

Practice Teaching: Survival in a Marginal Situation*

Rodney A. Clifton
university of manitoba

On considère généralement la pratique comme un élément très important de la formation des élèves-maîtres. Cependant, des études démontrent que l'image que les futurs maîtres ont d'eux-mêmes a tendance à diminuer plutôt qu'à augmenter avec les stages et que bien que plusieurs chercheurs aient observé ce phénomène, ils ont rarement essayé de l'expliquer. En conséquence, on propose dans cet article que les stages créent une situation marginale dans la mesure où, dans les écoles, les futurs maîtres ne remplissent pas de rôle leur permettant de légitimer convenablement leur comportement. Plus précisément, ils ne détiennent pas l'autorité dans l'école et ignorent les rituels de la classe. De ce fait, ils se sentent un peu comme des imposteurs et l'image qu'ils ont d'eux-mêmes en souffre. Si ce raisonnement est valable, il implique quelques changements fondamentaux dans la manière dont on forme les enseignants.

Robert Dreeben (1970, p. 126), in *The Nature of Teaching*, notes that the education of teachers has four general content areas: courses in subject matter, courses in teaching methods, courses in the social-scientific basis of instruction and classroom management, and supervised practice teaching. In virtually every teacher education program in Canada, these four components are represented. Furthermore, in every program practice teaching is given a very important place.

In fact, some educators consider practice teaching to be the most important training experience for student teachers (Shaplin, 1961). In the words of these educators practice teaching is the *raison d'être* for the whole of the student teacher's education. Every component in the curriculum is geared towards making a student teacher into a teacher, and it is during practice teaching that this education is utilized in real teaching situations. Moreover, it is in practice teaching that a student teacher engages in the role behavior which will, at a later time, distinguish him as a full-fledged, legitimate teacher.

Even though practice teaching is considered to be a very important component in the training of teachers, it has not received much attention from educational researchers (see, for example, Denemark & MacDonald, 1972; Gaskell, 1977; Lomax, 1972; Peck & Tucker, 1973; Turner, 1975). Specifically, there has been little research on the manner in which prac-

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tice teaching affects the socialization of student teachers. Furthermore, the research that has been conducted has not generally been integrated in any systematic way with theoretical conceptions of the differences between teaching and practice teaching.

Thus an attempt is made in this paper at explaining why practice teaching may not be a very adequate way of either training or evaluating prospective teachers. In essence, it is argued that practice teaching is a marginal situation and, as such, the student teacher's greatest concern is simply surviving. It is recognized that this perspective is provocative. It is intended to be in order to stimulate further thought and research.

PRACTICE TEACHING AND THE SELF-CONCEPT OF STUDENT TEACHERS

In reviewing the research literature, the effect of practice teaching upon the self-concepts of student teachers has been of particular concern. From a symbolic interaction point of view, it is noted that a person's self-concept is the product of social interaction and that his self-concept has very important effects upon the ways in which he perceives, evaluates, and interacts with the social world (Kinch, 1963). Moreover, as LeVine (1969) notes, an individual develops an enduring self-concept which monitors all of his behavior.

From this perspective, it may be argued that one of the most important tasks for practice teaching is to socialize student teachers into the profession so that they develop self-concepts as competent teachers (Iannaccone & Button, 1964, pp. 11-16). Howard (1965, p. 453), for example, argues that "the most important task for a student in a teacher education program is to feel like a teacher."

In terms of this conception, a few research studies show that the self-concepts of student teachers either stay stable during practice teaching (Covert & Clifton, 1979; Gregory & Allen, 1978) or slightly increase (Brim, 1966; Clifton & Covert, 1977; Corrigan & Griswold, 1963; Horowitz, 1968; Iannaccone & Button, 1964, pp. 27-28; Smith & Adams, 1972). On the other hand, a number of other studies suggest that, as a result of practice teaching, the self-concepts of student teachers decrease rather than increase. These studies are important because they suggest that practice teaching as it is now conducted may not be as instrumental in producing competent teachers as we may have thought.

In the United States, Walberg (1966) was one of the first researchers to discover that the self-concept of student teachers decreased as a result of practice teaching. In a pretest posttest design using the semantic differential, Walberg showed that there was a significant decrease in the self-concept scores for a group of student teachers following a block of practice teaching. This study was conducted in a number of schools within Chicago's inner city, and Walberg explained his findings by the fact that the

pupils were from the lower class while the student teachers were from the middle class. Thus he argued that there must have been differences in expectations between the lower class pupils and the middle class student teachers. The findings were seen as evidence that college and university courses are oriented towards teaching middle class pupils and as a result student teachers are shocked by the realities of teaching lower class pupils.

This seemed to be a reasonable explanation until he extended the research to other settings and used multivariate analysis (Walberg, 1967; Walberg et al., 1968). Surprisingly, these studies also showed a negative relationship between practice teaching and the self-concept of student teachers. However, an alternative explanation was not provided.

Other researchers in Australia (Coulter, 1974), Canada (Gaskell, 1977; Loosemore & Carlton, 1977), and the United States (Dumas, 1969; Friebus, 1975), using both questionnaire and multivariate analysis and participant observation techniques, have found similar results. That is, all of these studies also pointed to the fact that for student teachers practice teaching is generally associated with the development of less positive self-concepts.

Moreover, educators have long recognized the fact that there is a great deal of stress associated with practice teaching. The Dean of Education at York University for example noted:

It has been my observation that we do far too little in teacher education, both at the university and in the school setting, to allay the anxiety of student teaching. Most of us are to some degree sensitive to the stresses and strains of the practice teaching situation. Most of us have experienced mature students who, during interviews, dissolve in tears. Most of us have observed behavior on the part of student teachers that can be explained only as their being in something approaching a state of shock as they stand in front of their pupils. (Overing, 1973, p. 21)

In the article from which this quotation is extracted, Overing seems to imply that the effects of practice teaching upon the self-concept of student teachers can be easily corrected. But it would seem that before we may be able to improve the situation we must have a viable explanation of why practice teaching causes the self-concept of student teachers to become deflated. And so far such an explanation has eluded us.

One explanation may imply that lowered self-concepts resulting from practice teaching may simply reflect more realistic self-concepts. That is, practice teaching may force student teachers to consider teaching as a realistic vocation rather than as an idealistic vocation, and as a result the student teachers may adjust their self-concepts accordingly. Nevertheless, a more intriguing explanation may imply that practice teaching is a marginal situation. That is, practice teaching may not be integrated in a systematic way with the functioning of the school, and the lack of integration may cause the self-concepts of student teachers to become deflated. While recognizing that the first explanation may have some substance,

there seems to be considerable evidence which supports the second explanation. This evidence is presented here. But before it is presented the meaning of marginal situations will be defined in a more clear and concise manner.

MARGINAL SITUATIONS: A DEFINITION

From a broad perspective, institutions may be conceptualized as being composed of a number of integrated status positions with constant patterns of authority and communications (Ellis, 1956). Specifically, in schools there are principals, department heads, teachers, secretaries, librarians, and, of course, pupils. All of these positions are related in some orderly manner. That is, there are certain lines of authority which are relatively permanent and are maintained through set patterns of interaction.

Role behavior arises from these interaction patterns. That is, individuals interact with each other in accordance with the position they occupy. This process includes what Getzels (1963, p. 310) identifies as a "nomothetic" or institutional component as well as an "ideographic" or individual personality component, both of which are essential for role behavior. That is, while certain regularities in role behavior are required, individuals may play their roles with some degree of uniqueness.

Thus, within an institution such as a school the behavior of principals, teachers, and pupils reveals certain regularities. In part, these regularities arise out of shared expectations which group members have with respect to each other. Furthermore, these regularities are developed over time rather than being automatically assumed by the individuals from the beginning of their interaction. As a result, individuals behave in ways which generally conform with their status positions.

At the same time, institutions may be conceptualized as being structured around the achievement of important social values. And the pattern of interaction that develops between individuals in terms of their roles facilitates the achievement of these values. It is commonly accepted, for example, that schools are organized to facilitate pupils' learning of both academic subjects and appropriate modes of behavior which are valued by society at large.

The concept "marginality" has been used to define roles within an institution which are peripheral to the main functioning of that institution (Stonequist, 1961). That is, a marginal person is one who is not integrated into the formal structure of the institution and, as a result, does not contribute to the achievement of the desired goals. More specifically, a marginal individual may be in a situation which is structured so that it is not integrated within the institution. As a result, the individual who is in the situation cannot contribute to the achievement of the desired goals. In this sense, a marginal situation is a situation in which there is no clear

set of rules which legitimate the person's behavior, and as a result his role is not related to the achievement of the desired goals of the institution.

PRACTICE TEACHING AS A MARGINAL SITUATION

In the case of practice teaching, the lack of legitimacy may be identified by two interrelated factors. First, student teachers do not have authority in the classroom, and secondly they do not know the rituals of the classroom. These factors are interrelated in the sense that not having authority means that the student teacher can never participate in forming all of the rituals which are continually being evolved as new situations arise. And, because the student teachers never know all of the rituals, they are continually reminded of those they do not know by both pupils and co-operating teachers. This further illustrates their lack of authority.

Authority

Max Weber (1947) has identified three types of authority: traditional authority, charismatic authority, and rational-legal authority. Traditional authority means that the legitimacy that an individual has is based upon both his and his followers' attachment to established customs and practices. In essence, it is tradition which sanctifies the authority of an individual. Charismatic authority is based upon the respect that individuals have for the extraordinary powers and performances of an individual. Moreover, it is not only that these powers and performances are believed to be beyond the capabilities of ordinary people, but the performances specifically meet the perceived needs of both the authority figure and his followers. Rational-legal authority was originally conceptualized to mean that individuals believed in and followed the rules and regulations which govern formal social institutions. However, Weber's conception of rational-legal authority actually contains two separate dimensions: expert (rational) and official (legal) authority (Spady, 1977). Expert authority relies upon technical knowledge and experience; an individual is granted a legitimate right to exercise power within a defined set of activities because of his recognized competence and expertise. Official authority is inherent within an organizational position; whoever occupies such a position in the structure of the organization is granted the legal or official right to exert power by virtue of the office.

In the schools, as they presently exist, it seems that the only mode of authority that may be generally relied upon by both teachers and student teachers is derived from their expertise, experience, and official positions. Charismatic authority rests upon the extraordinary powers and performances of an individual. Given the fact that most teachers as well as most student teachers are quite ordinary individuals, they cannot rely upon this mode in order to maintain control within a classroom. It may,

however, be a mode of authority which a few teachers and student teachers may be able to use, and for them this mode of authority may be very effective (cf. Spady, 1977, p. 370).

It is recognized that these modes of authority are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, the majority of teachers and student teachers must rely upon a combination of expert, official, and, probably to a much lesser degree, traditional authority. That is, teachers and student teachers must rely upon their competence, expertise, and their positions within the school in order to maintain control and ensure that the pupils learn the required material.

While it may be quite easy for bona fide teachers to rely upon these factors in order to maintain control in their teaching situation, it may be practically impossible for student teachers to rely upon these factors even though this is generally the only legitimate way they can ever hope to maintain authority within the classroom. Two reasons can be identified for the difficulties student teachers may have in depending upon their expertise: competence, and their position in order to maintain authority.

First, student teachers do not have an official position in the school. Their position has been artificially created, usually after the school year has begun, and it is extinguished usually before the school year ends. Because student teachers do not have an official position in the school they cannot rely upon authority which is ascribed to such a position. At least one student teacher had made this quite explicit in answering a question about the nature of practice teaching:

It's not real, especially my relationship to the kids. They know I'm a student teacher. They think it gives them license to get away with more. I'm not the supreme authority like the regular teacher is. (quoted in Friebus, 1975, p. 12)

The concern expressed by this person, however, seems to be shared by many student teachers. Generally, student teachers realize that they have little authority in the classroom, derived in part from the fact that they only spend a small proportion of the school year participating in the activities of the school.

Moreover, the fact that practice teaching is a short-term exercise leads student teachers to de-emphasize long-range planning, getting to know the pupils, or assuming responsibility (Gaskell, 1977). Thus, for student teachers the lesson becomes the basic unit of work. As a result, student teachers usually spend an inordinate amount of time preparing each of their lessons. But they are unlikely to see how the lesson fits in with the pupils' general academic program. In this respect Goodlad (1965, p. 268) notes:

The prospective teacher observed a social studies lesson, for example, but has no basis for understanding how and why the class got there or where it is going; often, as a consequence, his perspective is rudely distorted.

At the same time, a student teacher reported:

When you are assigned individual lessons, you can teach the lesson beautifully — you can get all kinds of concrete material. It's just isolated, though; you've got no way of integrating it with other facets of the curriculum. (quoted in Loosemore and Carlton, 1977, p. 415)

In response to this type of behavior another student teacher said:

I think it is very important to try to begin the school year with the students and not come in the middle of the school year. It just seems to me you are making that kind of situation even more artificial if you don't start out with them. (quoted in Gaskell, 1977, p. 14)

The lack of authority, which may be derived from an official position, and the fact that practice teaching occupies such a relatively short period of time means that student teachers often feel as if they are intruders into the classroom. The learning experiences of the pupils have been defined and shaped before the student teacher enters the classroom and will be developed and extended after he has left. As a result, it is not surprising that both teachers and pupils often regard student teachers as disruptive in the normal progression of events, and when this happens student teachers cannot help but feel frustrated and dissatisfied with their practice teaching experiences.

The second reason for the difficulties encountered by student teachers is the fact that they are often seen by both their co-operating teachers and the pupils as being neither experts nor competent. Student teachers are continually being coached and evaluated, and as both they and the pupils know, a competent and expert person is not continually being coached and evaluated, especially in front of pupils who are supposed to be his subordinates.

The coaching may begin even before the student teachers start their practice teaching. In their classes at the university, professors are likely to remind student teachers that they are going to participate in a "teacher's classroom" and they must act accordingly. For example, Kaltsounis and Nelson (1968, p. 279) report that student teachers are typically reminded of their behavior by words such as:

Don't forget that you are guests in the school to which you are going. Remember that you are there to learn. The class into which you are going belongs to Miss So and So. Do not upset her routine. Make sure you check with the teacher on everything you must do.

Not only does this remind the student teachers of their behavior in the classroom but it informs them in a very subtle way that they will not have authority in the classroom. The classroom will "belong" to their co-operating teacher and they will be there to learn and to follow directions even if it deviates from what they have previously learned in their university courses.

When the student teachers enter the classroom their lack of authority becomes even more evident to them as well as becoming evident to the pupils. It has been reported, for example, that co-operating teachers often fail to introduce their student teachers to their pupils until the student teachers have sat in the classroom for a number of days (Gaskell, 1977, pp. 13-14). Or a student teacher may be introduced in a manner which illustrates to all those who are present his lack of expertise and competence. A normal introduction seems to follow the lines of: "This is Mr. So and So, who is our student teacher this year. If he is successful in teaching you people he will become a teacher some day." This type of response on the part of a teacher indicates to the pupils that the student teacher is there to learn and to be evaluated in a similar way as they are. Moreover, it cannot help but undermine the legitimacy of the student teacher's authority in the classroom.

This illustrates that the coaching and evaluation which takes place in the classroom is directed as much towards the pupils as it is towards the student teacher. Moreover, it informs both the pupils and the student teacher exactly where they stand in relationship to each other and in relationship to the teacher. As the student teacher begins to participate in the classroom activities, the coaching and evaluation becomes more directed. In this respect, one student teacher reported:

The cooperating teacher stood up and said that there might be differences between him and me but when I'm up in front of the students they should treat me as a teacher. (quoted in Friebus, 1975, p. 20)

Specifically, in situations such as this, does the teacher really mean that the student teacher has complete authority, or that only for the purpose of the lesson the student teacher should be treated like a teacher? One way of determining whether the student teacher has authority or not is by looking at what happens when he makes a mistake. It seems that when this occurs, the legitimacy which has been assumed often breaks down. One of the most common mistakes that a student teacher can make is to tell the pupils something which contradicts what the teacher has previously told them. For example, a pupil may ask the student teacher the meaning of a word and while he is responding to the question the co-operating teacher may interrupt to remind everyone that pupils in *his* class have been informed that dictionaries are provided for them to find the meaning of words for themselves (Gaskell, 1977, p. 13-14). The fact that a mistake of this type is "corrected" in front of everyone illustrates the tenuous nature of the student teacher's position: the authority which is given to a student teacher by a teacher may be just as easily taken away.

But this is not the only situation in which authority assumed by a student teacher may be jeopardized because he is considered to be neither a competent nor an expert person. Another situation in which a student teacher's authority may be questioned arises when another person, either a pupil

or a teacher, comes to the classroom door. Even if the student teacher is presenting a lesson and is in charge of the class the person is most often directed, by either the pupil who answers the door or by the student teacher himself, to the regular teacher. As a result, the fact that a student teacher has little authority in either the classroom or the school is brought clearly into focus.

Perhaps the most tenuous situation for a student teacher is when the co-operating teacher leaves the classroom and the student teacher is in charge. Often the orderly behavior which was evident when the teacher was in the classroom dissolves into chaos. The pupils may do what they want, talk with whom they please, and in general not pay the slightest attention to the commands of the student teacher. Most often, the pupils know that the student teacher is being evaluated on his performance and that he does not want to be seen by his co-operating teacher as having "lost control of the class." Therefore, even if the student teacher has the authority, he may be very reluctant to punish the pupils who are causing the disruption or even to inform the co-operating teacher that certain members of the class were unruly. The behavior of the pupils in this situation makes it obvious that the student teacher has been relying upon authority which has been granted to him by the teacher rather than upon authority which has been assumed by virtue of his own competence and expertise.

Ritual

The concept "ritual" has had a long and varied history. Even at present this concept means many things to many people. A clergyman would probably say that all ritual is the observance of established procedures and beliefs necessary for public worship; a social worker may use the concept to refer to the specific compulsions of individuals; an anthropologist will probably mean "a category of standardized behavior (custom) in which the relationship between the means and the end is not 'intrinsic'" (Goody, 1961, p. 159).

In this respect, the anthropological definition is used. As such, the concept implies that there is no visual direct linkage between the behavior of the individuals and the defined goals of the institution. That is, in the classroom situation, there are certain types of behaviors and expressions used and understood by both the teacher and the pupils which are not formally defined so that they relate to obtaining the pupils' best performances but they are thought, at least by the teacher, to assist in achieving that end. In other words, rituals are not the formally defined rules and regulations which apply universally to all pupils in the school, but they are the informally defined "customs" which apply within the classroom and are determined to some extent by both the pupils and the teacher through their mutual interaction.

In virtually every case, the rituals of the classroom are established at the beginning of the school year; they are then negotiated, within set

limits, throughout the year (Martin, 1976). A specific teacher, for example, when asked how she was enjoying her class replied: "It is only the end of the first week of school and neither the students nor I have gotten to know each other yet. It takes a while before I can say." This teacher seemed to be referring, at least in part, to the fact that the rituals of the classroom had not been established and the pupils did not know how to interpret her cues and the responses they were supposed to give as a result. Only when the rituals were established would this teacher know how the pupils would respond; if they responded in an appropriate way the class would be enjoyable, but if they responded in an inappropriate way the class would not be enjoyable.

The rituals which operate in a classroom may be divided into two basic types. First, there are rituals which apply to the teaching situation; secondly, there are rituals which apply to the control of disorderly behavior. There are virtually hundreds of rituals which may be classified into these two categories, and of course there would be some overlapping. But generally, rituals which apply to the teaching situation may include such things as the manner in which a teacher structures his lessons, his style of teaching, the type of encouragement and reinforcement provided, and the type of evaluations used. Rituals which apply to the control of disorderly behavior may include the responses the teacher uses to control such things as inattentiveness, mischievousness, and unacceptable behavior. Moreover, the way in which a specific ritual may be performed may depend upon the individual pupil or the group of pupils the teacher is focusing upon. That is, some pupils or groups of pupils may be treated differently by the teacher than others.

For student teachers it may be easier to follow the rituals which apply to the teaching situation than those which apply to the control of disorderly behavior. In most classrooms, the rituals which apply to teaching are evident on a relatively continuous basis, whereas the rituals which apply to the control of disorderly behavior are only brought into prominence when the teacher judges pupil behavior to be disorderly.

Even though a student teacher may be able to observe the rituals used when his co-operating teacher is engaged in teaching a class, it still may not be very easy for him to follow those rituals. Student teachers often note, for example, that some teachers use techniques which are not congruent with the principles and procedures they have learned in their university courses (Gaskell, 1977, p. 3). Moreover, some student teachers may have personalities which differ significantly from the personality of their co-operating teacher.

Differences such as these may create real dilemmas. In the first case, a student teacher may not be sure whether he should follow the procedures used by his co-operating teacher or the procedures he has learned in the university. In the second case, a student teacher may have difficulties presenting himself to the pupils because of the differences between his per-

sonality and the personality of his co-operating teacher. More often than not, however, the student teacher soon realizes that he must follow the procedures and style of teaching used by his co-operating teacher whether he likes it or not. That is, he soon realizes that he is going to be evaluated on the manner in which his teaching style matches the style of his co-operating teacher. This concern is noted in the response by a student teacher to a question about whether his co-operating teacher explicitly encouraged him to follow her procedures:

No, but I like the way she taught so I naturally tried to do it something like she did. Another thing you have to realize about student teaching is that you can't really come in with an entirely different approach. The kids will be threatened so you have to more or less conform to the cooperating teacher. (quoted in Friebus, 1975, p. 16)

Probably the pupils would be "confused" rather than "threatened" if a student teacher used a style of teaching which differed dramatically from the style used by their regular teacher. The pupils may be confused because the rituals they had previously learned were being discounted and new rituals were being required — rituals which they knew would only last for a short period of time. It seems likely then that the pupils would question the legitimacy of a student teacher who imposed upon them new requirements of this type. It would be quite obvious to the pupils that these new requirements were not intimately related to their learning experiences. Consequently, it is probably the student teacher rather than the pupils who would be threatened by using a different style of teaching than the style used by the regular teacher.

Not only may pupils threaten a student teacher if he uses a style which differs from the style used by their regular teacher, but the teacher himself may also threaten a student teacher. A co-operating teacher may have spent a considerable amount of time and energy establishing acceptable response patterns for his style of teaching, and it may be very difficult in a psychological sense for him to see a student teacher disregard those response patterns and attempt to establish other patterns. Moreover, the regular teacher may honestly believe that his rituals are much more effective in obtaining acceptable performances from his pupils than the student teacher's rituals. Consequently, he is likely to insist that the student teacher follow as closely as possible the rituals he uses. In this respect, a co-operating teacher specifically noted:

Some student teachers are very good in that they observe the first day just how far I let my class go, and what the rules are. They may think that something else should be going on in the room, but they are to put their own thoughts away and try to do what I'm doing. (quoted in Loosemore & Carlton, 1977, p. 419)

Nevertheless, as said before, it may be much easier for a student teacher to focus upon the teacher's style of teaching than upon the manner in

which the teacher controls disorderly behavior. For one thing, teaching styles are relatively easy to observe while even the identification of what constitutes disorderly behavior is relatively difficult. An example of this is the fact that there are great differences between teachers in the amount of discussion and noise they allow in their classrooms (Stebbins, 1974, p. 50). This suggests that a teacher may be very sure of the distinctions he makes between various types of disorderly behavior, but these distinctions are likely to vary from teacher to teacher. At the same time, the pupils understand how each of their teachers makes these distinctions and the punishment they can expect if they are disorderly. As a result of the difficulty student teachers have in identifying disorderly behavior, it may be practically impossible for them to discipline the pupils. In this respect, one pupil observed:

I think everybody tries to take a little bit of an advantage of them if they can, in different things. Student teachers might not know everything — things that your everyday teacher knows. (quoted in Loosemore & Carlton, 1977, p. 413)

Moreover, even if a student teacher can identify the different types of disorderly behavior, he may not be able to match the behavior with the type of punishment which is appropriate for the situation. Furthermore, in the extreme cases of unacceptable behavior the co-operating teacher may not give the student teacher the authority to use severe measures such as physical punishment or expelling the pupil or pupils from the classroom or the school. Even though a student teacher may practise in a classroom, the regular teacher is still legally responsible for the pupils.

At the same time, the expectations a teacher has for his class may vary from day to day and throughout the year. As a result, punishment which is applied to various forms of disorderly behavior may also vary. There are periods of fluctuation within a classroom. Before holidays, for example, pupils are much more boisterous and difficult to handle than during other times (Fuchs, 1969, p. 192). Through his experience, the classroom teacher is generally aware of these periodic fluctuations in the moods and behavior of the pupils, and he can usually adjust his responses accordingly. The student teacher on the other hand may not only have a difficult time understanding these subtle changes in the pupils, but he is even more likely to have difficulty adjusting his disciplinary action to take this into consideration.

Consequently, rituals which are a natural part of the classroom for the teacher constitute for the student teacher barriers to what should be the main focus of attention, namely the learning experiences of the pupils. As a result of the complexity of the classroom situation the student teacher may find himself paying more attention to the rituals, just in order to survive, than to the actual learning experiences of the pupils. If a student teacher does not know the rituals of the classroom he will probably find it

difficult to exercise authority, and if he has difficulty exercising authority he will probably find it difficult to learn the rituals of the classroom. Because of this, student teaching is a marginal situation in which there is no clear set of rules which adequately legitimates the student teachers' behavior in terms of the defined goals of the school.

CONCLUSION

Educators have recognized that there is a certain degree of stress associated with practice teaching, but they may not have realized how severe this stress may become or that what they observed as stress may be in effect significant depreciation in their student teachers' self-concepts.

This paper has attempted to provide a simple explanation of why the self-concept of student teachers may decrease as a result of practice teaching. Basically, it is argued that practice teaching is a marginal situation in which student teachers do not fill roles which allow them to adequately legitimate their behavior. More specifically, they do not have authority in the school, and they do not know the rituals of the classroom. As a result, they tend to feel like they are imposters and their self-concepts suffer.

If this is true, it seems to contradict the established goals of practice teaching. That is, it has often been assumed by educators that practice teaching is very important in that it provides training for the actual teaching roles the student teachers will assume in the future. More importantly, practice teaching also serves as a forum for assessing the teaching performances of student teachers. However, these performances may be so different that practice teaching may not indicate very much about the way a student teacher will behave as a full-fledged teacher.

Thus, in order to make sure that practice teaching has greater significance in the training of teachers it must be integrated in better ways with school situations (Clifton & Covert, 1977). This goal may be achieved in part by having student teachers begin their practice teaching when the schools first commence in the autumn, with their continued participation throughout the school year. At least this may mean that the student teachers would learn and understand the important rituals of the classroom. Beyond this, however, it may be important to ensure that student teachers have authority in the classroom. This may be achieved not only by having student teachers spend more time in practice teaching, but also by structuring the situations so that they are recognized as holding official positions in the schools. At the same time, it may be important to ensure that student teachers are recognized as being competent by both co-operating teachers and pupils. All of this may entail substantially revising the way student teachers are educated. Finally, if we are serious about improving the education of teachers, researchers must monitor practice teaching situations to be certain that the desired goals are achieved. Hopefully, better programs will be based upon research evidence.

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Rodney A. Clifton is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2.