host our class. Professional behavior will be expected at all times including

- appropriate dress (no jeans or shorts),
- civility to all staff and students,
- signing in at the office and wearing a name tag at all times
- high ethical standards (confidentiality, no gossip or slanders)
- notify the school if you will be unable to attend your scheduled observation (Telephone numbers, names, maps, etc. will be provided)

Remember you are pre-service teachers who should not be giving counseling type advice to these students. Problems that arise in the mentoring part of your work must be discussed with the classroom teacher or myself if you are unsure of how to proceed. Your focus should be to help these individuals learn and experience more school success. This may involve being a good listener at first and developing mutual trust.

You will sign up in class on either Tuesday or Wednesday mornings. I suggest five two-hour blocks would be the best. You are welcome to go beyond the minimal requirement. Your observations, field notes, along with other course material will be the basis for an observation analysis paper discussed in Requirement #3.

Field Note Assignment: Collected on Thursday, April 3, 1997

You will document a minimal of ten hours spent at Central Middle School as part of this assignment. Include the following information for each field note entry:

1. Date
2. Time
3. Class observing
4. Focus of observation
5. Brief descriptive details of setting and lesson
6. Coded names of kids
7. Dialogue snippets when possible
8. Significance of observation for educational psychology.

Often a double entry journal works best: on one side you take down objective verbatim details of what you are seeing and hearing, on the other side you write your editorial and analytical comments and explanations of what you observe. Remember that a comment such as "the teacher was crabby today" is interpretive; more objective descriptions might say, "The teacher walked briskly into the room with a frowning expression. Her tone was sharp as she asked for quiet." I sometimes use brackets to identify my interpretative statements as separate from the raw observational data. If you are asked to be a participant observer, you may

not get the notes written up until after you leave the classroom. It is imperative that you do so **immediately** after the experience or too much will be lost. Some researchers use a tape recorder in their cars to capture their descriptions and thoughts if there is not enough time to write them.

By observing other adults in a teaching situation, you should be able to recognize many of the teaching skills and situations we discuss in the course content. For each observation focus on an issue such as higher order thinking, motivation, classroom management, space allocation and materials use, special needs students, group interactions, behavior reinforcement, information processing, etc. Your task does not involve a critical evaluation of the regular teacher's methods or class organization. There are many circumstances that influence what you are seeing at both micro and macro levels. Your focus must be on the learning taking place and how to explain that learning theoretically.

Observation Analysis: (6-8 pg.) Due on Tuesday, April 22, 1997
(Note: No Late Papers Will Be Accepted)

This paper represents the integration of your thinking about issues in educational psychology and your observations and mentoring experiences. It will be evaluated on several criteria since the form, content, and focus will be unique to each student.

1. thoughtful assessment of how theoretical perspectives can help guide teachers' and students' complex choices of behavior in schools.
2. a well-articulated underlined thesis statement (This involves narrowing your broad data to a topic, discussing two to three issues in depth. Be looking for a puzzle or question during observation time that you wish to unravel or understand better. The earlier you identify a few thematic interests, the more focused your observations will become to support your paper.)
3. an outline of the paper's basic organization in the first paragraph
4. the extent and richness of material quoted directly from your field notes
5. demonstration of correct use of vocabulary and concepts dealing with educational psychology issues.
6. your use of outside sources to further understand your topic
7. correct writing mechanics

This document will provide a record of some of your own learning in this class and so will vary considerably in how it is conceptualized and approached.

I do not want generalizations made that do not have **detailed** supporting data to illustrate the point you are making. Stop and think about what you have learned in the school setting: How were your notions of teaching and learning challenged or changed? What insights about young people did you uncover? What did you learn about yourself and how students see you? If you have been reflecting after every observation and writing down your impressions and thoughts as they occur during the time following field note taking, you should have lots of issues to discuss. If you try to reconstruct ideas retrospectively, you will fail to demonstrate the depth of thinking and support detail needed to write a successful paper.

Additional comments excerpted from observational analysis papers of university students evaluating the significance of the field experience in the course.

- "A notion that changed from this experience – it is not as hard to teach this age as I had heard."
- "I'm glad I'm observing and substituting in all grades because this will help me to be a more effective teacher."
- "I learned that middle school students are quite intelligent and they want to feel valued and needed. I also learned they can be quite trying."
- "I found the student observations to be interesting and beneficial....Jill enjoyed having us come to her school and said she thinks other kids would like it as well."
- "In conclusion, this experience was beneficial in my educational training as well as in experience. Helping Ashley gave me more insight on how to relate to a child who had been characterized as an at risk student. I can only hope that my guidance and direction opened a door for Ashley in learning organizational skills, note taking , and test taking strategies."
- "In conclusion the observational experience really opened my eyes to the problem of discipline in today's classrooms. . . .The educational time alone that is spent correcting problems could be used to further the education of students. . .All in all it was a valuable experience to which I will think about always and hopefully address successfully in my future endeavors."(Comparison of achievements with Japanese)
- "This experience has helped to enhance my knowledge on how I will approach teaching. The books help some but they did give me the knowledge on how to deal with certain students. Abigal was just one student that I had to deal with. As a teacher I will have to deal with at least twenty more with their own learning styles and different techniques. . . I will not give up until I find the tool that helps that one particular child. Teaching is harder than I thought."
- "I learned that students need one-on-one assistance. I knew that at-home support was important, not realizing that it is essential and necessary in helping students achieve academic success. Sometimes parental support is the link between school success or failure."
- "The observation of students and teachers in schools enhanced my understanding of several actions teachers can directly control which may help to promote student involvement in class. This increased involvement will hopefully lead to increased academic achievement and make the classroom a better place to be for both teachers and students."
- "I really enjoyed doing these site observations and it was really great to meet Tony and get along with him. I only wish I could have got to do more one on one with Tony. It is really hard for me to sit down and explain and tell you what I have learned from this, and put it down on paper. But what I do know is that these site visits were exciting for me and kind of prepares you and what you should expect when you become a full time teacher or even a substitute."
- "The at risk mentoring program is a good thing but I think the mentors need to be used more. . . .This could be a very beneficial program with more attention and time put into helping the students. It is something I would very much like to be a part of."

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|---|---|---|
| Signature: Virginia Navarro, Ph.D. | Printed Name/Position/Title: Virginia Navarro, Ph.D. | |
| Organization/Address: University of Missouri-St. Louis<br>8001 Natural Bridge<br>St. Louis, MO 63121-4499 | Telephone: 516-5871 | FAX: 314 516-5784 |
| | E-Mail Address: Virginia Navarro@ umsl.edu | Date: 4/13/98 |

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