

# SUPERVISING THE STUDENT TEACHER IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

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The student teacher being supervised in the public school soon becomes a full time, licensed teacher. Student teaching is perceived to be the cap stone or final course in undergraduate preparation before entering the profession of being a teacher. It carries much responsibility for the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor in assisting the student to emphasize quality in helping pupils to achieve as optimally as possible. The university supervisor and the cooperating teacher must work together to provide a quality student teaching experience. Student teachers need to be adequately prepared to meet obligations of becoming a true professional (Ediger, 2007).

## **Preparing Student Teachers**

Prior to the student teaching experience, the pre-service teacher has been engaged in general education course work, methods of teaching classes, seminars, field experiences, as well as observation and participation in classrooms. These experiences have assisted the prospective student teacher to gain knowledge, skill, and understandings pertaining to teaching and learning situations. The university supervisor will now have the responsibility of assisting the student teacher to integrate what has been previously acquired in teaching pupils in the public school classroom. The supervisor will also need to clarify expectations for the student teaching experience. What will the supervisor expect of the student teacher during the time allotted to this final activity prior to becoming a full time licensed teacher?

The following need to be clarified with the student teacher:

- Lesson plan development for each lesson taught

- A unit to be developed for unit teaching
- A seating chart of pupils in the classroom
- Grouping of pupils for instruction
- Conference expectations of the university supervisor
- Evaluation considerations for student teaching
- Working responsibly with the cooperating teacher.

## **Evaluation of Student Teaching**

Prior to each observational visit, the university supervisor needs to clarify the objectives to be emphasized in teaching pupils with the student teacher.

Clarity of meaning is important in what will be emphasized in teaching and learning situations. The learning activities on the daily lesson plan need to match up with each intended objective. The evaluation techniques listed assist in ascertaining what pupils have learned from the lesson taught.

During the time the lesson is taught,

the university supervisor needs to record salient information on teaching and learning being stressed by the student teacher. This needs to be done in a manner which does not distract the student teacher from doing a good job of teaching. Developing a good self concept is a must for the student teacher.

It is important to notice if pupils are actively engaged in the lesson. Interest in learning is a powerful factor in educational psychology. If selected pupils did not appear to be interested, what might be suggested during conference time with the student teacher to aid in pupil lesson engagement? A notice needs to be filled out so that the student teacher may work on recorded deficiencies (See Ritchhart and Perkins, 2008).

Second, pupils need to understand content taught. If subject matter is not meaningful, pupils will reveal this lack of understanding during discussions, tests taken, or in future learnings emphasized. Learning is sequential and what is not understood presently will hinder subsequent progress. Hurrying to teach new subject matter will not suffice when the present lacks meaning for the pupil. Readiness for learning accrues when the previously presented knowledge and skills possess meaning. Whatever is taught must be taught well. Meaningful subject matter provides sequence for ensuing knowledge and skills to be attained (See Burke, 2005).

Third, pupils must perceive purpose in learning. Thus, reasons need to be in evidence for achieving selected ideas. If purpose is lacking, pupils will lack perceiving relevance in the objectives to be

attained. The student teacher may assist pupils inductively or deductively to perceive purpose in learning. The writer when supervising pre-service teachers has noticed how pupil attitudes change in a positive direction when they are assisted in noticing the relevance of acquiring new knowledge and skills. University student teachers need guidance in assisting pupils to perceive purpose in learning. Sometimes, simply stating in a few words why the ensuing content is important to be learned is adequate!

Fourth, university students are generally used to hearing complex ideas in coursework taken on campus. They may need considerable assistance in communicating ideas on the understanding level of the public school pupil. Teaching involves effective communication in either an inductive or deductive approach. Subject matter needs to be presented in a manner that is understandable to learners. To ascertain if directions, for example, are understood for doing a lesson, a pupil may be asked to repeat what was said in his/her very own words. After having given an assignment, the student teacher may observe if the ensuing work is done properly. Adequate leeway must be given, too, to have pupils do creative work whereby novel ideas are presented and appreciated. Originality is salient in writing creative poetry, stories, and plays, as well as in art work (Ediger, 2007).

Fifth, the student teacher needs to provide for individual differences in the classroom. Pupils differ from each other in diverse ways. Thus, some pupils like to study and learn in small groups; others pre-

fer individual activities to pursue. Selected pupils prefer quiet activities such as reading and writing experiences while others prefer to work on projects where physical movement and motion are involved. Additional differences among pupil choices are the following:

- assigned class work as compared to making choices from among alternatives
- a quiet classroom versus movement and motion of learners engaging in learning
- being seated in rows and columns versus a flexible arrangement of classroom furniture for learning
- teacher supervision of learning as compared to self monitoring of progress.

Each pupil has a preference for specific kinds of learning activities, such as those listed above. But still, each pupil needs a combination of activities such as working by the self as well as with others. Both are salient in that individuals need to do learning activities by the self as well as work together with others in class. Later at the work place, individuals will do tasks by the self as well as with others. Student teachers need to observe and appraise pupil progress in either situation (Ediger, 2006).

Positive attitudes of teachers toward their profession will shape their students into becoming good citizens. As teacher education programs are the most significant methods for developing positive attitudes toward teaching and the teaching profession, the assessment of attitudes of student teachers over time helps to evaluate the effectiveness of experiences provided, changes in training and procedures, or the general progress of program

implementation. The results can help to improve program design and implementation, daily procedures of pre-service teacher education programs, and support services.

One of the challenges we see facing teacher education at the present time, is our need to respond to the tension in our pre-service education programs between development of individuals as professionals and the demands of professional programs that must ensure teaching competency (Devanandan, 2008).

#### **Supervision of Reading Instruction**

Reading, as one curriculum area, receives much attention in the school setting. The student teacher needs assistance to guide pupils in sequential and remedial work. Young readers need guidance in beginning reading instruction such as in using the Big Book approach. Here, a class of five to seven children are taught using a big book, clearly visible to all in the group. Readiness for the ensuing reading activity is promoted through a discussion of the related illustrations in the big book. The teacher reads aloud to the pupils, pointing to each word being read. Pupils follow along by viewing the printed script. In the next read aloud, both the teacher and pupils are involved. This may be repeated as often as necessary. Pupils learn to identify the new words by sight. There is no embarrassment of pupils who cannot otherwise recognize unknown words.

The university supervisor assists the student teacher in bringing in new approaches in teaching which aid in providing for individual differences in the

classroom. Additional approaches in reading instruction to assist the student teacher in providing for individual differences include the following:

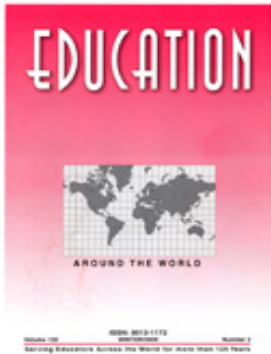
- using the basal reader more creatively by stressing new ideas along with those in the manual. Thus, the basal should not be used in a stultifying manner, but rather emphasize teaching suggestions which assist pupils to achieve more optimally.
- implementing individualized reading by having pupils select and read silently sequential library books of their very own choosing during a designated time in class.
- emphasizing literature circles whereby peers choose and read a library book involving a stimulating discussion of the contents. Here, peers help each other in reading within a cooperative learning situation (See Clarke and Holwadel, 2007).

The university supervisor and cooperating teacher help students to grow, develop, and achieve during the student teaching experience.

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