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ABSTRACT

The objective of the project was to unify the efforts of the classroom teacher and the college faculty in observing and guiding the teacher trainee in classroom teaching practice. Two coding systems, one on teacher behavior and one on pupil behavior, were used to establish a common language for professional dialogue on description of and prescription for teacher trainee performance. The common focus served to coordinate the energies of all participants in the experimental program. The project offers a model for coordinating the efforts of classroom teachers with college faculty in diagnosing and prescribing teaching practice for teacher trainees toward the goal of performance-competence. Sample forms are included. (Author/SE)

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Preface

The task of this action research project was to use a paired set of coding systems describing teaching-learning behavior with cooperating teachers to individually prescribe teacher trainee practice. It is important to note that this exploratory project was interlocked with the coding system development project, Paper #1 (Schwartz, S. L), which is an integral part of a newly designed undergraduate early childhood teacher education program. This paper follows Paper #1 in this series, and it is strongly recommended that Papers #1 and #2 be read in sequence.

Statement of Need

During the 1972-73 academic year the cooperating teachers in two field centers worked with the researchers in piloting a plan for implementing the field component of the undergraduate early childhood teacher education program proposal. A major premise in this cooperative venture was that the cooperating teachers would assume responsibility for the direct supervision of the teacher trainee in classroom practice, and that the college faculty member would provide support and guidance to the

classroom teacher in the performance of this supervision. The college faculty members assumed the responsibility for the modular instruction in the college based learning laboratory and the cooperating teachers provided guidance in the development and field testing of the modules of instructional content. The official shifting of supervision responsibility from the direct control of faculty members to the shared responsibility between cooperating teachers and faculty and the sharing of instructional content provided the structure for integrating two segments of the program: (1) the day-to-day classroom experiences of the trainee, and (2) the theoretical content introduced at the college Learning Laboratory.

During this program pilot year the cooperating teachers reported on the supervisory conferences with the trainees at the seminars, and the teacher trainees submitted records of these conferences. An analysis of these two pieces of data revealed that in the supervisory conferences the cooperating teachers covered the following areas of guidance: (1) emphasis on rapport between teacher trainee and the pupils in the classroom, (2) encouragement to explore the emotional climate of the classroom, (3) frequent discussion of personality factors and general teacher characteristics of the teacher trainees, (4) specific feedback to the teacher trainee in the areas of lesson planning and sequencing of instructional objectives, and (5) identifying the instructional needs of individual children. It was clear from the data that the cooperating teachers provided opportunities for the trainee to experiment in both the content of instruction and the introduction of curriculum materials. The cooperating teachers' guidance was primarily in the area of the curriculum

needs of the children in the classroom. Objective, specific feedback on teaching behavior of the trainee was lacking in the data. Descriptions of the trainee progress in the development of professional skills were global and stated in value laden and judgmental terms. The progress was described as "successful," or "effective," or "good," with a minimum of information which would distinguish aspects of developing skill of individual trainees. The vague global language of the cooperating teacher was not sufficient to describe or prescribe practice for the teacher trainee. In the traditional pattern of student teaching the college supervisor previously had the sole responsibility for evaluating the progress of the student teacher, including the student teaching grade. Sharing this responsibility with the cooperating teachers focused on the need for a common language to describe the teaching behavior of the trainee. It has been established in the extensive studies of teaching in the research literature that systems of analysis of teaching provide a language for communication about the dimensions of teaching and the changes in teaching performance that occur over time (Bebb, Low & Waterman). Consequently, the goal of the project was to establish a common language for dialogue between the classroom teacher, the college faculty, and the teacher trainee that would serve as a basis for individually prescribing teacher trainee practice.

Background Information

In the year prior to the initiation of the research using the coding systems, the researchers had met with the teachers in two field centers on a weekly basis working toward the goal of coordinating the college based professional studies with the classroom teaching practice of the

trainees. The centers were typical of the schools in the New York Metropolitan area which served as field centers for the program. In addition, the two centers served school populations of distinctly different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. The working relationship established in the year prior to the research project laid the foundation for the project and a brief description of that foundation follows.

In the scheduled weekly meetings with the cooperating teachers, the two faculty members took the leadership in planning the sessions. (The college faculty members working with the teachers in these two field centers were members of the research team.) Initially these meetings took the form of presenting and explaining student assignments in the college-based Learning Laboratory. These sessions gave the teachers the assurance that their joint responsibility with the college faculty members was taken seriously and was an essential component of the program. At mid-semester, a feedback session on assessing teacher trainee progress in the classroom was scheduled. The first discussion took the form of explanations from the cooperating teachers defending how good each teacher trainee was doing in the classroom. There was a strong reluctance on the part of classroom teachers to discuss areas in which the teacher trainee needed practice in teaching skills. Each cooperating teacher seemed to be testing whether he would be judged by peers or faculty on the basis of the progress of the teacher trainee. However, the need to develop an instrument for assessing teacher trainee progress was acknowledged, and the teachers produced some 50 items for assessing trainee progress. The researchers categorized the items and suggested scaling procedures. The assessment instrument contained only those items on which there was

common agreement among cooperating teachers and faculty. During the joint work on the instrument the teachers increasingly used specific examples of observed teaching behavior to describe trainee progress in the classroom, thus indicating a movement in the direction of describing trainee development from the judgmental to the descriptive. However, the observations were most often highly selective and used to support earlier descriptive judgments.

To follow up the interest in observing trainee behavior, the faculty members introduced a category system of teacher roles as an orderly way to describe teaching behavior (Robison & Schwartz). The teachers analyzed type-scripts and video-taped protocols to identify and clarify the role definitions, and then applied the role definitions to video-tape recordings of the teacher trainees. The teachers engaged in lengthy discussions on judging the relative values of the various roles. The overall response to the use of roles was favorable as indicated by an end-of-the-year questionnaire. Seventeen teachers completed an evaluation form. Thirteen of the seventeen teachers responded with unqualified positive reactions to the use of roles to discuss teacher trainee progress. Two teachers questioned the value of the use of roles, one cautioned against over emphasis on roles in the program, and one teacher suggested that the study of roles was enlightening, but didn't know whether it was helpful. Twelve of the seventeen respondants referred to the study of teacher roles as an important influence on professional development. The researchers viewed the use of roles for describing trainee behavior as an important step in unifying the efforts of the classroom teachers and faculty in guiding the trainee practice. Role study, however, did not

provide concrete enough information for guidance of students in specific teaching behavior skills. Thus, a decision to seek a more concrete objective observation system for the joint use of faculty and cooperating teachers in the supervision of trainees launched the current study. The development of the Teacher Behavior Form (TBF) and the Pupil Behavior Form (PBF) is reported in Paper #1 (Schwartz, S. L.).

Project Procedures

The task of this exploratory project was to use the TBF as a tool to unify the efforts of the cooperating teacher and the college faculty member in observing and guiding the classroom practice of the teacher trainee. The project was conducted during the fall semester, 1973.

The two field centers established during the program pilot year continued to serve as centers for the action research project. The first step in the project was to involve the eighteen cooperating teachers in four discussion seminars on teaching strategies and definitions of teaching behavior. Teacher reactions to these seminars varied. There were those who expressed the opinion that defining teaching behavior was academic and of no practical classroom value; others indicated that the discussions made specific and applicable the work on teacher roles from the previous year. While discussions on teaching behavior continued at a modified pace for all cooperating teachers, nine teachers agreed to participate in the project to test the use of the TBF as an observation instrument for describing and analyzing the teaching behavior of trainees. There were thirteen trainees assigned to the nine teachers.

The teachers received ten hours training in coding using the TBF instrument. The categories of the TBF included verbal and non verbal

behaviors in both the management and instructional modes and the affective and cognitive domains of teaching behavior. The TBF system of analysis consisted of two categories for communicating information to children, four categories for soliciting responses from children, and two reinforcement response categories. (See Appendix for the TBF and PBF recording forms.) The researchers gathered ten-minute video recording of instructional episodes of the thirteen trainees assigned to the nine teachers. In conference the cooperating teacher and the researcher viewed and coded the teaching episode of the trainee, and discussed the interpretation of the observation based on the coding of the episode. Pupil involvement in the episode was discussed in relation to the observed patterns or clustering of the trainee's teaching behaviors. The categories from the PBF were used for this discussion, but the PBF as an observation tool was used later by the researchers in the development of the instrument. Jointly, the teacher and the researcher made plans for guiding the trainee in needed teaching behavior skills. Thus the goal of joint planning for guiding trainee practice was met. The cooperating teacher then assumed the responsibility for conferring with the trainee, assigning the practice of specified teaching behaviors, and observing the outcome of the trainee practice.

Discussion

1. Specific and individualized plans for guiding trainee teaching behavior practice were formulated jointly by the teacher and researcher through the use of the observation codings of the TBF and the discussion of pupil involvement. The plan for one trainee was designed to expand the repertoire of teaching behaviors. This trainee chose a discussion

episode for the video-taped observation. The analysis of the trainee's coded observation indicated that the trainee did use teaching behaviors to elicit language from the pupils. The viewing of the taped episode indicated that the trainee did not give information to pupils when it was needed, and this lack of supplying information was reflected in the coding. The trainee was asked to plan and implement several instructional sequences to teach children specific skills and thus to practice a teaching behavior that was lacking in the observed episode.

The plan for a second trainee who implemented a discussion episode was designed to help the trainee modify and control information giving behaviors. As the teacher and researcher interpreted the coded observation of this trainee there was a contradiction between the trainee's discussion goals and lack of pupil production of language. The trainee controlled pupil language by responding to selected pupils and by long sequences of giving information. This trainee was asked to sit with individual children following an instructional activity and to respond only to child-initiated interactions without giving further information.

Another trainee implemented an episode in which ten first grade pupils investigated the insides of fruits and vegetables for seeds. In this manipulative activity the trainee responded positively to pupil conversations and the manipulation actions. The form of the reinforcement teaching behavior was that of echoing the exact words of the pupils. For this trainee the plan was designed to change the form of the reinforcement and to encourage the practice of reinforcement teaching behavior.

As used in this project the TBF and the categories of the PBF were viable tools for coordinating the joint efforts of the classroom teachers and the faculty members, and for individualizing the supervision of the trainees. The researchers suggest that the next step is to continue the joint use of the TBF and the PBF with the teachers who participated in the project and then to extend the use of the observation system with a larger group of cooperating teachers to further explore the potential uses of the observation system.

2. The classroom teachers in the project were trained to use an observation system, the TBF. The vocabulary used in the categories of the observation system served as a common language basis for discussing the performance of the teacher trainee in the classroom. The teachers' enthusiasm for using the observation system as a basis for discussing the trainee progress was uanimous, as expressed in such statements as "I never thought you could see so much," and "Now I know some things to look for when I watch the trainee." However, the teachers did not internalize the new language of the observation system easily. They did use the language in the viewing conferences and in the supervision conferences with the trainees. Three weeks after the viewing conferences, all the teachers in the field centers were asked to describe the progress of trainees. There was no language difference between teachers in the project and the other cooperating teachers. The language of the TBF was used by the teachers in the project only in the framework of using the observation system.

3. The time demanded for participation in the project was a continuing problem for the cooperating teachers. This was particularly evident in the viewing conferences. In these conferences the joint coding of the observations was a time-consuming activity. The ten hours training in coding was sufficient for facilitating the use of the language, but not sufficient for quick and easy coding of the episodes. An assessment of the use of the teacher's time suggests that alternatives to the procedures used in the exploratory project are needed. The researchers could assume the task of coding the observations and discussing the coding during the joint viewing conference. This would provide more time for focusing on the joint analysis of the observation and on developing the plans for guiding trainee practice. This procedure would sustain the joint use of the observation system and eliminate some of the time pressures for the teachers. It is clear that a time commitment is required for training and using the TBF for individualizing the supervision of trainees.

4. The value of using an observation tool was communicated after the teachers had used the TBF and discussed the categories of the PBF to analyze and prescribe practice for the teacher trainee. Throughout the coding training sessions the teachers raised questions about the practicality of using an observation system. They were concerned that a teaching behavior system would not represent the interactive process of teaching. It was in the using of the TLF and the categories of the PBF that the teachers realized the potential of the tool for relating teaching behavior to instructional goals and planning for instruction. The observation system gave the teachers in the project a new way to look at and describe the interactive process of teaching.

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APPENDIX

TEACHER OBSERVATION FORM (TOF)

DATE_____ Age/Grade_____ # Children_____ Teacher _____

Activity_____ Recorder_____

Teacher Behavior	(+) Instructional Mode	(-)	(+) Management Mode	(-)
1. Manipulate materials				
2. Give directions				
3. Supply information				
4. Demonstrate/ illustrate				
5. Reinforce: objective				
6. Short answer question				
7. Elicit: program activity				
8. Probe				
9. Reinforce: subjective				
10. Elicit: social				
11. Physical contact				
12. Participate with chldrn				
13. Non-intervention				

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APPENDIX

PUPIL BEHAVIOR FORM (PBF)

Teacher_____ Recorder _____

Children _____ Date _____ Activity_____

Child Behavior	Task Involved	Task Unrelated	Task Resistant
Receiving: listening without talking or moving about.			
Producing Language			
Manipulating Materials			
Producing Action moving about			

NOTES