
Professional Course Work and the Practicum: Do Good Students Make Good Teachers?

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In recent years, in an attempt to bridge the so-called theory-practice gap, teacher education programs have sought to bring professional course work and the practicum experience into a closer and more meaningful relationship. This study investigates an expected relationship between performance in professional course work and performance in the practicum in a professional year program for prospective elementary teachers at the University of Alberta. Its findings confirm those of other researchers who have discovered little if any relationship between theoretical course work and student teaching performance. In the discussion, it is argued that the implications for teacher education to be drawn from such findings are not primarily data-driven; rather, they depend upon various assumptions concerning the nature, purposes, and priorities of professional education.

Depuis quelques années, les programmes de formation des enseignants essaient de rapprocher les cours professionnels de l'expérience pratique, dans un effort pour combler le soi-disant écart entre la théorie et la pratique. On étudie ici les relations possibles entre les résultats obtenus dans les cours professionnels et les résultats obtenus dans l'expérience pratique telle qu'on les trouve dans le programme d'un an de l'université d'Alberta, programme que suivent les futurs enseignants de l'école élémentaire. Dans la discussion, on avance que les conclusions sur la formation de l'enseignant, telles qu'on peut les tirer des résultats de la recherche, ne sont pas toujours basés exclusivement sur les données; elles dépendent plutôt des hypothèses variées tirées de la nature, des buts et des priorités de la formation professionnelle.

INTRODUCTION

One of the more persistent problems in the training of professionals, particularly teachers, is the relationship of formal academic studies – the so-called “theory” – to the actual performance of the professional in the field – the so-called “practice.” In the case of teacher education the issue concerns not so much how useful expertise in the subject is for its specialist; no one seriously questions whether a knowledge of mathematics, for instance, is directly related to the effectiveness of the mathematics teacher. Rather, the problem concerns the function and place assigned to the strictly professional course work required of teachers in training.

In recent years the issue has acquired special significance. Increasingly, politicians, school administrators and students in training clamor for a

university-based teacher education program primarily concerned not so much with theoretical understanding of topics like the teaching-learning process, the social functions of schooling, the philosophical basis of education and the like, but rather with the specific skills and competencies required for effective performance as a classroom teacher. In response to these demands and expectations, colleges and faculties of teacher education increasingly have tended to centre their programs on the most directly practical aspects, the curriculum and instruction course work and, even more, the student teacher practicum experience. At the same time, to demonstrate their relevance, other professional studies have been required to show a payoff directly related to classroom teaching performance. Even theoretical courses, which on the surface appear to have little or no direct connection with the teaching act, for example, the history and sociology of education, are evaluated according to teaching performance relevance. In short, the relationship between professional course work and the practicum experience, in which teaching performance is central, is held to be direct.

Surprisingly, comparatively little research or conceptual analysis has been carried out concerning this desired and expected relationship between theoretical course work and professional performance. What little has been done strongly suggests that, however desirable such a relationship may be, in reality little connection exists between the two. For instance, Jencks et al. (1972, p. 187) conclude from a number of studies relating professional performance to college grades that this relationship is much weaker than commonly supposed. With reference to the teaching profession they report that for both elementary and secondary school teachers college grades and observer ratings of teaching performance correlate between 0.2 and 0.3. They note a similar trend within the medical profession, in which neither undergraduate grades nor grades in the preclinical years of medical school correlate with supervisors' ratings of medical interns; in the clinical years the ratings correlate only about 0.3 with grades. Moreover, medical school grades predict observers' ratings of novice practicing physicians only weakly and not at all in later years of the practitioner's career.

Similar trends within teacher education have been uncovered by other researchers. Burton, for example, concludes from her survey of the literature that success in teaching is not related to performance in teacher training courses (Emanuel et al. 1975, p. 246). Emanuel, Larimore and Sagan (1975) reach a similar conclusion from their study of 42 secondary social studies majors, finding that student teaching performance does not significantly correlate with final grades in any of seven different education courses.¹ And although Twa and Greene (1980), in a recent study of

139 teacher trainees at the University of Lethbridge, find that students' grade point average in their teaching major and their performance in practice teaching are significantly correlated, the correlation is only .255 (p. 8). Similarly, while Emerson, Elford and Scaldwell's (1982) investigation of the characteristics associated with strong and weak performance in student teaching of 112 Althouse teacher trainees reveals a positive association between practicum success and performance in Foundational studies (i.e., theoretical course work in psychology, philosophy, and sociology), the *phi* coefficients derived from crosstabular analysis range from a low of .03 (philosophy) to a high of only .34 in the case of psychology.² Thus, even when significant relationships are found, they are generally very weak, indicating that performance in theory-based education courses accounts for only a small proportion of variation in student teaching performance. The evidence available in North America, therefore, suggests the presence of an apparent dichotomy between the professional/practical and academic/theoretical criteria of success within the realm of teacher education, a conclusion also drawn by Cortis and Satterly (1968) from their study of education students attending Manchester University in England. It is clear, however, that further related research is needed before any definitive conclusions can be reached.

The professional year of the elementary B.Ed. program at the University of Alberta provides an ideal context for further examining the relationship between professional course work and practicum performance. Following two years of predominantly arts and science course work, the professional year was designed to foster the closest possible relationship between theoretical studies in professional education and the practicum experience. The theory-practice gap was to be reduced to a minimum, the practicum experience building upon and in turn exercising a reciprocal influence upon the course work.

For the elementary B.Ed. students, the professional year at the University of Alberta consists of two four-month academic terms beginning in early September and ending in late April of the following spring. During the first five weeks of the fall term the students are on-campus enrolled in a senior undergraduate course in Educational Psychology and in a Curriculum-Instruction module comprised of four interrelated Curriculum and Instruction courses. These classes are suspended during the sixth to ninth weeks while students are off-campus engaged in an intermediate level practicum. They then return to university for another four weeks and complete the psychology and CI course work in time for the Christmas break. When the second term begins in January, they enrol in a senior undergraduate course in Educational Administration and one in Educational Foundations.³ Upon completing their administration and founda-

tions courses within a six-week period, the students are assigned to schools to engage in the culminating, eight-week student teaching experience.

Students receive a final grade for their performance in each of the on-campus education courses completed during this professional year. Their performance in the culminating practicum is evaluated twice by both the cooperating teacher and the faculty consultant, once as a formative evaluation measure at the mid-point of the eight-week round, and then at its conclusion. The second evaluation is a summative one and determines, therefore, whether the student receives credit for this culminating practicum. Using the Practicum Progress Reports provided by the Faculty of Education, the cooperating teacher and faculty consultant record their estimation of the extent to which the student has demonstrated "competence in the normal classroom environment" and the ability to "build upon previous experiences both at the university and in the field" (Department of Elementary Education, 1981, p. 7).

The professional year, then, is designed to be as much as possible an integrated training experience. It is intended to facilitate the socialization of students into the profession of teaching by immersing them in both educational theory and practice as well as by providing common experiences presumed to foster strong personal identification with and commitment to the profession. Its purpose is also to maximize the extent to which the on-campus professional component is "fully integrated with the practicum component to ensure that students can transfer theoretical components into practice and appreciate the relevance of theoretical instruction to problems faced in the classroom" (Government of Alberta, p. 39). Thus, if professional course work can exercise an influence on practicum performance, one could scarcely imagine a more ideal program design. In short, one might expect to find a substantial correlation between performance in professional/theoretical course work in education and performance in the practicum experience. It is this relationship that is examined in this study.

THE SAMPLE

The subjects for the study were 107 students in the elementary B.Ed. professional year during the 1982–83 calendar year at the University of Alberta. The sample was comprised of voluntary participants who permitted the investigators access to their academic and student teaching records. Although some 200 students were enrolled in the program, data were obtained only for this voluntary sample. Consequently, it was not possible to ascertain fully whether the sample was representative of the population of teacher trainees from which it was drawn.

THE VARIABLES

Academic Performance

Final grades in the following professional year education courses were used to indicate student performance within the on-campus theory component of the teacher preparation program:

- (1) Educational Administration Grade
–final grade in the professional year Educational Administration course (weighted at one course equivalent);
- (2) Educational Foundations Grade
–final grade in the professional year Educational Foundations course (weighted at one course equivalent);
- (3) Educational Psychology Grade
–final grade in the professional year Educational Psychology course (weighted at one course equivalent).
- (4) Educational CI Grade
–final grade in the professional year CI module (weighted at three course equivalents).
- (5) GPA
–weighted average of the above grades.

For all five of the above variables the possible values range from a minimum of 1 (*failure*) to a maximum of 9 (*excellent*) in accordance with the 9-point grading system employed by the University of Alberta.

Practicum Performance

The quality of practicum performance was ascertained using the Phase III Progress Reports completed by both the cooperating teachers and the faculty consultants at the end of the eight-week culminating round of student teaching. These reports contain 48 items, each forming a 5-point Likert scale ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 5 and corresponding to the following descriptors: *poor*, *fair*, *good*, *very good*, and *exceptional*. The items are used by the evaluators to rate each student in relation to various competencies and qualities deemed important for a beginning teacher.⁴

Using 45 of these items, summative indices were constructed to measure the following dimensions of student teaching competence:

- (1) Total Student Teaching Score (45 items);
- (2) Personal/Professional Qualities (8 items);
- (3) Communication Skills (5 items);
- (4) Planning Skills (10 items);
- (5) Teaching Skills (7 items);

TABLE 1
*Means, standard deviations and correlations between professional course grades**

<i>Course</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i> ₁	<i>X</i> ₂	<i>X</i> ₃	<i>X</i> ₄	<i>N</i>
Educational Administration (<i>X</i> ₁)	7.23	0.88		.35	.47	.42	106
Educational Foundations (<i>X</i> ₂)	6.65	1.17			.37	.35	107
Educational Psychology (<i>X</i> ₃)	5.93	1.39				.61	106
Educational CI (<i>X</i> ₄)	6.46	1.04					107
GPA	6.57	0.86					105

* $p \leq .001$ for all correlation coefficients

- (6) Relationship With Pupils (4 items);
- (7) Management Skills (5 items);
- (8) Evaluation Skills (3 items);
- (9) Professional Growth (3 items).

The eight sub-indices were constructed in order to examine the relationship between course grades and numerous specific areas of student teaching performance as well as between grades and the overall index. Scores on each of the above indices were computed for each sample member from the ratings provided by the completed Progress Reports.⁵ Evaluations made by both cooperating teachers and faculty consultants are included in the analysis that follows.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Academic Performance

Performance in professional course work was found to be generally satisfactory. Indeed, a grade of 3 was the lowest achieved by any of the sample members, and only three received this conditional pass in any of the four courses. In contrast, a grade of 9 was given 15 times and there were 88 grades of 8 awarded to students in the sample. The students' grade point averages (GPA) ranged from a low of 4.75 to a high of 8.25. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations as well as the inter-correlations among the grades for the four courses.

As Table 1 reveals, performance on any one of these courses is positively correlated with performance on the others. This is hardly surprising, since criteria for success tend to be fairly common across all four. Basic to completing and successfully satisfying professional course requirements are such competencies as the capacity to comprehend and

deal with abstract ideas, the ability to complete assignments on time, and skills in writing examinations and term papers and other similar tasks. These are all dimensions or components of what could be termed an *academic ability* factor which helps to account for much of the association among course grades evident in the table.⁶ On the other hand, most correlation coefficients are not particularly large, suggesting that performance in these professional courses is to a substantial degree, course-specific.

Practicum Performance

As in the case of their theoretical courses, sample members generally performed well in their final student teaching practicum. For the cooperating teacher data, the total scores range from a low of 59 to a high of 225, the maximum score possible on the 45-item index. Indeed, only one subject's score was below 108, and five students received perfect scores from their cooperating teachers. An examination of the faculty consultant data revealed that the total scores range from 49 to 210, with only one student falling below a score of 107. The generally high evaluation accorded by both assessors is also apparent from Table 2 which shows the means and standard deviations for all nine of the performance indices.

Further, Table 3 shows that strong positive correlations exist between the evaluations made by cooperating teachers and those made by faculty consultants. In effect, the data indicate that considerable agreement exists between the cooperating teachers and faculty consultants concerning student performance in the practicum. But it is also clear that the association is far from being perfect. Indeed, for all categories of practicum performance the teacher evaluations are higher than those of the consultant, suggesting that the close personal contact between student and cooperating teacher over an eight-week period exercises a significant influence upon evaluation, making it a more subjective process than it perhaps ought to be. Certainly, the figures indicate sufficient differences between the two sets of evaluations to warrant separate treatment in the subsequent analysis. They also suggest that the relationship between academic and practicum performance is likely to depend to a considerable extent on whose assessments are used in the study.

The intercorrelations among the eight sub-scales or indices of practicum performance are shown in Table 4. As this table indicates, performance in one area of student teaching is positively and strongly associated with performance in all other areas. Thus, just as an academic ability factor may be said to underlie performance in course work, what might be called a *teaching ability* factor appears to run through the various categor-

TABLE 2
Means and standard deviations for practicum performance indices: cooperating teacher and faculty consultant data

<i>Practicum Performance Index</i>	<i>Evaluator</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>
Total student teaching score	Teacher	186.99	27.55
	Consultant	169.08	26.04
Personal/professional qualities	Teacher	34.27	4.81
	Consultant	33.64	4.97
Communication skills	Teacher	20.38	3.28
	Consultant	19.77	3.18
Planning skills	Teacher	41.29	6.45
	Consultant	39.78	6.74
Teaching skills	Teacher	28.69	4.64
	Consultant	27.86	4.79
Relationship with pupils	Teacher	17.12	2.72
	Consultant	16.56	2.79
Management skills	Teacher	20.20	3.61
	Consultant	19.66	3.61
Evaluation skills	Teacher	12.22	2.09
	Consultant	11.82	2.08
Professional growth	Teacher	12.81	2.13
	Consultant	12.66	2.11

NOTE: $N = 107$

ies of performance in student teaching. However, in spite of this common factor, the evaluation of practicum performance is highly subjective and inferential; thus, the strong associations observed among the eight subscales may be at least partly a function of a *halo effect*. That is to say, during the practicum an evaluator is likely to form an opinion of the student's overall potential as a teacher and this may predispose him/her to make a consistently high or low assessment across all areas of performance when completing the final Progress Report.

Given a set of skills and competencies apparently pertaining to performance in theoretical course work and a set of qualities and competencies apparently associated with teaching performance, to what extent and in what manner are these two sets of attributes related? Simply stated, do

TABLE 3
*Correlations between scores on cooperating teachers and
 faculty consultant indices of practicum performance**

<i>Performance Index</i>	<i>r</i>
(1) Total student teaching score	.75
(2) Personal/professional qualities	.72
(3) Communication skills	.62
(4) Planning skills	.72
(5) Teaching skills	.69
(6) Relationship with pupils	.70
(7) Management skills	.69
(8) Evaluation skills	.68
(9) Professional growth	.56

* $p \leq .001$ for all correlation coefficients

TABLE 4
Correlations between practicum performance index scores generated from cooper-
 ating teacher and Faculty consultant evaluations†*

<i>Performance Index</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
(1) Personal/professional qualities		.86	.86	.86	.84	.84	.76	.77
(2) Communication skills	.74		.84	.84	.79	.81	.74	.73
(3) Planning skills	.86	.73		.91	.86	.87	.82	.73
(4) Teaching skills	.87	.76	.86		.91	.87	.80	.74
(5) Relationship with students	.89	.77	.86	.89		.85	.77	.75
(6) Management skills	.86	.78	.80	.86	.87		.84	.80
(7) Evaluation skills	.81	.65	.87	.79	.82	.77		.81
(8) Professional growth	.82	.70	.76	.76	.80	.76	.79	

* $p \leq .001$ for all correlation coefficients

†Correlation coefficients comprising the matrix above the diagonal pertain to index scores derived from cooperating teacher evaluations and those below the diagonal pertain to index scores derived from faculty consultant evaluations.

TABLE 5
Correlations between practicum performance and academic performance

Practicum Performance Index	Evaluator	Course Grade			Educational CI	GPA
		Educational Administration	Educational Foundations	Educational Psychology		
Total Student teaching score	Teacher Consultant	.26* .29*	.07 .15	.07 .01	.19* .15	.18* .14
Personal/professional qualities	Teacher Consultant	.21* .13	.05 .12	.07 -.07	.22* .12	.17* .08
Communication skills	Teacher Consultant	.16* .19*	.02 .18*	.02 .06	.16* .19*	.11 .19*
Planning skills	Teacher Consultant	.28* .26*	.10 .20*	.10 .05	.20* .16*	.21* .21*
Teaching skills	Teacher Consultant	.27* .17*	.12 .13	.08 .00	.21* .15*	.21* .13
Relationship with pupils	Teacher Consultant	.25* .16*	.08 .13	.06 -.03	.13 .12	.16* .11
Management skills	Teacher Consultant	.23* .13	.07 .10	.02 -.12	.14 .03	.14 .02
Evaluation skills	Teacher Consultant	.28* .22*	.05 .05	.07 -.01	.19* .15	.18* .11
Professional growth	Teacher Consultant	.19* .21*	-.04 .08	.05 .04	.12 .16*	.09 .15
N		106	107	106	107	105
*p ≤ .05						

* $p \leq .05$

good students make good teachers? The data in Table 5 suggest an answer to this question.

It would appear from Table 5 that performance of elementary generalists in university course work – the theory component of the professional year – has only a weak linear⁷ association with their performance in the final practicum, at least as these are measured by university professors, faculty consultants, and cooperating teachers. Indeed, the largest Pearson correlation coefficient is .29, while the majority fall below .20 and some even approach or are equal to zero. Accordingly, by squaring these coefficients to obtain r^2 we find that the proportion of variance in student teaching performance explained by academic performance is extremely small; in all instances it is less than 10%.⁸

Further, of the relationships that do appear in Table 5, the student's grade in the Educational Administration course is most consistently associated with his/her performance in student teaching. Indeed, for almost all measures of teaching performance it is a better predictor of successful performance than the grade in the CI module, the course experience which, purportedly, most directly readies students for practice teaching. Also, contrary to the recent findings of Emerson, Elford and Scaldwell (1982) reviewed earlier in this paper, for this sample of students there are no significant correlations between student teaching success and grades in the Educational Psychology course.

DISCUSSION

For many people working in the field of education, the findings of this study will come as no surprise. Students in training, classroom teachers, and school personnel engaged in hiring teachers all know, on the basis of personal experience, that the skills, qualities, and aptitudes required for successful performance as a university student and successful performance as a classroom teacher differ enough to discourage expectations of a strong relationship between them. Nevertheless, for those involved in designing teacher education programs, these findings may well be significant and unsettling. Not only does the evidence render problematic a particular program of teacher education but, more importantly, it raises questions concerning the validity of a whole approach to teacher education.

A weak relationship between the two modes of performance is likely to be most disturbing to those who believe that teacher education should be concerned primarily, if not exclusively, with preparing beginning teachers to function effectively in a conventional classroom setting after graduation from the program. From the standpoint of this conceptualiza-

tion, the practicum component is, not surprisingly, central to the entire program. Professional course work, it is felt, should be designed around skills needed by teacher trainees to complete successfully the practicum and thus gain initial certification.

For those committed to the above model, when little or no effect of course work on teaching performance can be readily demonstrated or, stated more directly within this study's terms of reference, when it appears that little relationship exists between being a good student and being a good student teacher, one of two conclusions can be drawn. The first is that the professional courses are either poorly designed or irrelevant, and thus out of touch with classroom realities; they therefore stand in need of fundamental changes in content and/or mode of presentation. In effect, the theory component should be refashioned so that the competencies needed and the criteria of evaluation in course work converge with those of the practicum. Alternatively, and more fundamentally, it may be concluded that the validity or *raison d'être* of conventional, formal professional course work no longer exists. The implication is that teacher education institutions, as Emanuel, Larimore and Sagan (1976) put it, "would be well advised to examine closely their teacher training programs and decide whether all of these courses are worth keeping in the program or whether their content should be integrated with actual classroom experiences in order to establish a greater relationship between theory and practice" (p. 248). According to these writers, the integration of theoretical content with field experience can be achieved through what they refer to as "experientially-based" courses: the latter will not only help integrate course objectives in the teacher preparation program and demonstrate to the trainees the utility of theory for practice; they will also lead to a stronger relationship between course performance and student teaching performance because of similarity in behaviours compared (p. 248).

But the above line of reasoning reflects a one-sided view of teacher education which fails to recognize that other interpretations can be placed upon the findings reported in the present study. Consider, for example, a view of teacher education which runs counter to the "practice-driven" perspective outlined above and which thus leads to substantially different conclusions. This second perspective holds that the practicum experience is not the most important component of a teacher education program and that it alone should not dictate the nature and purposes of professional course work. Rather, it is argued, teacher trainees must be fully exposed to contemporary educational theory upon which sound practice ought to be based, and they must demonstrate an awareness, understanding and appreciation of these theoretical underpinnings. A primary purpose of the practicum, then, is to serve as a bridge between educational theory and

practice. Or, as stated in the Government of Alberta's *Theory to Practice* report (1981), practica should be designed to "... bring theoretical and practical aspects of undergraduate teacher education into a clear and interacting type of relationship and to aid students in applying what they learn theoretically to simulated and actual educational situations" (p. 14).

In contrast to the first perspective, therefore, the practicum is viewed as a kind of laboratory experience in which the theory studied in course work can be, in some sense, tested in the classroom. But if the practicum is to help foster student appreciation of the relevance of theory to teaching and, moreover, an ability to translate theoretical concepts into teaching practice, it must be designed to facilitate the attainment of these objectives. Specifically, it must provide ample opportunities for students to "create, innovate, test and revise theories and methodologies" (p. 15) and, as Taylor emphasizes, it is vital that within it "the analysis of practice is systematically conducted in terms of concepts and theories which feature in other areas of the professional sequence ..." (Government of Alberta, 1981, p. 27).

Interestingly and significantly, the professional year program under study is purportedly based on this perspective; the practicum is thus intended as a vehicle for integrating theory and practice.⁹ It is noteworthy, however, that the Progress Report used in evaluating performance in the final practicum makes no direct reference to the student's demonstrated capacity to apply theory to practice or even, for that matter, his/her attempts to do so. Not one of the 48 scales comprising the evaluation report constitutes a direct or even inferential measure of this key feature of professional performance. Also not present in the report is a measure of the student's knowledge of subject matter, another critical attribute of professionalism. In these respects, the practicum experience and certainly its evaluation seem to bear out the observations of Joyce¹⁰ and Taylor¹¹, regarded internationally as experts in the field of teacher education. In their opinion, poorly articulated programs of teacher education, a preoccupation with entry-level preparation rather than life-long self-training, the exigencies of everyday life in the classroom, and strong socializing forces in combination foster among many student teachers a pragmatic – even anti-theoretical – stance toward teaching as well as an almost unquestioning acceptance of how practice is currently conducted and rationalized as appropriate to the alleged "realities" of the classroom.

From the standpoint of the second perspective, then, if the abilities, skills and competencies required for success in theoretical studies substantially differ from those needed for success in the "conventional" practice, what stands in need of revision are the latter, not the former. In other words, the study's findings could be interpreted to mean not that

professional course work is irrelevant to teaching effectiveness in the practicum experience but rather that the practicum itself is being conducted and, more importantly, evaluated inappropriately. For example, it could be argued that the student teaching experience serves to introduce and initiate the prospective teacher into the conventional wisdom, procedures, and values of the existing approach to practice rather than to provide opportunities to test out and implement emerging, more progressive strategies suggested in theoretical course work.

The two points of view briefly elaborated above do not exhaust, however, the possible interpretations of this study. Indeed, perhaps the most valid conclusion to be drawn from the data derives from a third concept of professional education, one that stresses not the interdependence and interrelationship of theoretical studies and practical training, but rather their discreteness or separateness. Each may well be fundamental to professional training. But each has its own rationale and each its own unique and appropriate criteria for evaluating success or failure. What theoretical professional studies provide is knowledge, the basis of an informed understanding of the professional activity in all its contexts. In the Western world such knowledge is generally held to be a distinguishing characteristic of a professional activity as opposed to a craft or trade, and it is closely tied both to income level and occupational status. The criteria for demonstrating such knowledge, particularly in a university setting, are well known and need no further elaboration. They are certainly and clearly different from those which govern the evaluation of performance in an internship or apprenticeship activity which has as its primary goals the development of needed job competencies and, equally important, the socialization of the trainee into the professional or conventional order of things. To allow these two discrete areas of professional education to spill over into each other is to compromise the integrity of both: on the one hand it will weaken the quality of what is essentially an academic activity, and on the other intellectualize unnecessarily what is basically a practical and socializing experience.

Seen from this particular perspective of professional education, the study's data are disturbing not because they suggest a weak relationship between theory and practice, but rather because they indicate that a relationship of any kind exists. If both were true to their own natures, there could be no relationship at all. In this connection it is interesting to note that the data show that performance in the generally recognized more practical, applied studies – the Educational Administration and Curriculum-Instruction courses – is most strongly correlated with performance in the practicum experience. This, it might be argued, reflects

not so much course relevance but rather the course's possible introduction of criteria into evaluation procedures that might more appropriately be employed in the practicum context.

In conclusion, it should be evident that the data presented here in themselves reveal neither strengths nor weaknesses in a teacher education program. They do, however, raise fundamentally important questions about the underlying rationale and organizing principles of professional education and, specifically, the training of teachers. These questions need to be addressed and answered not only by conducting further empirical studies, but also by clarifying conceptually the value commitments implied by particular models of teacher education.

NOTES

- ¹ The correlation coefficients reported in their study range from a low of .051 between grades in a general methods course and student teaching performance to a high of only .277 between the latter level of performance and that in a senior methods course in secondary social studies.
- ² The *phi* coefficient between performance in student teaching and performance in the School and Society course is .12. When these three foundations courses were combined to form an index, the coefficient was found to be .28.
- ³ To meet their Educational Foundations requirement, students must choose one course from the "core" offerings which include two different courses in the history of education, two in the sociology of education, and one in the philosophy of education.
- ⁴ A sample of the complete Phase III Progress Report (i.e., the culminating practicum report) is included in the Faculty of Education's *Handbook For Practicum Programs in the Elementary Schools, 1983-84*, University of Alberta, 1983.
- ⁵ Alpha coefficients of reliability are very high for all indices constructed. The coefficient is .986 in the case of both the cooperating teacher and faculty consultant total scores and they range between .85 and .95 for all of the subscales.
- ⁶ To explore this association further the scores on the four university courses were factor analyzed. This generated one factor having an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 and the loadings of the four courses on the factor ranged from a low of .65 (Educational Foundations) to a high of .83 (Educational Administration).
- ⁷ Scattergrams plotted to depict the correlation between each course grade and the total student teaching scores revealed no evidence of any notable curvilinearity in the relationships.
- ⁸ A stepwise multiple regression analysis was also performed on the data, with similar results obtaining. When all four courses are entered into the analysis as independent variables, the resulting Multiple R^2 is .09.
- ⁹ See the Department of Elementary Education, *Practicum Proposal: Phases II and III*. University of Alberta, April, 1981.
- ¹⁰ Summarized in *Theory to Practice*, pp. 24-28.
- ¹¹ Summarized in *Theory to Practice*, pp. 28-32.

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In einem Versuch die sogenannte Lücke zwischen Theorie und Praxis zu überbrücken, haben Lehrerausbildungsprogramme in den letzten Jahren versucht, fachliche Klassenarbeit und Praktikum in eine nähere und bedeutungsvollere Verbindung zu bringen. Diese Arbeit untersucht eine zu erwartende Verbindung zwischen Leistung in fachlicher Klassenarbeit und Leistung im Praktikum in einem einjährigen Berufsausbildungsprogramm für zukünftige Grundschullehrer an der Universität von Alberta. Deren Feststellungen bestätigen die von anderen Forschern, die wenig oder keine Verbindung zwischen theoretischer Klassenarbeit und Leistung im Lehrpraktikum entdeckten. In der Diskussion wird angeführt, daß die Folgerungen für Lehrausbildung, die von solchen Feststellungen gezogen werden können, nicht in erster Linie durch Daten bedingt sind, sondern sie beruhen auf mehreren über die Art, Aufgaben und Prioritäten der Lehrausbildung gemachten Annahmen.

En un intento por cerrar la brecha entre teoría y práctica, en los últimos años, los programas de educación de maestros han tratado de injertar una relación más estrecha y significativa entre los currículos profesionales y la experiencia práctica. Este estudio investiga la relación que se espera entre el desempeño en el trabajo de formación profesional y la práctica, en un año de formación profesional para maestros de primaria en la Universidad de Alberta. Los resultados confirman los de otros investigadores quienes han descubierto poca o ninguna relación entre trabajo teórico y desempeño de los estudiantes en el aula. En la discusión se arguye que las implicaciones para la formación de maestros con relación a la formación de maestros que se obtienen de tales resultados no son principalmente en base a datos; más bien dependen de varias suposiciones que se hacen acerca de la naturaleza, propósito y prioridades de la formación profesional.

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