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Andrews University

School of Education

PROFILES OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION:  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE OF  
SELECTED EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS  
IN JAMAICA AND MICHIGAN

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Heather Smith-Sherwood

July 2006

UMI Number: 3234104

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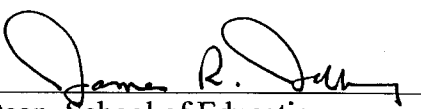
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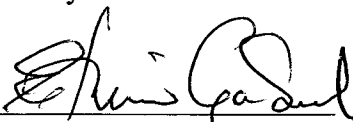
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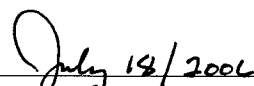
  
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ABSTRACT

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by

Heather Smith-Sherwood

Chair: Hinsdale Bernard

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

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INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE OF SELECTED EXEMPLARY  
PROGRAMS IN JAMAICA AND MICHIGAN

Name of researcher: Heather Smith-Sherwood

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Date completed: July 2006

Problem

The education system in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is faced with numerous challenges that, quite often, leave administrators and classroom teachers bewildered in their quest for effective solutions. In light of these challenges, this study investigated three exemplary pre-service teacher education programs in Jamaica and Michigan in order to provide an account of how these are structured in different contexts of tertiary institutions and, in addition, to identify how these programs ensure that their graduates are prepared to function effectively in today's schools.

## Method

A qualitative case study design was used in this study. Five categories of stakeholders in the three institutions were interviewed regarding their perception and expectations of pre-service teacher education in general as well as in the context of their program. The responses from these persons were described in narrative form then analyzed and compared based on the similarities and differences that existed among them. The analysis led to the emergence of various themes across the three institutions, and these were used to draw conclusions relative to the structure of pre-service teacher education.

## Results

There are certain distinguishing features of exemplary/effective pre-service teacher education programs whether they are university- or college-based. Programs of this sort will bear eight basic features: (a) coherent program vision, (b) cultural competence, (c) collaborative partnership, (d) contextualization, (e) quality standards, (f) well- planned and implemented field experiences, (g) continuous assessment, (h) experienced committed faculty, and (i) a harmonious blend of theory and practice. These features enhanced the performance of graduates from these institutions.

## Conclusions

To be effective, pre-service teacher education programs have to prepare prospective teachers to adequately meet the challenges of teaching in the schools and classrooms of today. The programs' structure may vary according to their institutions' guiding principles, beliefs, and vision of teaching and learning. However, there are

certain basic features that will characterize all programs that are operating to prepare the caliber of teachers that the society demands. To effect change, quality teachers are needed, and to produce quality teachers, quality preparation is a necessity.

To

*The Almighty God, my Tower of Strength, my Balm in Gilead,  
My Source of all Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding;*

*Michael, my husband; dearest friend and life-time love*

*My late mother; symbol of true Godliness*

*Nelton; my dear son*

*Annette; my wonderful niece;*

*My loving friends; treasures.*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*The education of a society can rise no higher than the qualifications of its teachers. To ignore or neglect the role of teacher education is to ignore the intellectual future of the country itself.*

— Dean Corrigan

“Education is an important investment in human capital, and plays an important role in helping people learn to become literate, numerate, problem-solvers and motivated toward self-realization, economic sufficiency, civic responsibility and satisfactory human relationships” (Brimley & Garfield, 2002, p. 1). In speaking to the American Government in July 2000, Allan Greenspan (as cited in Brimley & Garfield, 2002) said the nation must invest in human capital and, as such, it is critical that the quality of education in elementary and secondary schools be improved. He declared:

Even the most significant advances in information and technology will not produce additional economic value without human creativity and intellect. Certainly, if we are to remain preeminent in transforming knowledge into economic value, the U.S system of education must remain the world’s leader in generating scientific and technological breakthroughs and in preparing workers to meet the need for skilled labor. . . . Education must realize the potential for bringing lasting benefit to the economy. (p. 2)

Economists Galbraith (1984), Friedman (1980), Schultz (1970), and Benson (1978) have all underscored the significant relationship between a country’s educational development and economic growth (cited in Brimley & Garfield, 2002). They point out

that educational development is more important than the extent of natural resources in determining the productivity and individual income level of nations.

More importantly, the economists posit that “a nation with high educational development may overcome to a great degree any lack of natural resources, but no nation having a poor educational system, even with tremendous stores of natural wealth has been able to approach high individual economic productivity” (pp. 19-20). As an extension, and within this context, education therefore provides more security against joblessness in periods of change or a slackening of business and industrial activity (Brimley & Garfield, 2002).

The importance of education cannot then be refuted, and governmental leaders who are forward thinking, must pay attention to the system of education on which the country’s future hangs. The Government of Jamaica in a Five Year Development Plan, 1990-1995, reiterated its belief in “education as a desired end of society” and in “the right of all individuals to education and training opportunities in order to develop their innate creative and intellectual capabilities” (King, 1998, p. 43).

Milford (2003) asserts that education has the greatest potential of making a strong impact on the nation’s most important resource, its human capital. With regard to Jamaica as a developing country, Evans (1999) remarked that the country needs a “wide range and large numbers of educated and skilled personnel” (p. 1). Those who are responsible, according to Milford (2003), are obligated to ensure that every young person is provided with optimum opportunities for quality educational development at the highest level, regardless of ethnicity, social class, or gender (p. 2).

Among other things, a country's education system is directly related to and influenced by the caliber of teachers by which it is served. Teachers are in turn influenced by the training received. The training received is a function of the training programs, which are influenced by philosophy, vision, governance, and structure. According to Guyton (2000), powerful teacher education programs will produce good teachers who are able to teach all the students who come to their class. If the program is effective, Guyton believes it will have a positive effect on teachers and ultimately on their students.

Fullan (1995) suggests that quality learning for all students depends, on quality learning for all teachers. This, he believes, is dependent on the development of the six interrelated domains of teaching and learning – collegiality, context expertise, continuous learning, change process, and moral purpose. The ultimate goal of all educational endeavors must be student learning; consequently, teacher education can and must be made accountable for making connections between teacher performance and student learning.

In respect of this connection, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future articulated the following position:

1. What teachers know and can do is one of the most important influences on what students learn.
2. Recruiting, preparing and retaining good teachers are the central strategy for improving schools.
3. School reform cannot succeed unless it focuses on creating the conditions in which teachers can teach and teach well. (Miller, 1999, p. 63)

Kostner and Dengerink (2001) make the connection even more explicit; they say:

The quality of teaching depends in large measure on the quality of the teachers, the quality of the teachers depends in large measure on the quality of their professional

development, the quality of teacher education depends in large measure on the quality of those who provide it –namely the teacher educators. (p. 345)

The current situations which exist in the United States and Jamaica are sufficient to awaken a consciousness in the leaders regarding the urgent attention that must be paid to schooling and teacher education. These must be regarded as high-priority items. The stark reality however is that the concerns of teacher educators relative to the interrelatedness of schooling and teacher education are not shared by the general populace. In fact, Sikula (1996) remarked that health care, violence and the economy are more highly prioritized than education.

According to Sikula (1996), teacher education faces a daunting array of formidable challenges, some of which result from social issues such as poverty, violence and crime, teenage pregnancy, divorce, substance abuse, unemployment, women parity, AIDS epidemic, and the socio-linguistic diversity of our students and citizens (Britzman & Dippo, 2000).

There is also the growing power of science and technology and the ethical questions involved. There are challenges, derived from parents and guardians who are concerned that their youth need to be prepared more effectively for adult life in a world of increasing social turbulence and high technological advancement (Sikula, 1996).

Sikula (1996) also charges that teacher educators themselves are entrenched in situations where they are expected to produce satisfactory results with limited resources in unfavorable working conditions. Egan (2000) contends that they are torn between varied and sometimes conflicting external demands on one hand and their own internal tensions and needs on the other hand.

Sindelar and Rosenberg (2000) identify some contradictory demands concerning teacher education; these include legislative mandates for curriculum coverage, restrictive university regulations, and the “consumer orientations” of students in higher education.

External issues, such as globalization, the professionalization of teaching and teacher education, and the call by external subject matter experts for teachers to teach for understanding of subject matter rather than rote learning and performance (Ben-Peretz, 2001), are challenges impacting teacher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In consideration of the impact of globalization on teacher education, Helsby (1999) argues that

the very heart of teachers’ work, the education of young people, is itself being subjected to contestation and redefinition as coalitions of state and industrial interests seek in various ways and to varying degrees, to develop policies that will align the educational system more closely with the perceived requirements of the labor market. (p. 14)

There is no doubt that these trends will create conflicts for teacher educators who do not recognize themselves as contributing to the alignment of the education system with the requirements of the labor market. Smyth and Shaddock (1998) predict that schools will be transformed from agents striving for the betterment of society, to servants of economic growth.

Further, they add that schools will be governed by the ethos of marketplaces, resulting in a differentiated mix of teachers, “some of whom are fully qualified, others who are cheaper to employ for short periods of time and who can rapidly be moved around within auxiliary and support roles to help the growing niche markets” (p. 122).

The professionalization of teaching has been challenged on all fronts. Bridges (1999) suggests that professional teachers have academic qualifications and act in an

ethical manner according to explicit or implicit codes of conduct. He further reiterates that

the practice of teachers is based on a “special knowledge” aspect rooted in the idea that successful professional knowledge much of it experientially gained and often held tacitly. It becomes then the task of professional education to unpack this knowledge or find ways of passing it on from experienced professionals to those entering the profession. (p. 4)

It is unquestionable that teacher education must be based on a valid body of knowledge. Margaret Ishler, president of the Association of Teacher Educators, a United States-based organization (1996-1997), suggests that the teacher education curriculum should be built on a professional knowledge base, formed by theory and pedagogy in relation to wisdom and practice (cited in Byrd & McIntyre, 1997). In addition to subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, Bridges (1999) speaks of knowledge that is intimate to teachers’ understanding and commitment to professional behavior, as well as interpersonal and communication skills.

Within the context of social and economic change, teacher education must realize that the conditions for teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are very significantly different from those that existed in previous centuries (Day, 2004). The need to revisit the structure of programs for the preparation of teachers must be paramount if education is to move forward.

Goodlad (1994) shares the view that a new model of school and school reform is needed and future educators must be specially prepared with the relevant expectations, knowledge, and skills to participate effectively in the renewing process. This seems highly necessary if teacher education is to be successful in preparing teachers for tomorrow’s schools.

In an age when social problems have escalated to epidemic proportions, Sikula (1996) and O'Hare and Odell (1995) advocate that educators must become more willing to serve as advocates and change agents, no longer accepting the roles of impartial observers and transmitters of culture. Jennings (2000) examine therefore the National Educational Policy documents in the Caribbean and note that they are strong regarding the teacher as a leading change agent of educational reform. Further, she emphasized that the Barbados White Paper on Educational Reform proclaims 'teacher empowerment' as a central plank in the strategy aimed at improving the educational quality for all students. This is so reflective of the developmental trend in Caribbean Teacher Education.

It is imperative that schooling and teacher education be given national priority, as there is no question to the fact that there is a direct relationship between the social and economic state of a country and its education system (Brimley & Garfield, 2002). Teachers must be properly trained to become change agents. Orlofsky (2001) advocates that teacher education must be time-tested and redefined in order that young teachers are adequately prepared as dynamic, creative individuals, ready for the realities of the teaching profession in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century society.

### **The Context of the Problem**

The following represents a brief overview of the structure of teacher education in Jamaica and Michigan, the two areas that form the context for the development of this study.

### The Jamaican Context

Teacher education in Jamaica falls under the governance of the University of the West Indies and is directed by the Joint Board of Teacher Education. This regional board has a secretariat and is a partnership body with teacher training colleges or institutions charged with the responsibilities of executing teacher education programs, teachers' organizations in the three affiliated countries, independent members, Ministries of Education, and the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the University of the West Indies.

The mission of the Joint Board is to guarantee quality in teacher education in the Western Commonwealth Caribbean. At the end of their training, the board notes that teachers must possess the necessary competencies to take their place as leaders in society. Within this context, the environment of teacher education is expected to provide rich opportunities for students and educators to be involved in:

1. cooperative learning process
2. reflective activities that promote self and peer analysis
3. inquiry and problem-solving activities
4. learner-centered processes
5. exposure to principles of relevant theories of learning (Joint Board of Teacher Education, 2003, p. 3).

The Joint Board certifies teachers who are trained at the undergraduate level in colleges in the Bahamas, Belize, and Jamaica. Those who are certified by the Board are automatically recognized by the University of the West Indies and the Ministries of Education of the three countries. Certification indicates that through the process of



external examination and accreditation, this person has acquired the necessary academic and professional skills necessary for teaching.

There are five programs through which the Joint Board certifies teachers. These are: Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Literacy Studies. The Early Childhood Program prepares students to teach children between the ages of 3 and 7. The Primary Program prepares students to teach children between the ages of 6 and 12, that is, from Grades 1 to 6. The Secondary Program prepares students to teach specified subjects to adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17, that is, from Grades 7 to 11 or forms 1 to 5. The Special Education Program prepares students to teach children between the ages 3 and 14 who are challenged in one or more of the following ways; Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Mentally Challenged, or Learning Disabled (Joint Board of Teacher Education, 2003).

Pre-service, undergraduate education is generally offered at the college level where programs are delivered over a 3-year period. In other instances, however, students can be awarded advanced placement, and in this case their period of training is reduced to 1 or 2 years depending on the nature of the placement. Teachers are certified through the award of certificates and diplomas.

The process of external assessment is done during the latter part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year field experience. This is conducted by representatives of the Joint Board of Teacher Education in collaboration with the college supervisors. External assessment provides for the verification of teacher competence and for students' certification.

### The Michigan Context

According to Michigan law, teachers of elementary or secondary schools must be certified for the positions for which they are assigned. This certification is made compliant by the Office of Professional Preparation Services (OPPS) in the Michigan Department of Education. It is the responsibility of this office to ensure that all professionals within the school environment complete quality preparation and professional development, in keeping with the standards that are articulated by the Michigan Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the Superintendent of Public Education (Michigan Department of Education, 2003).

In Michigan, as well as in other states, a teaching license is obtained through the completion of a college or university teacher education program. This program however must be approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The State Board of Education is required by law to determine the requirements and to issue the licenses and certificates for all public school teachers. A license indicates that such an individual has met state mandated requirements and is approved to practice in the state (Michigan Department of Education, 2003).

The Michigan law states that no person shall be eligible to teach in any private, denominational, or parochial school without a teaching certificate. State mandates also include ensuring that teacher preparation is aligned to student standards.

The Michigan State Board issues two types of certificates: the Provisional Certificate and the Professional Education Certificate. The Provisional Certificate is earned by successful completion of an approved teacher education program for a specialized area. This certificate is valid for a period of up to 6 years within which time

the teacher is expected to gain experience and additional professional development for the next level of certification.

The Professional Education Certificate is the advanced teaching credential, which is earned after the issuance of the Provisional Certification. The teacher must acquire at least 3 years of experience as a practicing teacher in addition to the successful completion of 18 semester hours of additional study. For elementary certification, the teacher must complete 6 semester hours of reading requirement, while those for secondary certification are required to complete 3 hours (Michigan Department of Education).

The Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) is also a mandated requirement for teacher certification. The purpose of the tests is to ensure that each certified teacher possesses the necessary basic skills and content knowledge to operate in Michigan Public Schools. The MTTC consist of three tests.

The Basic Skills Test comprising reading, mathematics, and writing has to be successfully completed by students before they are enrolled into student teaching. For the Academic Content-area Tests, candidates for secondary-level teaching certificates must pass the corresponding subject area test for each academic content area in which they are to be certified. Elementary Education Test has to be completed successfully by those teachers who wish to teach in elementary classrooms. Those who wish to teach in Grades 6-8 in specific subject areas are expected to pass the appropriate subject-area tests in order to qualify for endorsement (Michigan Department of Education, 2003).

### **Statement of the Problem**

School governance in Jamaica is highly centralized with the Ministry of Education constituting the main governing body. Consequently, educational programs are

generally standardized from early childhood through to teacher education at the tertiary level. The University of the West Indies through the Joint Board of Teacher Education is directly responsible for the development of teacher education curriculum, while training institutions have the autonomy of structuring their programs to satisfy the needs of the stated curriculum.

Over the last two to three decades, violence has eroded the social fabric of the Jamaican society. In recent years, the education system has come under serious attack, as this situation has escaped into schools especially at the secondary level. *Jamaican Daily Gleaner* (“Violence in Schools,” 2004) reports a list of violent incidents in Jamaican schools involving students with their peers as well as with teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. This was just a sample of the many incidents that had disrupted the system since the beginning of the calendar year 2004.

Writing in *Institute of Education Annual*, King (2000) observes, “Violence is fast becoming the accepted way of solving conflicts in the wider national and global society as well as in the school community” (p. 5). The close proximity of Jamaica to the US, she notes, with its estimated school-related violence of 204,000 incidents of aggravated assaults, 270,000 burglars, 12,000 armed robberies, and 9,000 rapes annually, must be regarded as a contributing factor.

In conducting a systems analysis, the government of Jamaica identifies acute economic pressures as contributing negatively to the stability of the country. There are reductions in public expenditure on education, high levels of functional literacy, low levels of morale, and the unpreparedness of graduates of the education system to deal

with the challenges of the work environment as the underlining cause of the erosion of quality and severe inefficiencies relative to the education sector (King, 1998).

Sikula (1996) writes that in comparison to other industrialized countries, the United States is ranked number one in social issues such as murders, incarceration, capital punishment, homelessness, single-parent families, television watching and divorce. Citing Frank and Marie Hill, King (2000) identifies nine societal factors that the writers recognize as associated with high incidence of violence in US schools: dysfunctional families, clashes of cultures and lack of community, media messages, prevalence of weapons, denial, cover up, and court systems, drugs as big business, gangs and other subculture activities, catalytic events and random violence (p. 11). These, King further reports, are not unique to the US; they are also prevalent in other countries as well as in Jamaica.

The need for teacher education to reassess its effectiveness in light of this startling reality that impacts the education system is paramount. Studies show that teacher preparation is critical to student success, and good teacher preparation can result in the kind of delivery that will lead to improvements in students' outcomes (Byrd & McIntyre, 1997; Sikula, 1996) and therefore a transformation in the entire education system.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Within the context of the challenges facing schooling and the education system and the critical role of teacher education in transforming teaching through the proper preparation of teachers, this study investigated and provides an in-depth account of how pre-service teacher education is structured and conducted in three different contexts of tertiary institutions in the country of Jamaica and the state of Michigan.

### Research Questions

This study was descriptive in nature. It elicited specific information regarding the structure, distinctive features and content of undergraduate pre-service teacher education programs relative to three different contexts of tertiary institutions: (a) Jamaican –Private, Christian Denominational, (b) Jamaican – Public, and (c) Michigan – Public. The study approached the teacher education programs from a case review perspective. Although L. R. Gay (2003) describes a case study as “an in-depth investigation of one ‘unit,’ such as an individual, group, institution, organization, program or document” (p. 219), an in-depth review of the programs was not undertaken.

The following questions guided the research process in respect to the objectives of the study:

1. What are the major components of effective/productive teacher education programs?
2. What assessment techniques are effective for teacher education programs?
3. How should teacher pre-service teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?
4. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher graduate?
5. How should field experiences be organized to influence the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher?
6. What relationship should exist between the university/college and the practicing schools?
7. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher educator?

8. What are students' expectations of pre-service teacher education programs?

### **The Current Context of Teacher Education: Conceptual Framework**

The framework of the study guides the researcher regarding the information that should be included in the study. According to Miles and Huberman (1984), "a conceptual framework is the current version of the researcher's map of the territory to be investigated" (p. 33). From this framework, the researcher should be able to critically assess and distinguish between the relevant and irrelevant material chosen for the study.

Although developing a conceptual framework may be demanding and time-intensive, Odell (1997) advised that the "resulting programmatic benefits and clarity make it worth the effort" (p. 137). With regard to pre-service teacher education, a conceptual framework provides direction for the development of programs and sets the foundation for coordinated and effective teaching. Without this framework, Odell believes that "students are exposed to an array of disconnected research and theories rather than on a combined and thoughtfully determined hierarchy of courses that are inextricably linked" (p. 138).

In describing the need for a program framework, Howey and Zimpher (1989) explain:

Programs have one or more frameworks grounded in theory and research as well as practice; frameworks that explicate, justify, and build consensus around such fundamental conceptions as the "role" of the teacher, the "nature of" teaching and learning, and the "mission" of schools in this democracy. These frameworks guide not only the nature of curriculum as manifested in individual courses but, as well, questions of scope; developmental sequence; integration of discrete disciplines; and the relationships of pedagogical knowledge to learning how to teach in various laboratory, clinical and school settings. (p. 42)

Programs that are guided by such frameworks tend to reflect more coherence between and among program components, development, implementation, outcomes, and teaching/learning activities for students. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 1995b) emphasized the need for teacher education programs to be guided by a well-articulated, shared conceptual framework. The emerging educational practices, contemporary research, and beliefs regarding teaching and learning should be considered in the articulation of this framework. In Feiman-Nemser's (1990) view, the conceptual framework will guide program planning, course development, learning instruction, and assessment.

In keeping with contemporary research, reforms in teacher education programs are advocating models that allow the design of an interrelated set of activities that will enable prospective teachers to acquire and/or refine the understandings and abilities relevant to effective operation in today's schools (Howey & Zimpher, 1996). This seems to suggest that programs are being guided by such frameworks with underlying themes that are reflective of the concept of teaching and learning, and the nature and substance of teacher education in respect to certain outcomes to be achieved.

Trends in teacher education reform are guided by four key questions according to Cochran-Smith (2002). The response to these questions, Cochran-Smith posits, will reveal the underlying theoretical assumptions on which reform principles are based. The questions:

1. Attributes – What are the attributes and qualities of good teachers, prospective teachers, and/teacher education programs?
2. Effectiveness – What are the teaching strategies and processes used by



effective teachers?

3. What teacher education processes ensure that prospective teachers learn these strategies?

4. Knowledge – What should teachers know and be able to do?

5. Outcomes – What should the outcomes of teacher education be for teacher learning, professional practice, and student learning?

The results of studies done by the International Reading Association (IRA) and the Association of American Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), involving 15 exemplary teacher education programs that vary dramatically, have yielded seven common features of these programs. These provide in-depth information regarding the specific features that exemplify excellence in teacher education (Brownell, Ross, Colón, & McCallum, 2003). These seven features will help to form the conceptual framework for the current concept of pre-service teacher education and specifically for those programs that are regarded as exemplary.

1. A coherent program vision permeates all coursework and field experiences. This provides faculty with a common language for communicating with each other, students and school-based personnel.
2. The conscious blending of theory, disciplinary knowledge, subject-specific pedagogical knowledge and practice allow students to make the link between theory and practice. To accomplish this, faculty models active pedagogy, spend considerable time discussing important readings, and provide students with opportunities to practice and reflect on what they learn and practice in applied settings.
3. Carefully crafted field experiences are extensive, integrated well with course work, developmental in nature and carefully supervised.
4. Standards for ensuring quality teaching are established and monitored by faculty.
5. Faculty use active pedagogy that employs modeling and help students connect theory and practice and promote reflection.
6. Programs are focused on meeting the needs of a diverse student population, by attending to issues of diversity in all program activities.

7. Faculty view collaboration as a vehicle for building professional community. (pp. 243-244)

The conceptual framework that is adapted for this study is shown in Table 1.

Generally, pre-service teacher education programs are divided into three phases. In phase one, qualified students are recruited for entry into preparatory training for the teaching profession. These entrants are expected to possess certain qualifications, which will vary according to the specific program requirements as well as national and or international standards. In addition to these basic academic knowledge and skills, recruits will bring their personal attributes, beliefs, values, behaviors and background experiences or lack thereof to their training.

In phase two, prospective teachers will be introduced to a program of academic and non-academic studies and experiences, which again will vary according to the individual program's vision, guiding principles, nature and structure. Students will be engrossed into a rigorous program for the duration of their course of study, and during this period they are expected to acquire and develop some of the basic skills and dispositions that would prepare them for entry into teaching. It is important to emphasize the place of non-academic and/or extracurricular activities and interpersonal relationships in this preparatory process. It is these experiences that will help to enhance each prospective teacher's ability to operate as a part of a team and to have a healthy student/teacher relationship with his/her students.

Table 1

*Pre-service Teacher Education Conceptual Framework*

| INPUT   | PRESERVICE TEACHER PREPARATION |                                      |  | PRODUCT                       |   |   |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|---|
| RECRUITMENT<br>↓<br>INTAKE<br>↓<br>Entering Characteristics<br><br>Personal Attributes<br>Attitudes<br>Values<br>Beliefs<br>Behavior Pattern<br><br>Experience<br>Non-Experience<br>Knowledge<br>Skills | E                              | PROGRAM EXPERIENCE                   |  |                               | E | Teacher Knowledge                           |
|   |                                | Formal Preparation                   | Informal Preparation                     | Interpersonal Relationships   |   | Awareness                                   |
|   | N                              | Liberal Arts Education               | Extra-Curricular Activities              | Student Centers               | X | Skills                                      |
|   | T                              | Subject Matter Preparation           | Special Academic and Non-Academic Events | Cooperative Learning          |   | Disposition                                 |
|   | R                              | Professional and Pedagogical Studies | Leadership Roles                         | Study Groups                  | I | Attributes                                  |
|   | Y                              | Reflection and Research              | Community Service                        | Faculty-Student Relationships | T | Qualities that will exemplify good teaching |
|   |                                | External Linkages                    |  | Student-student Relationships |   |   |
|   |                                |                                      |  | Spiritual Experiences         |   |   |
| → ASSESSMENT- CONTINUOUS AND SUMMATIVE →  |                                |                                      |  |                               |   |   |

*Note.* Adapted from *Teaching to Teach* (p. 15), by C. Major and R. Pines, 1999, Washington, DC: National Education Association. Copyright (1999) by National Education Association.

During the third phase, prospective teachers will enter into a period of summative assessment. Here, they will prepare for final internal as well as external examinations, again depending on their program specifics. In most/many instances, some will also be in their final, formal field experience. At the end of this phase, prospective teachers would exit their college or university fully prepared for a smooth transition into the schools and classrooms that are in keeping with their subject discipline. It is expected that during the preparatory period, prospective teachers would have relinquished attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors that are unconventional and not reflective of the principles that are recommended and upheld for success in the teaching profession.

As an integral aspect of pre-service teacher education, assessment begins before recruits gain entry into university-or college-based programs. For maintenance of quality performance among students, faculty and at the program level, continuous and summative evaluation and assessment are factored throughout every phase of the program.

In keeping with the results of the study conducted by Brownell et al. (2003), exemplary programs will be characterized by:

1. a conceptual framework
2. a coherent program vision
3. attention to diversity issues
4. collaborative partnerships
5. standards that ensure quality performance
6. faculty pedagogy that employs modeling and helps students connect theory and practice and promote reflection

7. carefully planned field experiences and a conscious blend of theory and pedagogy.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms have been defined according to the context within which they are used in this dissertation:

**Teacher education:** Teacher education is inclusive of pre-service programs for prospective teachers, induction programs for beginning teachers, and in-service programs for practicing teachers (Lee & Yarger, 1996). However, for this study the focus is on pre-service programs for prospective teachers.

**Teacher education program:** Programs developed for the preparation of prospective teachers, induction for beginning teachers and in-service training to enhance professional development of practicing teachers.

**Pre-service teacher education:** The first formal training that is provided for those students who are desirous of becoming teachers in K-12 schools.

**Teacher educators:** Teacher educators encompass all those who are directly involved in the training of teachers. For this study, teacher educators are those who are instructors or professors at the university level and lecturers at the college level.

**Teacher graduates:** Teachers who have recently completed and graduated from the undergraduate teacher training program at the university or the diploma program at the teacher training colleges in the Jamaican context.

**Professors:** Teacher educators who teach at the university level of pre-service teacher education.

**Lecturers:** Teacher educators who teach in teacher training colleges in Jamaica.

**Field experience/ Practicum/ Internship:** Practical stage of teacher training where prospective/student teachers are allowed to practice in real classrooms under the supervision of specially assigned experienced classroom teachers and university or college supervisors.

**Cooperating teacher:** This person is often assigned the responsibility of guiding the student teacher and acting as a model, while he/she discusses and explains pedagogical practices (Evans, 1991).

**University/College supervisors:** Teacher educators who are directly responsible for the supervision of prospective/student teachers during field experience /practicum/internship.

**Prospective/Student teacher:** One who experiences a period of guided teaching, during which the student takes increasing responsibility for the work with a given group of learners over a period of consecutive weeks (Botnarescue & Machado, 2001).

**Exemplary:** Distinguished or outstanding by virtue of certain designated characteristics.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

With reference to the context of pre-service teacher education, the study made the following assumptions as the basis for the ensuing arguments and discourse:

1. Pre-service teacher education programs are integral to the preparation or training of teachers for the K-12 classrooms.
2. Pre-service teacher education programs are structured according to the university or college context. However, all such programs carry common features or components.

3. The content of pre-service teacher education programs is influenced significantly by state accreditation or Joint Board dictates.
4. Effective pre-service teacher education programs will delineate the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions that must characterize all graduates of such programs.
5. Information relative to the characteristics of effective or outstanding pre-service teacher education programs can be found in the literature and should provide authentic case data.
6. Research subjects will provide accurate and unbiased information relative to their involvement in the pre-service teacher education programs under review.

#### **Delimitations of the Study**

According to Pyrczak and Bruce (2003), delimitations are descriptive of the boundaries that deliberately limit the study (p. 71). In an effort to examine for understanding the characteristics of exemplary teacher education programs, only three programs were studied – two of which are in Jamaica and one in Michigan. Although these programs did not provide an extensive mix of differences, I felt that they had certain distinctive qualities, which made them very suitable for this study.

#### **Significance of the Study**

The primary significance of this study has been to provide information relative to the content and structure of three pre-service teacher education programs in Jamaica and Michigan. It is hoped that this information will serve as a valuable resource for the continued improvement of the Jamaican context of not just pre-service but teacher education in general. Some of the challenges facing teacher education have been

highlighted in addition to suggested strategies that could be employed to enhance reform or effect some measure of solution. Avenues for further research in pre-service teacher education have also been suggested.

### **Organization of the Study**

This dissertation is organized into eight chapters and these are briefly introduced as follows:

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the study and set the tone for the development of the material. It focused on the context of the problem, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the conceptual framework which guided the study, the definitions of major terms, the assumptions, delimitations and limitations of the study, and the significance.

Chapter 2 presents a general review of the relevant literature regarding the nature and status of pre-service teacher education. It provides a theoretical as well as a brief history of pre-service teacher education in Jamaica and Michigan. It also introduces one model representing an example of reform in teacher education programs across the United States.

Chapter 3 provides the research methodology that was employed to conduct the study. It describes the type of study, the population, the sampling techniques, the instruments for data collection, the procedure for data collection, and the measures that were employed in the analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 references the content and structure of the private, Christian denominational pre-service teacher education program in Jamaica relative to this dissertation. It also presents a discussion of the data ascertained from interview protocols.



Chapter 5 references the content and structure of the public, pre-service teacher education program in Jamaica relative to this dissertation. It also presents a discussion of the data ascertained from interview protocols.

Chapter 6 references the content and structure of the public, pre-service teacher education program in Jamaica relative to this dissertation. It also presents a discussion of the data ascertained from interview protocols.

Chapter 7 presents a cross-case analysis of the data relative to the three institutions in this dissertation.

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the dissertation in addition to the findings, conclusive statements regarding implications for practice, and suggestions for further study.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*We may fairly enough call educational  
practice a kind of social engineering.*  
—John Dewey

#### **Introduction**

The review of literature encompasses various areas of teacher education programs. These are: reflective practice, the importance of research, multicultural and diversity issues, the role of technology, partnerships for a successful practice, the curriculum context, field experiences, standards for accountability, teacher educators, identifying marks of quality teaching, and a model of reform in teacher education. It also presents a brief historical context of pre-service teacher education in Jamaica and Michigan.

Lee and Yarger (1996) define teacher education as inclusive of pre-service programs for prospective teachers, induction program for beginning teachers, and in-service programs for practicing teachers. Regardless of the focus, teacher education indicates a deliberate educational intervention designed to foster teachers' learning and eventually improve the academic achievement of today's children.

Teacher education prepares individuals to meet the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow's classrooms and this presents a formidable task for teacher preparation

programs (Byrd & McIntyre, 1997; Pacheco, 2000). Valli (1992), in addressing teacher education, posits that teachers must be prepared to solve complex educational problems, make wise decisions, reflect in and on action, and collaborate with colleagues.

Barone, Berliner, Blanchard, Cassanover, and McGowan (1996) proposed that teacher education must be built around the unifying image of the strong professional. Such graduates are described by Byrd and McIntyre (1997) as reflective thinkers who have the capacity to effectively articulate their judgments regarding those factors that characterize best practice, and how these can be operationalized in their classrooms.

Preparatory programs must therefore provide the avenues for these kinds of talents to be nurtured. Sarrason (1993) is of the opinion that teacher education programs must nurture and support students' curiosity and desire to understand themselves and their world. The conditions must be created that will facilitate educators of these students to experience a sense of learning, growth, and personal and intellectual change for themselves, in order for them to create and sustain these conditions for their students.

As a researcher, Orlofsky (2001) is convinced of the efficacy of studying time-tested models of teacher preparation programs in order to make application to current pedagogical situations. Goodlad (1994) shares the view that a new model of school and school reform is needed, and future educators must be specially prepared with the relevant expectations, knowledge, and skills to participate effectively in the renewing process. This seems highly necessary if teacher education is to be successful in preparing teachers for today's and tomorrow's schools.

The future of our children, according to Pacheco (2000), depends on better teachers, which lead to better schools, which lead to better children, and which will

eventually lead to a better democracy. What better place to start, if not with teacher education?

### **Historical Context of Teacher Education in Jamaica**

In 1830, teacher education began in the Commonwealth Caribbean with the Moravians who established the first teachers' college in Jamaica for the purpose of training "Brown Ladies" who were the more privileged, as teachers. Although this college lasted only a short while, it heralded the entry of the period when the Caribbean would take the initiative and establish its own autonomy in teacher education. During this period, private individuals and religious denominations began the organization of elementary, infant schools and care centers all around the island of Jamaica, in an effort to provide security for young children whose parents were drafted for work in factories.

The need for teachers became paramount, and in 1836, teacher training for the public school system began with the establishment of Mico colleges in Jamaica and Antigua. Miller (1993, as cited in Newton, 1999) indicates that the official training of primary school teachers began in the Commonwealth Caribbean in 1830 and was institutionalized by 1850. Initially, college programs were developed and organized by the departments of education in the different territories. Following training, teachers were then certified through examinations set by the department of education in the particular country.

In the 1950s, the various colonies were more organized and stable, hence they were granted greater power and control over their destinies. Departments of Education were then replaced by Ministries of Education, which were headed by elected representatives of the people. There were, however, concerns raised by teachers' unions

that the possibility existed that the teacher certification process would be affected by political interference. The newly created Ministries of Education responded by establishing Boards of Teacher Training to which it delegated the teacher certification process. In addition, those territories that had teacher-training colleges instituted mechanisms for developing and maintaining standards in teacher education.

The first Regional Teacher Education Conference convened in Trinidad in 1957, and provided the forum for the main stakeholders to examine the issues and challenges with which teacher training was faced. The entire Commonwealth Caribbean was serviced by 13 teachers' colleges, which were located in six territories across the region.

According to Walters (1965), in 1957 only about 22% of all the teachers in the British West Indies were trained. "The remaining 78% were untrained, consisting of pupil teachers, student teachers and assistant teachers who had passed their local certificate examinations while they were teaching" (as cited in Newton, 1999, p. 14).

The urgent need for a significant improvement in teacher education was paramount; hence the conference prepared a list of recommendations that would form the basis for this change in the right direction. One of the policies that the conference adopted was that all children should be taught by qualified and trained teachers. Several government agencies responded positively to this recommendation, resulting in increased opportunities for training, expansion of existing colleges, construction of new colleges, and the development of temporary emergency colleges.

### **Historical Context of Teacher Education in Michigan**

In 1849, the Legislature founded the first training school for teachers in Ypsilanti. This was the "State Normal School" in those days, and was developed for the purpose of

preparing teachers for the “One Room School Houses” that were in operation at that time. In 1892 and 1902, the Central and Western Michigan Normal Schools were organized in Mount Pleasant and Kalamazoo, respectively.

Before the creation of Normal Schools, teachers, who were usually untrained, constituted any young unmarried female teenager or just about anyone who wished to be so involved. These calibers of teachers were found mostly in the rural areas, however, and were very typical of the situation that existed at that time. It was therefore not surprising that students were not adequately taught.

Dr. Charles Humphrey, an early proponent of teacher education says:

i might quote their complaints till sunset that it is impossible to have good schools for want of good teachers. Many who offer themselves are deficient in everything in spelling, in reading, in penmanship, in geography, in grammar and in common arithmetic. The majority may be dismissed and advised to go back to their domestic and rural employments if competent instructors could be had. (as cited in Harper, 1820, pp. 12-13)

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, schooling was primarily focused on memorization of facts rather than on reflection or understanding of information. Consequently, teachers were basically responsible to ensure that students memorize and recall information verbatim. As the century progressed, and aims of education changed, reformers saw the need for the focus of schooling to change with the time. Schools were therefore challenged to help children discover their inherent potentials, hence the need for a more competent teaching work force.

Germany and France were two countries that were committed to the development of pupils’ skills rather than memorization of facts during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This educational philosophy soon took root in the United States of America, making the need for training in teacher education extremely essential.

### Reflective Practice

In their review of research on teacher education, Lamier and Little (1986) describe the curriculum as being relatively static, fragmented, technical, and shallow. As a comparison, Goodlad (1990) in his study of the *Education of Educators* found that the curriculum is not linked to a conception of what teachers do and should do.

Again, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Barnes (1987) referred to programs as lacking powerful, thematic, conceptual orientations, which had not succeeded in removing the naïve notions of teaching from the minds of prospective teachers. Without a concept of good teaching, says Barnes, a teacher education curriculum becomes nothing more than a means for preparing teachers to replicate current school practice.

In reference to Schon (1987) and the distinction he makes between technical rationality and the knowledge of practice, Russell and Munby (1992) point to the knowledge that teachers acquire from their own practice. This knowledge, which allows for reflection and action, is far-reaching and will facilitate a paradigm shift in the way they practice their teaching and instructional skills.

Although reflective thinking and teaching are not new ideas as noted by Clift, Houston, and Pugach (1990), it was not until Schon's reflective practitioner hit the consciousness of the educational arena in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the concept took on a new significance. This awakened the consciousness that teachers ought to be reflective in their approach to the context of learning and problem solving.

Orlofsky (2001), whose ideas are grounded in Brunerian philosophy or learning theories, cites Bruner as saying: "It is good practice for students to use their heads to solve a problem by reflecting on what they already know or have learnt" (p. 6). Joyce,

Weil, and Calhoun (2000) write that the never-ending cycle of organizing one's environment is never complete. The process, they explain, is exactly the same in the secondary and advanced phases of education as it is with young children. This should give an indication of how the learning environment ought to be organized.

In support of these claims, Houston and Warner (2000) add that a major responsibility of teacher education is to facilitate professional self-reflection (p. 73). This is expected to facilitate the avoidance of routine and haphazard instruction, which very often characterizes the classroom environment of many not only unprepared but untrained teachers.

### **The Importance of Research**

Teacher education is a complex academic enterprise. In describing its complexity, Guyton (2000) compares the practice to a nested doll with five layers. These comprise the students' and teachers' metacognition, the strategies needed to combine these into a coherent program, the knowledge and skills base, and the various contexts within which these operate.

While struggling with this complexity, it is necessary for teacher education to develop effective programs that have the power to change teachers and their students. Pacheco (2000), Darling-Hammond, Griffin, and Wise (1992), Murrell (2001), and Orlofsky (2001), among others, suggest the need for a restructuring or a redefining of teacher education. This has strong implications for how schools are structured and organized to facilitate learning. Curricular methods will be more focused on students' needs than on standardized procedures. As a result, teachers will develop the skills to



know their students well and be trained to “do the right things, rather than to do things right” (Sergiovanni, 1991).

Darling-Hammond (1992) suggests that teacher education must prepare teachers who can educate students’ understanding, conceptions, learning styles and intelligences, strengths, and needs and then to construct learning opportunities that are responsive to the learner while true to the subjects under study. To this end, there seems to be a loud call for informed research in teacher education. Cruickshank (1990), Poeter (1997), and McIntyre and Byrd (2000) are all contenders for research that will provide information for a paradigm shift in teacher education.

Citing the common thread that runs through a number of research initiatives over the period 1984-1994, Kochran (2000) articulates his findings as:

1. establishing high quality standards for all
2. focusing on teaching for understanding
3. providing a quality learning environment that facilitates success for all children
4. stressing active, applied learning that focuses on processes, higher level thinking, and the integration of subject matter
5. developing collaborative governance structures
6. forming connections among and between content areas, people, and institutions
7. enhancing the professional status of teachers, teaching, and teacher education.

Without adequate research in teacher education, the practice will not be adequately informed. If teachers and teacher education are to demand self-respect and the

respect of other professionals, including the general public, their preparation must be based on verified knowledge, that is, knowledge that is held in high regard and informs practice (Newton, 1999, p. 129). Knowledge of this nature has to be acquired through research, devoted to inquiry about the impact of teacher education programs on teachers and their students (Cruickshank, 1990; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000).

Cruickshank, in identifying the use of inquiry in teacher education, further explained that research on pre-service teachers will provide key information regarding the quality of teacher candidates with respect to their abilities, attitudes, values, perceptions, and preferences leading to a guide regarding who is most likely to be effective in the classroom. Research findings and sound professional practice have to be included in each teacher education program. According to Zeichner, Melnick, and Gomez (1996), this must be based on a systematic curriculum design with explicitly stated philosophy and objectives.

If classrooms are to become communities of active enquiring learners, it is recommended that the teachers who provide the leadership in such classrooms need themselves to have professional developmental opportunities that are enquiry-oriented and collaborative (Poeter, 1997). First, they should be encouraged to become researchers in their own classrooms, carrying out inquiries about student learning and the conditions and practices which most effectively support it. Second, there must be institutional conditions that enable them to share the results of their inquiries with their colleagues in an ongoing attempt to create a better curriculum, guided by collaboratively determined goals.

### **Multicultural and Diversity Issues**

The student population in the public schools of the United States has become increasingly diverse and this trend will continue for the foreseeable future, according to predictions by Zeichner et al. (1996, p. 135). Citing Pallas, Natriello, and McDill (1989), Zeichner et al. predict that about 40% of school-age youth will be students of color by the year 2020. Further, they note that already in 25 of the 50 largest school districts, about 30% of the students are colored.

Certainly this has implications for teacher education, school development, and student learning. According to Darling-Hammond (1997), meeting the challenge of cultural diversity is an agenda that is central to today's quest to develop schools that can educate all students for the challenging world they face. In support, Thomas (2002) and Striedieck (1997) argue for a more culture-sensitive education, which is more reflective of the cultural diversity, which challenges today's society. Gardner (1991) posits that since human development is the aim of schooling, diversity and differences among students must be seen in a different light.

The fundamental need for multicultural education, Tom (1997) posits, occurs because American society is characterized by diversity, which exists along a variety of dimensions, inclusive of ethnic groups, racial minorities, gender differences, religious groups, and diversified lifestyles. He identifies this education as "the preparation for the social, political and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human endeavors" (p. 19).

This world is both more technologically and more multiculturally rich and complex than ever before in history (Ducette, Sewell, & Shapiro, as cited in Murray,

1996), and teacher education must be aware of these changes and structure their programs to reflect these accordingly. As a recommendation from research conducted on “cross-ethnic and cross-racial dynamics of instruction,” Duhon and Manson (2000) suggest the need for multicultural collegiate training, while Dilworth (1992) and Obidah and Teel (2001) suggest that the professional preparation of teachers must include additional academic knowledge related to diversity and multicultural contexts, which can be incorporated in the professional education curricular and the clinical teaching experiences.

Writers such as Banks (1991) and Hollins (1990, as cited in Zeichner et al., 1996) believe that teachers need a clear sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities in order to be able to understand those of their students and their families. Such a requirement is very instructive in view of the critical role that teachers have to play in diversified classrooms.

Students’ diversity challenges teachers’ skills and knowledge in a number of ways. In addition to the fact that schools are filled with pupils of varying range of abilities, a number of different immigrant groups are represented also. One of the greatest challenges is for teachers to find effective instructional strategies that will enhance the growth of each child who may be so culturally different from the other. In respect of this, Hollins and Guzman (2005) comment that

providing high quality schooling for all students especially those who are presently underserved by the educational system, including students of color, low- income students, English language learners and students in rural and urban settings, is among the most important challenges facing the nation. (p. 477)

Mark and Ribeiro (1999) are advocates that differences among students must become the working capital of the school and classroom and teachers in the new order

must be prepared to accept and work with all students in non-elitist, democratic institutions.

Multicultural education must be an integral part of everything that happens in the educational enterprise, whether assessing the academic competencies of students or teaching math, reading, writing, science, social studies or computer science. It is imperative, G. Gay (2003) advised, if all children are to be effectively taught.

### **The Role of Technology**

Technology changes the way things are done. It pushes us out of our comfort zone, so its use is naturally resisted, McCain and Jukes (2001) commented. Although change is uncomfortable, it is inevitable in a dynamic society and the sooner each well-thinking individual adjusts his paradigm, the more mentally prepared each one will be for the future advancement. McCain and Jukes further add that we need to rethink what is really important in technology use, as it is not the technology but the people who use it and their mind-sets that are the critical determining factors.

There is need for a shift from computer evolution to computer revolution, if schools are to be kept relevant in the modern world. Educators have the responsibility of preparing their students for success in the technology-rich environment they will undoubtedly occupy after graduation. Morris (2003) advises that “experience in schools should equip teachers with the ability to challenge traditional methodologies by discovering more efficient techniques of which the main objective is to enhance the students’ learning by addressing different learning styles” (p. 16). This implies that if human beings are not educated in the use of technology, irrespective of its usefulness, it will eventually become a piece of junk or waste matter.

The executive summary of the presentations made at the First Education Technology Leaders Summit informs that for the introduction of technology to be effective, it must be well-planned, be supported through teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, and should support authentic learning. Major and Pines (1999) concur that the use of technology goes to the core of educational reform.

As issues of reform are being addressed between coalition of school districts and universities or teachers' colleges, Major and Pines (1999) challenge the 'powers that be' to integrate technology usage in their reform initiatives. Teachers will have to rely on sophisticated new technologies to help them provide rich, fulfilling, and varied learning experiences for children. This technology will facilitate the creation of active learning environments and individualized learning, and will encourage intellectual activity. If teachers are to embrace technological advancement for learning, they themselves must hone their skills in the understanding and use of the technology, according to Levine (1996).

### **Partnerships for Successful Practice**

In the many calls for reform in teacher education, there has been a focus on collaborative partnerships between schools and universities (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; Kennedy, 1992; Levine, 1992; Thomas, 2002). Most of these reform initiatives are geared toward partners working cooperatively in a mutually beneficial relationship. Partnerships like these are, however, very complicated and challenging, as educational institutions are unique and distinct in their mission, vision, culture, and organizational structure.

Resolving conflicting fundamental interest (Snyder, 1994), competing with other reform efforts (Grossman, 1994), developing a common mission and vision (McIntyre, 1994), establishing inter-institutional authority and fiscal responsibility (Neufeld, 1992), and defining roles and responsibilities (Miller & Silvermail, 1994) are indicative of the many challenges that constitute school/university partnerships. Despite these conflicting challenges, however, there are great rewards to be derived when these are overcome.

Goodlad (1988) makes reference to the prospects for individual and institutional renewal as the workplace is infused with expert knowledge from internal as well as external environment. According to Darling-Hammond (1994), many school-university partnerships are successfully restructuring the knowledge, nature, and governance of teaching as well as the form and content of teacher education.

Teachers have articulated benefits as increased knowledge and efficacy in teaching techniques, enhanced collegial interaction, and increased positive attitude and feelings about themselves as teachers (Sandholtz & Merseeth, 1992). Some student teachers have been heard to comment that as a result of this partnership, they have experienced a shift in their focus from themselves to an emphasis on their students (Snyder, 1994). And isn't this a step in the right direction?

The involvement of teachers as researchers according to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) also generates knowledge that is useful for teachers as well as for the wider school and university communities. Through sustained collaboration between researchers and teachers, Bickel and Hatrup (1995) report that educational materials and instructional strategies are improved.

Balancing school and university becomes a critical and crucial issue with respect to the advantages to be derived from and the challenges of this venture. Harris and Harris (1994) counsel that the energies must be directed toward the obstacles and encourage and embrace the forces that will result in benefits for individuals and schools. Clarke (1988) is very instructive in emphasizing that the value of school –university partnerships depends not on individual self-interest or attempts to reform one institution, but rather on the extent to which all parties seek to use them for the simultaneous reform and renewal of both schools and universities (p. 62).

Over a 5-year period, Sandholtz (1997) directed a study that examined and compared the experiences of four institutions involved in a state initiative to improve teacher preparation through collaboration and innovation. The findings reveal three overarching conclusions:

1. Collaboration in teacher education is essential as all educational institutions have a stake in the lifelong professional education of teachers; hence it is counter productive to divide the process into discrete parts. (Murrell 2001).
2. The context is important as the most successful partnerships are not mandated but, rather emerge from a context that is ready for and supportive of collaboration.
3. School-university partnerships need valid opportunities and time to experiment. In support of this, Robinson and Darling-Hammond (1994) posit that collaborative partners must have opportunities to revisit plans, incorporate new understandings and ideas and change priorities as experiences dictate. (p. 24)

McIntyre (1994) stresses that the ultimate goal of encouraging collaboration and establishing partnership is to improve the educational opportunities of school-age children and the initial and continuing preparation of their teachers.



### **The Curriculum Content**

The teacher education curriculum, according to Cruickshank (1985), comprises two parts: General Education and Professional Education. The former, he describes as being education that is of value to all persons, while the latter pertains to the education that is needed for practice in a particular profession. During the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, teacher education adopted the development of a new structure.

The programs began to be comprised of three components, which are still prevalent today: academic studies, professional studies, and practice teaching (Murray, 1996). Be that as it may, however, theory and practice must be inextricably linked for the impact of curriculum to be felt.

Declarative knowledge, Major and Pines (1999) explain, must be closely linked to procedural knowledge in time and space. Further, teachers will eventually lose newly acquired skills, if there is no link between what they learn and what they are asked to do (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Fullan, 1991; Hawley & Evertson, 1993; Joyce & Showers, 1995). The teacher education curriculum must move beyond the mere transmission of facts and figures. To be effective, Orlofsky (2001) cautioned that it must be dynamic and informative to and for all those who are involved.

What is the essential knowledge that should be included in all teacher education curricular? Ishler (1997), president of the Association of Teacher Educators, suggests that the teacher education curriculum should be built on a professional knowledge base, formed by theory and pedagogy in relation to wisdom and practice (as cited in Byrd & McIntyre, 1997). Teacher education needs to encourage a solid preparation in general knowledge through liberal studies (Lucas, 1997), and later preparation in subject areas.

Teachers need a breadth of knowledge in many areas in order to be able to integrate the curriculum and to enrich learning experiences beyond the requested curriculum.

Teacher education curriculum needs to include content information on learning, covering learning theories (Gottesman, 2000) and cognitive science research, in such areas as schematic theory, scaffolding, cognitive structuring, multiple intelligence, misconceptions, and expertise in research. Odell (1997) explains that the curriculum does not stand alone, but is influenced by other common places of education – the learner, the teacher, and the social milieu in which the teaching and learning process occurs.

Of first importance in curriculum is to specify a conceptual framework, which should define the professional commitment, dispositions, and values that support the program (NCATE, 1995a). The framework, according to Feiman-Nemser (1990), will give direction to the practical activities of teacher preparation, such as program planning, course development, instruction, supervision, and evaluation. By extension, Evans (2000) comments that subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge are all essential to good teaching. A study conducted by Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy (2001) suggests that teachers with subject-matter preparation achieve better student outcomes than graduates who lack preparation.

With a view of the context of the interrelatedness between theory and practice, Darling-Hammond (1992) speaks to the creation of learner-centered schools, where teachers' preparation will encompass knowledge about teaching, learning, and the social context of education. In addition, she is adamant that teachers must be prepared to evaluate different pedagogical approaches, to evaluate students' understanding,

conceptions, learning styles and intelligences, strengths, and needs and construct the learning opportunities that are responsive to those needs.

### **Field Experiences**

Student teaching is sometimes referred to as practicum, field experience, or internship as explained by Botnarescue and Machado (2001). Although it was instituted many decades ago, it is still highly regarded today and has been accepted as an important and necessary aspect of teacher education (Evans, 1991; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996; Thomas, 2002). According to Hollins and Guzman (2005):

Field experiences are the key components of preparation where prospective teachers learn to bridge theory and practice, work with colleagues and families and develop pedagogical and curricular strategies for meeting the learning needs of a diverse population. (p. 493)

Although student teaching seems to be the most widely accepted component of teacher preparation, it is criticized for lacking a theoretical and conceptual framework, commonly expressed goals, and for not fulfilling its potential (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre et al., 1996; Zeichner, 1987). Recently, however, evidence has emerged that suggests that theory and practice are becoming more integrated through a distinct set of goals and objectives leading to common themes or models throughout these programs.

One of the major forces in this evolution, according to Fullan (1995), results from the set of standards adopted by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) in 1987. These require that all participating institutions explicate a model and knowledge base that undergirds the purpose, processes, and outcomes of their teacher education program.

Field experiences are organized in various ways and for a variety of purposes in teacher education, Hollins and Guzman (2005) inform. A few of these are: Introductory – designed for exposure and observations in classrooms; Practicum courses – that simultaneously engage student teachers in methods courses and field experience; Community-based – to familiarize students with diverse populations and student teaching placement in diverse context (p. 493). There are also experiences that allow students to gain experience in a variety of school situations.

Citing Liston and Zeichner (1991), McIntyre et al. (1996) propose that the aims of teacher education programs should focus on developing teachers who are able to identify and articulate their purposes, choose appropriate instructional strategies, and understand the social experiences and cognitive orientations of their students. Guyton and McIntyre (1990) suggest that if teacher education institutions are to succeed in providing prospective teachers with skills and knowledge needed for effective performance, the experience provided in the classroom must correspond to the goals established for the entire program.

In their review of research on student teaching and school experiences, Guyton and McIntyre (1990) conclude that improvements in field experiences will depend on a clear explication and mutual understanding of their goals. Further, Knowles and Cole (1996) studied goals for teaching experiences, which were articulated in several pre-service programs. They found that neither a conceptual framework nor a theoretical foundation was evident. Consequently, they suggest that a renewal of teacher education might be possible, if the appropriate placement of goals in the process and the timing of and context for activities related to the achievement of these goals were fully worked out.

As a conceptual framework of a curriculum, Schwab (1971, as cited in Evans, 1991) proposes four common places: the teacher, the student, the subject matter, and the milieu. In any deliberations about a curriculum, these must be represented as they form the basis for structure and organization. In terms of connectivity or interrelatedness, Evans (1991) explains that the teacher (college supervisor/instructor) teaches a subject matter to the student (prospective teacher), in a particular setting (the teaching learning environment). In the context of field experiences, McIntyre et al. (1996) instruct that the teaching learning environment becomes the practicing school. Botnarescue and Machado (2001) refer to these as the mechanics of student teaching.

Each of these will now be examined in relation to the teaching practicum or field experience.

### **The Context of Field Experiences**

Evans (2000) records that the effect of field experiences depends to a large extent on the setting in which they are carried out, the arrangement for student learning, the norms of the school, and the congruity between what is taught in the college/university program and what is emphasized by the classroom teacher. In addition, Guyton and McIntyre (1990) in reference to Copeland (1977) describe the major influence on a student teacher's acquisition of skills as the ecology of the school by which the pupils' physical environment, curriculum, community, and other school-related variables support and promote their performance.

The teaching context is therefore integral to the student teaching success, hence must facilitate and be supportive of the professional growth and development of student teachers. If schools do not offer sound educational experiences, Guyton and McIntyre

(1990) suggest that they are not suitable or appropriate for field experiences. The cooperating teachers, who are key persons in the practicing process, should be prepared for their roles to ensure effectiveness in developing a more positive context for student teaching. Preparation is therefore crucial for the success of this responsibility.

Regarding the importance of the context of the field experiences, Lemlech and Kaplan (1990) assert that the shaping of future educators began with the decision regarding their placement, cooperating teacher, and the philosophies to be emphasized in the program. For this reason, they too agree that the placement for practicing teachers be critically examined.

The national study done by Goodlad (1990) revealed that many universities did not control the placement of student teachers, which was very often based on convenience rather than on what would provide quality experience. On the other hand, McIntyre et al. (1996) bemoan the fact that some principals place students with weak cooperating teachers with the hope that the student teachers will positively influence these teachers through their own teaching skills. One wonders about the merit of placing a student teacher with a weak or inexperienced teacher? If both are inexperienced, then who will lead? Undoubtedly, the result may be destructive for all involved.

### The Cooperating Teacher

This person is often assigned the responsibility of guiding the student teacher, and acting as a model, while he/she discusses and explains pedagogical practices (Evans, 1991). Cooperating teachers are regarded as mentors. They are expected to work with student teachers in a nurturing relationship. Wiseman, Cooner, and Knight (1999) instruct that they serve as role models as they teach, sponsor, encourage, counsel, and

befriend a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting professional and/or personal development. For the success of this venture, mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé.

Copas (1984) describes cooperating teachers as school teachers whose job is to assist student teachers to develop a deep and meaningful concept of teaching, to analyze its many facets, to provide the student teacher with resources, and to encourage his/her unique teaching behavior. Their roles in preparing future teachers are broad and varied according to Wiseman et al. (1999).

Blair and Jones (1998) identify 10 responsibilities of the cooperating or supervising teacher. These are:

becoming familiar with the student teachers background and introduce him or her to the school, orients the teacher to the philosophy, curriculum and school policies, inform teacher regarding students' cultural and academic background, meets regularly for lesson planning while modeling lessons in content areas, assist teacher in developing classroom management techniques, provide expert supervision, evaluate students' performance and encourage student teachers to attend conferences which will stimulate growth and development. (p. 23)

Although cooperating teachers seem to occupy such an important place in the structure of field experiences, Lucas (1997) decries the fact that very few are well trained to provide the careful mentoring required. Student teachers are sometimes ill-advised, resulting in many of them regarding their experience as trivial and unfruitful. It is obvious that they have a significant impact on the professional career of student teachers and, consequently, for this reason, Botnarescue and Machado (2001) suggest that expertise must be one of the criteria for their selection.

To be effective, Morehead, Lyman, and Foyle (2003) advise that “the mentor teacher must first be a competent teacher in the classroom and must model the behaviors and attitudes expected of good teachers” (p. 11). The writers further explain that a student teacher’s placement is not to support or assist a mediocre teacher; therefore as the placements are considered, it is important that the most dedicated and effective teachers be given first priority for mentoring.

### The Student Teacher

According to Botnarescue and Machado (2001), a student teacher is one who experiences a period of guided teaching, during which the student takes increasing responsibility for the work with a given group of learners over a period of consecutive weeks. Student teachers are usually from diverse backgrounds; hence they bring varied experiences to the practice.

Knowles and Cole (1996) describe these as attitudes, beliefs, ideals, influences, and expectations developed over years of life experience and exposure to a wide variety of teaching and learning situations and contexts. Evans (1991) concurs that student teachers come to the practice with very unique or varying characteristics and dispositions, which she cites are as a result of their individual biography, developmental level, and personality.

Undoubtedly, students’ attitudes, previous experiences, and beliefs will influence their approach to the teaching experience, as well as their growth and development. Zeichner (1996), Ponzio and Fisher (1995), Bird and Anderson (1992), Calderhead (1991), and Richardson (1996) found that prospective students’ beliefs would significantly influence what they learn in teacher education as well as the change process.



As a caveat, Richardson (1996) says these beliefs must be considered in understanding classroom practices and in conducting the programs, which are designed to assist pre-service as well as in-service teachers to develop their thinking and classroom practices. Ball and Wilson (as cited in Evans, 2000) discuss the futility of teaching students without knowledge of their assumptions. With respect to the subject of mathematics, they advanced that

teacher educators must turn their attention to the content and pedagogy of teacher education . . . considering the prior knowledge and beliefs that prospective teachers bring with them, as well as the models those teachers have to reflect upon and learn from. Unless they acknowledge the influence of prospective teachers' pedagogical and mathematical biographies, it is unlikely that we will be able to alter the continuity of traditional mathematical teaching and learning. (p. 7)

#### Suggested Roles and Responsibilities of Student Teachers for a Successful Practice

Blair and Jones (1998) suggest that for a successful practicum experience student teachers should observe the following:

1. Attend seminars and staff development meetings throughout the semester.
2. Conduct oneself in a professional manner, become acquainted with and follow school district policies.
3. Become familiar with legal responsibilities of state.
4. Regard information received about students and school personnel as confidential, become aware of, respect and value students from all cultural, socio economic, and language backgrounds.
5. Plan and implement instruction based on students' needs.
6. Adopt a self-improvement learning philosophy and incorporate them into

Instructions.

7. Attend and participate in parent-teacher conferences.
8. Seek out multiple approaches and materials for meeting diverse needs of students.

In light of these challenging responsibilities, Howey and Zimpher (1996) advocate that prospective teachers should be intellectually capable and morally responsible. Their academic records should be consistent and should serve as the prerequisite for their admission to the program of teacher education.

### The College/University Supervisor

The college or university supervisor is the most important link between field experiences and the college program, Evans (1991) posits. Interestingly though, the supervisor has been criticized for not fulfilling the role of an instructional leader. In examining relevant literature, however, Knowles and Cole (1996) suggest that there is considerable uncertainty regarding what is known about the roles, practices, and influences of the supervisors.

Studies examined by Knowles and Cole (1996), McIntyre et al. (1996), and Blair and Jones (1998) reveal that there are a variety of roles and functions that are related to their involvement in field experiences. These are: setting goals and expectations, orienting student teachers to school sites, acting as liaison between the university or college and the field, reinforcing university/college perspective, observing and providing constructive feedback and assessment, and providing support for student teachers inside and outside of practice.

In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, Botnarescue and Machado (2001) suggest that the college/university supervisor also promote each student's

attention to professional standards of performance and timely completion of responsibilities.

### **Standards for Accountability**

One meaning of the term ‘standard’ according to the *American Heritage College Dictionary* (2000) is an acknowledged measure of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value; a criterion. Every organization or institution must operate based on certain designated guidelines, which denote minimum or maximum levels of performance. The most widely held view of the function of standards according to Roth (1996) is to guarantee a minimum level of competence in program quality.

Standards must characterize teaching if it is to be regarded as a profession. Standards define a profession and set the gateways that determine who shall and shall not gain entry (Roth, 1996). Engvall (1997) suggests that there must be standards by which teachers’ behavior can be judged. He further notes that the tools of professional practice consist of standards of excellence and voluntary accountability to these standards. While teachers may not possess the level of voluntary accountability to the designated standards, it is well to note the existence of these to guide performance.

In outlining the purposes of standards, Roth (1996) describes the ultimate purpose as to

provide assurance regarding the qualification of those persons who are teaching in the schools of children and youth. Recruitment, screening, quality preparation and legitimacy are the four areas of teacher education that are influenced by standards. Recruitment encourages literate sensitive individuals to enter the profession; Screening ensures that individuals with certain qualifications are allowed to enter the profession; Quality preparation addresses the nature of the preparation that is the requirement for those who wish to be licensed or certified; Legitimacy reassures the public of the quality of the teacher based on competence, training and reliability. (p. 243)

While there has been much discrepancy regarding the compatibility of standards for teacher preparation, there is evidence of a change in the right direction as Wise and Liebrand (1993) reveal. Many states have begun to develop and implement more meaningful standards for teaching and this is being led by The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, (NBPTS); The Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, (INTASC); and the National Certification for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996).

Meanwhile, to ensure quality in teaching, Wise (1999) suggests that the time has come for the teaching profession to embrace a system of quality assurance where the standards are found within three interconnected mechanism: that prepare teachers; professional accreditation of institutions that prepare teachers, performance-based licensing (Roth, 1996), and certification of accomplished teachers.

### Types of Standards

Performance or outcome-based standards have inspired much attention and discussion in the area of teacher education, certification, and accreditation (Roth, 1996; Wisenbach, 2000). The National Assessment of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Outcome-based Standards are designed to provide a framework for the approval of college and university teacher education programs. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's (INTASC) performance-based standards describe what teachers should know and be able to do.

While both programs are complementary, there are, however, distinct differences between them. NASDTE's outcome-based performance is designed for program approval, whereas INTASC's are designed for individual licensing. NCATE has also

placed much emphasis on performance through its individual assessment of performance. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification is also very much performance oriented.

The main thread that permeates all these standards is that they describe what teachers should know and be able to do. It is well to note therefore that a performance-based licensing would specify clear standards for performance, which would be thoroughly subject to evaluation through performance-based assessment. These, Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) indicate, must be representative of the actual knowledge, skills, and tasks required in teaching. Second, the replacement of course-counting strategies for licensing and program approval with (a) licensing based on successful completion of performance-based assessment and completion of an approved/accredited program and (b) program review and accountability based on a demonstration that the schools program provides learning opportunities that enhance successful attainment of knowledge, skills, and disposition needed for teaching.

Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) further contend that any teacher education faculty who is interested in accomplishing reform cannot stop at the adoption of standards. These are better conceptualized as tools for inquiry and so are better served as guideposts for local change.

### Certification and Accreditation

Teacher education programs are subjected to many forms of external influences (Tom, 1996). These very often have substantial impact on the direction and substance of educational programming. State certification and national standards have different

functions, although these may be complementary. National accreditation, which is conducted by NCATE, seeks to evaluate and verify quality programs.

The major roles include protecting the profession from the unqualified, assuring the public that certain professional elements have been a part of the training experience, signifying that the program is valued by peers, providing credibility to enhance professionalization of teaching and teacher education, providing for quality control, and assisting institutions in improving programs through renewal (Watts, 1982; Smith, 1990, as cited by Roth, 1996).

State certification/licensure is directed towards teacher competence (Zeichner et al., 1996). This is done for several reasons as identified by Roth (1999), one of which is to protect children from harm. In all societies with compulsory education, it is rather unacceptable to succumb children to the care of unqualified persons. In addition there is the need to guarantee a common standard across local communities for children's most important learning resource – teachers, and to ensure the state's interest in an educated citizenry.

### **Teacher Educators**

The critical role that teacher educators have to play in the continued development of teacher education is clear from Ducharme (1987). He instructs that

if teacher education programs are to change significantly, and they must change if they are to survive, they will do so through the efforts of existing teacher education faculty. . . . These conditions must be met by a largely in-place teacher education faculty, a faculty prepared with one set of assumptions, confronted during their careers with changing emphasis and facing a future filled with change. (p. 71)

In concurring, Ducharme and Ducharme (1996) reiterate that the current teacher education faculty must extend their focus beyond teaching, research, and service to the

larger issues of the transformation of schools. Their survival/success rate will depend on their ability to adapt to the changing culture and needs of today's and tomorrow's schools for which teachers are prepared. They must be able to bring perspectives of inquiry and the pursuit of application and knowledge to bear on the practical problems of teaching and learning.

Within the context of the negative image that so often characterizes the professionalization of teaching, the Holmes Group (1986), Goodlad (1990), Howey and Zimpher (1994), and Evans et al. (2002) observe that it seems critical that the professional development of teacher educators be examined in relation to their awesome responsibilities of pre-service education as well as to their own peers, commitment to scholarly research, and to that of nation building. As key players in pre-service teacher education, Evans et al. (2002) remark that they are "as important to the education of prospective teachers as the classroom teachers are to the education of K-12 pupils" (p. 84).

Kostner and Dengerink (2001) write that

the quality of teaching depends in large measure on the quality of the teachers, the quality of the teachers depends in large measure on the quality of their professional development, the quality of teacher education depends in large measure on the quality of those who provide it, namely— the teacher educators. (pp. 265)

Ducharme (1993) agrees that it is the responsibility of teacher educators to prepare competent teachers for the nation's schools. The Holmes Group (1986) describes such teachers as

those who possess broad and deep understanding of children, the subjects they teach and the world around them. They exemplify the critical thinking they strive to develop in their students. . . . They do not bore, confuse nor demean; instead they push them to interact with important knowledge and skill. . . . For competent

professionals, students' learning is the sine quo non of teaching and schooling. (pp. 28-29)

Under the captioned heading "Schools for Tomorrow's Teachers," Darling-Hammond (1987) remarked that knowledge, insight, and imagination will not flow naturally from students, but instead have to be nurtured through careful and disciplined inquiry, practice, and reflection. In this regard, the professional development of teacher educators must be emphasized. Teachers of the nation's schools must have a paradigm shift in their approach to the way knowledge is acquired or constructed if they are to be successful in 21<sup>st</sup>-century schools. Those who are educators of these teachers, Darling-Hammond (1987) says, must change their roles also.

The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), through a special task force has identified seven standards of practice for teacher educators. These represent agreements regarding what teacher educators should think about, know, and be able to do. The association asserts that these agreements give the teacher educators the opportunity to review and adopt a knowledge base that can be tested, modified, and revised when appropriate. The master teacher educators:

1. Model professional teaching practices that demonstrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes reflecting the best practices available in teacher education (Fullan, 1995).
2. Inquire into and contribute to one or more areas of scholarly activity related to teaching, learning and or teacher education (Smith, 2003).
3. Inquire systematically into and reflect on their own practice and demonstrate commitment to lifelong professional development (Fullan, 1993; Smith, 2003).
4. Provide leadership in developing, implementing and evaluating programs



educating teachers that embrace diversity, and are rigorous, relevant, grounded in accepted theory, research and best practice.

5. Collaborate regularly and in significant ways with representatives of schools, universities, state education agencies, professional associations and commit to improve teaching learning and teacher education (Fullan, 1993).

6. Serve as informed, constructively critical advocates for high-quality education of all students, public understanding of educational issues, and excellence towards diversity in the teaching and teacher education profession.

7. Contribute to improving the teacher education profession.

One of the fundamental characteristics of the professional development standards for teacher educators in Holland is the foundation of instructional competencies. This was articulated on the notion that the teacher educator's core task is to enable students to develop into competent teachers. The task force that comprised teacher educators themselves believes that if they are to enhance the development of competence in students, they need to be competent in their areas of specialization. The areas of competence include content, pedagogy, organization, group dynamics, and communicative and developmental and personal growth (Kostner & Dengerink, 2001).

Teacher educators spend much of their time being involved with the professional development of pre-service and very often with in-service teachers as well. While there is extensive literature regarding the professional development of qualified teachers, Smith (2003) wonders about the limited information pertaining to the professional development of teacher educators. Recently, however, this has taken center stage according to such writers as Lunenberg (2002) and Kostner and Dengerink (2001).

In addition to mastering diverse areas of competence, Smith (2003) challenges that teacher educators must exercise inter- and intra-personal intelligences to be empathetic and courageous, to be assertive, committed, and tactful in working with students and colleagues. They must be involved in research and add to the knowledge base on teacher education as well as to develop a strong collaboration with schools to promote education.

Evans et al. (2002) concur. From their study on the development of a conceptual framework for the preparation of new teacher educators, they suggest:

Principals and lecturers need to acknowledge the value of research as an important part of the work of lecturers and a way of inquiring into, learning about and improving the quality of one's work. . . . The necessity of research will be a radical departure from current thinking in education and teacher education in Jamaica, where research is regarded as a necessity for completing a graduate program and not an ongoing aspect of ones work. (p. 99)

Citing Oser (1998), Smith (2003) further suggests that the professional development of teacher educators is therefore not limited to expanded theoretical knowledge in a specific subject area, but to a more rounded development with cognitive and affective domains.

### **Identifying Marks of Quality Teaching**

Darling-Hammond (1998) writes that today schools face enormous challenges and in response to an increasingly complex society and a rapidly changing technology-based economy, they are expected to educate the most diverse student body in the country's history.

As a consequence, teachers must be trained differently in order to teach and meet the needs of all students according to today's standards. First of all Shulman (1987)

suggests that teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so that they can assist their students to create cognitive maps, relate ideas to one another, and address misconceptions.

In addition, Evans (2003) notes that subject matter knowledge, by itself, will not guarantee good teaching. Good teaching, she says, demands that teachers know their subject from a pedagogical perspective, and translate this knowledge into strategies that will lead to increased student learning and understanding.

Further Shulman (1987) says:

Pedagogical content knowledge identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching. It represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems or issues are organized, represented and adapted to the desire, interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction. Pedagogical content knowledge is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding the content specialist from that of pedagogue. (p. 8)

While the content specialist may focus on the delivery of content, the pedagogue will create the kind of a learner-focused environment that is conducive to the needs of all students. Educators have to be mindful of the words of Mark and Ribeiro (1999) in their documentation of the negative effects of the wrong approach to the learning environment.

They observe:

Our schools have been characterized traditionally by a modus operandi that services their perceived mission as the transmission of knowledge. In this process the teacher's role is to pass on a body of knowledge in a donor-recipient, performer-observer type of relationship. . . . This fosters helplessness and dependency in learning situations, limits creative capacity and it shapes the view that equates understanding with memorizing. (p. 114)

Very early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey (1938) insisted that the competent educator “views teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience” (p.

87). He also emphasized the “importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of purposes that direct his activities in the learning process” (p. 67).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) identifies five basic characteristics regarding professional and effective teaching: teachers’ commitment to students and their learning, teachers’ knowledge of the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to all students, teachers’ responsibility for managing and monitoring student learning and teachers thinking systematically about their own practice and being members of learning communities.

### **Model of Reform in Teacher Education: Professional Development Schools**

PDS are partner schools where one/more elementary or secondary schools are involved in the pre-service teacher education program of a college or university. The school-university/college partnership must adopt this collaborative dimension if teacher education is to be successful in preparing teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Clarke, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Goodlad, 1984; Holmes Group, 1990, 1995; Zeichner, 1992).

In McIntyre et al. (1996), Professional Development Schools are defined by Stallings and Kowalski (1990) as a school setting that is focused on the professional development of teachers and the development of pedagogy. To Feiman-Nemser and Buchanan (1986) these are schools where future teachers learn to teach in classrooms where their cooperating teachers are also students of teaching.

Citing Murray’s (1993) article, Book (1996) provides a comprehensive statement defining PDS and identifying its underlining goals, which are interconnected. In this regard the achievement of one is not possible without the other.

1. Understanding of content by all students.

2. It is the intention to teach important knowledge and for students to master that even if it means they are exposed to less information.
3. The goals of the school apply to all students.
4. Teachers use dialectical instruction, which is more responsive to the needs and understanding of individual students.
5. Students are required to be active in their interaction with the knowledge, because it is perceived that “understanding is dependent on, and critically shaped by its content or its place.”
6. Valid assessment is used to determine the students’ ability to use the information gained in real-world contexts.
7. The learning community that is established models the community values students are to acquire, including those that are inherent in the negotiated dialectical process that yields understanding.
8. The PDS values the professional teacher who continually is a learner and who seeks to collaborate with others to respond to the learning demands of the students and colleagues.
9. The school organization and finances are structured to allow teachers to have time for reflection, planning and consultation necessary to respond to the demands of the dialectical environment.
10. The goal is to bring integrated support services to respond to the needs of the students.
11. The PDS research mission endorses the concept of the PDS being a “center of inquiry that contributes to the scholarly literature,” and that works to solve practical and theoretical problems so that knowledge can be more complete and coherent. (p. 195)

### **Summary**

Teacher education prepares individuals to meet the challenges and opportunities of today’s and tomorrow’s classrooms, and this is a major and overwhelming task for the preparation programs (Byrd & McIntyre, 1997; Pacheco, 2000). Graduates of teacher education programs ought to be reflective and should be able to articulate their judgments regarding the practices which characterize best classroom instructions (Byrd & McIntyre, 1997).

Teacher education is being reformed, and these initiatives are built around major questions related to attributes of good teachers, prospective teachers, and/teacher education programs; strategies used by effective teachers, education processes that will

ensure that prospective teachers learn these strategies, knowledge regarding what teachers should know and be able to do, and outcomes that should result from teacher learning, professional practice, and student learning (Cochran-Smith, 2002).

A major responsibility of teacher education programs is to encourage and facilitate professional self-reflection among teachers as well as teacher educators. Researchers such as Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2000) and Houston and Warner (2000) advocate that reflection should be embedded in teacher education programs and thus allow prospective teachers to understand and begin to inculcate the practice. In the same breath teacher education ought to be built on and informed by active research, according to Cruickshank (1990), Poeter (1997), and McIntyre and Byrd (2000). Without this knowledge, the practice will be ill-informed and the public respect cannot be guaranteed.

Schools in the United States are highly multicultural which has tremendous implications for development of teacher education programs, training of teachers, and the establishment of schools. Prospective teachers need to be exposed to and be prepared to teach all children of these varying backgrounds (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Dilworth, 1992; Duhon & Manson, 2000; Mark & Ribeiro, 1999; Obidah & Teel, 2001; Striedieck, 1997; Tom, 1997; Thomas, 2002). At the same time writers such as Banks (1991) and Hollins (1990, as cited in Zeichner et al., 1996) suggest that teachers also need to have a clear sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities in order to be able to understand those of their students and their families.

According to Major and Pines (1999), the use of technology goes to the core of educational reform and especially in today's technological advanced society. The interesting fact, however, is that the technology will be useless if the human mind is not

educated to handle this powerful medium (Levine, 1996). Teacher preparation therefore has to be infused with the development and use of technology for teaching and learning, if teachers are to be able to exploit the technology to aid classroom instruction.

Thomas (2002), Levine (1992), Kennedy (1992), Carnegie Forum (1986), and Holmes Group (1986) address the need for partnerships in teacher education reform. Although this will induce many and varied challenges, Snyder (1994), Grossman (1994), Miller and Silvernail (1994), Neufeld (1992), McIntyre (1994), Darling-Hammond (1994), and Sandholtz and Merseth (1992) advocate that the initiative is well worth the effort.

Teacher education curriculum must be linked to what prospective teachers will be expected to do in their schools and classrooms (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Fullan, 1991; Hawley & Evertson, 1993; Joyce & Showers, 1995). A solid preparation in knowledge base must be given to prospective teachers according to Lucas (1997) and Evans (2000). Teachers with subject matter preparation tend to achieve more in the classroom than those without based on the results of study done by Wilson et al. (2001).

Because of the importance of field experiences in the preparation of prospective teachers, they necessitate proper planning and implementation to allow prospective teachers to achieve maximum benefits in the honing of their instructional and classroom management skills (Evans, 1991; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; McIntyre et al., 1996; Thomas, 2002). If teaching is to be regarded as a profession, then it must be characterized by standards (Roth, 1996). Engvall (1997) suggests that standards ought to be used as a measure of assessment and accountability not just for programs but for teachers' performance as well. Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) identify the New

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS); the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); and the National Certification for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which serve as guidelines for the development of quality standards in teacher education.

According to Kostner and Dengerink (2001), and Goodlad (1990), there is a connection between what happens in the classroom and the quality of teacher training. This they believe is linked to the quality of their program and the quality of the faculty in those programs. The success of teacher education depends to a great extent on the quality of its faculty.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

*If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are  
planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are  
planning for a lifetime, educate people.*

—Chinese Proverb

#### **Introduction**

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the content and structure of pre-service teacher education programs in different contexts of tertiary institutions in Jamaica and Michigan. This study facilitated a review of these programs' characteristics with a view to understanding their current structure, to provide a comparative analysis of the programs' components, and to unearth information that will be relevant and beneficial to the continued development of pre-service teacher education in Jamaica.

The following questions were prepared to serve as guidelines in conducting this review:

1. What are the major components of effective/productive teacher education programs?
2. What assessment techniques are effective for teacher education programs?
3. How should teacher pre-service teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?
4. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher graduate?

5. How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher?

6. What relationship should exist between the university/college and the practicing schools?

7. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher educator?

8. What are students' expectations of pre-service teacher education programs?

While pre-service teacher education programs were the targeted population, only three different contexts of these programs were examined. Two of the programs were selected from institutions that are publicly operated, while the other was selected from private, Christian denominational institutions.

This chapter outlines the type of study that was conducted and the general procedure that was followed in order to realize this development. The various sections covered are: Research Design, Population, Sampling, Respondents' Sampling, Sampling Procedure, Instrumentation, Documents and Artifacts, Data Collection Procedure, and Data Analysis.

### **Research Design**

Empirical research studies usually follow a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approach to data collection. The quantitative approaches according to L. R. Gay (2003) are designed to describe current conditions or to investigate relationships. Those designed to promote a greater understanding of situations as they exist, as well as the reasons they exist as they are, are qualitative approaches (L. R. Gay, 2003).

As Merriam (2001) views it, “A qualitative research is an umbrella concept that covers several forms of inquiry, which help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption as possible” (p. 5). In this regard therefore she notes that “the philosophical assumption upon which this is based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds, hence the researcher has an interest in how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in it” (p. 6).

This study is qualitative and descriptive in nature. It was instrumental in facilitating a review of three pre-service teacher education programs as they existed in context. The structure, component, and content of these programs are described for analytical as well as comparative examination.

The study approached the pre-service teacher education programs from a case review perspective. Although L. R. Gay (2003) describes a case study as “an in-depth investigation of one ‘unit,’ such as an individual, group, institution, organization, program or document” (p. 219), an in-depth review of the programs was not undertaken.

Case studies facilitate data collection in the natural environment of the unit under investigation. Although the entire universities or colleges were not investigated, the case method was justified, as particular programs were reviewed in context. Consequently, the teacher education programs were examined as they currently exist and operate in their present environmental contexts.

### **Methods and Features of Qualitative Research**

The main characteristics of qualitative research according to Eisner (1998) are worth mentioning here as they served as guidelines and form the basis upon which the research was conducted.

#### **Field Focused**

According to Eisner (1998) qualitative studies tend to be “field focused” (p. 32). He notes that “anything that has an import for education is a potential subject matter for qualitative research” (p. 32).

This research was conducted in the physical environs of the three institutions that were studied. This was inclusive of their external environment, partnership community K-12 schools, and in addition to contact through technology. Observation in the physical environment of their partner schools allowed me to make an informed judgment regarding the participants’ views of the institution to which they were connected in relation to their life and work.

#### **The Self as Instrument**

Eisner (1998) says the “self is the instrument that engages the situation and makes sense of it” (p. 33). The intelligent researcher will be able to “see what counts” (p. 34), and be able to respond to it in keeping with the information that is being sought. The way the researcher “sees and respond to situations and events will bear on our signature.” The self should be able to maintain a balance between his/her own subjectivity, background experiences, biases, and beliefs in order to respond objectively to what is being observed.

My teacher education experience started 12 years ago when I transferred from primary to tertiary education. During these 12 years, I have gained invaluable insight and experience in teacher education, as I progressed from lecturer to senior lecturer, and acting Head of the Education Department. Serving in these various capacities has provided the scope for improvement of my intrapersonal, interpersonal, analytical, and reflective skills, which were extremely important in the data collection procedure of this dissertation. In addition, my post-graduate studies have further extended my theoretical and practical knowledge, as I completed various assignments and served in a graduate assistanceship position, and on various administrative committees.

Awareness of the critical place that the researcher occupies in the data collection and analysis process led me to pay keen attention to interview protocols. All sessions were done at the convenience of the participants, in their comfort zones, recorded for accuracy, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed as they were written. As far as was humanly possible, I tried to prevent my own educational biases from interfering with the participants' responses; instead, I allowed them to express their own thoughts and ideas.

#### Interpretative Character

In qualitative research, the interpretative character has two meanings according to Eisner (1998). First, inquirers try to “*account for*” what they have given *an account of* (p. 35). It is the ability to explain why an event or something has happened. Second, interpretative character refers to “*what experience holds for those in the situation being studied*” (p. 35). In this regard, qualitative researchers are interested in matters of motive and in the quality of the experience undergone by those in the situation (institutions) being studied.

To address the interpretative nature of the research, interviewees/participants were asked to bring their experiences to bear in giving meaning to their perceptions of their institutions with respect to pre-service teacher education. Senior students and teacher graduates were given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in light of what they had achieved, in comparison to what they had expected.

#### The Use of Expressive Language

The “*use of expressive language* and the presence of voice in text” (p. 36) is the fourth feature of qualitative research to which Eisner (1998) makes reference. The researcher displays his signature, which makes it clear that “a person and not a machine was behind the words” (p. 36). The intelligent use of the language was significant for a clear understanding of the study and the replacement of expressions such as: The “researcher did . . . to; I did. . . .” Certainly this has added personality, meaning, and emotions to the literature and should make the reader more intimate with the study.

#### Attention to Particulars

This feature of qualitative research provides a sense of the uniqueness of the case/institutions being studied. “*Attention to particulars*” (Eisner, 1998, p. 38) ensures that the aesthetic features of each case are maintained and the reader is made aware of the distinctiveness of these individual entities. This also allows for general statements to be made regarding the connection between, for example, the characteristics of each institution in this study, its historical and or religious flavor, and the quality of its graduates. In keeping with this feature, I provided a brief historical as well as a current

description of each institution and their contemporary pre-service teacher education program.

#### Coherence, Insight, and Instrumental Utility

Eisner (1998) says “the sixth feature of qualitative research pertains to the criteria for judging their success and this is believable because of its *coherence, insight and instrumental utility*” (p. 39). There is no statistical test of significance to determine if results “count.” In the end, what counts is a matter of judgment (p. 39). The evidence or the reliability and validity of the results will depend on the researcher’s ability to persuade according to the weight, coherence of the case, and cogency of the interpretation, rather than the use of statistical methods.

#### Population

The identification of the research population is a very important aspect of the development of the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a population is a group of elements of cases whether individuals, objects, or events that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the research. L. R. Gay (2003) advises that this population must be chosen and identified at the very early stages of the research process.

The targeted population for this study was pre-service teacher education programs in tertiary institutions in Jamaica and Michigan. The sample, however, was drawn from those in Jamaica who are certified by the Joint Board of Teacher Education in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, the Ministry of Education and the University Council of Jamaica, while in Michigan, those that are approved by the

Michigan Department of Education, and accredited by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE). These are public and private entities to facilitate a cross-cultural comparison of program structure, content, and development.

These institutions offer 3-and 4-year undergraduate programs in pre-service teacher education. There are 11 teacher-training colleges in Jamaica, which are governed by the Joint Board of Teacher Education. All these colleges offer 3-year diplomas in teacher education.

Presently, there are 32 teacher education programs that are approved by the Michigan Department of Education. Of these, only 14 are nationally accredited by NCATE. Other variables that were taken into consideration for the selection of the programs were the age and size of the institution. Older programs with a history in pre-service teacher education, and that would evidence more growth and development, as well as the number of graduates per year, were given top priorities.

Table 2 represents those programs in Jamaica that are certified by the Joint Board of Teacher Education and the University Council of Jamaica. Table 3 represents a list of the teacher education programs that are approved by the Michigan Department of Education. Table 4 represents those in Michigan that are nationally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

### Criteria Denoting Exemplary Status

#### **Jamaica**

The Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE, 2003) is the organized body that certifies teachers in the Bahamas, Belize, and Jamaica. The Board is described in the *Regulations for Teacher Certification handbook* as “a partnership in teacher education”



(p. 2). The partners represent: Ministries of Education, Teacher Education Institutions, Faculty of Humanity and Education at the University of the West Indies, Teachers' Organizations from the three countries, and independent members who are drawn from the various communities that the Board serves.

The Joint Board operates through two Standing Committees. These are the Examination Accreditation Committee and the Curriculum Committee. The Examination Accreditation Committee is responsible for all matters intimate to the administration of

Table 2

*Teacher Training Colleges in Jamaica That Are Certified by the Joint Board of Teacher Education*

| <b>Public</b>                                       | <b>Christian/<br/>Denominational</b> | <b>Other</b>                | <b>Founded</b> | <b>Size</b> |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Mico Teachers' College                              |                                      |                             | 1835           | 1,555       |
|   | Bethlehem Moravian College           |                             | 1861           | 774         |
|   | St Joseph's Teachers' College        |                             | 1897           | 645         |
| Shortwood Teachers' College                         |                                      |                             | 1885           | 991         |
|   | Northern Caribbean University        |                             | 1919           | 5,000       |
| Moneague Teachers' College                          |                                      |                             | 1956           | 403         |
| College of Agriculture, Science & Education         |                                      |                             | 1995           | 428         |
| G. C. Foster College of Physical Education & Sports |                                      |                             | 1980           | 478         |
|   |                                      | Sam Sharp Teachers' College | 1975           | 514         |
|   | Church Teachers' College             |                             |                | 430         |

Table 3

*Teacher Education Programs Approved by Michigan Department of Education*

| <b>Public</b>                      | <b>Christian/<br/>Denominational</b> | <b>Other</b>         | <b>Founded</b> | <b>Size</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------|
| University of Michigan             |                                      |                      | 1817           | 51,000      |
|                                    |                                      | Kalamazoo<br>College | 1833           | 1,300       |
|                                    | Albion College                       |                      | 1835           | 1,850       |
|                                    |                                      | Hillsdale College    | 1844           | 1,200       |
| Eastern Michigan<br>University     |                                      |                      | 1849           | 24,000      |
|                                    | Hope College                         |                      | 1851           | 3,068       |
| Michigan State<br>University       |                                      |                      | 1855           | 44,836      |
|                                    | Adrian College                       |                      | 1859           | 1,000       |
|                                    | Andrews University                   |                      | 1874           | 3,017       |
|                                    | Calvin College                       |                      | 1876           | 4,300       |
| Ferris State<br>Michigan Tech.     |                                      |                      | 1884           | 11,822      |
|                                    |                                      |                      | 1885           | 6,536       |
|                                    |                                      | Alma College         | 1886           | 1,400       |
|                                    | Aquinas College                      |                      | 1886           | 2,300       |
| Central Michigan<br>University     |                                      |                      | 1892           | 27,936      |
| Northern Michigan<br>University    |                                      |                      | 1899           | 9,400       |
| Western Michigan<br>University     |                                      |                      | 1903           | 28,000      |
|                                    | Siena Heights<br>University          |                      | 1919           | 2,153       |
| Wayne State University             |                                      |                      | 1933           | 33,314      |
|                                    | Corner Stone<br>University           |                      | 1941           | 2,400       |
| University of Michigan<br>Flint    |                                      |                      | 1944           | 6,600       |
| Lake Superior State<br>University  |                                      |                      | 1946           | 3,500       |
|                                    | Madonna University                   |                      | 1947           | 4,000       |
| Oakland University                 |                                      |                      | 1959           | 16,000      |
| University of Michigan<br>Dearborn |                                      |                      | 1959           | 8,500       |
| Grand Valley State<br>University   |                                      |                      | 1960           | 22,565      |
|                                    | Concordia University                 |                      | 1963           | 1,000       |
| Saginaw Valley State<br>University |                                      |                      | 1963           | 9,300       |
|                                    | University of Detroit<br>Mercy       |                      | 1990           | 6,000       |
|                                    | Marygrove College                    |                      | 1905           | 2,421       |
|                                    | Olivet College                       |                      | 1844           | 1,112       |
|                                    | Spring Arbor<br>University           |                      | 1873           | 3,701       |

Table 4

*Teacher Education Programs Accredited by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in Michigan*

| <b>Public</b>                   | <b>Christian/<br/>Denominational</b> | <b>Other</b> | <b>Founded</b> | <b>Size</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
|                                 | Andrews University                   |              | 1874           | 3,017       |
|                                 | Calvin College                       |              | 1876           | 4,300       |
| Central Michigan University     |                                      |              | 1892           | 27,936      |
|                                 | Concordia University                 |              | 1963           | 1,000       |
| Eastern Michigan University     |                                      |              | 1849           | 24,000      |
| Grand Valley State              |                                      |              | 1960           | 22,565      |
|                                 | Hope College                         |              | 1851           | 3,431       |
|                                 | Madonna University                   |              | 1947           | 4,000       |
|                                 | Marygrove College                    |              | 1905           | 2,421       |
| Northern Michigan University    |                                      |              | 1899           | 9,400       |
| Oakland University              |                                      |              | 1959           | 16,000      |
| Saginaw Valley State University |                                      |              | 1963           | 9,300       |
|                                 | Spring Arbor University              |              | 1873           | 3,701       |
| Western Michigan University     |                                      |              | 1903           | 28,000      |

Examinations: arrangement, organization, and implementation of accreditation processes; makes recommendations to the Board on policies and procedures related to examinations and accreditation, and studies recommended amendments to the regulations.

The Curriculum Committee is responsible for coordinating the work of the Board of Studies; operating as liaison between the Joint Board and the Boards of Studies; ensuring that directives and decisions from the Joint Board are correctly interpreted by each Board of Study; ensuring that syllabuses and curricular in the various subject areas are integrated and well articulated in each program area; makes recommendations to the

Joint Board on staff development programs for the colleges, and criteria for accreditation proposed by the Boards of Studies for the different subject areas.

“The Boards of Studies is the plenary body for each subject offered under the aegis of the JBTE, and it brings together college tutors, external examiners and accreditation panelists in a given subject” (JBTE, 2003, p. 13). The Boards of Studies develop and recommend new syllabuses and/or amendments; criteria governing students’ entry requirements into the various courses in each program; criteria for determining academic qualifications for faculty in each subject; identify aspects of the subject in need of research, and determine the content of the course that will form part of the examination process in any single year.

The JBTE (2003) advocates that the environment of teacher education should provide rich opportunities for students and tutors to engage in:

1. cooperative learning processes
2. reflective activities that promote self and peer analysis
3. inquiry and problem-solving activities
4. learner-centered processes
5. exposure to principles of relevant theories of learning.

To be qualified for certification, according to the JBTE (2003), students must have completed the course of study and satisfied the passing conditions that are prescribed by the Board, in addition to possessing the qualities, and characteristics suitable for teaching. All prospective teachers are externally assessed by the Joint Board.

The University Council of Jamaica (UCJ, “Profile,” n.d.) was established by the University Council of Jamaica Act in 1987. It is a statutory body currently under the

portfolio of the Minister of Education and Culture, and consisting of members from the public and private sectors, professional bodies and societies and academic institutions in accordance with the University Council of Jamaica Act. The mission of UCJ is to increase the availability of university-level training in Jamaica, through accreditation of institutions, courses, and programs for recognition and acceptability. The Council is empowered to confer degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other academic awards and distinctions on those who have pursued courses approved by the Council at associated tertiary institutions.

The Constitution of the Council is guided by the principles of:

1. **Comparability of Standards:** The awards of the council are comparable in standard with those that are granted by universities internationally. To facilitate this, at least one-third of its members are university principals or professors.
2. **Relevance of programs and awards:** In order to ensure relevance, professional bodies and organizations as well as members of the public and private sectors are represented on the Council.
3. **Participation:** The council makes provision for representatives from institutions whose programs are accredited by the Council. Recently, Academic Boards of Studies were established and mandated to put in place mechanisms for ensuring quality in the tertiary system at all times (University Council of Jamaica, "Profile," n.d.).

The overall purpose of accreditation of programs or institutions is to determine educational quality and institutional integrity. In order to determine educational quality, the UCJ compares the institutions' or programs' statement of scope and purpose with the conditions that are believed to be necessary and desirable to produce such quality and the

evidence that the program does achieve the stated outcomes. For institutional integrity, the UCJ determines whether or not the program is what it says it is, and does what it says it does (University Council of Jamaica, “Accreditation,” n.d.).

UCJ’s accreditation allows institutions to perform self-evaluation and self-direction towards institutional and program improvement. In this regard, it enhances the institution’s capacity for change and facilitates a structured mechanism for research, self-analysis and self-improvement. Accreditation also provides public certification of the acceptable quality of the institution and its program, enhances its reputation, and inspires confidence in the educational internal as well as external community. Finally, there is the opportunity for consultation and advice from persons of other institutions and professional local and international bodies.

Presently, the UCJ has registered 22 government tertiary institutions and 26 private ones. These have all met the stated criteria of educational quality and represent a total enrolment of over 30,000 students. In addition, the UCJ monitors 47 degree programs that it has accredited in 17 institutions (12 Master’s, 23 Bachelor’s, 8 Associate). It also monitors programs offered in Jamaica by foreign universities (University Council of Jamaica, “Accreditation,” n.d.).

The Council is also distinguished in that it has:

1. Gained international acceptance; as a member of the worldwide network of quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.
2. Gained national acceptance from employers, students, tertiary institutions and the general public.
3. Developed reciprocal relationships with similar bodies regionally and internationally.
4. Assisted in strengthening tertiary institutions.
5. Helped to provide access to tertiary education as the Council seeks to optimize the number of persons having an opportunity to pursue tertiary level programs. (University Council of Jamaica, “Profile,” n.d., para. 5).

**Michigan**

The minimum standards for pre-service teacher education program approval in the United States, teacher licensing, and professional development are guided and influenced by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). This body, which was established in 1987 is a consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of the preparation, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers. The basic premise on which the organization operates is that “an effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that *all* students learn and perform at high levels” (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 2006).

INTASC’s mission is to provide a forum for its member states to learn about and collaborate in the development of:

1. compatible educational policy on teaching among the states
2. new accountability requirements for teacher preparation programs
3. new techniques to assess the performance of teachers for licensing and evaluation.

The INTASC standards are not intended for decision making; instead they are expected to serve as a “model” and are intended to be a “Resource” that all states can use to develop their own state standards. States are therefore encouraged to take the model standards and discuss and debate them among their own stakeholders to come up with their own language. INTASC’s hope is that states will agree with, and honor the values in the model standards, and in this way move toward consensus and

compatible educational policies around what good teaching looks like and how it can be assessed (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 2006).

Pre-service teacher education programs in Michigan are required to show evidence of and maintenance of these minimum standards before approval can be granted from the state and for graduates from such programs to be granted state licensing. After these minimum standards are attained, advanced accreditation can also be sought through another organized body.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is a specialty non-governmental organization consisting of 33 professional associations of teachers, teacher educators, content specialists, and local and state policymakers. This organized body has established a standards-based accreditation system for the preparation of pre-service teachers, licensing of teachers, and advanced professional development.

Programs that are accredited by NCATE are recognized and exemplified as having a mark of distinction, and this provides recognition that the college of education has met national, professional standards for the preparation of teachers and other educators (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2006).

To satisfy the performance-based accreditation system, NCATE requires participating institutions to provide evidence of competent teacher performance as well as to articulate the research base upon which their programs were developed. Operating on the premise that teachers who are prepared will make a difference in the lives of their students, NCATE advocates that teacher candidates must know the subject matter they plan to teach and how to teach effectively so that all students learn. Consequently, it is believed that those teachers who are prepared at NCATE institutions have the capacity to



help all students learn. These teachers:

1. know the subject matter
2. demonstrate knowledge of effective teaching strategies
3. reflect on their practice and adapt their instruction
4. can teach students from different backgrounds
5. have been supervised by master teachers
6. can integrate technology into instruction.

Presently, 700 institutions are a part of the NCATE system. 623 colleges of education have been accredited with nearly 100 more seeking accreditation. The organization is recognized as an accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education, by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2006).

### Sampling

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) emphasize the importance of defining both the target population and the sampling frame carefully and completely. While the target population was pre-service teacher education programs in Jamaica and Michigan, as defined above, the sampling frame was designated based on certain delimiting variables.

The following are the variables that defined and categorized the sampling frame for this study: pre-service undergraduate programs, tertiary institutions, 3- and 4-year colleges and universities, public and private entities, and Christian denominational. In addition, the sample was delimited to Jamaica and Michigan. By virtue of the fact that this study was qualitative, it allowed the choice of a sample that was more purposive rather than random. Consequently, three pre-service teacher education programs were

chosen. One of these programs was from Michigan, whereas the remaining two were from Jamaica.

### Respondents' Sampling

In a qualitative case study of a community school program, Merriam (2001) advises that a holistic picture of the program would involve the experiences and perceptions of people having different associations with the program (p. 83). Merriam further notes that the “the crucial factor in this type of research is not the number of respondents, but the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon” (p. 83).

This study sampled five different categories of individuals in the pre-service teacher education programs. The nature of the study and the type of analysis that was required necessitated the perspectives from the various groups to be ascertained.

The program directors in the three institutions were interviewed in order that information relative to the characteristics of the program was ascertained. The program vision, components, content, structure, approach to collaboration, and the general uniqueness were the various areas about which information was solicited.

One teacher educator in each of the three programs was interviewed. These persons provided information relative to the importance of standards for ensuring quality teaching. In addition, the educators described the qualification that is necessary for instruction at the tertiary level of teacher education as well as gave insight regarding the curriculum, field experiences, assessment, and characteristics or attributes that should describe the ideal teacher graduate.

A group of five pre-service senior students in each program was interviewed. These students made honest evaluations about their individual programs and the way they had met their expectations and were currently meeting their needs. They highlighted what they believe were the weaknesses and strengths of their programs and how in their estimation they could be improved. They explained their expectations and indicated the extent to which these had been realized.

A recent graduate from each program was interviewed. That is, three in-service teachers who had recently graduated from these institutions were interviewed relative to their perspectives of their alma mater. They were asked to describe how their training had prepared them to function effectively in the education system. The strengths and weaknesses or limitations of their training in respect of their perception of field experiences, theory, subject-specific pedagogical knowledge, and actual practice were highlighted.

One cooperating teacher representing each program was interviewed. That is, three cooperating teachers were chosen from practicing schools that are associated with the programs for field experiences. They spoke to their perception of their roles as cooperating teachers in the training of pre-service teachers. In addition, they were asked to describe the importance of field experiences for the transfer of content and pedagogical knowledge and for students to hone their skills in classroom management and instruction.

### Sampling Procedure

Alreck and Settle (2004) posit that “a pure random sample is the most desirable kind for almost every survey” (p. 71). This is important for the reliability and validity of the data. According to L. R. Gay (2003) “the goodness of the sample determines the

generalizability of the results . . . and good samples must be representative of the population from which it was selected” (pp. 113-114). Random sampling allows each person an equal opportunity to be included in the sample, therefore ensuring reliability and validity.

In the qualitative research approach to data collection and analysis, a purposive sampling technique provides the most effective means of selecting the sample. According to Merriam (2001), purposive sampling is more appropriate for most qualitative research.

For the selection of the five categories of individuals who made up the respondents for this study, a purposive semi-random sampling procedure was used in each situation where relevancy was required. Whereas the program directors were purposively chosen by default, the other participants were chosen somewhat randomly.

### **Program Directors**

It was not necessary for the program directors to be chosen by random sampling, since it was assumed that only one individual occupies this central position in each institution. Where the director was unavailable, the assistant director was interviewed. In one instance this was the case and the vice principal was interviewed in place of the principal.

The program that was reviewed in Michigan is quite larger and more complex than those in Jamaica. Consequently, three other persons from the administrative body were added to the interview schedules. These were the Associate Dean of the College of Education, the Interim Director of the pre-service program, and the Student Teaching Director. These persons were identified based on purposive sampling.

The other categories of persons – senior students, graduate teachers, faculty members, and cooperating teachers – were somewhat randomly chosen. Both genders were represented, and this facilitated an unbiased objective perspective from both sides.

### **Teacher Educators**

In collaboration with the directors of each program, suitable teacher educators who met the following criteria were identified as instructors and supervisors who were:

1. in pre-service teacher education
2. fully qualified based on the institution's standard
3. committed to teaching
4. work well with students
5. research oriented
6. technologically aware
7. possess extensive experience in teacher education.

In the Michigan context, they were identified in collaboration with the Associate Dean, while in the Jamaican context, they were identified in collaboration with the program director in one program and the vice principal in the other. In all three cases, the faculty chosen was ideal and provided the information that was sought.

### **Pre-service Senior Students**

In the 4-year programs, the senior students were chosen from the 4<sup>th</sup>-year group, while in the 3-year program, the senior students were chosen from the final or 3<sup>rd</sup>-year group. The following were the criteria used:

1. mature, focused, and reliable

2. knowledgeable of program
3. committed to goals
4. academically aware.

In order to select the students in the Michigan context, I had dialogue by phone and by electronic mail with the Associate Dean of the College of Education. During this time, I outlined the criteria for the selection of the students. As result of the dialogue, a list of names was submitted to me by the secretary through electronic mail. I randomly selected five of the names and tried to make contact with the students to get their commitment to the study. Some were unavailable, so the five were eventually chosen from those who were left.

Following the selection and permission to participate in the study, I went to the campus and arranged for the interview. The five students were interviewed together. There was one male and four female students, all from different programs in secondary and elementary education.

For the first institution in the Jamaican context, I visited the campus of the private university and had dialogue with the director of the program regarding the criteria for selection of the students. In collaboration with her secretary, a list of students was identified and given to me. From the list, I randomly chose five, most of whom were unavailable, so other students were identified.

The program director and the secretary assisted me in making contact with the students. On gaining their willingness to participate in the study, I made arrangement with them to conduct the interview on the campus. The interview was conducted twice. In the first instance, all five students were interviewed together; however, the tape

recorder was not turned up properly, resulting in some sections of the interview not being audible enough for clarity and transcription.

This necessitated a rerun of the session. In the second instance, the students were interviewed in two groups of three and two, because it was a difficult challenge to get them together and I did not succeed in accomplishing that. After the second sessions, however, the script was quite audible.

For the second institution in Jamaica, I visited the college campus and had dialogue with the vice principal who was representing the principal. We discussed the criteria for the selection of the students after which she identified the student council president who was quite an outstanding student with commendable leadership skills. From dialogue with him, we identified the students and he made contact with them regarding a suitable time for the interview.

The interview was conducted on the college campus and all the students were present. There were four males and one female from primary and secondary programs.

### **Graduates**

The following criteria were used to select the teacher graduate. This teacher must have been regarded as one of the top/outstanding graduates of the program and must be currently employed in the education system. A graduate who is not employed in the classroom would not be in the position to adequately determine whether or not the training received was adequate for the challenges of today's schools.

In the Michigan context, I had dialogue with one of the university supervisors in the pre-service program. She gave me the names of four recent graduate teachers who were in nearby schools. I selected one of the names and made contact by phone. That fell

through, in addition to the two that followed. The fourth teacher responded favorably. I made arrangements with her and the interview was conducted in her classroom at the school where she teaches.

In the first Jamaican institution, I had dialogue with the program director. From the discussion, I received the names of two recently graduated students. I randomly selected one, then proceeded to make contact by phone. He agreed to do the interview and we arranged for a suitable time. I interviewed him in his office at the school where he teaches.

In the second Jamaican institution, I had dialogue with the vice principal, who directed me to a faculty member. That faculty member directed me to someone else, who directed me to the teaching practice coordinator. He identified two recently graduated students who were within contact. I chose one randomly and made contact by phone. She agreed to do the interview and I interviewed her in her classroom at the school where she teaches.

### **Cooperating Teachers**

For this selection, purposive sampling was used to select one cooperating teacher from one of the schools representing each program. The cooperating teacher needed to be one who exemplified the characteristics of effective classroom teaching in the K-12 classroom, demonstrated mentoring skills, and was experienced in practicum supervision.

In the Michigan context, I had dialogue with one of the university supervisors in the program. She gave me the names of two cooperating teachers who were in nearby schools. I made contact with the first name and she agreed to do the interview. We made arrangements and I conducted the interview at the school where she teaches.



In the first Jamaican context, I had dialogue with the program director. She directed me to the teaching practice coordinator. He identified two cooperating teachers whom he thought were suitable. One was available for the interview. We made arrangements and I conducted the interview at the school where he teaches.

In the second Jamaican context, I had dialogue with the vice principal of the institution. She directed me to a faculty member. That faculty member directed me to another, who directed me to the teaching practice coordinator. He gave me two names of cooperating teachers whom he thought were reflective of the criteria. I made contact and the second was available for the interview. We made arrangements and I conducted the interview in her classroom at the school where she teaches.

### **Instrumentation**

#### **Interview Schedules**

This study employed five separate interview schedules for the purpose of: (a) gathering information pertinent to the nature, content, and structure of the three pre-service teacher education programs that were studied, (b) ascertaining the perspective of various persons regarding the quality and effectiveness of the program to which they are and were affiliated. The persons who were interviewed were: the directors of the three programs, one teacher educator from each program, five pre-service senior students in each program, one recent graduate in-service teacher from each program, and one cooperating teacher representing each program.

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended with pre-arranged questions. This was done to maximize comparability across the three programs and to allow each interviewee the opportunity to respond to the same questions. In this way, the possibility

of extracting more or less information from each person was greatly reduced (Patten, 1990, 2004). The interview questions were pertinent to the interviewees and their areas of focus in the pre-service teacher education programs.

Interview schedules were a maximum 80 minutes in length. The shortest was 20 minutes. I conducted all the interviews at locations that were convenient and familiar to the interviewees. Permission was ascertained from the interviewees for the sessions to be recorded to ensure preservation and accuracy of the information received. All participants agreed and all the sessions were recorded. The relationship between the research questions and the interview questions is shown in Table 5.

#### Documents and Artifacts

Documents are described by Merriam (2001) as an umbrella term that encompasses “a wide range of written, visual, and physical material relevant to the study at hand” (p. 112). In reference to documents and artifacts, Eisner (1998) explains that these documentations are valuable sources of information in qualitative inquiry as they reveal what people will or cannot say. Patton (1990) comments that

program records and documents serve a dual purpose as they are first a basic source of information about program decisions and background, or activities and processes and second, they can give the evaluator ideas about important questions to pursue through more direct observations and interviewing. (p. 233)

In keeping with this knowledge, the researcher therefore needs to identify those documents that are relevant to his/her study and persistently ensure that they are acquired. When selecting documents for research purposes, Merriam (2001) suggests three guidelines that must be borne in mind: (a) the document must contain information

relevant to the study under consideration, (b) the documents can be obtained, and (c) the documents are authentic and accurate.

Documents that were used for this study constituted program handbooks, program development material, field experience handbooks, curriculum documents, and State and Joint Board Regulations.

Table 5

*Table of Specification Showing Relationship Between Research Questions and Interview Schedules*

| Interview Items      | Research Questions |                 |                 |               |                |                  |              |              |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                      | Components<br>1    | Assessment<br>2 | Curriculum<br>3 | Graduate<br>4 | Practicum<br>5 | Partnership<br>6 | Faculty<br>7 | Program<br>8 |
| Program Directors    | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5      | 8               |                 |               |                | 6                | 7            |              |
| Teacher Educators    |                    | 6               | 1, 2            | 3             | 5              |                  | 4            |              |
| Senior Students      |                    | 6               | 7               | 4             |                |                  | 5            | 1, 2, 3      |
| Graduate Teachers    | 3, 4               |                 |                 | 1             | 2              |                  |              |              |
| Cooperating Teachers |                    |                 |                 |               | 1, 3, 4, 5     | 1, 2,            |              |              |

### **Data-Collection Procedure**

Access to the research sites was ascertained from the institution's administrators through written requests. Permission was requested to study their pre-service teacher

education program. Written requests were made of each participant in these programs, and their agreement was ascertained before they were asked to respond to interview schedules.

Permission was sought from the Ministry of Education in Jamaica, the Joint Board of Teacher Education, as well as the college, for the teacher education program to be studied. For the private institution (NCU), permission was sought from the administration. From Michigan, I sought permission through the University Human Subjects Review Committee of Eastern Michigan University. I was requested to submit an application that included a copy of the dissertation proposal.

Having ascertained those privileges, an application was made to Andrews University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for authorization to continue the research process. On receiving the permission from the IRB, I proceeded to make arrangements to conduct data collection following the steps outlined above.

### **Data Analysis**

All interviews were electronically recorded. Following this, I mechanically transcribed all questions and responses verbatim. This was a difficult process, as there were times when a word was not clearly pronounced. For clarity and to ensure reliability I went through the interviews as often as was necessary. In instances when I could not decipher a word, I sought help from friends. Each interview was then typed and saved electronically.

Data were organized according to institutions and categories of persons in the institutions. This means each interview was treated separately. Following that, they were

organized according to the various areas of pre-service teacher education that were represented by the research questions. From this, eight categories were derived.

In order to answer each research question, the responses to the items from the various persons in these categories were then analyzed for related and unrelated themes. The themes that were identified for each research question/category were discussed and compared with relevant literature. I conducted a cross-case analysis of the responses from the three institutions, then I summarized my findings, and made conclusive statements and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 described the research methods used in this dissertation. It gave a description of the general procedure that was followed in order to realize this development. The research design, inclusive of the methods and features of qualitative research which provided the basis for the development, was discussed. The targeted population, sampling techniques, and procedures were presented and explained. Instrumentation, covering documents and artifacts, data collection procedure and analysis, concluded the presentation of the methodology.

## CHAPTER 4

### NORTHERN CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY: “WHERE NATURE AND REVELATION UNITE IN EDUCATION”

*A society’s ability to foster new skills, new concepts and  
new patterns of learning depends heavily on its ability  
to renew educational institutions and practices.*

—Daniel Keating

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of Northern Caribbean University, which includes a brief history of the development of the institution, its educational philosophy, mission, vision, objectives, and the contemporary teacher education program in operation. The chapter also provides a presentation and analysis of the interviewees’ perception of the teacher education program in response to the eight research questions that guided the study.

During the pre-emancipation period of Jamaica’s history, no provision for the education of slaves was made. Affluent Whites were sent to England where they received superior education; poor Whites were privately tutored, whereas Blacks who were considered intellectually inferior were kept ignorant for fear of their becoming rebellious (Gordon & Augier, 1962).

The Emancipation Act of August 1, 1838, heralded the beginning of a critical and significant period in the lives of Jamaican slaves. “The Great Day of New Beginnings for

Slaves” (Francis, 1984), as it was called, allowed them to transition from a life of subordination to freedom, but not without a plethora of challenges. Being uneducated without security or income, the slaves were to chart their own ‘sustainable’ development mainly through farming.

In this early post-emancipation period, the government failed to organize education for the newly freed slaves. The missionaries, who had already begun to provide religious education, used this opportunity to “indoctrinate and brainwash” them into becoming their own good Christian converts (Francis, 1984). Attempts were made by the government to remedy the situation, by making suggestions and recommendations that they hoped would secure efficiency in education. This was met with failure. There were also additional challenges from the adverse economic conditions, which forced retrenchment in the already weak system. The need for an improved quality of education for the Negro race was evident.

During the latter part of this post-emancipation period, the Seventh-day Adventist church was established in Jamaica. The rapid growth of this new religious denomination led to the stark realization that public schools, although they were supported by the government, were supervised by different denominations, in whose church buildings the schools were housed. The result of this was that religious ideologies were being perpetuated with strong competition among the different groups. The Seventh-day Adventist Church saw the need to develop an educational system of its own, to allow its children free right of expression without reprisals, preserve their identity, train workers for the church, and provide stability for the rapidly growing congregants.

### **A Brief History of Northern Caribbean University**

West Indian Training College was one of the schools born out of this need. It was founded in 1907 and was the first secondary school to be organized for the purpose of training workers for the entire Caribbean region. The features of the school indicated its nature, purpose, curriculum, and thrust. Young Seventh-day Adventists were to be provided with an education of the head, the hand, and the heart. The curriculum emphasized mathematics, Bible, history, bookkeeping, physiology, organ, and English. Because industry was an integral part of the school's philosophy, students were taught to work with their hands.

As a result of economic and medical challenges, West Indian Training College was forced to close, but reopened in 1919 as West Indies College at its present site in Mandeville, Jamaica. The college grew tremendously from junior college to senior college status in the late 1950s because of the great demand that the church had for a more qualified workforce. In June 1999, with the receipt of a government charter from the University Council of Jamaica and accreditation from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the college became Northern Caribbean University (Northern Caribbean University, 2004-2006).

Presently, the University operates through six divisions/colleges: Business and Continuing Education, Graduate Education and Leadership, Education and Behavioral Sciences, Arts and General Studies, Religion and Theology, and Natural and Applied Sciences. Undergraduate degrees are offered in English, Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Education, History, Mass Communication, Music, Religion, Biology Education, Biology, Biochemistry, Business, Counseling Psychology, Nursing,



Information Science, Mathematics, Medical Technology, and Geography. Graduate degrees range from Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology and Public Health, Master of Science in Counseling Psychology, and Master of Business in Administration, to doctoral degrees in Education and Religion.

The University is proud of its main library collection, which has been increasing significantly. The holdings now stand at 210,859. Since achieving university status, the institution has increased from an average student enrollment of 1,200 to a current enrollment of over 5,000. In keeping with this level of growth, the faculty employment has had to be increased also. Presently there are in excess of 200 members.

#### The Philosophy

Northern Caribbean University was founded on the educational principles of scripture and the philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As recorded in the *Third Annual Calendar* (West Indian Training College, 1921-1922), the aim of the West Indian Training school was very clear from the early beginning:

As character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings, the purpose of the West Indian Training School is to lay a solid foundation for a Christian character and to give young people a broad symmetrical training for usefulness. The school is owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination; and therefore its chief object is a preparation for immediate service in giving the gospel to all the world in this generation. (p. 7)

In this regard, the school purported that the teachings of the Bible should have direct bearing on the development of human beings in all spheres of life. The philosophy of Ellen White, who was highly recognized as one of the patriarchs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, strongly influenced the principles of the school. She exemplifies what

she believes is the true essence of Christian education, which should seek not only to transform but to restore and redeem.

Nature should play a vital role in the restoration of God's image in man, hence the school's location away from the influences of commercial life, and practical manual labor being an integral part of the educational process. The study of the Bible should be given a prominent place in the development of the curriculum as God is the source of all wisdom and knowledge.

The University, in embracing this philosophy that epitomizes holistic education, seeks therefore to take all of the individual's faculties into consideration, hence engaging all students in both a redemptive as well as an educative process. White (1902) says:

True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study, it means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come. (p. 13)

Within the context of Christian faith and learning, the University, therefore, leads students to relate their academic pursuits to the Christian faith. They are encouraged to be involved in the pursuit of that which is true, good, and noble through discovery, research, interaction with the community, professors and fellow students, and through their own personal reflection.

Students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to become critical thinkers and change agents in their dynamic societies. Based on my personal experience and exposure to education at Northern Caribbean University, the school has certainly left an indelible mark on me through its purposeful student-oriented environment. The impact

of this student-centered environment has been felt from the very early days. Reid (1930) expressed his appreciation in this way:

I must truly say that words would fail me to express my appreciation of the work the West Indian Training College has done for me and what it is doing for others. I have spent four years in the college and nothing can destroy the living germ of all round knowledge that has been injected in me. (p. 7)

Through their dynamic educational pursuits embellished with the Christian philosophy, students are expected to be flexible and intelligent enough to respond to the changing demographics and technological advancement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Northern Caribbean University, 2004-2006).

### The Mission

An organization or institution's focus is usually declared in the mission or vision statements.

Northern Caribbean University, a Seventh-day Adventist institution, has as its mission, quality, Christ-centered education achieved through academic excellence, social interaction, physical and spiritual development, and a strong work ethic, thereby fitting each person for committed professional service to country and to God (Northern Caribbean University, 2004-2006).

### The Objectives

The University's objectives are the tenets through which it strives to achieve its mission. With students' education being the central theme, the following operative words form the core of the major objectives: lead, guide, engender, inspire, develop, train, instill, provide, and enable.

At the end, students will have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, live a life of selfless service, demonstrate intellectual excellence, show tolerance and respect for the rights of others, reflect high levels of deportment and refinement, show appreciation for nature and that which is beautiful, respect the dignity of labor, be community-oriented, be marketable, and be able to cope with the challenges of a dynamic world (Caribbean University, 2004-2006, p. 4).

### Accrediting Organizations

Northern Caribbean University's academic programs are accredited by three main organizations which are identified below.

1. The Primary and Secondary Teacher Education Diploma Programs are accredited by the Joint Board of Teacher Education, while the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture validates the authenticity of the graduate and undergraduate degree offerings.

2. The undergraduate degrees in Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Primary and Secondary Teacher Education are accredited by the University Council of Jamaica. This is the government's major accrediting organization in Jamaica.

3. The University has received overall accreditation from the international accrediting agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church –The Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA).

### External Linkages

In keeping with their belief in collaboration to strengthen their programs as well as to serve other institutions, the University has established ongoing linkages with

national and international Seventh-day Adventist as well as non-Adventist universities and colleges. They collaborate in research, sharing of information, and the staging of events such as: symposia and conferences, and engage in faculty and student exchanges.

The University's Seventh-day Adventist collaboration includes Andrews University –Michigan; Loma Linda and La Sierra Universities – California; University of Southern Caribbean – Trinidad and Tobago; and Walla Walla College – Washington. The non-Adventist institutions include University of the West Indies and University of Technology – Jamaica; University of Wisconsin – White Water; University of Maryland – Eastern Shore; and Babcock University – Nigeria. Collaboration with Andrews University, University of Wisconsin–White Water, and University of Maryland –Eastern Shore are specifically related to the Department of Education.

#### Student Development

An extensive variety of academic and extra-curricular activities is organized and implemented for students' intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth and development. These are supervised by the Office of Student Development and are planned according to religious life, campus ministries, assemblies, counseling and psychological services, sexual harassment, new student orientation, manual arts, health care, critical incident management, president's round table, University ambassadors, and clubs and societies.

#### **The Contemporary Teacher Education Program at NCU**

As an outgrowth of the general mission of the University and consistent with its broad vision, the College of Teacher Education aims to maximize students' opportunities

for the highest level of service. Embedded in the program's mission are the deeply held convictions that form the frame of reference for the program development: (a) Professionals must be prepared holistically, (b) Training must constitute a careful blend of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills, and (c) Quality service must exemplify the performance of all graduates.

The broad objectives through which these are achieved are outlined in the following seven areas according to the Northern Caribbean University (2004-2006):

1. To provide a standard of educational delivery in the Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary school systems servicing the West Indies Union territories, the Caribbean and the international community.
2. To prepare individuals who will develop a sound philosophy of Christian education, and who will demonstrate the true professional role of the teacher through the infusion and modeling of Christian values and attitudes in their instruction, and through their instruction and servant leadership.
3. To prepare teachers as critical thinkers who possess a deep understanding of the philosophical, sociological and psychological foundations of teaching and learning, and who have the ability to organize the learning environment, in order to facilitate group and individualized learning.
4. To prepare teachers in the science, the art, and the craft of teaching; teachers who will effectively invite those under their care to embrace the relevant content through the effective use of materials, technology, methods and strategies and assessment practices.
5. To prepare individuals as professionals in curriculum and instructional planning, educational evaluation, instructional supervision and administration.
6. To help teachers develop a quest for knowledge as a means of personal professional development, and for increased preparation for the committed service to society.
7. To encourage the active participation and involvement of teachers in the process of social and cultural transformation of the nation. (p. 300)

## Areas of Emphasis

Writing on the preparation of teachers for the nation's schools, Goodlad (1990)

argues:

The context in which schools function, is in a constant state of change and presses in on schools, particularly through those they are designed to serve. In recent years, this has all but overwhelmed schools accustomed to responding to directives but unaccustomed to self-directed renewal. There have been directives to be sure, but so many, so conflicting and often so far afield from daily exigencies that many teachers ill-equipped to begin with have become benumbed. . . . The problem is one of preparing teachers to confront and deal with the daily circumstances of schooling while redesigning their schools. (p. 4)

The educational expectations and challenges of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries are far greater than those of our ancestors. This suggests a greater need for more expertise in teacher preparation. Goleman (1995) warns that changes in society have ensured that teachers will remain a key group in promoting students' understanding of and commitment to active citizenship and also in developing their potential for intellectual curiosity and emotional intelligence. Further, Goleman notes:

It is the kinds and quality of training, education and development opportunities throughout their careers, their own sense of purpose and identity and the cultures in which they work that will influence their own capacity to help students to learn how to learn to succeed in ways that include but go beyond partisan curriculum agendas and competency-based, standardized testing. Teachers are at the cutting edge for they hold the keys to students' self esteem achievement and visions of present and future possibilities for learning, for their sense of citizenship and for their hopes for society, through their values, commitment, knowledge and skills. (p. 45)

In keeping with the variety of expertise needed in the educational arena, the program offerings for the College of Education range from Bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Teacher Education to Diplomas in Early Childhood and Secondary Teacher Education. In addition, there is a certificate in Early Childhood Teacher Education as well as a Minor in Education and Literacy Education.

### Recruitment and Screening

Roth (1996) portends that recruitment, screening, quality preparation, and legitimacy are the four areas of teacher education that are influenced by standards. The identification of standards for recruitment and screening must be endemic to contemporary programs of quality in teacher education, if they are to remain distinct from other programs. The University therefore takes academic qualifications of entrants seriously, and in this regard entry requirements are clearly articulated and adhered to in the selection of prospective candidates.

Those to be matriculated into the degree program must demonstrate qualifications in national or international certification. National certification ranges from Caribbean Examinations Council Examination at the General Proficiency Level, through Vocational School Upper Level to Mature Age Entrance Examination.

For international Certification, candidates must demonstrate satisfactory performance in the Scholastic Aptitude Test or qualifications in the Cambridge or London General Certificate of Education Examination. In addition to these basic matriculation requirements, there are also specific requirements for the major areas of specialization.

### Development of Expertise

Teacher education is expected to develop experts for the teaching profession. Recent studies have confirmed that expertise in teaching is a significant factor in predicting student achievement especially at the K-12 level (Darling-Hammond, 1993, 1998; Ferguson & Brown, 1998; Murnane, 1996). Teachers need to have expert knowledge in the subjects they teach, how students develop and learn, how to teach for



understanding, how to diagnose and correct learning difficulties, how to manage learning environments, and how to handle conflicts that will inevitably arise.

The programs are therefore structured to ensure that prospective teachers acquire expert and professional knowledge in their areas of specialization as well as the skills and dispositions necessary for successful application in the educational arena. This is accomplished through the various segments that form the core of the program requirements.

For the Bachelors Degree in Primary Education, students are expected to complete:

1. 75 semester credits of requirements for the Teaching Components. The subject areas that form the core of the courses for these components include: Language Arts, Primary Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Religious Education, Arts and Craft, and Music.
2. 44 credits for Professional Education. The required courses include: Psychology, Technology, Curriculum Development, Classroom Assessment, Professionalism, School Administration, Educational Research, General Methodology, and the Practicum.
3. A minimum of 43 credits for General Education Requirements. These courses include: Community Service, Computer Science, Personal Finance and Development, Social and Professional Ethics, Health and Physical Education, Foreign Language, and others with a religious foundation.
4. 24-27 credits for content minor. These are to be selected from Art, Computer

Studies, Guidance and Counseling, English Language, French, Geography, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Music, Literacy Education, Religious Education, Science, Social Studies, and Spanish.

The Bachelor of Arts/Science in Secondary Education requires:

1. 93 semester credits of Teaching Components. These include 42 credits of content major, at least 24 credits of content minor, 18 credits of Language Arts, and 6 credit hours of Foreign Language.

The areas for selection of the majors and minors are: Accounts, Business Education, Business Studies, Chemistry, Computer Studies, Guidance and Counseling, English Language, French, Geography, History, Home Economics, Literature, Mathematics, Music Studies, Music, Natural Science, Literacy Education, Religious Education, Secretarial Studies, Social Studies and Spanish.

2. 44 credits of Professional Education Requirements.

3. 43 credits for the General Education Requirements. The courses that constitute the requirements for General and Professional Education are the same as those for the Bachelor's program. The program duration extends over a 4 to 5 year period and is inclusive of the practicum in the final semester.

#### Development of Teaching Skills

Teaching Practicum is the practice portion of the Teacher Education Program, which is a cooperative venture between the college and the schools in which the student teachers are placed. The practicum is divided into two phases. The first phase, regarded as Teaching Practicum 1, is an intermediary activity of the program and is a time for relating theory and practice in order to develop and consolidate competence in teaching.

Opportunities are provided for students to use their knowledge, skills and attitudes in demonstrating their capabilities to cope with the many tasks and problems the teacher encounters in the classroom (Northern Caribbean University, 2004-2006).

To be eligible for Teaching Practicum 1, students must complete successfully Educational Psychology and the equivalent of two semester coverage of the content courses. In addition, they must complete the Teaching Practicum seminar/workshop. In this course, they are exposed to guided preparations for teaching practice, and are allowed to share and analyze their experiences in feedback sessions (Northern Caribbean University, 2004-2006).

Teaching Practicum 2 is the final cooperative venture between the University and the cooperating schools, to provide the student teacher with practice opportunities to develop beginning skills and confidence in teaching. It is the culminating activity of the teacher preparation program, and a time for relating theory and practice in order to develop and consolidate competence in teaching. Opportunities are provided for students to use their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in demonstrating their capabilities to cope with the many tasks and problems the teacher encounters in the classroom (Northern Caribbean University, 2004-2006).

To be eligible for Practicum 2, students must have completed successfully Teaching Practicum 1, 1 year's teaching methodology, and the equivalent of four semesters of content courses. In addition, the practicum seminar/workshop must be successfully completed. In this course, students are provided with the opportunities to engage in guided preparations for their final teaching practice experience. The content coverage includes mastering the development of the unit and lesson plans, understanding

and making interpretations of the curricula of different types of schools, and developing a clear understanding of the role of the teacher in the school and the community, among others (Northern Caribbean University, 2004-2006)

### **Through the Eyes of the Interviewees**

Critical information about Northern Caribbean University's Teacher Education Program was ascertained from interview protocols. Five categories of stakeholders were interviewed. These persons are representatives of the various groups that serve and are served by the College of Education. These representatives include: The Department Chair-administration; Faculty-teacher educators; Senior students-pre-service student body; Graduate teacher-product; Cooperating teacher-community partnership for field experiences.

Each category of persons was asked a different set of questions, although in some instances there were a few questions that overlapped. The number of questions that were asked of each group is as follows: Department Chair-eight; Faculty member-eight; Senior students (focus group)-seven; Teacher graduate-six; and Cooperating teacher-five. The interviews followed a more semi-structured format. Although questions were pre-determined and standardized, allowance was given for probing to be done.

The responses from these open-ended questions allowed for an unbiased explication of the perceptions of those involved, their expectations, understanding, and how they account for and take action in light of the way they are connected to the program. I have examined each question separately according to the various aspects of teacher education that were addressed as I conducted a comparative analysis of the responses of the various stakeholders.

## Program Components

This section documented five questions that were asked relative to structural components that should form the basis of teacher education programs, and how these were organized specifically to develop Northern Caribbean University's program. In light of the administrative nature of the questions, the director of the teacher education program was the sole person from whom direct responses were sought.

*1. What should be the major components of effective pre-service teacher education programs?*

*The director* of the teacher education program felt that there must be three main areas of emphasis in effective teacher education programs. These she identified as the professional component, the content component, and the general education component for the students' "own individual professional development." Each of these areas, she advised, is made up of several courses which together provide the students with a total development package, thus making them "more rounded and effective."

According to her explanation, the professional component addresses the psychology of learning, the content area deals with the students' main areas of concentration—the majors and minors—and the general education addresses their personal development.

In comparison to the requirements for the Joint Board's 3-year diploma in Teacher Education, NCU's program subsumes the Joint Board's Program because of its 4-year duration. Students who require Joint Board's certification are expected to complete examination requirements or they may seek certification through the Teachers' Services Commission organized by the Ministry of Education.

Although a private Christian institution, Northern Caribbean University's (NCU) pre-service teacher education program components are similar in many respects to recommendations in the international literature. In describing the continuum of teacher development, Pines and Seidel (1999) capture the pre-service preparation as the first phase. The program they believe has four areas: liberal arts education, subject matter preparation, professional and pedagogical studies, and internship. These areas are identifiable and comparable in the program structure of NCU.

The answer to the question, How should teachers teach? Cochran-Smith (1991) suggests should be used to inform the content of teacher education. In this regard, therefore, he identifies four bodies of content that seem to respond very favorably to societal and current school needs. These are: curriculum planning, teaching for understanding, inquiry into teaching, and the school as a workplace, areas for which a number of courses have been identified in the NCU program structure.

*2. How is your program structured to reflect these components?*

*The director* explained that the program is structured to reflect an emphasis on the areas that they deem most important and crucial to teacher preparation. These areas are the professional and the content components. A certain number of course credits are allotted to both of these areas, and specific courses are also critical to their completion.

For the general area, the students are exposed to a "broad base as it were, so for example, if history is their specialization, in addition, the students are still given an exposure in a particular course in mathematics and science." The essence, then, is that professional education takes priority over the general education. "A student with a 'C' in a professional or content course would be deemed to have failed that course and would be

required to repeat that particular course. This, she explained, would not be necessary in a general education course.

Darling-Hammond (1998) writes that, of first importance, teachers need to know subject matter very deeply and flexibly, they need to understand child and adolescent development and how to support growth in the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional domain. Teaching in ways that connect with students, Darling-Hammond continues, necessitates an understanding of their cultural, family, and intellectual differences.

For NCU, teacher learning that supports student learning is reflected in the areas they regard as ideally important and crucial to teacher preparation. The professional and the content components that are strongly emphasized are the areas that address the psychology of learning and the students' main areas of concentration – the majors and minors. Subject matter preparation and students' learning seemed to be deeply entrenched in their program requirements.

3. *What is your program vision and how does this influence your program structure?*

Within the context of the vision, which serves as the frame of reference for the school of education and the teacher education program, *the director* stated:

Our teachers must always be on the cutting edge. The teachers that we train, we expect them to be the best, and so we strive to get this out of them. Although they are always growing, we still try to get the best out of them. Presently, language is a problem in the Jamaican society, and because of the Creole interference or the Jamaican language interference, we do not speak the way we need to in the classroom, on the street, or even in our day to day conversations. This affects the students' writing and so we have to see this as a problem. A special curriculum is designed to really help them, because we place great emphasis on language in the general education area.

If teachers are to be the best and remain on the cutting edge, as the director indicated, it seems sensible to suggest that they will develop expertise in their areas of specialization and generally otherwise. Further, this expert knowledge will be evident in the way students' learning and achievement are directed in the K-12 classroom. Recent studies have confirmed that expertise in teaching is a significant factor in predicting student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1993, 1998; Ferguson & Brown, 1998; Murnane, 1996).

In regard to this, teachers need to have expert knowledge in the subjects they teach, how students develop and learn, how to teach for understanding, how to diagnose and correct learning difficulties, how to manage learning environments, and how to handle conflicts that will inevitably arise.

4. *What is the conceptual framework that guides your program?*

*The director* commented: "In reflecting on our individual history, we realize that we have come out of a competitive situation, consequently, whatever we are doing or trying to achieve, the frame through which we have to operate is collaboration. Whether students, faculty or administration, achievement is embedded in collaboration."

In response to reflection and discussion relative to the structure, purpose, and function of the conceptual framework, the director added: "At this time, there is no documented framework, probably in theory, because the three main arms on which we seek to serve are in the areas of community service, research, and teaching, but embedded in that, for this to be achieved must come through collaboration."

A conceptual framework, as described by the National Certification for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), provides direction for programs, courses,



candidate performance, teaching, scholarship, service, and unit accountability. It is supposed to be knowledge-based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit or institutional mission' and must be continuously evaluated. The need for proper documentation of a conceptual framework for the teacher education program at NCU would be rendered urgent in light of structure and contemporary development in effective teacher education. Based on the trends in the structure of teacher education programs, which are representative of high standards, a conceptual framework will undoubtedly provide the kind of support system to which NCATE makes reference.

*5. What strategies do you employ to ensure that your program achieves this goal of collaboration?*

*The director explained that the focus is on small groups and committees that are directed by professors who collaborate for the accomplishment of different projects. She went on to say: "I know I have to find other ways and means because this is really a treadmill, but already everybody is involved in some way or other in these small groups making their contribution to the whole."*

Commenting on the critical role of collaboration in teacher education, McIntyre (1994) stresses that the ultimate goal of encouraging collaboration and establishing partnership is to improve the educational opportunities of school-age children and to improve the initial and continuing preparation of their teachers. It is therefore a praiseworthy feat when school or university personnel can collaborate toward the achievement of goals.

Using collaboration as the main vehicle through which strategic planning and implementation are achieved would definitely place NCU's program in a position that is

well poised for continued growth and expansion. Britzman (1991) counsels that isolation within school structure discourages change and transformation of the environment and the conditions that exist. In unity there is definitely strength.

### Assessment Techniques

This section addressed the matter of assessment and its place in teacher education. Two questions were asked. The first required the program director to identify her assessment techniques, while the professor, the teacher graduate, and the senior students' focus group were asked to identify what in their estimation are suitable assessment techniques for teacher education programs. The responses will be discussed in the order outlined.

*1. What are your assessment techniques?*

*The director* informed me that one of the methods that have been used to ensure quality and maintain standards was external validation. In order to prepare for accreditation, she explained that schools where their graduates are employed were chosen randomly. After this selection, their employers were then asked to provide a critical evaluation of the NCU's teacher education program based on the performance of the graduates who are employed in those schools. The basis for this decision is that "product is determined by quality of process." Further, the director noted: "What we have put out there is our product and that is what the principals are experiencing, therefore this gives them a fair idea of the kind of produce that we are sending out on a yearly basis."

Regarding a systematic way of the process of assessment, she indicated that there was none, but the accreditation process facilitates continuous self-evaluation to maintain standards and keep the administrators "on their toes." Students' performances are

reflected through the grades they received in their special areas of concentration. In order to ensure satisfactory performance, students are advised to choose their focus areas based on their background in the national examination—Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), and or the London-based external examination—General Certification Examination (GCE). These are the main examinations that are used for recruitment and screening of entrants to the program.

2. *What assessment techniques do you think are effective for teacher education programs?*

In terms of assessment for student evaluation, *the professor* favored techniques that facilitate an overall evaluation of the students' achievement. He noted:

Continuous and summative techniques work very well. I also prefer projects or practical assignment over the traditional paper and pencil tests. We must remember, however, that this technique has its place and so I use it alongside or to complement other methods. Field trips and reporting, planning and micro-teaching, projects, portfolio development, individual and group presentations are some of the alternative assessments that I think are effective. These really serve to enhance social and intellectual skills.

*The teacher graduate* was somewhat contemplative before he answered that students must be assessed continuously rather than with a one-shot examination at the end of a semester or term as the case may be. When asked to expand on the response, he went on to say:

You are to be assessed in bits because nobody learns as a whole. You learn things in bits and pieces. So, as you are assessed during the learning process, then it makes it easier for you and learning becomes enjoyable because it takes away the stress of examination. . . . It breaks the barrier of swatting and allows for students to develop more understanding of the material they are expected to learn.

Another method that he believes is effective is a cooperative learning type of assessment. In explaining, he noted that an assignment can be given cooperatively and be

judged on that merit at the end. "There is also individualized assessment which is also very critical," he emphasized at the end.

*The senior students* portended the need for alternative measures of assessment such as: action research in the field/cooperating schools, projects, portfolios, writing in journals, debates, discussions, interviews, and the traditional pen and paper tests and major examinations. They unanimously agreed that these techniques are very relevant and can and should form the main core of the assessment measures in teacher education.

They reported that they had been exposed to a wide variety of assessment techniques in their program at NCU, which they have all found to be effective in the context of learning and achievement. They also emphasized the need for continuous assessment with regular feedback and time for students' reflection, correction, and growth in the areas being tested.

Employing a particular measure of assessment is one thing but ensuring its effectiveness is another. As one student explained:

Although a paper and pencil test is monitory, not everybody works well or can give of their best under such conditions. So it is good for people to be tested in different areas so that they can give of their best in a different assessment outside of the rigors of a pen and paper test.

In discussing the limitations of the traditional paper and pencil tests, one student seemed to look back retrospectively and became somewhat emotional: Her words continue to ring in my head:

I tend to have a phobia for exams, so I do not do well on tests. Although I may get the A's, if the teacher ever knew my experience before that exam, she would never give me that exam. I think though that the type of assessment for students should be dependent on the course that is being assessed, the class that is being assessed, the classroom atmosphere and the condition. The good teacher will be flexible enough to adjust and select the most suitable assessment for the situation. No measure should be cast in stone.

In her discourse, the program director addressed assessment from her administrative platform. She spoke of the importance of having their program operating at a level where it can be validated by the constituency that it serves. Continuous self-evaluation to ensure optimum program level function and operation for accreditation is deemed highly necessary in her estimation.

In comparison, the professor, teacher graduate, and the senior students directed their attention to the principles that should guide student assessment. They agreed that assessment should be: (a) continuous rather than summative, (b) flexible and suitable for the course/content that is being taught, (c) reflective of a variety of alternative measures, and (d) facilitative of feedback and time for reflection, correction, and growth.

Assessment must be used as a measure of accountability. We can therefore contend that if there is accountability, there will be standards by which this accountability is measured. The NCU program director maintains operational standards through constituency evaluation of employees of the program. She believes that if the product is worthwhile, then the process has to be commendable.

Assessment is integral to maintaining standards of performance in teacher education. Standards, Roth (1996) explains, serves the ultimate purpose of providing assurance regarding the qualification of those persons who are teaching in the schools of children and youth.

Tellez (1996) is advocating that assessment must be authentic, which implies that the process is “genuine,” “real,” “uncompromised,” “natural,” or “meaningful.” This information is pertinent for structure in teacher education, while it lends support to the professor, teacher graduate, and student views regarding the principles that should guide

student assessment. He instructs that assessment techniques are authentic according to the degree to which they are meaningful to and helpful for teachers in the exploration of their practices (p. 707). Whatever form assessment takes, whether traditional or alternative, it is important that both paradigms be underpinned by authenticity, primarily in an era when students in general believe they are short-changed.

### Program Curriculum

This section dealt with three questions regarding the content of pre-service teacher education program curriculum and its relationship to the practice of education. The first, which addressed specifically the content of the curriculum, was asked of the teacher education professor, the second was asked of the professor, the teacher graduate, and the senior students' focus group, while the third was asked of the professor only. For the second and third questions, I have examined the professor's response first, followed by the response from the senior students and the teacher graduate.

*1. What should constitute the content of pre-service teacher education curriculum?*

*The professor* seemed rather firm in his conviction when, in response to this question, he stated emphatically that

the content of the curriculum should be relevant to our world today. There should be materials that students would find useful and would be able to use to make meaningful application. The content should be broad-based. It should provide initially the educational foundation from which students can operate. More importantly, it should be content that is relevant that they will find application for as they move out into the world.

Determining relevance necessitated clarity, therefore, when he was asked to give more clarity to his definition of what constitutes relevance, the professor added that

relevance speaks to societal needs. For example, he explained, “as technology advances, there will be a need for individuals who are more apt in that area, and as we learn from time to time what these needs are, we should inform our programs to reflect these needs.”

The professor’s point of view is that the teacher education curriculum content should definitely reflect societal needs with respect to meaningfulness and relevance. The question which comes to mind, however, is, How does this content preparation account for students’ learning and achievement within the context of primary, elementary, or K-12 education? It is wisdom to be conscious of the fact that teachers are trained not just to satisfy workforce demand, but to make a difference in the lives of the children who will inevitably become tomorrow’s leaders. Training must therefore prepare them to influence their students’ lives towards this end.

One of the common complaints about teacher preparation of the past was that it did not adequately prepare teachers for “real life” in the classroom (NCATE, 1999). There was a gap, NCATE says, between theory learned in college courses and practice in P-12 classrooms with most candidates being left to make connections on their own. In this regard, for effective practice, teacher preparation cannot be divorced from classroom life as well as from the societal needs. If that fact is borne in mind, as was indicated, then teacher training will be effective not just at NCU but in other programs as well.

Further, according to Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996), Fullan (1991), Hawley and Evertson (1993), and Joyce and Showers (1995), teachers will eventually lose newly acquired skills, if there is no link between what they learn and what they are asked to do. Again, the importance of this connection.

## *2. How should the pre-service teacher education curriculum be linked*

*to the practice of education?*

*The professor's* response to this question captured the essence of relevance and meaningfulness. His ideas suggested that the curriculum should be so linked to the practice of education that this connection ensures that it is relevant to the society and can be utilized. He emphasized, "Educational practice in today's multicultural society will be very irrelevant and impractical, if it does not address the cultural diversity that exists in the schools."

Although Jamaica is not as multicultural as the United States, the students' socioeconomic background and how this impacts their learning necessitates an understanding by their teachers, if they are ever going to be successful at advancing this learning and achievement in the classroom. Knowledge of students' cultural and/or socioeconomic status is information that will be instructive for those who are to advance their learning and development at the various educational levels.

On account of this notion, Cazden and Mehan (1990) and Comer (1988) have advised that teachers must understand socio-cultural knowledge about children's and adolescents' development, second-language acquisition, how language and culture shape school performance, and educational achievement.

*The students'* ideas on how the curriculum should be linked to the practice of education were very pointed and underscored what the professor suggested. Although only three of the five responded, however, there was a commonality among their responses. The first remarked:

The curriculum must be linked to what is happening in the society and this is where research takes on extreme importance. Students should be taught how to handle the problems they will be facing in the schools and that is why the curriculum should reflect what is happening in the society. I think that is why new subjects are added



to the curriculum on a regular basis, so as the need arises, the curriculum has to be structured so that these needs can be met.

The second agreed:

Yes, I agree. To me there should be a relationship. Students cannot be trained in isolation from what exists on the ground. There should be a link. Also the curriculum is not static, it has to be one that changes as the society changes. So it must be structured to meet the needs of a changing society. The curriculum cannot be going one way and the society going another way. It must be tailored to effectively meet the needs of the society and the students because we are living in a dynamic world that is changing so the curriculum must change also.

The third concurred:

We must ask ourselves when preparing a curriculum—Who am I preparing this for? Is it for university students, or is it to prepare them to function with other students in the wider world? As an educator, you need to ask yourself, where will my teacher students go when they are finished? They are not only going into local schools but also overseas where they will have to deal with different cultural environments so whatever the program that is being prepared, it should be able to fit a global international standard while it allows the teacher to be flexible in whatever situation he finds himself.

A summary of their responses indicated that wise curriculum planning in teacher education has to be simultaneous with the challenges of societal dynamics, changes with respect to educational practice, and the impact of the global market.

*The teacher graduate's* response to the question reflected the same ideas of those of the students and the professor who were asked the same question. He posited that:

The curriculum should be linked where it becomes relevant and true to the real life that the students will be facing in the wider society. It makes no sense to organize a curriculum that is hanging in the air when the candidates are completed. . . . It must be relevant to the development of the individual person, relevant to societal requirements so the students can be normal functioning human beings out there doing their part.

In a paper entitled “Addressing the Disconnect,” where she focused on a conceptual framework for practicing integration in a discipline-based teacher education program, Brown (2004) makes the following relevant statement, which lends support to

the professor,s and the senior students' views regarding the relationship that should exist between the practice of education and the content of the teacher education curriculum:

She commented: Change in teacher training programs is sometimes precipitated by change in the schools' curriculum. Such synchronization is imperative if the preparation of the beginning teacher is to be relevant and useful (p. 34).

### 3. *What is the place of research in teacher education programs?*

The unique place of research in pre-service teacher education was keenly noted in *the professor's* response to this question. His advice was instructive:

In order to make the curriculum relevant to societal needs, the tool that is needed for all of this to be accomplished is research. Teacher education must be built on a knowledge base if it is to survive and maintain any level of prestige in our world today. This knowledge base must come through research. Teachers as well as students must be involved in constant research and reflection.

Without pertinent research in teacher education, the practice will not be adequately informed. If teachers and teacher education are to demand self-respect and the respect of other professionals, including the general public, their preparation must be based on verified knowledge, that is, "knowledge that is held in high regards and informs practice" according to (Newton, 1999, p. 129). Knowledge of this nature must be acquired through research, and devoted to inquiry about the impact of teacher education programs on teachers and their students (Cruickshank, 1990; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000).

### Teacher Graduates

This set of three questions addressed the characteristics that should describe the ideal teacher graduate within the context of those attributes and dispositions that are deemed necessary for effective teaching in the primary, elementary, or K-12 classroom.

The professor was asked the first two questions, while the third was asked of the senior students and the teacher graduate. The responses will be discussed in the order presented.

*1. What characteristics should describe the ideal teacher graduate?*

*The professor* advocated that there should be several characteristics such as: be chemically sound, have a good foundation, be research oriented, possess qualities that would make him/her fit in the society, have good human relations skills, have the ability to cope with stress, be an ideal person who is able to fit into different situations, be proactive, be one who goes out into the society and does not expect the world to provide for him, but instead will go and make things happen.

*2. How do these compare to the characteristics necessary for effective teaching?*

*The professor* continued:

I would say these characteristics would definitely aid effective teaching. It does not necessarily mean that a teacher who possesses all these characteristics would definitely be the best teacher. But my way of thinking is that, it is highly probable that one who cultivates these characteristics would be a more effective or efficient teacher, because he/she would be able to utilize these traits along with his/her professional training to be more effective.

*3. How would you describe an effective teacher?*

*The students* thought this question was intriguing. Although they had individual ideas, some were comparatively similar and this showed the strength of those ideas based on the emphasis they placed on them. I have summarized their responses collectively.

According to them, an effective teacher is: one who can deal with different students at the different classroom levels; a manager; open to learning—will not be afraid to say “I am sorry, I was wrong, or I am not certain what this is, so I will go and research it” will do everything in his power to ensure students understand; will be available to students for counseling, and clarification of lesson content.

One student was very emphatic when he outlined that, in his estimation, an effective teacher is a manager:

To me an effective teacher is one I would describe as a manager, just as how you have to manage your home and your financial affairs, the classroom is the place where you are the manager. You are in charge. You have children's lives in your charge. You have to be prepared for them. You have to be prepared to deal with the problems that come with teaching. You are aware of the different learning styles that you encounter in your classroom and so cater to different styles as they come along. An effective teacher has to be able to cater to all the learning needs of all the children and must ensure that all the children who are entrusted to him/her learn. Regardless of their problem, you are the one that is accountable for their learning. . . . So if no learning takes place, the teacher is not effective.

According to *the teacher graduate*, "An effective teacher plans, organizes and makes the necessary preparation for his class." To be more effective, he adds that the teacher must have tremendous love and concern for the development and advancement of his pupils. The operative words here seem to be planning and organizing, which will be influenced by love and concern for students' development.

When we examine the characteristics of the ideal teacher graduate that were outlined by the professor against those dispositions of the effective teacher identified by the senior students and the teacher graduate, we find interesting similarities. They are in agreement that the ideal teacher must make a difference in the society or in the lives of students. Having good human relations skills is critical for a successful teacher-graduate as well as other interpersonal relationships in the internal as well as external school environment. Having love and concern for students' welfare necessitates providing a stable, comfortable, and relaxing psychosocial environment during which learning can take place.

Planning and organizing are two other teaching skills that were identified by the groups. Whether in a private or public industrial organization, in an administrative office

or in the classroom, planning is critical to the achievement of goals. If the teacher is to cater to all the learning needs of his/her students, certainly planning purposefully and intentionally would have to characterize his/her classroom pedagogy.

Good teachers are lifelong learners, and they usually teach their students how to acquire, construct, and use knowledge to their advantage. They facilitate learning rather than impart knowledge. The teacher who remains current by making research an integral part of his teaching/learning environment will be more credible and will earn more respect in the eyes of his students than those who are routine and unaware.

Most, if not all, literature on effective teaching seems to agree that knowledge of children and their learning styles, subject matter, pedagogy and instructional strategies, with the right disposition, are all essential to classroom success. From the perspective of Reynolds (1992) the competent beginning teacher has three phases of teaching activity: These all bear resemblance to the quality dispositions that are outlined by the students and the professor: “pre-active, interactive, and post-active.” Each phase is described below.

#### Pre-active:

Competent teachers create lessons that enable students to connect what they know to new information. In order to create good lessons, teachers must know their subject matter in a way that allows them to tailor the subject matter, curricular materials and instructional activities to the students. (p. 10)

#### Interactive Phase:

Competent teachers create classrooms in which students want to learn. They develop empathy, rapport, and personal interactions with students. They maximize time spent actively engaged in worthwhile academic activities and minimize time spent waiting for activities to get started. . . . They find ways to establish and maintain rules and routines that are fair and appropriate to students. They use appropriate ways to represent and present subject matter; these ways range from teacher directed to student directed. They assess student needs and adapt instruction

to meet these needs. They maintain consistent accountability procedures of all students' progress with interventions to student learning. (pp. 23-24)

During the post-active phase, "Competent teachers evaluate their own teaching effectiveness by reflecting on their own actions and student responses in order to improve their practice" (p. 25). Reynolds (1992) further suggests that as a corollary to these standards, the beginning teacher should enter the classroom well armed with:

1. knowledge of the subject matter they will teach;
2. the disposition to acquire information about their students and their school and the ethnographic and analytic skills to do so;
3. knowledge of strategies, techniques and tools for creating and sustaining a learning community and skills and abilities to employ these strategies, and techniques and tools;
4. knowledge of pedagogy appropriate for the content area they will teach and the disposition to reflect on their own actions and students' responses in order to improve their teaching and strategies and tools for doing so. (pp. 25-26)

### Field Experiences

This section examined the organization and importance of field experiences in teacher education. Eight questions were asked. The professor was asked the first, the cooperating teacher was asked the second and the third, the professor and the cooperating teacher were asked the fourth, the senior students were asked the fifth, and the teacher graduate was asked the sixth, seventh, and eighth questions. The responses will be discussed in the chronological order.

*1. How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher?*

*The professor* began his response by saying: "The practicum is structured to give each student an opportunity to practice within their content area. The teaching assignments, therefore, have to be carried out in their areas of specialization."

This limited and brief response from the professor did not adequately address the question regarding how the field experience should be structured to ensure that students receive maximum benefits from their participation. In an effort to shed more light on the issue, he further explained that at NCU there is collaboration between the cooperating schools and the University, although the relationship within their context is not at the highest level of cordiality at present. He commented on the challenge that exists:

There seems to be a perennial problem that sometimes gets to the classroom, however, resulting in students not being given the level of support or cooperation that they need. But this is an area that has given us some amount of concern. We presently have some definite plans at the university level which we hope that having implemented, the bond between the university and those schools will be strengthened and the level of support and cooperation needed will be given.

*The professor* reiterated that collaboration will certainly serve as the needed bridge to pave the way for both entities to blend for a successful practice. The absence of a cordial and cohesive relationship will encourage neglect, apathy, and lack of commitment among those who must be instrumental in forming this bond.

He further stated that:

Schools are sometimes not receptive of students as they ought to be, and understandably so. It is also an encroachment on the schools, program and teachers are not so keen on giving up their classes especially when they are preparing students for examinations. We have a program where we get all the cooperating teachers on campus for a few days to advance collaboration and understanding. In the long run this can only be of great benefit to the students.

As a longtime proponent of site-based, university-school collaboration, Goodlad (1984) advocates that a renewal of schools and the education of educators are possible through an organic or symbiotic collaboration between universities and schools as equal partners. The focus then must be on ensuring that this relationship is duly established in consideration of the tremendous role that colleges, universities, and practicing schools

have to play in the training of teachers. All these entities, however, must recognize and accept their important place in this community of teaching, learning, and training.

*2. How should cooperating teachers be chosen?*

*The cooperating teacher* suggested that cooperating teachers should be chosen on the basis of experience and training. He does not believe that persons who are not trained teachers should be allowed to operate in that capacity. Botnarescue and Machado (2001) suggest that expertise must be one of the criteria for their selection. The students' success, to a great extent it seems, therefore, will depend on the behaviors that cooperating teachers display and the process and content of the feedback they provide to the student teacher.

Having untrained and inexperienced teachers operating in this capacity may definitely not be a sensible decision considering the extent of the ripple effect. The lives of K-12 students, the teachers, the program, the community as well as the entire nation will feel the impact sooner or later. That being the case, it is advisable that the best course of action is followed and cooperating teachers are intelligently chosen.

*3. What are the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher?*

*The cooperating teacher* identified three responsibilities in his response to this question. They are: to ensure that the assigned teacher trainee is comfortable in his/her position, to ensure that all the stated objectives to be completed within a certain time frame for the curriculum at hand are noted to the trainee, and to supervise and assess the trainee to ensure that a true feedback can be given to the University.

In comparison to these responsibilities, Blair and Jones (1998) identify 10 responsibilities of the cooperating or supervising teacher. These are:



becoming familiar with the student teacher's background and introduce him or her to the school, orients the teacher to the philosophy, curriculum and school policies, informs teacher regarding students' cultural and academic background, meets regularly for lesson planning while modeling lessons in content areas, assists teacher in developing classroom management techniques, provides expert supervision, evaluates students' performance and encourage student teachers to attend conferences which will stimulate growth and development. (p. 23)

If these recommendations are considered and communicated to cooperating school personnel, they will certainly provide a frame of reference from which one can begin to plan a teaching practice program that will enhance the process of reflection and analysis.

4. *How long do you think teachers should remain in the classroom before they are eligible to function as cooperating teachers?*

*The professor* was very cautious in his response to this question. "Individuals mature at different rates," he said, "so I would not want to suggest a specific time period. I think however that a teacher should gain some amount of experience first, which will allow him/her to be able to assist the student teacher adequately."

*The cooperating teacher* took a philosophical stance in responding to this question. I was fascinated as he outlined that:

this has nothing to do with time, although there may be an element of it. I believe it has more to do with understanding those elements and developing those skills that are essential to what makes for good teaching. As a complement to that end, the teacher must be able to demonstrate these skills in his own practice and possess the ability to transmit them to others without making a carbon copy of himself.

I totally agree with both responses as I think they were thoughtful, commendable, and quite instructive. Good educators do not strive to reproduce themselves in their students; instead, in recognition of students' uniqueness and individuality, they encourage

and provide support for these differences through the kinds of learning environments that are suitable for each student to realize his fullest potential.

Both the professor and the cooperating teacher complemented each other on the point that the number of years of classroom teaching does not actually determine suitability for assuming the responsible position of being a cooperating teacher. On the other hand, gaining experience, developing and demonstrating an understanding of the skills essential to good teaching, and having the ability to assist student teachers to inculcate those skills are the commendable attributes that they have embraced.

A point that warrants emphasizing is that the effective cooperating teacher will not make the student teacher into a carbon copy of himself. Rather, he/she will recognize and encourage individuality and development of competence within the context of those skills that characterize effective teaching.

5. *What is the most important part of your training?*

Of the five senior students in the group, three regarded the practicum as the most important aspect of their training. These students felt that the practicum gave them the opportunity to experience the real world. Although the other courses are important, without the practicum, they felt they would not have been able to make the necessary transfer of learning. One student said, "It is like your baptism of fire. Yes, you want to be a teacher, but when you are faced with what it is that makes you into becoming a teacher, you will be able to make it or break it."

For one student, self-development was the most important part of his training. He believes that in reading for the degree, he has developed what he described as a

“vocabulary burst.” As a result of this experience, he now has the ability to communicate at all levels.

Relationship was high on *another student’s* list of priorities. She will continue to treasure the relationship she had with her professors. The way they prepared them was commendable. Most of their classes gave them the opportunity to make presentations, coordinate projects, and to work together as a team. Cooperative learning seemed to have been high on the methodology chart of many of their professors.

As a matter of fact in applauding their level of competence, one student exclaimed: “The education professors here at NCU are simply the best. They are so very practical in their approach. I understand that most of them have been teachers in the public schools before they came to NCU.”

So the emphasis was placed first of all on the practicum as the most important aspect of the students’ training because it afforded them the opportunity to make the transition from theory to practice, then the development of oneself professionally, followed by relationship between professors and students. Although only one of the five students felt that her relationship with her professors was very important in her training, all the others underscored her point that the professors at NCU demonstrated a level of competence in their instructive skills, indicative of their involvement in the teaching learning environment at the primary and secondary levels. This fact merits commendation.

*6. How did your field experience help you to develop the skills relevant to effective teaching?*

*The teacher graduate* explained that the practicum provided the opportunity for him to implement some of the teaching methodologies he had learned during his program. He was able to examine individual differences within his students more closely, and this resulted in a renewed drive to try some strategies with which he was not totally familiar and to see the effect of those in his classroom.

If practicum experiences are to be of any value to students, however, they must be well planned, properly supervised, and must be linked to the internal as well as the external aspect of the program. The practicum cannot be an entity totally divorced from the rest of the program. It must be regarded as the culminating activity that facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills in an organized and suitable practical environment.

For the best results in the practicum experience, Goodlad (1990) cautions that teacher education must be linked closely with teaching practice, especially in restructured school settings. . . . The loose relationship between teacher education programs and public schools makes the student teaching experience irrelevant at best; at worst, it reinforces the status quo in teaching and begins the process of convincing new teachers to leave the professions. (p. 6)

I am certain that our motive is not to have teachers use their training as a stepping stone to other professions, but rather to have them remain in the classroom and continue to mature into excellent teachers and administrators.

7. *How did your training influence the development of these skills?*

*The teacher graduate* remarked:

Well, like any other skills, if you did not get the training, you would not be able to apply certain skill areas, so getting the training widens your horizon and makes you better able to implement the new methodologies and technology that have been advanced at the college. . . . The training, especially in the aspect of psychology, also allows you to see and analyze human behavior. As a result of that exposure you are able to a great extent to address the emotional needs of your students.

Regardless of the occupation, it is as a result of training that certain attitudes, professional skills, and expertise will be inculcated and developed. It is also training with experience that will facilitate the effective application of these attributes.

8. *How long do you think students should be required to practice before they are certified?*

To this question *the teacher graduate* answered: “In my opinion, a teacher trainee should be trained for at least an entire school year in practice with a teacher before he is certified.” At least a year, according to his explanation, will allow him/her to begin a process of maturation. He made a comparison to other professions like medicine, for example, where residency is 3 years, during which time the trainee is expected to develop the necessary and/or basic medical skills to become a more rounded person.

I note the need for the process of maturation in the development of expertise in the teaching/learning environment to begin. This does not seem altogether possible outside of the teacher’s involvement with students in the learning environment. Although knowledge can be constructed through research, insofar as effective teaching skills will be developed, interaction in the classroom with students specific to the teacher’s area of specialization has to be a necessity.

#### University/College–Cooperating School Relationship

In this section, I have examined the director and the cooperating teacher’s response to the question of relationship between cooperating school and university/college. Only one question was asked of these persons.

1. *What relationship (if any) do you think should exist between the university college and the practicing/cooperating school?*

From *the director's* point of view, the relationship between both ought to be close. In commenting, she said:

To go out into the schools and use their facilities, have our students practice in their schools is not enough. We are therefore seeking ways of building and cementing the relationship between the teacher and the principals in the particular schools. Already we have started on that but it ought to be a closer relationship to ensure their own professional development, the university's contribution to their development and for the total development of the nation and especially the communities that we serve and the students within those communities.

*The cooperating teacher* advocated for a relationship that would allow both himself and the University supervisor to work closely for the success of the student teacher. Regarding the establishment of this relationship, he argued that the University, through the supervisor, needs to take the initiative to begin the conversational process. "If the students are to succeed in their practice, this collaborative relationship must be prioritized," he emphasized.

Their points underscored each other. There cannot be strength in the practice without a unified relationship between the school and the university. Unity suggests working together closely and purposefully toward a common goal for a common good.

Therefore, the university/college and the practicing school partnership is necessary for the successful improvement of teacher education and ultimately the education of students. However, as McIntyre (1994) reiterates, working together toward a common goal requires much planning, commitment, and effort. The onus is on the university/college, as the cooperating teacher suggested, to take the initiative in strategic planning and collaborative endeavor to establish this partnership that will allow for a successful practice.

## Teacher Educators

This section examined the criteria for faculty selection as well as the characteristics that should describe these persons who form the backbone of the teacher education program. The director, the professor, and the senior students were questioned. The director's criteria for selecting faculty will be compared against the professor and the senior students' characteristics of the ideal teacher educator. The responses will be discussed in the order outlined.

*1. What criteria do you use to select faculty for your program?*

*The director* explained: "Emphasis is placed first of all on the need, which allows the qualification requirement to be identified within that context." She further added that for teacher education, the key component in making decisions on faculty employment is experience in teaching/learning and/or pedagogical courses. This suggests that after the special need is identified, those who will be employed are those who have teaching experience at the primary, elementary, or K-12 levels.

*2. What is your profile of the ideal teacher educator?*

*The professor's* description of the ideal faculty was rather brief and specific. "This individual must be properly trained," he said, "and is not satisfied with the level of training he/she has acquired. As such, he is willing to move on to broaden his/her scope. One who is prepared to make a positive impact on the lives of those with whom he comes in contact."

The tone of this response suggests that the teacher educator must be a lifelong learner. One has to agree that, to remain on the cutting edge of technology, research, and information relevant to teacher preparation, the teacher educator must see the need to

constantly upgrade his/her skills. After all, education is as dynamic as the society in which we live, and knowledge can definitely become obsolete.

3. *How would you describe an effective teacher educator?*

I was very keenly interested in the response that *the students* would give to this question. First, because of my 11-year career as a teacher educator, and second, as a result of this connection, I am knowledgeable of some of the various concerns that students have regarding their lecturers. Some of these, although negative and condemning, have the potential to awaken in teacher educators the need for self-evaluation and reflection in light of our expectations of our students and the standards that are set for them.

From examining all their responses, I have concluded that they have placed a high premium on their professors/lecturers. From their perspectives, teacher educators hold a very prestigious position in the teacher education community, hence are expected to operate as befits this level at all times. Their aptitude and attitude in terms of classroom delivery, student-teacher relationship, knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, classroom experience, research involvement, and practicum supervision and advisement were strongly and thoroughly examined and criticized.

All the students were of the opinion that the teacher educator should be extremely knowledgeable in his/her area of specialization. In addition, they believe he/she must be aware of world news events as they relate to education in general and teacher education specifically. In light of this, one student remarked: "First of all, I expect the teacher to be an erudite, I expect him to have a vast amount of knowledge." Another student emphasized, "The knowledge must not be redundant or obsolete. Instead, it must be



current and relevant, bearing in mind that the students of today's classrooms are different from those of 5 or 10 years ago."

The extent to which they revere this knowledge was clearly felt when one student said: "The educator should be so knowledgeable that we are in awe, we are inspired, we are just sitting at his feet and grasping everything as if we cannot be satisfied because of the vast repository of knowledge that he possesses." Another said,

For me, the teacher educator has to be a person who is always grasping for knowledge or is always learning. He has to be a person whose degree is not outdated by some 10, 15 or 20 years. Learning never ends, so you have to be current with all the best practices, the new innovations that are taking place, new books written, different languages being spoken and used. For some fields, there are specific terminologies; the teacher educator must be made aware, must be current with all the jargon in the field and the knowledge, the new information. You must stay current within the information age.

To introduce another dimension to the knowledge base of the teacher educator, another student interjected: "I totally agree with my colleagues. The teacher educator should be well rounded, not only in the area that he/she teaches, but in just about all aspects—the arts, whatever, so that whenever a student has a problem, you can go to that teacher and she would be able to impart something to you as a teacher educator."

Although the director, the professor, and the students concurred that teacher educators must be well trained, it is interesting to note that the students emphasized an expert, current, knowledge-base as a very crucial characteristic. One of the identifying marks of a profession is an expert knowledge-base acquired through training, research, and experience. In light of this, it is therefore neither irrational nor outrageous to expect no less a standard of excellence from those who form the backbone of the teaching profession. Those who teach the teachers how to teach must themselves know how to teach.

In my dialogue with pre-service teacher education students over the years that I have been a teacher educator, one of their concerns usually centers on the issue of classroom delivery. Students expect their lecturers to be role models in the teaching/learning environment. In other words, they want their lecturers to live what they preach. It has always been so very disconcerting to hear students complain that their lecturers do not teach using any pedagogical skills that can be emulated, yet they expect them to be extremely adept during their practicum.

They usually remark, “These same lecturers who themselves do not employ any form of instructional dexterity in their classroom presentations are the same ones who supervise us on teaching practice and who expect us to use a variety of instructional materials and strategies to work wonders in our classrooms.” This for them is totally unfair, and unacceptable, and represents a sense of inadequacy on the part of the supervisor.

“The teacher educator must be a teacher himself,” advises one student. “And he must be someone who is quite familiar with the school system, and must have taught in one or more of those secondary or primary/elementary schools. At some point in his delivery, he must model some of the characteristics of good teaching to include being a prolific writer, an avid reader, and an ardent researcher.”

It is not a coincidence that Orlofsky (2001) contends that the time has come for a redefinition of pre-service teacher education. She writes:

As educators we should make it our business to train individuals who won't be afraid to take risks, make transfers, search their value systems, hone their communication and management skills, and be models of competence in thinking and learning. However, we can teach this way only if we exhibit these traits in our own classroom pedagogy. (p. 4)

In commenting on the need for teacher educators to be involved in research, Holmesland and Tarrou (2001) advise that “teaching based on one’s own research findings rather than on knowledge produced by others provides teacher educators with a major source of richness” (p. 69). Undoubtedly, this richness augers well for competence, credibility, and prestige.

One of Koster, Korthagen, and Wubbels’s (1998) seven functions of teacher educators is to be a researcher. Teacher educators have to contribute to the codification and hence the extension of a body of knowledge by engaging in continuous research. In an interview with one teacher educator regarding the perception of his role in this context, the writers recorded the very astute response:

I can affect the quality of teaching by imparting what I know to people who are to be teachers, or I can conduct research so that I can learn more about instruction. I see the research that I do as fundamental to teacher education as the courses I teach. (p. 79)

It is wise however to note that in “A Guide to College Programs in Teacher Preparation,” NCATE (1995b) suggested two basic questions that will serve as a guide in the evaluation of suitable teacher education faculty for those who are making decisions regarding teacher education programs:

1. Is the teacher at the school site where student teaching/internship takes place provided with training by the college or university? Are there any mentor teachers from the P-12 school site that serve as adjunct professors at the university and teach or co-teach courses that the candidates take?

2. Are faculty members qualified to hold their positions? How many have doctorates? How many have current or recent (past 5 years) P-12 school experience? Do

the faculty who are involved in clinical education and methods courses have a current or recent P-12 teaching experience?

### Program Effectiveness

These three questions required the senior students to reflect on their overall training experience in respect to their expectations and make a critical assessment of their program in terms of what they had already achieved.

1. *What are your expectations of a teacher education program?*

*The students* were very clear on what they expected of a pre-service teacher education program. The following represents an overview of their expectations: basic global knowledge, not just textbook related, but practical, and in relation to the real world; many months of practicum experience in real classrooms; requisite knowledge suitable for addressing students' needs at the various levels; knowledge that will be useful for successful operation in the society, knowledge that will allow them to cope with the challenges of today's schools.

It is logical that teachers are inclusive in their thoughts as they prepare for the students in the teaching learning environment. As one of the students in the group explained, "I expect to be equipped with the requisite knowledge that will ensure that I am able to deal with students at different levels, to communicate with them as well as reach their affective side."

It seems reasonable therefore to recommend that if education is to make an impact, the emphasis must be learner centered. How teachers teach ought to be related to how children learn. That knowledge would lead to wise curriculum planning, which

would encompass teaching for understanding, research into teaching, and the context within which this teaching and learning occur.

In addition, Darling-Hammond (1999) advises that teaching in ways that connect with students also requires an understanding of differences that may arise from culture, family experiences, developed intelligences, and approaches to learning. Teachers need to inquire sensitively, listen carefully, and look thoughtfully at students' work.

2. *How has this program met and is meeting those needs?*

"There is no doubt," noted *one student*, "that we have been given the requisite skills and knowledge to operate in the society." "We have learnt," he continued, "how to deal with the psychological aspects in addition to the problems we will face in the classroom." Another student remarked that

the wide varieties of courses to which I have been exposed, and especially the psychology courses, have been tremendous. Because you are dealing with students, you have to understand their make up, what is expected of them, why they will or will not learn and the barriers that that they face.

In support of her colleague, another group member added:

As my colleague has said, the courses that we do here have really prepared us for the world of work. In my capacity as a primary school teacher, I usually teach in the upper grades, now because of the exposure here, especially the reading courses; I can now teach in special education, primary, pre-primary and even secondary.

This student could hardly wait to extol the virtues of her program. She stated proudly:

NCU's program has met my expectations in such a way because of the experiences you get here. For example in your third year, you have to go out into the schools for 3 weeks and then in your fourth year, you are expected to go out for 12 weeks or 3 months. During this time you are assessed on the job as a student teacher and your supervisors are able to see exactly what is happening out there in the classroom environment. On returning to the classroom, there is feedback program which allows you, the student, to reflect on your experiences, while the professor makes

plans for your improvement based on the problems he encountered. These programs are then used to prepare us for our future practical experiences.

The duration of the practicum was not suitable in one student's estimation, so although he voiced his agreement with the program fulfilling other expectations, he was clearly dissatisfied with the length of the practicum. "Although the program gives time for practice, I believe it could be longer," he suggested. He thoroughly enjoyed the assessment because he was given an idea of how well he was doing. His most interesting moments were when he encountered situations that were not textbook related, and he had to find novel or creative ideas to address them.

According to the students' expectations, NCU's teacher education program has to be highly rated. They agree that they have been adequately trained to go out into the schools and make a difference in the lives of their students. One, however, thinks the practicum experience needs to be extended to facilitate more supervised practice and feedback.

3. *What would you do differently were you the director of the program under which you were trained?*

It was very interesting to listen to the ideas of *the students*. One student would extend the practicum to allow students to have more practice for development of positive attitude and skills. The teacher graduate proposed that one of the things he would do would lead to greater interaction in all aspects of the teachers' training. Psychological theories would be taught in conjunction with practical experiences, rather than as disconnected bits and pieces of information.

### Summary

Chapter 4 presented a brief historical perspective of Northern Caribbean University. It outlined the various tenets upon which the University develops and operates in respect to the philosophy, mission, objectives, accrediting organizations, external connections, and programs for student development. Following this, a description of the contemporary undergraduate teacher education program in operation was outlined.

The chapter concluded with a presentation and analysis of the interviewees' response to the eight research questions which focused on various aspects of pre-service teacher education programs. The program components should be characterized by strong content knowledge, professional development, assessment, general knowledge, and a conceptual framework.

Assessment is important for maintenance of standards, program restructuring, and improvement of the teaching and learning environment. In order to achieve these ends, assessment has to be authentic and should encompass a variety of alternative techniques suitable for the information that is required.

The curriculum ought to be meaningful and relevant to societal needs and challenges in the school systems. It must address diversity issues within the context of a multicultural society and should be founded on accurate research.

Teacher graduates ought to possess action research, good human relations, and planning and organizational skills. They must also have a knowledge of the content that is intimate to their discipline, and a repertoire of such pedagogical skills.

For field experiences to enhance the professional and overall development of prospective teachers, the program has to be characterized by: collaboration between host schools and the university, intelligent choice of cooperating teachers, awareness of the responsibilities of cooperating teachers, suitable placement of students, adequate time for practice, and coherence between field experience and content and pedagogical knowledge.

University-school relationship should reflect close collaboration, open lines of communication, and training for host-school participants. The ideal or effective teacher educators will model instructional techniques, show scholarly research engagement, possess expert current knowledge, and be experienced in K-12 education.

Students expected that their preparatory program would provide them with adequate practice in real classrooms, coherence between theories and practical experiences, knowledge suitable for addressing students' needs at all levels, competent professors who model effective teaching strategies in their classrooms and treat students as individuals, knowledge suitable for addressing students' needs at all levels and to cope with the challenges of today's diverse schools.

The students were generally satisfied that their program was adequate and it prepared them well to function effectively in the schools. They would, however, extend their practicum to allow students more time for development of skills and the teacher graduate would ensure there is a greater connection between psychological courses and practical experiences.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE MICO COLLEGE: 'DO

### IT WITH THY MIGHT'

*Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.*

—Willa A. Foster

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of The Mico College; it includes a brief history of the development of the institution in keeping with its educational philosophy and mission. Other characteristics of the institution are also included, such as the cultural consciousness and academic acuity. There is a description of the college's focus in pre-service teacher education, and finally, the chapter concludes with a presentation and analysis of the interviewees' perception of the pre-service teacher education program.

Teacher training colleges, like large universities, have their own underlying cultures which are entrenched in their value systems, behavioral norms, and organized ceremonies. Together, these rituals serve to maintain and preserve the deep-rooted ideologies of the founding fathers as growth and expansion are realized.

The majority of the Jamaican contingent of teachers is trained initially through either of the country's 11 teacher training colleges which operate under the auspices of the

University of the West Indies, the Joint Board of Teacher Education, and the Ministry of Education. Although programs are standardized and validated through these governing entities, the distinctive and distinguishing norms and values of each teacher training institution will be brought to bear on the implementation of the pre-service teacher education program, resulting in a culture that reflects their individual uniqueness.

Teachers from the different colleges will therefore exhibit behavior patterns and teaching styles that are reflective of their training. It is also important and worthy of mention that some teacher training colleges have a long history in teacher education as well as religious roots, which have also influenced their dominant culture and impacted their training paradigm.

### **A Brief History of The Mico College**

During the 17<sup>th</sup>-century, Moorish piracy, which was rampant, controlled and ravished the waters of the Mediterranean, leaving many families destitute in enslavement. Because there were no organized measures of safety, the plight of future passengers as well as those enslaved seemed rather grim. Acting out of a deep concern for the severe hardship and tremendous suffering of those Christians, whose freedom and rights were being infringed on, Lady Jane Mico, of Great Britain, joined with other benefactors in an effort to secure redemption for the captured, and to address the safety for future travelers of the Mediterranean waters (Packer, in press).

The benevolence of Lady Jane Mico led her to bequeath a substantial amount of £1,000 toward this venture. In 1816, when approximately 3,000 of the slaves were liberated, there was no longer any need for the financial assistance of Lady Mico and her

philanthropist. Consequently, by 1827, what began as £1,000 grew into a significant sum without any decision regarding its further use (Packer, in press).

During this period, a movement which was dedicated to the emancipation of slaves was being spearheaded by the chairman of the Mico Trust. It was then proposed that the Trust could be directed to aid this movement. When this proposal was denied, and the Black slaves were later freed, it was decided that the Trust should be used to finance their education.

Acting on this agreement, the Charity was established on four principles: (a) All schools supported by the Trust should be opened to all children of all denominations, (b) the promotion of education, in general, especially Christian religious education, (c) books of a particular religious group should not be taught in the schools, and (d) no teacher should be employed without proof of his academic competence, religious affiliation, and general character (Packer, in press).

As a result of The Lady Mico's Bequest, the college was established on December 28, 1835, in Kingston, Jamaica, as a *Normal School*, with the assistance of a group of teachers sent from England. Although 300 other Mico Schools were established in the Caribbean during that period, only The Mico College survived. This all-male institution did not accept female students until 1954. During the ensuing years, the college experienced tremendous challenges and changes from governmental control, natural disasters, relocation, and administrative leadership styles. Despite these challenges, however, the college did not lose sight of its mission.

In applauding his alma mater, The Mico College, for the tremendous impact it has had on the growth and development of people and society, the Governor General of

Jamaica, Sir Howard Cooke, an alumnus of Mico, speaking at a ceremony held at the College's Eli Matalon Gymnasium on March 14, 2005, said:

I can definitively say that if researchers and writers were to carefully examine our great Jamaican past, the greatest contributors to the social, economic, ethical and spiritual development of our people were some people called Mico men and women. So the glory of modern Jamaica is the glory of Mico.

The Governor general also told the gathering that there were many lessons to be learned from Mico's history, and pointing to the college's motto, 'Do it with thy might', he said it spoke "clearly to the fact that you have to be definitive in the design of what you want, and having identified the design, you must not deviate" (Cook, 2005).

Today, with 170 years of existence, The Mico College, the oldest teacher training institution in the Western hemisphere, an affiliate of the University of the West Indies, will advance to become The Mico University College in the academic year 2005-2006.

#### 'Do It With Thy Might'

Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, one of the early advocates and leaders of the Abolition of Slaves Movement and the Chairman of the Mico Trustee, penned the following words in an attempt to describe what was to form the philosophical frame of reference for The Mico College:

The longer I live, the more I am certain that the great difference between men, between the feeble and the powerful, the great and insignificant, is Energy, Invincible Determination, a purpose once fixed, and then death or victory. That quality will do anything that can be done in this world; and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities, will make a two-legged creature a man without it.

These words, engraved in stone in the entrance hall of the old Mico building, help to explain the shaping of the psyche of the graduates of this noble institution. Their stalwart strength of purpose and determination, their hallmark, certainly distinguishes

them as worthy Miconians. The principal's address to the 167<sup>th</sup> class of graduates challenges them to reflect on their motto. He asked: "Will you continue to embrace the competitive excellence that epitomizes the Mico spirit?" The Miconians' spirits are fuelled by their motto—"Do it with thy might."

### The Mission

The mission of The Mico College is to offer its students opportunities for academic success and professional advancement through a rich and diverse curriculum and extracurricular activities. Mico recognizes that continued growth can only be assured through its students and staff and, therefore, is committed to:

1. foster scholarship, research, and the development of leadership
2. provide quality education to university level through a rich and varied curriculum
3. the dedication of the advancement of a spiritual, moral, and cultural climate for staff and students to attain the heights of professionalism (The Mico College, 2002-2003).

### Cultural Consciousness

In keeping with its heritage, the college strives to maintain a healthy cultural climate internally with the impact extending to the wider educational arena. To this end, it has therefore been recognized for its tremendous contribution to the stabilization and cultivation of a rich cultural heritage in Jamaica and the Caribbean. Some of these programs are:

1. The Leslie Henriques and Nathan Brissett Competitions, which facilitate the

honing of prospective teachers' talents in speech, drama, and music, while instilling in them an appreciation for the Arts.

2. The Indian, African, and Caribbean Art Museum (INAFCA) and the Museum of Education, which symbolize the plurality of the country's ancestral roots, provide a bridge between the past and the present and also trace the history of educational developments in the Jamaican society.

3. The Science Learning Centre (SCL) provides a centre that gives hands-on experience of scientific principles and also displays the contributions of many Black people to the development of society.

4. The annual staging of Culturama, which is a celebration of cultural richness, features cuisine, folk wisdom, dress, dance, and religious practices.

5. The Nakumbuka Celebrations, provide a ceremonial and symbolic reminder of the Slave Trade and the horrors of the Middle Passage (The Mico College, 2002-2003).

#### Academic Acuity

In an effort to maintain a recognized level of excellence in the academic arena, to provide academic resource to the internal as well as the external community, and to instill in prospective teachers a lifelong learning desire, The Mico College has established connections through:

1. *Mico International Journal*: Through the collaborative efforts of The Mico College and Simon Frazer University in Canada, the *Mico International Journal* was published. The journal seeks to address and engage in discourse regarding the impact of

education at all levels, extending the general and professional knowledge base of prospective teachers.

2. Partnership with Nova Southeastern University of Florida: Providing more facilities for advanced education to the Jamaican community through the offering of masters and doctoral degrees.

3. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) of New Delhi, India: One of the 10 mega-universities in the world, teaching 2 million students at a distance. The principal of The Mico College is the local advisor for the students from Jamaica who have earned post-graduate diplomas in Distance Education.

4. Mico CARE: Child Assessment and Research in Education. The centre is 25 years old. It is a public institution that provides Special Education Services to school-age children with multiple problems that impinge learning. The centre is committed to offering the highest quality diagnostic, and therapeutic intervention services.

5. Museum of Education: In collaboration with the Institute of Jamaica, the Museum of Education was launched at the college.

6. PRIDE: Program and Research Instruction in Distance Education, which seeks to train in-service teachers at a distance. The program gets support from the Commonwealth of Learning of Vancouver, Canada.

7. Caribbean Center of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT): Designed to provide innovative leadership to strengthen reading instruction and increase reading skills in primary students. Other teacher training colleges in Jamaica are involved in this intervention also (The Mico College, 2002-2003).

### **The Mico Focus**

The Mico College was established as a Normal School and developed out of a European education context. In keeping with this paradigm, the institution's purpose was for the development of teaching standards and the training of teachers in primary/elementary education. Consistent with the mission and the motto of the founding fathers, the college's pre-service teacher education program has always sought and still seeks to provide the Jamaican education system with a cadre of competent and dedicated teachers in primary, secondary, and special education.

Maintaining this tradition of excellence, The Mico College, now fully grown and already poised for university accreditation, has six divisions, through which it lays the foundation for prospective teachers to acquire the expert knowledge, disposition, and skills relevant to effective teaching at local, national, regional, and international levels.

These are:

1. Department of Humanities under which falls Physical Education, Visual Arts, Social Studies, and Music Divisions
2. Department of Languages, comprising English and Reading Division and Literacy Education Division
3. Department of Professional Studies, which covers Education and Guidance and Counseling Divisions
4. Department of Science and Technology Education, covering Computer Studies, Industrial Technology, Home Economics, Mathematics, and Science Divisions
5. Department of Special Education
6. The Department of Continuing Studies.



The Mico College is an Affiliate of the University of the West Indies for the Bachelor's of Education in Teacher Education, the cohort being primary and a Bachelor of Science in Special Education. In addition to these programs, the college is now set for the first time since its existence to validate its role and contribution to teacher education in Jamaica by offering its own degree programs. Five of these (Mathematics Education, Heritage Studies, Language and Literacy, Primary and Secondary Education in certain specialized areas) will be at the bachelor's level while the other will be at the master's level.

The pre-service teacher education program is structured as prescribed by the Joint Board of Teacher Education. The program duration is 3 years. At completion, successful students are awarded a diploma in secondary, primary, or special education depending on their major areas of focus.

#### Screening of Entrants

Maintaining standards through institutional focus and quality control is endemic to The Mico College psyche and philosophy. Consequently, requirements for admission to the program as stipulated by the JBTE are strictly adhered to. Prospective students who are desirous of gaining admission to year 1 are expected to show passes in National certification ranging from Caribbean Examinations Council Examination (CXC), Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSC), National Levels 4 and 5; City and Guilds, ULCI, RSA, Royal School of Music, or Trinity College in Musical Performance; First Year Level Technical Courses from an accredited institution; Certificate in Secondary Education of the U.K.; Associated Examining Board (AEB), or other

certification as approved by the Ministry of Education (JBTE Regulations for Teacher Certification)

International candidates with a high-school diploma from an accredited American or Canadian institution will be accepted provided that the passes shown in the transcripts are at the level required for the program the candidate desires to pursue. In addition to the basic qualifications for entry, students are required to satisfy requirements specific to individual departments based on their major areas of study.

Entry to year 2 is restricted to those who have successfully completed year 1 or those who have been given advanced placement as described below. Entry to year 3 is restricted to those who have fully completed the specified program in year 2 and those who have been given advanced placement as described below.

Students are admitted to Advanced Placement in the diploma program on a credit basis. These applicants are given credit for all courses in years 1, 2, and 3 for which they hold approved equivalent qualifications. They are, however, required to complete all the courses in years 1, 2, and 3 for which they have not been granted credit. Advanced Placement is also granted to applicants holding passes at advanced levels in National Examinations (JBTE, 2003).

#### Development of Expertise

The diploma program constitutes between 113 and 115 credits depending on the particular program that is being pursued; that is primary, secondary, or special education. Upon selection, students will gain entry directly into the program for which they have applied, and specialization in the selected area will begin immediately.

The Primary Education Program prepares prospective teachers for children between the ages of 6 and 12 years, representing Grades 1 to 6. The Secondary Education Program prepares prospective teachers to teach specified subjects to students between the ages of 12 and 17 years, representative of Grades 7 to 12, or forms 1 to 5. The Special Education Program prepares teachers for children between the ages of 3 and 14 who are challenged in one or more of the following areas: Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Mentally Challenged, or Learning Disabled (Joint Board of Teacher Education, 2003).

All students are required to take 15 credit hours of Education Foundation courses, 6 hours of Technology in Education, 8 or 10 hours of College English, depending on their area of specialization, and 9 credit hours of Practicum. These are in addition to the subject requirements specified for each program (Joint Board of Teacher Education, 2003).

#### Development of Teaching Skills

The practicum is that aspect of the pre-service teacher education program that provides the students with the opportunity to go into the classrooms and practice and hone their skills in the integration of theory and pedagogy. The focus is largely formative, beginning with a period of guided observations and is integrated with instruction in principles and methods of teaching and learning and with subject content and methodology.

The practicum is divided into three sections, which are completed in years 1, 2, and 3. In year 1, there is a period of guided observation. In year 2, students are expected to manage and teach classes in their subject areas for 3 weeks under the guidance of a

cooperating teacher and a college supervisor. In year 3, the final practicum takes place, and students are expected to teach for 12 weeks.

Again, they are guided by a cooperating teacher and one or two college supervisors, depending on their program of study. In order to be qualified for year 3 practicum, students must complete their relevant content and methodology courses successfully.

Students are both internally and externally assessed during the practicum. The external assessment is usually conducted by the Joint Board of Teacher Education, in association with the college. This final evaluation serves to ensure that final-year students who will be certified as teachers are sufficiently competent to perform their expected classroom duties. The following are the areas under which evaluation is conducted:

Planning ability, clarity of lesson structure (systemic lesson presentation consistent with defined instruction objectives), knowledge of subject matter, communication skills, effective use of learning time, meaningful learning activities, knowledge and use of resources, sensitivity and adaptation to individual differences, psychologically supportive emotional climate in the classroom, enhancement of students' self-concepts, questioning skills, formal/informal evaluation techniques, monitoring of group/individual activities and assignment completion, awareness of what is occurring in the classroom, use of reinforcement to encourage/discourage particular behaviors, consistency in enforcing rules, and professional attitude (Brown, 1999, pp. 1-2).

Brown (1999) continues to describe the practicum as a period of exploration and self-evaluation. It is also anticipated, she said, that through the guidance received during this period, student teachers would have

1. gained a better understanding of students, the processes of learning, and the relative merits of various teaching methods/materials
2. become more adept at identifying and defining their individual needs for further study and professional development (p. 2).

### **Teaching Practice Coordinator**

It is the responsibility of the coordinator, in collaboration with his team of supervisors, to coordinate the teaching practice exercise. In this context, he/she identifies and places students in special schools, which will contribute to their professional development. In some instances, however, owing to numerous constraints unique to the Jamaican situation, some students are inadvertently placed in environments that do not conform to the stated objectives.

The coordinator also arranges for cooperating schools' personnel to be kept informed of their roles and responsibilities in the teaching practice process. The arrangement of teaching practice seminars with college supervisors and host school representatives serves to create the level of awareness that is desirable for cooperating teachers to function satisfactorily and for students to experience a successful practice.

Teaching practice students are to be seen at least three times during the practicum and it is the responsibility of the coordinator to ensure that this level of supervision is maintained by the college supervisors (Brown, 1999).

### **The Host Schools**

For the anticipated success of the students' teaching practice, there are various responsibilities that must be assumed by the host schools/cooperating schools:

1. Make student teachers welcome and a part of the staff
2. Place student teachers with the more experienced, successful teachers and better classes
3. Give student teachers an overall picture of the school's educational objectives and make teaching supplies, instructional materials and equipment available
4. Avoid placing a student-teacher, particular during the first phase of the teaching practice, in sole charge of a class if the regular teacher is absent
5. Find opportunities for the student-teacher to have additional experiences, such as observation of other classes besides the one(s) to which he/she is assigned, attendance at staff meetings and PTA meetings
6. Monitor carefully the absences and tardiness by student-teachers. (Brown, 1999, p. 10)

### **The Cooperating Teacher**

The daily supervision and guidance of the student-teacher is the responsibility of the cooperating teacher into whose class the teacher is assigned. Making reference to Putt (1975), Brown (1999) says:

It is the classroom teacher who knows the specific experiences that can be best offered in a given classroom. It is often the classroom teacher's skills in organizing, skilled leadership, educational background, philosophy of education and knowledge of pupils which will ultimately determine the effectiveness of the student-teacher's experience in a given classroom.

The cooperating teacher must be committed to:

1. Cooperate with the college supervisor and the teaching practice coordinator to ensure a smooth implementation of the practicum exercise
2. Provide students with a model of good teaching techniques and professionalism
3. Treat the student-teacher as a professional but not expect him/her to be a master teacher
4. Plan a sequenced program of varied responsibilities that will enable the student-teacher to become involved gradually in all aspects of the classroom and school
5. Acquaint the student-teacher with the needs of the pupils, the curriculum patterns and various instructional plans
6. Acquaint the student-teacher with the forms and procedures of school reports attendance, absence diagnostic (etc.)
7. Discuss the pupil evaluation procedures

8. Ensure that the student-teacher has access to all necessary material and equipment, such as written curriculum materials for lessons to be taught, textbooks, teacher manuals and audio-visual aids
9. Help the student-teacher to become as self-directed as possible within the limits of the practice situation
10. Encourage and consider suggestions and ideas of the student-teacher and involve him/her in the discussions and planning
11. Remain alert for signs of need and give assistance tactfully
12. Offer guidance and advice to the student-teacher on the basis of his/her first hand knowledge of the classes and school
13. Provide frequent encouragement, constructive criticism and recognition of success. (pp. 11-12)

### **The College Supervisor**

The college supervisor serves as the connecting link between the student teacher, the cooperating school/cooperating teacher, and the external assessment team. This person provides clinical supervision and guides student teachers during the process of their practicum, ensuring that each student under his jurisdiction is prepared for external assessment.

In order for this to be accomplished, they are expected, as part of their responsibility, to visit student teachers as regularly as possible during the practicum and to provide continuous help, encouragement, and advice, especially during the early phase. The students are supposed to be in conference with their supervisors at least once per week for individual instruction and feedback.

### **The Student Teacher**

If student teachers are to experience any amount of success in their practicum experience, they must regard the exercise as an extremely important and crucial aspect of their training. It is therefore recommended that they:

comply with and enforce established rules and regulations, particular those that speak to dress, absenteeism, punctuality and conduct, be professional in their relationship with students, other teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, notify the college supervisor and the school in the event of their illness or late arrival, give respectful consideration to classroom teacher's methods as he/she has the final responsibility in the classroom, accept criticism as a learning tool, ask questions when information or clarification of an issue is needed, offer some creative ideas, accept responsibilities outside as well as inside the classroom, maintain good communication between themselves and the classroom teacher, prepare all teaching lessons carefully and with adequate advance time. (Brown, 1999, p. 8)

### **Through the Eyes of the Interviewees**

Critical information about The Mico College pre-service teacher education program was ascertained from interview protocols. Five categories of stakeholders were interviewed. These persons are representatives of the various groups that serve and are served by the college community: The Principal-administration; Faculty-teacher educators; Senior students-pre-service student body; Teacher graduate-product; and Cooperating teacher-community partnership for field experiences.

The individuals in each category were asked a different set of questions, although in some instances there were a few that overlapped. The number of questions that were asked of each group is as follows: Principal-eight; Faculty member-eight; Senior students (focus group)-seven; Teacher graduate-six; and Cooperating teacher-five. The interviews followed a more semi-structured format. Although questions were pre-determined and standardized, allowance was given for probing to be done.

The responses from these open-ended questions allowed for an unbiased explication of the perceptions of those involved, their expectations, understanding, and how they account for and take action in light of the way they are connected to the program. I have examined each question separately according to the various aspects of



teacher education that were addressed as I conducted a comparative analysis of the responses of the various stakeholders.

### Program Components

This section documents five questions that were asked relative to structural components that should form the basis of pre-service teacher education programs, and how these were organized specifically to develop The Mico College program. In light of the administrative nature of the questions, the vice-principal of the program was the sole person from whom direct responses were sought.

*1. What are the major components of effective pre-service teacher education programs?*

*The vice principal* created quite a relaxing atmosphere so I was not surprised but was deeply impressed with the openness with which she responded to the questions I asked of her. Through her eyes, effective teacher education programs must focus on: cooperative learning processes, well-trained faculty, properly organized programs and reflective activities that involve critical thinking and problem solving. In keeping with these emphases, she added that programs ought to be culture-based and learner-centered rather than culture-biased and teacher-focused. This is quite an instructive, interesting and novel view that piques the imagination while it encourages serious thought especially for structural and strategic planning in teacher education that is geared to meet the needs of a particular community.

Of course, the view is partially expressed in a study conducted by Griffin (1986) in which he identified the elements for an effective teacher education program that spans pre-service and in-service teachers. He asserted that a program of this nature must be

embedded in and sensitive to a school context, be purposeful and articulated, participatory and collaborative, knowledge-based, ongoing, developmental, analytic, and reflective. The vice principal's concept of a culture-based, learner-centered, reflective and collaborative teacher education program could best be described as insightful and contextual.

*2. How is your program structured to reflect these components?*

As the vice principal explained, the diploma program is structured to reflect the standards prescribed by the Joint Board of Teacher Education (3-year diploma) while the norms and cultural values that characterize the Mico psyche are deliberately maintained and transmitted. In terms of curriculum planning, she added that

the curriculum is uniquely structured and well rounded to facilitate students' involvement in critical, creative and reflective thinking as they develop expertise in their special areas of study. We pay serious attention to faculty recruitment as we believe that the quality of the faculty will enhance not just our program quality but also the quality of our graduates.

*3. What is your program vision and how does this influence your program structure?*

The vice principal's response reflected the deep-rooted system of beliefs that epitomizes the spirit of the Mico psyche. Regarding producing leaders for nation building.

we want to produce competent teachers who have the pedagogical knowledge and exposure, who will become leaders in the society. Mico has produced two of Jamaica's Governor Generals and the backbone of much of our society. If you scratch a foundation leader in Jamaica, you will find a Miconian, so we still hold to the vision that when we are training teachers we are training leaders of the society.

If teachers are expected to be nation builders, they must be given the tools and must be educated in the use of those tools. I have read and listened to many negative

comments regarding the worth of teachers, especially those at the lower levels of the education system. Many of the persons who make these comments, however, seem not to understand the striking relationship between a person's future and his educational experiences at the early and later years. The child makes the man and the man makes the society. In educating children, providing resources for solving educational, social, and other problems in school and wider communities, the teacher is certainly involved in nation building.

The vice principal is a strong advocate of properly organized and meaningful extra-curricular activities that should serve as outlets and provide opportunities for students to extend themselves and develop leadership skills complementary to their training. She explained:

We also try to give activities that are not only pedagogically based and dealing with those things, but things which will give the rounded information and a sense of worth. So we have planned special leadership programs for them, making the student government very strong. There are programs like Culturama, Music festivals, African Heritage Festivals, special museums and so on.

*4. What is the conceptual framework that guides your program?*

*The vice principal* took a retrospective look as she framed her response:

“The learner first. There was a time in the colonial development when education was very teacher centered, so it was the knowledge base of the teacher that was passed on and regurgitated by the students.”

Her answer is reflective of a strong sense of the importance of the learner in the teaching/learning environment and in all their endeavors in pre-service teacher education. In light of this view, we must be mindful of the words of Mark and Ribeiro (1999) in their documentation of the negative effects of a teacher-centered approach to learning:

Our schools have been characterized traditionally by a modus operandi that services their perceived mission as the transmission of knowledge. In this process the teacher's role is to pass on a body of knowledge in a donor-recipient, performer-observer type of relationship. . . . This fosters helplessness and dependency in learning situations, limits creative capacity and it shapes the view that equates understanding with memorizing. (p. 114)

The vice principal further outlined Mico's program focus to counteract this system of belief. She said:

The need to appeal to all the faculties of the child is now significant, and we are very mindful of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, so we have embraced a student-centered approach blended with the constructivist view to provide the hands-on. We try to remember that there are no clones here and no two students are alike, hence their individuality is taken into consideration.

When teachers, especially at the primary/elementary and secondary levels, can accept and respect the unique differences that make each student an individual, and consequently adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the students rather than try to get them to fit into one unbending mold, they would have begun the first step to achievement for all students.

The following writers have made some pertinent remarks with respect to the vice principal's statements regarding the need for a student-centered learning environment. Gardner (1991) posits that since human development is the aim of schooling, diversity and differences among students must be seen in a different light. "Differences among students," according to Mark and Ribeiro (1999), "must become the working capital of the school and classroom. . . . Teachers in the new order must be prepared to accept and work with all students in non-elitist, democratic institutions" (p. 115).

Very early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dewey (1938) insisted that the competent educator "views teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience" (p.

87). He also emphasized the “importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of purposes that direct his activities in the learning process” (p. 67).

Insofar as NCATE’s recommendation that contemporary effective teacher education programs are to be characterized by a conceptual framework, The Mico College program did not identify that a documented structure was in place. Although a conceptual framework is not a requirement of the Joint Board of Teacher Education, and in view of the program benefits that are to be derived from this implementation, it would be wise for this conceptual framework to be properly documented.

*5. What strategies do you employ to ensure that your program achieves the goals?*

*The vice-principal’s* theme was “quality control” and it permeated her response to the question. Working through the Joint Board of Teacher Education frame work, the college ensures that all faculty members are involved in the Board of Studies relevant to their particular discipline. There is therefore a “hands-on approach to what constitute the syllabus and the curriculum.”

The idea of maintaining organizational structure and standards for quality performance is very important to the achievement of institutional goals and objectives. To maintain accountability to the Joint Board, which comprises the Ministry of Education, the University of the West Indies, and the teacher training colleges, she explained that program policies are kept in mind when planning and organization are initiated. “We ensure quality in first of all putting the program together and quality in seeing that it is properly executed.”

Evaluation and assessment are integral to maintaining quality, and in recognition of that fact she stated that “through the avenues of formative and summative evaluation procedures, staff-student assessment and staff-staff assessment, we have also managed to keep our focus and our standards very high.”

### Assessment Techniques

This section addresses the matter of assessment and its place in pre-service teacher education. Two questions were asked. The first required the vice-principal to identify her assessment techniques, while the lecturer, the teacher graduate, and the senior students’ focus group were asked to identify what in their estimation are suitable assessment techniques for pre-service teacher education programs. The responses will be discussed in the order listed previously.

*1. What are your assessment techniques?*

*The vice-principal* explained that in accordance with the Joint Board’s Teacher Certification Handbook, the teacher education program requires the application of continuous assessment. Students are expected to be constantly involved in self-evaluation through the process of reflection, while the lecturers use their course work requirements to evaluate their performance. This is usually done through formative and summative assessment techniques. Final examinations, which are conducted at the end of each semester, are internally and externally assessed with the external assessment prepared by the Joint Board.

*2. What assessment techniques do you think are effective for teacher education programs?*

*The lecturer* explained that the skills to be measured have to be the main determinant of the type of assessment that will be used. As a complement, she added that 'more alternative devices must be considered and used very regularly. Journaling, portfolio development, case studies and in general those that will measure higher order cognitive skills.'

It may be necessary for teacher educators to focus on the extent to which the assessment measure that is employed is meaningful in allowing them to explore their practice in the truest sense. The teacher who is committed to a successful practice aimed at transforming the lives of his/her students will need to use the most authentic and accurate measures at his disposal.

In support of this idea, Tellez (1996) advises that assessment must be authentic and this will be reflected in 'the degree to which they are meaningful to and helpful for teachers in the exploration of their practices' (p. 707).

*The students'* responses were interesting. In Jamaican parlance, 'Bun all exam,' which means 'Burn, Destroy, Get rid of, all examinations,' was one of the responses that came from them. The student continued quite boisterously, 'We believe in continuous assessment and it is very unfair for you to judge my performance in a 3-hour span of time.' To this, all the others concurred unreservedly.

Projects, portfolios, presentations, field assignments, debates, and, most of all, extensive micro teaching are some of the alternative measures the students identified as suitable replacements for many of the written exams. They were adamant that most of their assignments should be focused on some form of classroom interaction as teaching involves more of a practical than a theoretical experience.

*The teacher graduate's* comment was focused mainly on practicum assessment which, in her estimation, was well planned and so was meaningful for her. As an added dimension, she suggested that a portfolio detailing the progress of students during the practicum should be included in the assessment process. As students are able to monitor their progress, she believes that they will be more challenged and motivated to succeed.

Responding to a follow-up question regarding suitability of other alternative techniques, she noted: "A wide variety of alternative measures were used in our program and I think they were all very effective for not just giving our teachers an idea of how much we had learnt, but also helping us to achieve."

The Mico College lecturer, senior students, and recent teacher graduate all agree unanimously that alternative measures of assessment are adequate for teacher education programs. The extent to which these are adequate or suitable, however, will depend on how well they provide the teacher with the information that is needed to enhance a successful practice. An important point made relative to the practical nature of teaching suggested that, by virtue of that characteristic, micro teaching ought to be one of the main alternative measures of assessment.

### Program Curriculum

This section dealt with three questions regarding the content of pre-service teacher education program curriculum and its relationship to the practice of education. The first, which addressed specifically the content of the curriculum, was asked of the lecturer, the second was asked of the lecturer, the teacher graduate, and the senior students' focus group, while the third was asked of the lecturer. For the second and third



questions, I have examined the professor's response first, followed by the response from the senior students and the teacher graduate.

1. *What should constitute the content of pre-service teacher education curriculum?*

*The lecturer* started her response by commenting on the courses taught in the Department of Education:

Presently, I think that the courses that are taught in education are ideal. The main areas are assessment, curriculum development and psychology. Recently however, there has been an introduction of five new courses: Understanding the Learner, The Emergent Teacher, Assessment in the Classroom, Principles of Teaching and Learning and Teaching the School and the Society. In addition, there is a technology course.

In addition to the above, she bemoaned the fact that formal research had been removed from the curriculum and was incorporated into the new courses. While it is wise to expose students to research through their individual course completion, she advocated that the curriculum should constitute a research component.

With reference to NCATE's emphasis on the need to have a well-articulated, shared conceptual framework for a program in teacher education, the council advises that of first importance in developing a curriculum is to specify an underlying conceptual framework. This knowledge base and framework, according to Odell (1997), must rest on contemporary research, wisdom, and emerging educational policies. It can therefore be argued that if the curriculum must be built on research, then research ought to be an integral part of the curriculum.

2. *How should the teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?*

In answering this question, *the lecturer* pointed out that there has to be a link between the two for students to make sense of what they are learning. She explained that in planning, for example, teaching practice experiences, those in charge would endeavor to organize the experience to allow for connections to be made between the practice and their content knowledge.

Although the lecturer's response was quite brief, it foreshadowed an important point regarding curriculum planning in pre-service teacher education and education in general. Curriculum planning must facilitate students making linkages in the learning experiences. It cannot therefore be divorced from students' needs in conjunction with the cultural and changing context of the society.

Brunerian philosophy regarding the nature of the curriculum (Bruno, as cited in Orlofsky, 2001) is instructive for those who are in the business of curriculum planning and development:

Education must be conceived as aiding young humans in learning to use the tools of meaning making and reality construction, to better adapt to the world in which they find themselves and to help in the process of changing it as required. . . . Education is not simply a technical business of well managed information processing, nor even a matter of applying learning theories to the classroom or using subject-centered achievement. It is a complex pursuit of fitting a culture to the needs of its members and of fitting its members and their ways of knowing to the needs of the culture. (p. 53)

Curriculum planning cannot be incidental, instead, according to Bruner (as cited in Orlofsky, 2001), it has to be purposeful as it connects the students' needs to the cultural context and the cultural context to the students' needs.

A summary of *the students'* responses reflected the following ideas:

1. The practice of education should govern curriculum planning and delivery.
2. For the credibility of the teacher education program, lecturers need to be

involved in and practice current research.

3. Teachers, in general, need to change their roles from that of a repository of knowledge from which students access information, to facilitators of the learning process.

4. Students are now more knowledgeable than before and this should influence the approach to classroom interaction.

5. Lecturers need to spend time and become aware of what is happening in the schools in the society, and this should inform their own classroom practice in the preparation of teachers.

6. The practice of using and making reference to materials and textbooks that are older than 10 years should be avoided.

A very direct and pertinent response was given to this question by *the teacher graduate*. She portended:

Speaking from my own perspective, I think the teacher education curriculum is teacher-centered. By this I mean that it was prepared actually for student teachers, and this is good because it is actually the main guideline, the main tool that will actually prepare you for the classroom. Now, for this to be significant, there must be a relationship or a link between what is in the curriculum and what is taking place in the practice of education. The courses must be very relevant to the practice because students will need to take what they learn and execute it in the classroom.

The general ideas expressed by the lecturer, the senior students, and the teacher graduate suggested that curriculum planning ought to be influenced by the practice of education within the context of the environmental culture. Lecturers, from the perspective of the students, should remain informed of societal changes that occur from time to time. In order to do this, they must be involved in some aspect of classroom life at the primary and/or secondary level.

3. *What is the place of research in teacher education?*

“The importance of research cannot be overly emphasized,” *the lecturer* responded.

It is very significant and because we live in a dynamic society where things are not stationary, we must be constantly researching, trying to find out things. In teacher education, it is especially important because knowledge does not just come to you, you have to go out there and get it and this is essentially achieved through research.

### Teacher Graduates

This set of three questions addressed the characteristics which should describe the ideal teacher graduate in the context of those attributes and dispositions which are deemed necessary for effective teaching in the primary, elementary, or K-12 classroom. The lecturer was asked the first two questions, while the third was asked of the senior students and the teacher graduate. The responses will be discussed in the order presented.

#### *1. What characteristics should describe the ideal teacher graduate?*

High on *the lecturer's* list of attributes is that the teacher graduate ought to be research oriented. While they may not be researchers in the restrictive sense, the lecturer argued that “they must believe in continuous research for improvement of their teaching-learning environment.” The center of the learning milieu has to be the child. And this awareness should influence those in charge to place him/her at the center stage of all educational planning and execution. The lecturer affirms that teacher graduates should have a “student-centered perspective” which will impact their approach to the teaching-learning environment.

Another disposition that she regards very highly is for teachers to have a reflective sort of attitude. She observed thoughtfully:

I think that is one of the things that we have not stressed very much in recent years, but now we are trying to get across to the student-teachers that they need to be very

reflective, look at what is happening, examine their teaching in light of students' level of learning and the challenges facing them, identify problems and how they can change or address them.

Certainly, although this is not a novel idea, it is worth emphasizing, in light of the challenges facing contemporary teacher education. Houston and Warner (2000) underscore the point as they instruct that "a major responsibility of teacher education is to facilitate professional self-reflection" (p. 73). Professional self-reflection facilitates the avoidance of routine and haphazard teaching, which very often characterizes the classroom environment of many unprepared teachers.

2. *How do these compare to the characteristics necessary for effective teaching?*

*The lecturer* answered: "It is crucial and critical for student teachers to develop a sense of the need to be reflective and to see the students they will teach as the main focus of all their planning. Therefore what they do, what they think about, how they can improve, their attitude toward their work, certainly will have a great bearing on student quality."

This sobering thought is consistent with the perspective of Mark and Ribeiro (1999). They discuss the view that the quality of the students who graduate from our schools will not be enhanced if the quality of the teachers is not enhanced (p. 117).

3. *How would you describe an effective teacher?*

To summarize *the students'* responses: First, in reference to a quotation he saw on his vice principal's door, the first student repeated the statement and then said: "I really do believe the excellent teacher inspires." The statement read: The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates, and the great teacher inspires.

*Student #2* described an effective teacher as one who is willing and committed to go the extra mile, doing everything that is necessary to ensure that his/her students learn.

I was deeply impressed when he said:

This is what I want to do. I might be young in it, but I am willing to learn and see the impact that I can have on students as I try to go as far as I need to go to have them learn. This I believe makes a teacher very effective.

*Student #3* announced, "All things to all men, is what makes a teacher." The statement sounded quite unorthodox and seemed unrelated to the question under consideration, so everybody needed clarity. The student continued:

First and foremost you must care. It cannot be just a job, if it's a job to you, you are not doing it. You must be flexible, adaptable and able to think on your feet. You must be persistent and your powers of understanding must be superb, because if you do not understand children, there is no way you will be able to inspire them.

*Student #4* voiced his agreement with the ideas of his colleagues and added that an effective teacher ought to be extremely humble, while the other admonished that the teacher will not be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I will find out" because he/she is research oriented.

The great teacher inspires and is research oriented. He will not be ashamed to admit ignorance, will do everything necessary to ensure students' learning, is caring and knowledgeable about children and learning, is persistent and humble. These are the attributes that will describe the effective teacher as was described by the senior students.

Evans (2003) substantiates their claim. She suggests that "good teaching demands that teachers have knowledge of other matters such as how students learn and how to represent subject so that their students understand it" (p. 83). This is definitely placing the students at the center of the teaching learning environment.

*The teacher graduate* was very clear regarding her perception of an effective teacher. The passion with which she spoke left no doubt in my mind that she was influenced by her training and professional standards. Her classroom (within which the interview was conducted) was beautifully appointed with a multiplicity of instructional and learning materials. Certainly, it represented an environment that would facilitate students' academic growth and development at the primary level at which she operated.

She posited:

First and foremost, an effective teacher is one who is cognizant of the calling of teacher. She has to be aware that the education of her subjects is of primary interest to her and she has to take steps to make this education as far reaching as possible. . . . She will use different methodology that will cater to the needs of every student.

This is also in keeping with the general comments made by the senior students and that which is recommended in the literature.

### Field Experiences

This section examined the organization and importance of field experiences in pre-service teacher education. Eight questions were asked. The lecturer was asked the first, the cooperating teacher was asked the second and third, the lecturer and the cooperating teacher were asked the fourth, the senior students the fifth and the sixth, and the teacher graduate the seventh and eighth. The responses will be discussed chronologically.

*1. How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher?*

*The lecturer* advised that student teachers should be suitably placed in environments where they can adequately practice and hone their skills under effective

supervision. They ought to be given enough time in these schools, they should be properly supervised, and feedback regarding their performance should be communicated during regular conference with the student. The lecturer also emphasized the need for collaboration between the supervisor and the cooperating teacher. "This communication is important," she outlined, "for the smooth functioning of the practice and the success of the student teacher."

## 2. *How should cooperating teachers be chosen?*

With reference to the selection of these persons, *the cooperating teacher* spoke to experience and commitment, which she advocated should be critical elements in the process. Before a teacher is eligible to serve as a cooperating teacher, he/she needs to be in the classroom for a considerable period of time. During this time the teacher will acquire expert knowledge of children, their learning styles, and the different instructional techniques which are suitable and effective for working with the differences they display.

Willingness or the commitment to assist the student teacher is the other factor that she mentioned. She advised:

Cooperating teachers should be chosen based on experience. . . . I believe if a student teacher is going to be placed with a teacher, that teacher ought to be in the classroom for a number of years and is willing to help the student teacher. This is because, sometimes teachers feel that having practicum done in their class is just a way for them to go and have fun, while their class is being looked after by someone else. So the teacher should be willing to stay in the class and help the student teacher. . . . I think a consent form should be signed by the teacher stating his/her willingness to assist the student teacher to the fullest extent of his/her ability.

Cooperating teachers are integral to the success of student teachers during the teaching practice experience. Putt (1975, as cited in Brown, 1999) says:

It is the classroom teacher who knows the specific experiences that can be best offered in a given classroom. It is often the classroom teacher's skills in organizing, skilled leadership, educational background, philosophy of education and



knowledge of pupils which will ultimately determine the effectiveness of the student-teacher's experience in a given classroom. (p. 11)

Choosing cooperating teachers wisely and purposefully will certainly prove beneficial not just for the success of the student teachers but for the entire practice. From my personal experience, I have observed that cooperating teachers that are chosen haphazardly or based on convenience usually do not provide the kind of expert guidance and supervision that student teachers need to facilitate the development of teaching skills.

In the Teaching Practice handbook, prepared by Brown (1999), teacher training colleges are urged to pay attention to the selection of cooperating teachers in light of the significant role they have to play in the development of teaching skills by the student teachers.

3. *What are the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher?*

*The cooperating teacher* was very brief and explicit in her response. "Guide, instruct, make suggestions regarding what has been observed and help the student teacher in whatever way you can," were the responsibilities that she outlined. When these are compared to the responsibilities recommended by the Joint Board and documented by Brown (1999), there is a striking difference in the expectations.

4. *How long do you think teachers should remain in the classroom before they are eligible to function as cooperating teachers?*

*The lecturer* suggested that time period should not be the main factor for selecting cooperating teachers. One must agree, as individuals mature at different rates.

I think it depends on the person, because you can have somebody out there for two years, and this person is very mature and have all the characteristics that are necessary to guide a student teacher. On the other hand, there may be those in the classroom for twenty years and still would not be suitable as they do not contribute to the students' development.

*The cooperating teacher* espoused the need for experience as another of the factors that should be used to determine the eligibility of cooperating teachers. Her statement went this way:

A teacher should be in the classroom for at least 3 years to gain some experience and not just 3 years in different classrooms, but three years in the same grade. Because of what I have noticed, it takes a year or two for a teacher to get the knack of things in one classroom. You are there for the first year and if you make a mistake you have the second year to make up for it, and by the third year you should be doing very well in that same classroom. By then you should have the knowledge, experience and skills to share with somebody else.

5. *What is the most important part of your training?*

In response to this question, *the reading student* in the focus group was quick to report that his reading lecturer ensured that they had enough opportunity to be involved in micro teaching. To him, this was important because it brought them in touch with their content and made them comfortable in their delivery. He felt that the reading option in the program is the best in the college and was very forthright when he said: "While I cannot speak for the rest of the college, but if you did reading which is the best here, you would have been sufficiently exposed to micro teaching sessions, which in my mind are very crucial in teacher training."

One of his colleagues was quite alert to his response, and she did not hesitate to correct him. She informed him that micro teaching was an integral part of everybody's program. In her department (history), they have to practice for 3 months, not just with their peers but through interaction with pupils from the practicing school.

Having teacher education students connect with pupils in the classrooms according to their area of study provides enrichment and an opportunity for students to evaluate themselves in light of their knowledge of their content, methodology, and

confidence. There is also the opportunity for them to internalize the information to which they have been exposed, facilitating decision making regarding their capacity to handle the challenges of the teaching profession.

In expressing how much she values the practicum, one student had this to say:

I was in the classroom prior to being apart of this program. However most of the students who come here . . . teaching practice is their first experience standing in front of a class and being expected to deliver everyday for a period of time. It is interesting to hear the kinds of responses you get when students return from the practice; ‘I know I am not going into teaching’ or ‘I know this is what I was born to do.’ So, it really gives the students a feeling for whether or not they really have the capability or the tolerance.

The Joint Board regards the practicum as the capstone experience of the teacher education program. As a period of exploration and self-evaluation, Brown (1999) anticipates that through the guidance received during this period, student teachers are expected to ‘gain a better understanding of students, the processes of learning and the relative merits of various teaching methods/materials and become more adept at identifying and defining their individual needs for further study and professional development’ (p. 2).

6. *How did your field experience help you to develop the skills relevant to effective teaching?*

In answering this question, *the teacher graduate* explained that practice teaching was very relevant because it allowed her to put into practice what was previously theory. As a pre-trained teacher, she did things which were evidently incorrect and unprofessional, due to her lack of knowledge and training. ‘The practicum righted some of the wrongs that I took for granted and has left me more rounded and professional in my approach to my practice,’ she observed quite thoughtfully.

As a matter of importance, she made mention of her college supervisor, whom she thought was very instrumental in facilitating the learning process, leading to the honing of her skills. She reflected: "I have been guided by a great supervisor and that made the experience very challenging, yet rewarding." Consequently, she is a strong contender that the supervisor and the cooperating teacher are very crucial to the success of the practicum for the student teacher.

The college supervisor, according to Brown, (1999), serves as the connecting link between the student teacher, the cooperating school/cooperating teacher, and the external assessment team. This lecturer, through regular visits and conferences, is expected to provide clinical supervision and guidance to student teachers during the process of their practicum. Each student under his/her jurisdiction must be adequately prepared for external assessment, which is conducted by the Joint Board.

*7. How did your training influence the development of these skills?*

*The teacher graduate* testified that her training bore significant influence on the development of her teaching skills. "I did a wide conglomerate of courses which were really relevant to the development of the skills necessary for effective teaching. I am now in a position to use many of the theories that I learnt and see the result in relation to how my students learn. I am satisfied that my preparation was very adequate." She remarked.

Darling-Hammond (1998) contends that "the most important contribution academe can make to supporting learning, is if colleges and universities would commit their resources to better preparing those who will become elementary and secondary teachers" (p. 18). In this context, therefore, teacher training must provide students with the

opportunities to reflect on various teaching situations and problems in light of theory and educational practice.

In preparing their teachers adequately, The Mico College program would be making the important contribution in support of learning to which Darling-Hammond (1998) makes reference. What better way to assess the worth of any endeavor if not to evaluate within the context of program purpose and achievement?

8. *How long do you think students should be required to practice before they are certified?*

*The teacher graduate's* conviction was obviously strong when she made this point in response to the question. "Student teachers need at least 1 year of practice teaching before they are certified." As she continued, however, I understood why.

Lesson planning is usually a big problem and then there is classroom management. I think that they need time for these skills to be developed and 3 months is not enough. The practice should be extended to at least 6 months if they cannot go back to the 1-year internship period of years ago. I have heard many negative comments regarding professional inadequacy of teachers and I am so sad that we have allowed the public to look down on our profession. So I think they need to pay attention to that aspect of the training.

#### University/College and Cooperating School Relationship

In this section, I have examined the vice-principal and the cooperating teacher's response to the question of relationship between cooperating school and university/college. Only one question was asked of these persons.

1. *What relationship (if any) do you think should exist between the University/college and the practicing/cooperating school?*

*The vice principal's* response seemed to echo the ideas of researchers who support school-university partnerships. She spoke of a collegial, cooperative, collaborative

relationship. She added almost instantaneously: "That is the best of all possible worlds, and although it does not always work as collaboratively as we would have liked, we still try to maintain the connection."

The Mico College contingent of students is fairly large, 300-500 each semester, and as she further outlined, this has been a tremendous challenge, because of the number of schools that are needed to facilitate this huge group. She explained the challenge this way:

There was a time when we usually call in the principals of our cooperating schools for seminars regarding the teaching practice exercise. This has broken down slightly, so in the interim however, we have prepared documentation that provides our participating schools with all the information to ensure a smooth practicum exercise. We understand that the relationship between the college and the cooperating teacher is very crucial and we believe they need to be aware that they are a part of the bigger picture. It is disappointing however that some of them have not been fully educated regarding their responsibilities, as they disappear as soon as the students are sent in. More and more, however, they are recognizing that they need to be there and not as a stumbling block.

The tone of the vice principal's statements rings through various research studies, such as Levine (1992); Kennedy (1992); Goodlad (1988); and Darling-Hammond (1994). They all speak to the fact that many reforms in teacher education have now begun to focus on collaboration where universities and school districts form partnerships toward the success of training in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs.

Although McIntyre (1994) warns that creating such partnerships is complicated because it involves combining institutions with distinctive and possibly conflicting missions, organizational structures, and cultures, Sandholtz (1997) advises that despite numerous challenges, collaborative ventures hold considerable promise and potential.

*The cooperating teacher* emphasized the need for communication. This she says is the operative word. If nothing else happens, she stressed that there should at least be

some amount of communication between herself and the supervisor for the benefit of the student teacher. She did not mince her words when she stated:

In view of the fact that I am not working independently of the college, I think that a relationship ought to exist between myself and the supervisor. This should allow us to communicate and share information about the student teacher's progress. I must say however that very often, this relationship is not initiated, and I think it is the supervisor's job to ensure that we form a bond for the benefit of the student teacher. Instead of coming to the class and just sitting, observing and then leaving, they need to communicate with the person who sees and supervises the students everyday during their practicum.

The Mico College is committed to strengthening this aspect of their program structure, with a view to correct and build the college-practicing school collaborative endeavor. The urgency is undoubtedly great considering that, according to Darling-Hammond (1994), in teacher education, many school-university collaborations are successfully "restructuring teaching knowledge, the form and content of teacher education and the nature and governance of teaching" (p. 3).

In addition, Goodlad (1988) makes the claim that school-university collaboration enhances prospects for individual and institutional renewal by infusing the workplace with expertise and knowledge from inside and outside the setting.

#### Teacher Educators

This section examined the criteria for faculty selection as well as the characteristics that should describe these persons who form the backbone of the teacher education program. The vice-principal, the lecturer, and the senior students were questioned. The vice-principal's criteria for selecting faculty will be compared against the lecturer and the senior students' characteristics of the ideal teacher educator. The responses will be discussed in the order listed.

1. *What criteria do you use to select faculty for your program?*

On this matter, *the vice principal* reiterated one of the foundation principles of the Mico Charity. She noted: "Mico has always prided itself on having a highly qualified staff?"

While they aim for those educators with advanced degrees, they are cognizant that having a doctorate does not necessarily mean the person is suitable for the particular position. She used an analogy to emphasize the point: "To know that a tomato is a fruit is to be educated, not to put it in a fruit salad is wisdom."

Although faculty members must be fully qualified, they must be experienced in their pedagogical areas as well as have experience of the world. Other criteria that are used in the selection of faculty are interest, energy, and a commitment to the Mico vision and world view. As she explained:

We are looking for those persons who are interested in the vision of The Mico and who can bring a broader view of the vision to expand that vision. Although we are strong on our heritage, we know that if we stand still, we will fall back, so we want a nice mix of the wise people and then the more rash, visionary people and those who have the energy to take it. . . . We want the perspective to be both broad and deep, so if it were a curriculum, it would have scope and sequence.

The Mico College Administration regards research as very integral to faculty professional development, enrichment of the teaching learning environment, and improvement of the wider sphere of teacher education. Consequently, research is accorded much emphasis to the extent that a "Research Day" was instituted to create an awareness of the place of research in the educational arena, and to inspire and instill in faculty and students the need to make research an integral part of their career development. To this end, the principal has advocated that the college becomes a



research-oriented institution and faculty members are encouraged to ‘publish rather than perish.’

The involvement of lecturers in research is supported by Evans et al. (2002). In their development of a conceptual framework for the preparation of new teacher educators, they identify research as an attribute that should characterize the teacher educator of today. We note the emphasis on the development of research skills and the impact that it will have on the Jamaican teacher education system.

Principals and lecturers need to acknowledge the value of research as an important part of the work of lecturers and a way of inquiring into, learning about and improving the quality of one’s work. . . . The necessity of research will be a radical departure from current thinking in education and teacher education in Jamaica, where research is regarded as a necessity for completing a graduate program and not an ongoing aspect of one’s work. (p. 99)

By virtue of the fact that the teacher educator is as important to the education of prospective teachers as the classroom teacher is to the education of primary or secondary pupils (Evans et al., 2002), it seems that serious attention must be paid to faculty recruitment and employment. After all, what is teacher education without teacher educators? The Mico College’s strong emphasis on the caliber of its faculty is representative of the extent to which it regards them as crucial to the success of pre-service teacher education.

## 2. *What is the profile of the ideal teacher educator?*

I was not surprised when *the lecturer* remarked:

The ideal teacher educator is a person who allows the student-teacher to do research, doesn’t spoon feed, because it is very tempting sometimes to do that, especially because we have students who do not feel very confident, so they depend on you to give them every bit of information. The teacher educator should try to avoid that and allow them to be more active participants in their own learning, be more reflective and do constant research.

From personal experience, I have found that many students at the college level expect to be treated like primary/elementary students. They seem to find it difficult to construct their own understanding and chart their own course of learning, and in an effort to prevent their failure, lecturers tend to provide support by 'spoon feeding'. The result of this is a total dependency syndrome and a deficiency of some of the very skills they ought to be able to teach their students when they go into the classroom.

A similar observation was made in an interview with new teacher educators by Evans et al. (2002). One interviewee commented that she was surprised to find that her students were not as mature and responsible as she had expected them to be, in regard to their metacognitive skills and in constructing their own learning. The writers suggest that 'teacher educators in the new constructivist tradition, have to be prepared to break this cycle and model a new method of teaching and set new expectations for student behavior' (p. 89).

### 3. *How would you describe an effective teacher educator?*

This is how *the students* began their responses: "It is a serious difference, when you sit before someone who has been through teacher training and someone who has not. The entire classroom atmosphere is totally different," one student emphasized. Another remarked, "I can tell all those that have not been teacher trained by their delivery." Trying to justify the essence of pedagogical modeling by the faculty, a third student articulated: "Although this is a tertiary institution, they must remember that they are preparing a different kind of student, so some modeling must be done."

Students' awareness of this issue was quite obvious from one student's comment regarding lecturers modeling good teaching techniques. She noted:

In terms of what is expected of us when we go out into the schools, most times we generally do what we are accustomed to. It's like changes is hard especially when it is not being repeated. So if they constantly practice this behavior and keep reminding us that this is what we need to do out there then eventually it will become second nature. Therefore the teacher educator must be teacher squared. All the characteristics of a good teacher are embedded in an effective teacher educator. They must teach us how to reflect as they model those kinds of behaviors

The discourse that resulted from this question left no doubt in my mind that these students operated on the basic tenet that all teacher educators must be trained teachers who model good teaching methodologies in their daily classroom interaction.

I wonder whether or not the Mico students have read Orlofsky's (2001) exegesis on the theories of Bruner and the training of teachers. Orlofsky postures:

By virtue of our subject matter, teacher educators should be among the finest in the world. After all, if we are teaching others the key elements necessary for successful teaching, then it follows that we should be ideal pedagogical models. . . . We also need to understand that to be a pedagogical model requires a cutting edge and mentor mentality in addition to a strong competent and inspiring classroom presence. (p. 71)

The literature is rife with information regarding the influence that students' exposure, background knowledge, and previous experiences have on their approach to classroom practice. Writers such as Zeichner (1996), Ponzio and Fisher (1995), Bird and Anderson (1992), Calderhead (1991), and Richardson (1996) found that prospective students' beliefs would significantly influence what they learn in teacher education as well as the change process.

#### Program Effectiveness

The following three questions required the senior students to reflect on their overall training experience with respect to their expectations and make a critical assessment of their program in terms of the training they had already received.

1. *What are your expectations of a teacher education program?*

*The students* had various expectations and it was obvious that this was influenced by their perception of what teacher training meant. One student felt that in preparation for the “actual teaching world,” opportunities must be afforded them during training to use the information they had been learning. He said: “Much of this is not applicable to what you will meet out there and what is applicable, we do not use enough of it here, so we are not versed when we actually go out there on teaching practice.”

*A second student* emphasized structure. While he is impressed with how compact his program is in History/Social Studies, he is adamant that there needed to be more structure. This he explained would “allow students more time to get research done. The program is rigorous and does not leave the students much time to accomplish individual assignments in pursuit of learning goals.” He described his program structure as “clock work.”

Although he never had any support for his opinion, one of his colleagues joined him in commenting on the structure, but from a different context. He made reference to a change of structure in terms of how the courses are organized, delivered, and timed. He recommended that the “powers that be need to take a serious look on their organization of courses.” For example, he said, “a course like research methods should be taught when students enter college rather than when they are about to leave and worst, now they are removing it formally from the curriculum.”

As a follow-up to this comment, one student exclaimed:

I do not agree with that decision, because if you intend to move on to anything away from a diploma, you will be confronted with research. Therefore research is a must and I don't think they are going to move it from first degree or second degree and when you get to the doctorate level that's all it's about.

*Another student* addressed the knowledge base. He expected a wider coverage of content. "Much of what I taught during practicum, I did not do here at college," he reported.

*A fourth student* did not agree with his colleague, however. He felt that the program is too content driven compared to the art of teaching that is so practical. He is advocating for more practicum and less theory and content. He commented very strongly:

There was a time when Jamaica had 1 year internship, now I think they need to revert to that. This is because many of the students that are taken into college are ready to begin the learning process only after they have been out there on teaching practice. When they are completing the practicum that is when they are ready to assimilate all the information that was given to us before, so they need a longer practical time. The development of practicing schools was to provide training grounds for teachers' colleges, where students would go on a regular basis to practice what they were being taught. The practicing schools have now become autonomous institutions and are being run like regular schools. Therefore more practice is needed.

Another expectation that was identified was technological awareness. As the student remarked: "I think also that teachers colleges need to be on the cutting edge in terms of technology as well, because if we are going out to mold young minds, we need to be aware of what is present and what is current."

Clearly, the senior students were dissatisfied with various aspects of their training program. They were advocating for a program that is less content driven and more flexible so it will facilitate them more time to complete assignments. The practicum should be extended to a 1-year internship in addition to an increase in the micro teaching experiences, cutting-edge technological awareness, and the institution of formal research.

These are intelligent observations, which should serve to provide a basis for strategic planning, leading toward program restructuring and improvement.

In an age when technological advancement has skyrocketed, the students' concern for training in computerized technology for improvement of instruction and professional growth is quite timely. Peart (1998) underscores the point. He posits that

teacher inputs in instructional design, development, and delivery are critical to effective education, particularly in technologically enhanced learning environments. . . . Without the involvement of teachers who are trained, technologically equipped, motivated and committed, no amount of "computerization" of schools will bring about desired changes in education for societal benefits. (p. 202)

*2. How has this program met and is meeting those needs?*

I was quite aghast by the fact that *the students* were so very transparent in the critique of their program. The openness and honesty with which they relate their concerns, disappointments, and satisfaction was extremely imposing. It was interesting though that they disagreed on whether or not all their expectations were missing from the program. One student was very emphatic when he chided: "All the expectations stated so far are missing here, so flatly, we would say that our expectations have not been met."

Another, however, in defense of the program was quick to retort with diplomacy:

To put a more balanced spin on it; there are some good things in this program. Much of our learning was research oriented. We were guided. Lecturers were excellent in their delivery of the curriculum. The things we mentioned are those we think will enhance the program.

Making reference to Jamaica's reading problem, one student extolled the virtues of his training program:

Recognizing the reading problem we have in Jamaica, they are trying to ensure that all students have a base in the teaching of reading and so there are core courses that all students must do that expose them to literacy learning or language and learning so we will be able to pay attention to those students who have reading problems.

2. *What would you do differently were you the director of the program under which you were trained?*

*The students* agreed that they would improve on the expectations that they had: Less content driven and more practical experiences, longer practicum, adequate technological awareness, formal research, and more flexibility to allow time for research toward completion of assignments.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented an overview of The Mico College; it included a brief history of the development of the institution in keeping with its educational philosophy and mission. Other characteristics of the institution were also included, such as the cultural consciousness and academic acuity. There is also a description of the college's focus in pre-service teacher education. The chapter concluded with a presentation and analysis of the interviewees' response to the eight research questions, which focused on various aspects of pre-service teacher education programs.

The program components should constitute assessment, be culture based/contextual and learner centered, and be supported by a conceptual framework. Assessment is important for maintaining standards of accountability, program restructuring, and improvement of teaching and learning. It should be continuous, authentic, and consistent with a variety of alternative techniques.

Pre-service teacher education curriculum ought to be meaningful and relevant to the needs of the society within which prospective teachers are expected to serve. The curriculum must address diversity issues and must be built on adequate research. It is

important that teacher graduates develop reflective and action research skills. They should be equipped with a variety of pedagogical skills and should understand that their instructional environment ought to be learner centered rather than teacher centered.

For field experiences to facilitate the professional growth of prospective teachers, they should be well planned. There ought to be collaboration between the cooperating schools and the college. The cooperating teachers have to be intelligently chosen and they ought to be made aware of their responsibilities. The prospective teachers should be placed suitably and they need to spend at least a year in the practice. The theory that is learned in their various courses has to be related to their practice.

The relationship between practicing/cooperating schools should be characterized by communication, collaboration, and training for cooperating school participants. Those who are pre-service teacher education faculty are expected to have K-12 classroom experience and to model instructional techniques suitable for this educational level. Their educational prowess should reflect scholarly research engagement.

The Mico students would like their program to be adequately structured to allow them more time for research toward the completion of assignments. They expect a relationship between what they learn in their courses and what they have to teach in schools; they expect extended practice in their practicum and less content, they expect competent professors and need their program to prepare them for the technologically advanced society of today.

In terms of the effectiveness of their program, they are satisfied with the performance of their lecturers, they felt they were adequately guided, their instruction



was research oriented, they were exposed to micro teaching in all their courses, and they were given adequate content.

## CHAPTER 6

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY: “COME TO LEARN;  
COME TO GROW; COME TO EASTERN.”

*I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion.*

—Thomas Jefferson

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of Eastern Michigan University. This is inclusive of a brief history of the institution, its mission, guiding principles, and values. The contemporary pre-service teacher education program is described as well as some of the distinctive features of the College of Education and the accrediting organizations. The chapter concludes with a presentation and analysis of the interviewees’ response to the eight research questions that guided the study.

Eastern Michigan University is one of Michigan’s 15 public universities offering teacher education programs that are structured to prepare teachers who will be sufficiently competent to meet the demands of today’s societal educational challenges.

To have a highly trained workforce for Michigan’s future, we need to have highly trained teachers. . . . Michigan is on the forefront of updating the way we teach teachers to teach. We are a leader in boosting standards that teachers must meet before entering the workforce, and in requiring future educators to spend time in

diverse classroom settings while in college, to ensure that they can handle the more difficult education challenges, today's young students present. (Rao, 2004, p. 5)

The stark reality of the power of education to increase a country's economic sustenance and give the competitive advantage was reported by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). The report entitled *A Nation at Risk* created awareness in the American people that if there is mediocrity in their educational system, then there will inevitably be the ripple effect in the country's social and economic strength. The following is a brief section of the report. "Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world" (p. 5).

The report observes that while there are a number of factors that have contributed to the state of affairs, it is only concerned with "one that undergirds American prosperity, security and civility. We report to the American people that . . . the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people" (p. 5).

From all appearances, Michigan's State Board of Education has responded to the challenge for higher educational standards for preparatory teachers, and has mandated universities and colleges offering teacher education to reflect these rigorous standards.

### **A Brief History of Eastern Michigan University**

#### The Normal School Concept

Founded in 1849 as a teacher-training school, today Eastern Michigan University has grown to a student population of more than 24,500, and has become one of the United

States' 50 largest universities. It is regarded as the nation's largest producer of educational personnel and one of the largest producers of teachers.

In 1849, the state of Michigan established what was known as the Michigan State Normal School. 4 years later in 1853, the school began operation as the first teachers' training school west of the Allegheny Mountains. This concept of teacher training had its foundation in the state's constitution, which declared that education was to be of primary importance in the region. Consequently, as teaching became the main focus in the Normal School concept, students on entering were therefore encouraged to choose teaching as their career. This inevitably resulted in the majority of the student population being enrolled in the teacher preparation program (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

In those early years, the Normal School operated at a basic secondary level, instructing students in teaching methods and material to encompass a variety of levels. In addition, high-school diplomas were also awarded. Later, the Michigan State Board of Education instituted two main standardized programs of study from which students could choose their options (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

The first program, with a 2-year duration, was an English course, which sought to ensure that teachers acquire the broad range of academic subjects they would need to teach at the primary level. The second course of study, the Classical Course, had a 3-year duration. It emphasized primarily language instruction for those teachers who were desirous of teaching at the secondary level and those who wished to pursue higher studies at the college level (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

In contrast to our contemporary society, students gained entry to the Normal School at a much earlier age. According to requirements for admission, entrants for the

English Course had to be at least 14 years old, while those for the Classical Course needed to be at least 13 years. To gain entry, students were required to have a high-school diploma, while those without were allowed to sit an entrance examination (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

The next 40 years saw a significant increase in the student population as well as in the variety of subject offerings at the Normal School. During the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, dissensions grew as the school professors were in disagreement regarding what should constitute the main focus of a teacher training school. One group advocated for an emphasis primarily on pedagogical skills and the means to this end, while another group's philosophy was that teachers in training needed to be prepared extensively so they would be equipped to offer their students a well-balanced education. The indecisive debate continued for two decades before the principal took a decision to direct the school toward the achievement of more extensive educational goals. This decision paved the way for the multidisciplinary university that exists today (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

Growth and expansion of the Normal School continued steadily in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and with this came the decision to shift the mission focus from a secondary school curriculum to a 4-year college program. In addition, the name was changed in 1899, from Michigan State Normal School to Michigan State Normal College, to be more representative of the new direction. These significant changes heralded the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the college being recognized as the premier teacher-training school in the state of Michigan and the first in the United States to offer a 4-year degree program (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

There were many other firsts for the Normal College; it was the first to offer a program in industrial arts in 1901, it was the first state teachers' college in the nation to establish training for teachers of handicapped children in 1915, and it was the first to offer a program in library services in 1940.

In 1956, Michigan State Normal College became known as Eastern Michigan College to reflect the extensive changes that had taken place in educational programming and course offerings. With the formal establishment of the Graduate School, 3 years later in 1959, the school gained the status of a university and again the name was changed to Eastern Michigan University. The new name not only demonstrated this tremendous step, but also broadened the emphasis of the school from teacher training to a wider range of baccalaureate programs.

The College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences were established in 1959 as two separate entities. Although these two colleges would collaborate in the education of students, this provided an opportunity for students attending Eastern to be afforded a broader range of options in their courses of study and a greater influence on their future plans.

Eastern Michigan University has experienced 155 years of growth and expansion. There are now five degree-granting colleges and a graduate school: Education, Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Health and Human Services, College of Technology, and Graduate School. These offer a range of programs that include more than 400 academic majors and minors. There are diplomas, certificates, bachelor's, master's, specialists, and doctoral degrees (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

Cultural diversity has always been a hallmark of the university; hence Eastern Michigan's enrollment reflects this trend. The multicultural student population of approximately 24,000 represents 110 different nations from various countries around the world. Approximately 15% of this group is African American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American.

In keeping with its mission of excellence in teaching, the University endeavors to keep students on the cutting edge of research and technology through its world-class library facilities. The Bruce T. Halle Library provides a unique blend of traditional library access and new informational technologies. This \$41-million, state-of-the-art facility includes more than 1,500 network connections, 218,000 square feet of space, 300,000 volumes of open-shelf books, and 800,000 volumes in an automated retrieval collection (Eastern Michigan University, 2004a).

Regardless of these significant changes, however, the University has not diverted from its original focus and has remained true to its roots as an educator of tomorrow's leaders (Eastern Michigan University, 2004b).

### Institutional Mission

Within the broad context of education and training and with its rich history in teacher training, Eastern Michigan University is committed to:

Excellence in teaching through traditional and innovative approaches, the extension of knowledge through basic and applied research, and creative and artistic expression. Building on a proud tradition of national leadership in the preparation of teachers, we maximize educational opportunities and personal and professional growth for students from diverse backgrounds through an array of baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs. We strive to provide a student-focused learning environment that enhances the lives of students and positively impacts the community. We extend our commitment beyond the campus boundaries to the wider community through service initiatives, and public and private partnerships of

mutual interest addressing local, regional, national and international opportunities and challenges. (Eastern Michigan University, n.d., Mission Statement, para. 1)

### **The Contemporary Teacher Education Program**

Operating under the broad umbrella of the institution's values, mission and vision, the College of Education has chosen the theme of "Caring Professional Educators for a Diverse and Democratic Society" as the fundamental guideline by which it would implement initial preparation of some of the qualified teachers that are necessary for Michigan's K-12 classrooms. This theme embodies and reflects the pluralistic society that exists not just in Michigan but across the entire United States of America.

The program, which is characteristically rigorous and intensive, is tailored to meet institutional, as well as Michigan's standards for teacher preparation in elementary, secondary, special education, and K-12 endorsements. The theme emphasizes the need for candidates to be caring individuals committed to all students' learning. They must be student-focused and knowledgeable regarding their content and pedagogy. Candidates must also be reflective and must demonstrate professional disposition and effective communication skills.

They are expected to celebrate diversity in schools and communities in the way they plan instruction and work with diverse parents and community members. Their students must be prepared for active participation in democracy through their nurturing of critical and creative thinking and problem solving in communities.

### **The Conceptual Frameworks**

One of the requirements of a profession is for members to create, define, transmit, and enforce standards for ethics and practice. These standards, according to Darling-



Hammond (1992), are intended to support a continual search for knowledge to apply to student problems and to ensure that the interests of clients are placed first (p. 16). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) advocates for rigorous standards-based teacher preparation programs as one of the ways to reform teacher education. One of the most significant aspects of these NCATE standards is the development and articulation of a conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework represents the underlying structure of the unit that articulates its vision and provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for the direction of programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, faculty scholarship and service, and unit accountability. It is expected to be knowledge-based and consistent with the unit and institutional mission and must undergo continuous evaluation (NCATE, 1999).

Although it may be time-consuming, Odell (1997) counsels that the programmatic benefits of developing a conceptual framework make it far worth the effort. Howey and Zimpher (1989) address the importance of these frameworks in distinguishing between a curriculum and a teacher education program. They explain:

Programs have one or more frameworks grounded in theory and research as well as practice; frameworks that explicate, justify and build consensus around such fundamental concepts as the role of the nature of the teaching and learning and the mission of schools in this democracy. These frameworks guide not only the nature of curriculum as manifested in individual courses but, as well, questions of scope; developmental sequence; integration of discrete disciplines; and the relationships of pedagogical knowledge to learning how to teach in various laboratory, clinical and school setting. (p. 242)

The pre-service teacher education program at Eastern Michigan University is guided by conceptual frameworks, which themselves are informed by a variety of sources: These are vision and mission statements, purposes and goals, knowledge bases, candidate proficiencies, and assessment processes and outcomes.

### The Program Vision

Recognizing the need for collaborative partnerships in teacher education, technological advancement and its serious implications for instruction in general and teacher education in particular and the importance of providing service to community, the program vision is all-encompassing and far reaching. It speaks to:

1. The preparation and continuing education of teachers, other school personnel, and the other professionals prepared in the College of Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be a collaborative effort involving many partners.
2. Technology is changing the way students learn at all levels and it has changed and is changing "the way the world works." As a result, preparation programs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to redefine the way professionals are prepared.
3. The College of Education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should support career-long professional development for professionals.
4. The College of Education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should very much be a part of the "community"— responsive to future work force needs, education needs, social needs, and career preparation needs. (Eastern Michigan University, 2005b)

### The Program Mission

The program mission, which is quite instructive, sets the frame of reference that forms the backdrop from which the program effectiveness is defined. It is consistent with the overall institutional values and guiding principles, the institutional mission statement, and the dean's personal statement of vision. It seeks to:

Create an exemplary educational environment to develop the intellectual curiosity, creativity, critical and reflective thinking and problem-solving abilities of our students so that they may become ethical, productive and contributing participants and leaders in a democratic and diverse society. (Eastern Michigan University, 2005b)

### The Program Goals

There are 22 broad goals in the Standards and Benchmarks for the Initial Teacher Preparation Program. These goals, which are organized into five categories, are outlined below.

1. Caring educators are committed to all students' learning within supportive learning communities. They are student-focused and persistent in pursuing high and appropriate expectations for all students.
2. Professional educators are knowledgeable regarding content, pedagogy, and educational technologies.
3. Professional educators are reflective in their practice.
4. Professional educators demonstrate professional dispositions and communication skills.
5. Educators for a diverse and democratic society celebrate diversity in schools and communities. They prepare students for active participation in a democracy through nurturing critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving within communities. (Eastern Michigan University, 2003a)

### The Program Disciplines

Initial teacher preparation programs offered in the College of Education are:

1. Elementary Education, with or without early childhood endorsement
2. Secondary Education, leading to endorsements in biology, business education, chemistry, computer science, earth science, economics, English, history, industrial-vocational education, marketing education, mathematics, physics, political science, psychology, social studies, sociology, Spanish, and speech. The minors lead to endorsement in art, bicultural Spanish/English, geology, health education, and physical education.
3. Special Education endorsements in emotionally impaired, hearing impaired, mentally impaired, physically and otherwise health impaired, and visually impaired.

### Screening of Entrants

At Eastern Michigan, students do not gain direct entry to pre-service teacher education programs on entering the University. Instead, prospective candidates must, after gaining admission to the University, satisfy the following matriculation requirements: (a) Completed at least 56 credit hours, including at least 12 credits at Eastern Michigan, (b) Earned a cumulative GPA of 2.50 at Eastern, (c) Earned a major area or 3 minor average GPA of 2.50 for elementary and a major GPA of 2.50 for secondary, (d) Earned a passing score on all three parts of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) Basic Skills Tests.

In order to remain in the teacher preparation program with satisfactory academic status, and to ensure eligibility for field experience, students are required to maintain a cumulative 2.50 GPA in major or average of all three minors. In addition they are expected to have a C or higher in all professional education courses and others so designated according to their program of study.

### Assessment

Eastern prides itself in upholding high standards of quality performance among faculty and students. Assessment is therefore ingrained in the program structure and organization.

In the Initial Teacher Education Program, students' assessment actually begins before they are accepted into the University. Following their assessment for admission, they are also assessed at various other points throughout their tenure in the University. These are: (a) Admission to the initial teacher preparation program, (b) Retention in the initial teacher preparation program, (c) Six course assessments and related field

experiences, (d) During and at the culmination of the student teaching experience(s), (e) The applicable tests of the Michigan Tests for Teacher Certification, (f) During the first year of teaching. A wide variety of assessment techniques is employed, and these range from observation, to performance-based assessments, to standardized tests.

### The Development of Expertise

Goodlad (1994) shares the view that there is a great need for a new model of school and school reform. “He advises that to help create and implement that new model, future educators must be prepared with the expectations, knowledge and skills to participate effectively in the renewing process” (p. 197). This raises once again the import of having quality expert teachers in our education system. The Holmes Group asserts this significance in their 1986 report. They wrote:

We cannot improve the quality of education in our schools without improving the quality of teachers in them. Curriculum plans, instructional materials, elegant classrooms, and even sensitive, intelligent administrators cannot overcome the negative effects of weak teaching, or match the positive effects of positive teaching. . . . The entire formal and informal curriculum of the school is filtered through the minds and hearts of classroom teachers, making the quality of school learning dependent on the quality of teachers. (p. 23)

If the quality of learning impinges on the quality of teaching, then it seems reasonable to suggest that the quality of teaching must then rest on the quality of training, which will be explicably linked to the quality of the teacher education program. In keeping with their theme, “Caring Professional for a Democratic and Diverse Society,” the teacher education program is structured to ensure that this aim is realized.

All required courses in the programs of study are categorized either as General Education, Majors/Minors, or Professional Education. Students must complete the

required credits in the General Education category before entry to the program can be gained.

The General Education courses constitute the same requirements for secondary and elementary programs. The areas named are: Area one – Symbolics and Communication; Area two – Science; Area three – Social Science; Area four – Arts and Humanities, Fine and Practical Arts, Physical Education, and Health, and Cross Cultural/International Studies.

Students in the secondary program must pursue a content major and a content minor, while those in elementary education may have either a major and a minor or three minors. Elementary students, however, must choose their major from math, integrated science, social studies, language arts, or reading.

Professional Education course requirements for elementary education and secondary education are categorized according to phases. For the Elementary Education Program, the phases are: The Pre-Admission Phase, where students focus on courses related to the learner and the community; Phase one, students focus on technology, diversity, and teaching environments; Phase two, students focus on curriculum and assessment; Phase three, students focus on methods and technology; Phase four, the focus is on literacy, culture, and the arts; while Phase five is the capstone experience, which symbolizes the final field experience.

For Secondary Education, the phases are: The Pre-Admission phase, focusing on the learner and the community; Phase one, focusing on curriculum, assessment, and the school context; Phase two, focusing on content methods, literacy, and technology; and

Phase three, the capstone experience, which again is the final field experience. Students are expected to earn a grade of 'C' or higher in all professional education courses.

### **Clinical Experiences**

The Eastern Michigan University teacher preparation program involves successful completion of a comprehensive program of studies designed to assure each prospective teacher encore after encore of effective instruction. These include three Field Experiences in Teacher Education (FETE) courses. FETE courses are a series of one-credit field experiences designed to tie learning in teacher education courses to real classrooms, schools, and communities. Each FETE course is linked to a co-requisite professional education course. The first FETE course is taken by both elementary and secondary education students. The next two experiences are divided into elementary and secondary courses.

There are specific role descriptions for students to ensure their successful completion of FETE courses: They are expected to:

1. Make appropriate contacts, including the assigned cooperating teacher, the school principal, and support staff.
2. Dress professionally.
3. Be on time.
4. Practice professional conduct and language in and out of the classroom.
5. Be prepared for class.
6. Participate actively and ask questions.
7. Demonstrate attentiveness and an eagerness to learn.
8. Notify the school immediately of any change in schedule.
9. Complete FETE assignments.
10. Spend remaining time in school in appropriate professional activities. (Eastern Michigan University, Field Experiences in Teacher Education, n.d.)

### **Pre-Student Teaching**

Each student in the teacher preparation program is required to complete at least 100 hours of pre-student teaching field experience. This experience is observation and interaction with children in a teaching/learning environment. For those students in the elementary program, these hours must be spent with children in Grades K-5, while the secondary students will work with students in Grades 7-12 and in their major subject area.

Pre-student teaching is a precursor to student teaching. It is an important activity, because it prepares the students emotionally and professionally for student teaching. It is designed to help prospective teachers evaluate their own abilities as teachers and to affirm their decision about choosing teaching as a career. Pre-student teaching also enables prospective teachers to understand how the professional education courses in human development and learning, social aspects of teaching, and curriculum and methods relate to the classroom.

It also facilitates the completion of some of the assignments in their professional education courses and provides them with the opportunity to work with and gain experience with children in the respective age groups intimate to their program of study.

For enhancement of their success during the exercise, students are given basic guidelines which they are encouraged to embrace:

1. Student must earn at least 100 hours of pre-student teaching field experience in order to qualify for Student Teaching.
2. These 100 hours must not be more than three years old by the time the student is ready for Student Teaching.
3. Students must gain experience in at least two different classrooms, one of which must be multicultural or urban.



4. Some of the experiences students have had with K-5 or Grades 7-12 children in tutoring, coaching, structured religious activity, scouting, recreational programs and school activities can be counted toward these 100 hours.
5. At least 50% of the 100 hours must be spent in a classroom with the age group relevant to the student's program of study.
6. Students in elementary and secondary programs must complete 60 pre-student teaching hours in FETE courses. (Eastern Michigan University, Field Experiences in Teacher Education n.d.)

On completion of the pre-student teaching field experience, it is expected that the student teacher should acquire knowledge and experience pertaining to: ways in which schools and communities interact to impact student learning; teaching/learning activities in a variety of settings; planning and executing and assessing learning activities for an individual student or group of students; a variety of classroom environments and how they affect student learning; and making valid decisions concerning teaching as a career.

### **Student Teaching**

According to the program bulletin, student teaching is the integrative and capstone experience in the teacher preparation program. It is regarded as an intensive internship and is the responsibility of every student to apply for this practice when they believe they have completed all the pre-requirements. The students' ability to make sound professional decisions is based on their ability to reflect on their professional courses and to apply these educational principles and techniques within the framework of their field internship.

Student teaching allows the student teacher to: implement and evaluate methods and theories of teaching, develop a repertoire of effective practice, identify teaching strengths and weaknesses, learn to reflect on, analyze, and adapt his or her teaching, and to develop a personal teaching style. To be eligible for student teaching, students are

expected to have earned a minimum grade point average at Eastern Michigan of 2.50 as well as a minimum grade point average of 2.50 in major and or minor classes and have passed the Michigan Basic Skills Test.

Placement sites are sought by the College of Education, and are usually chosen based on their richness and dynamic academic and institutional environments. Through the Office of Academic Services, placement sites are evaluated for their support of schools, teachers, and children. Diversity, highly qualified teachers, a high level of parent involvement, and commitment to improved student achievement are a few of the factors that comprise a quality student teaching.

Cooperating teachers who are integral to the success of the field experience must have a minimum of 3 years' teaching experience, a master's degree, a recommendation from the building principal or department head, and must have demonstrated success in teaching children and youth. The process for this selection may vary from one school to another and is accomplished through the cooperative arrangement between the University and the surrounding school districts.

Student teaching is divided into four distinct stages, which are identified as:

Stage 1: Orientation and Observation – weeks 1 and 2. During this period, student teachers familiarize themselves with the school and its policies, the personnel, classroom objectives, procedures, and needs of the individual students they will teach.

Stage 2: Part-time Teaching – weeks 3-11. Student teachers are provided with the opportunity to assist their cooperating teachers, work with small groups and individuals, and gradually assume increased amounts of responsibility for regular duties as well as instruction.

Stage 3: Independent Teaching –weeks 12-14. During this period, student teachers have the primary responsibility for instruction, which is inclusive of planning, teaching, and evaluation of students. A minimum of 10 days is recommended for this period, but this however will be influenced by such factors as (a) the nature of the classes, (b) the student teaching assignments, (c) the progress of the student teacher, (d) the judgment of the cooperating teacher and the University supervisor, and (d) the responsibility and maturity of the student teacher.

Stage 4: Phase-Out and observation – weeks 15-16. During this period, responsibilities are transferred from the student teacher back to the cooperating teacher. The student, however, will continue to assist with various aspects of classroom teaching and be given the opportunity to observe other classes (Eastern Michigan University, (2003b, p. 61).

Outlined below are the basic rules which apply to student teaching for students to achieve the best results from their practice:

1. All professional educational courses must be completed before students are eligible for student teaching.
2. It is not recommended that students take a major or minor course during student teaching, because of its time-intensive nature.
3. Student must submit a list of three schools districts which they regard as their first choice for placement.
4. Students cannot arrange their own teaching assignments and they are not allowed to student teach in the area from which they come or in an environment where their relationship with the staff will impact their evaluation. This will hinder a fair and objective evaluation.
5. The final decision for placement in student teaching is made by the College of Education.
6. Student Teaching will run for a duration of 15 weeks
7. At the elementary level, the student teacher is expected to work in all content areas and with all ability levels during the entire experience.
8. At the secondary level, the student teacher is expected to gradually take on responsibilities equivalent to a full teaching load, with a minimum of four 45-60 minutes classes or three 80-90 minute blocked classes.

Students in Special Education (emotionally impaired, hearing impaired, mentally impaired, physically or otherwise health impaired, and visually impaired) are required to fulfill 6 semester hours of student teaching in general education and an additional 10 semester hours of student teaching in their area of specialization.

### **Special Distinctive Features of the College of Education**

#### **The Office of Collaborative Education (OCE)**

This office ensures the coordination of College of Education projects that collaborate with area K-12 school districts. These activities are brought together under the "umbrella" of the Office of Collaborative Education, thus allowing each project to benefit from the experiences of other projects. The office also disseminates information to school district personnel who are interested in receiving educational services from Eastern or who wish to enquire about collaborative partnership projects (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

#### **The Collaborative School Improvement Program (C-SIP)**

This program offers school building/district staff members a method for improving instructional outcomes. The C-SIP process is an uncomplicated, straightforward problem-solving system which provides an interface between theory, research, and scientific data, on the one hand, and knowledge and understanding of the educational setting, on the other.

Unlike traditional school improvement systems, the C-SIP provides equity to teachers as equal stakeholders in school improvement. The process is aligned with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Public Act 25 guidelines. The essence of the

model is to ensure constructive change through shared decision making at the building or district level. Emphasis is placed on staff collaboration to achieve school improvement.

The staff identify needs within an individual building that reflect their district mission statement and school improvement plan, and the C-SIP model provides structure and direction through a clearly defined six-step process: (a) Awareness, Readiness, Commitment, (b) School Improvement goals, (c) Development and Approval of Plan, (d) Implementation and Monitoring, (e) Evaluation.

Through collaboration, the various stakeholders (the building, local school district, intermediate school district, Eastern Michigan University, and the Michigan Department of Education) assume important roles in ensuring the success of local projects (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

#### The Detroit Comer School and Families Initiative

The Comer Schools and Families Initiative is a collaborative effort that seeks to raise student achievement and promote healthy social, emotional, and psychological growth and development. The collaborators include Detroit Public Schools, Detroit Federation of Teachers, Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors, City-wide School Community Organization, Eastern Michigan University, The Skillman Foundation, and the Yale Child Study Center School Development Program.

For the success of this venture, all stakeholders must work collaboratively with an emphasis on parental involvement. Schools in the project are expected to submit their specific targeted needs for improvement, which are addressed on an individual basis by the project group. Parental involvement is actively encouraged.

The faculty at Eastern is steeply involved in a variety of ways. They coordinate parent facilitators, supervise student teachers, direct internships and practicum projects, and mentor and provide staff development workshops and consultation to teachers and administrators (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

### Consociate Schools

Consociate Schools is a project of the Renaissance Group. This body is a national consortium of 24 colleges and universities with a major commitment to the preparation of educational professionals. These colleges and universities have outstanding teacher education programs. The distinguishing feature of the Consociate School model is that it affords universities to partner with schools in the sharing of resources and opportunities for the advancement of students and instructors in both institutions.

In 1991, Eastern Michigan University partnered with Farmington High School (FHS) to form the first consociate school in the United States. Partnership activities take the form of counseling sessions, pre-student teaching, student teaching, and school improvement (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

### Urban Teacher Certification Program

Through this program, Eastern Michigan University provides non-certified teachers with the opportunity to complete requirements leading to certification while still in-service. Some students in the program are non-certified teachers in Detroit and Flint area schools, while others simply have an interest in or commitment to urban teaching.

Upon completion of all specific program requirements and submission of passing scores on the appropriate state certification tests, students in this program will become

eligible for Michigan teacher certification. The coursework does not lead to a master's degree, nor does it lead to specialized certification in urban teaching. Program completers, however, will have coursework and/or fieldwork in urban teaching and earn a Certificate in Teacher Preparation from Eastern Michigan University (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

#### The Office of Urban Education and Educational Equity

In response to an article in the Teacher Education Reports, entitled "A Call to Action," which reported on "Assessment of Diversity in America's Teaching Force," the College of Education decided it was time to make another attempt at narrowing the achievement gap that exists between minorities and Whites in the education system. According to the article, written by six major educational organizations, there is need for an increase of minority teachers in the classroom to increase the academic achievement level of minority students.

With the "No Child Left Behind" thrust, the government has placed a great emphasis on the importance of having quality teachers in the classrooms to raise students' achievement levels. While this is commendable, however, the writers believe that serious attention must be paid to issues of cultural competence and diversity in the teacher workforce, if there is ever going to be an impact on the performance of students of color.

According to the report, students of color tend to show a higher academic, personal, and social performance when taught by teachers from their own minority group. Likewise, teachers of color have higher performance expectations for students of color from their own ethnic group. Consequently, significantly greater resources need to be

targeted to the recruitment, preparation, and support of a teaching cadre that is fully qualified, ethnically diverse, and culturally competent.

The Office of Urban Education and Educational Equity therefore seeks to offer programs designed to enhance the recruitment and retention of minority teachers and prepare educational personnel with particular expertise that will allow them to operate in urban environments. In addition there is curriculum development, and research and technology within the scope of urban education. The objectives of the office are encapsulated in five major themes outlined below.

1. MARS Program (Minority Achievement Retention and Success): This program currently serves final-year prospective teachers. Through the Office of Urban Education and Educational Equity, this already successful program is being expanded to serve a larger group of minority students.

2. Developing cultural competency: The office creates an expansion of the Cultural Competency Induction Model, working with the needs and resources of first- and second-year minority teachers in local school districts. It plans and organizes professional development seminars on cultural competency for the entire faculty and staff within the MARS schools.

3. Supporting Urban Education Programs: Develop a master's program in Urban Education for MARS students, advance the research and theories associated with cultural competence, develop annual summer institutes focusing on the development of cultural competencies, prepare materials and strategies and organize summer programs for K-12 students with the aim of recruiting future minority students and teachers.

4. Research and Development: Develop collaborative research agendas that



address issues related to the elimination of cultural bias in assessment and the achievement gap; work collaboratively with other diversity units at the University.

5. Technology: Develop online technology support for professional development, data collection, and web resources for minority educators: disseminate research and teaching materials related to urban education issues; develop a stronger process for collection, of data for minority student achievement, retention, and future programming needs (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

#### Office of Collaborative Education

Through the Office of Collaborative Education, Eastern Michigan University has established a Systemic Change Initiative with an integrated approach involving collaboration between school districts within their network. This is a process for integrating the strengths of a training institution with a network of school systems in order to improve upon the method, process, and learning outcomes directly related to each institution's mission. This should serve to enhance the goal of a more collaborative educational system.

Through the systemic change initiative process, educational reform is encouraged – changes in roles, rules, and relationships among all stakeholders in the system. The sole purpose is to improve students' learning outcomes. The primary goals of the project are: (a) decentralizing authority, (b) implementing student-centered learning, which is less generic and more personalized, less competitive, and more cooperative, (c) assessing student and organizational performance, which is consistent with changes in the curriculum and the educational system (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

### Transition to Teaching

Transition to Teaching signifies a grant awarded by the US Department of Education for the purpose of improving educational quality aimed at increasing students' achievement. Within this context, Eastern Michigan University, Michigan State University, and University of Michigan – Flint have formed a partnership in support of the Flint Community Schools. These institutions provide a laboratory of learning where teaching and learning strengthen the future of high-quality teachers.

The Flint Community Schools District is the third largest district in the State of Michigan. Over the past 40 years, this school district has suffered declining enrollment, “white flight,” charter schools, and a changing economy, resulting in a diminished state of affairs both in student enrollment and achievement.

Consequently, the goal of the Transition to Teaching Project, then, in support of the No Child Left Behind legislation, and the critical role it plays in influencing the future of education, is to assist the Flint Community Schools in recruiting, preparing, and providing sustained, quality support to future highly qualified teachers in this district (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

### Affiliations

The College of Education has established connections and membership with various national organizations as a means of service and enhancement of professional education. It is a member of The Michigan Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; The Consortium for Outstanding Achievement in Teaching with Technology (COATT); and the Association of Teacher Educators and Michigan Association of Teacher Educators into which faculty members hold membership.

The affiliated partnerships are: American Association College for Teacher Education; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education; Renaissance group; Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities; SINO – American Consortium and Council of Great City Colleges of Education (Eastern Michigan University 2005a).

#### Accrediting Organizations

Eastern Michigan University College of Education is accredited by the following organizations:

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE); American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; Association for Childhood Education International; Council for Exceptional Children; Council on Accreditation of Counseling-Related Educational Programs; Council on Education of the Deaf; International Reading Association; International Society for Technology in Education; International Technology Education Association; Council on Technology Teacher Education; National Association for the Education of Young Children; National Association of Schools of Music; National Council of Teachers of English; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; and National Middle School Association (Eastern Michigan University, 2005a).

#### **Through the Eyes of the Interviewees**

Critical information about Eastern Michigan Teacher Education Program was ascertained from interview protocols. Five categories of stakeholders were interviewed.

These persons are representative of the various groups that serve and are served by the college community: The Department Chair – administration; Faculty – teacher educators; Senior students – pre-service student body; Teacher graduate – product; Cooperating teacher –community partnership for field experiences.

The individuals in each category were asked a different set of questions, although in some instances there were a few that overlapped. The number of questions that were asked of each group is as follows: Department Chair – eight; Faculty member – eight; Senior students (focus group) – seven; Teacher graduate – six; and Cooperating teacher – five. The interviews followed a more semi-structured format. Although questions were pre-determined and standardized, allowance was given for probing to be done.

The responses from these structured open-ended questions allowed for an unbiased explication of the perceptions of those involved, their expectations, and understanding, and how they account for and take action in light of the way they are connected to the program. I examined each question separately according to the various aspects of teacher education that was addressed as I conducted a comparative analysis of the responses of the various stakeholders.

### Program Components

This section documents five questions that were asked relative to structural components which should form the basis of teacher education programs, and how these were organized specifically to develop Eastern Michigan Teacher Education Program. In light of the administrative nature of the questions and the massive size of the teacher education program, the associate dean, the program director, and interim director were

the three persons from whom direct responses were sought. The responses were discussed in the order listed.

*1. What are the major components of effective pre-service teacher education programs?*

From *the associate dean's* perspective, a strong content knowledge, initial skills, and cultural competence are critical areas that should form the core of teacher education program components. "Teachers have to know content and they have to be passionate about it," she commented. Having a great love for what they do over loving the children they teach, in the dean's estimation, will yield greater results in the classroom than if they love the children and have no passion for what they do.

The initial skills, acquired from classroom management, lesson planning, and assessment matters are important because of inclusion in the classroom. In addition, she noted that students will not be able to acquire all these skills in a 4-year program; therefore they need also to be equipped with lifelong learning skills that will allow them to identify needed resources that will enrich their teaching/learning environment.

*The director* emphasized the need for content, pedagogy, and field experiences. In her estimation:

Prospective teachers need to have a good grounding on the content they need to know to be a good teacher. That is, you cannot be a good math teacher if you do not know math. I think they need good grounding in what I would consider the pedagogical component . . . and I think they also need the more field experiences the better. Good grounding in the field.

*The interim director* specified that, among other areas, such as content, methodology, developmental psychology, and cultural awareness, assessment is a critical component that many teacher education programs do not emphasize. He lauded Eastern

Michigan for being among those that recognized the role that assessment must play in teacher training, hence making it an integral part of their program.

Eastern's program administrators advocated content, methodology, assessment, cultural awareness, and field experiences. Entitled *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1990b) identifies five propositions that reflect their consensus in this regard. One of those propositions states that "teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to the students."

Darling-Hammond (1998) also writes that, of first importance, teachers need to know subject matter very deeply and flexibly. In addition she mentioned their need to understand child and adolescent development and how to support growth in the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional domain. An understanding of their cultural, family, and intellectual differences is necessary for teaching in ways that connect with students.

Ishler (1997) refers to the education of the nation's teachers as vital to the welfare of the country. She elaborated: "We teachers and teacher educators are a major force in shaping our country's destiny. The developing minds of our country are entrusted to us, and depending on our knowledge, pedagogical skills and commitment, we help Americans learn citizenship and evolve as a democratic society" (p. viii).

Although there is no guarantee that teachers will use the knowledge and skills that they acquire during training, the negative effects of not acquiring this standard of training will be more detrimental to the success of their practice in the classroom.

2. *How is your program structured to reflect these components?*

In responding to this question, *the director* made reference to the standards set by the Michigan State Board of Education. According to these standards, prospective teachers must have a major in a content area. Those for secondary must have a major and a minor, while those for elementary must have a content major and a minor or three minors. She noted that some elementary students will opt for three minors instead of one major because of the broader preparation. On the other hand, those who choose to focus on one major will get the experience of thinking in depth about their subject, which may not be totally possible when focusing on three minors.

Further, *the director* explained that elementary students are given the choice of limited majors based on the elementary school curriculum. In addition to the content areas, there are also professional courses that are organized into phases and have a field experience component. Before gaining admission to the program, students must, according to state requirements, pass the Basic Skills Test in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Another cluster of courses she mentioned is the pedagogical courses. These include social foundation, multicultural societies, curriculum planning, and classroom assessment. In the final phase, there are courses that are specific to the students' area of focus. In retrospect, the director compared her training in teacher education with what they presently offer to students today. She recalled: "It is very intensive and a much better preparation than I had as a beginning teacher. I think back at how much I knew then, and they are better prepared than I was."

According to *the interim director*, the program is structured to ensure that all the required courses are built in. In addition, he explained that a major theme of their

structure is diversity and so this is factored in through developmental psychology, curriculum, social foundations, and 100 hours of pre-service training, at least half of which must be in a diverse educational setting.

3. *What is your program vision and how does this influence the program structure?*

Although she has limited control over program structure by virtue of her position, *the associate dean* would like the program to be tightened up, field experiences to be linked to courses and not separate and disjointed, and program assessment to be comprehensive, intense, and ongoing.

While the associate dean concentrated on her vision for program improvement, the program director's focus was on program operation within the context of the theme through which it is aligned. She spoke thoughtfully:

I think the heart of the vision is that we see ourselves as an institution that is very applied. We vary in practice and we believe in giving back to the community and in community involvement. So the teacher preparation fits well.

She explained that this philosophy is used to chart the program development, if the requirements for state standards in teacher education are excluded. The theme statement for the college also reflects this thrust. She then commented on the theme accordingly:

Caring Professional Educators for a Diverse and Democratic Society (CPEDDS). Each one of these words is very rich, hence we do want to have people who are caring, and who are developing community of learners. We want professional educators who really know their content, who know their pedagogy, who are attuned to the needs of students and how they are doing. We have a heavy emphasis making sure they are prepared for our diverse student population with diversity of all possible variety and also to prepare them in a way that they become prepared to be active citizens. They are thinking students, so they can make critical judgment and so on, which is big. That's what we are training for.



From *the interim director's* perspective, his program vision is far reaching and will have concentrations in advanced programming at the doctoral level in urban and nursing education for the adult learner. He believes this expansion is the kind of growth that is needed at this time to allow them the capacity to more adequately address the educational problems with which their country is faced. The emphasis, he outlined, will be on operations at the practitioner level rather than the theoretical level, as observations in other programs indicate that this is the area of greatest weakness.

Eastern's vision and emphasis on diversity/urban education, nursing education, and program improvement have to be very crucial considering the multicultural nature of the American population and the shortage of nurses. The importance of providing teachers with the cultural competence that teaching in diverse classrooms demands cannot be overly emphasized. Hollins and Guzman (2005) agree and they portend that

providing high quality schooling for all students especially those who are presently underserved by the educational system, including students of color, low-income students, English language learners and students in rural and urban settings, is among the most important challenges facing the nation. (p. 477)

According to Ladson-Billings (1999) and Zeichner and Hoeft (1996), teacher education has been criticized from both inside as well as outside regarding inadequacy of traditional teacher preparation for teaching students in diverse populations. In view of this, as well as the No Child Left Behind Act of the government's initiative, it seems incumbent on colleges and universities in the business of preparing teachers to revisit and restructure their programs in light of these criticisms.

From their research, Hollins and Guzman (2005) report that "over the last decade colleges and universities across the country have responded to these challenges by altering their courses, curriculum, field work and other policies to include attention to

diversity and multicultural education” (p. 478). From the program theme and the response of the directors, it is apparent that Eastern Michigan’s program is strategically poised for advancement in this area.

4. *What is the conceptual framework that guides your program development?*

*The director* made reference to the theme statement which encompasses the acronym for the conceptual framework: “Caring Professional Educators for a Diverse and Democratic Society.” This theme statement is representative of the underlying structure of the program. It ensures coherence among the various program components: the vision and mission statements, purposes, and goals; knowledge bases; candidate proficiencies; and assessment processes and outcomes.

5. *What strategies do you employ to ensure that your program achieves its goals and objectives?*

*The associate dean* advocated that faculty is critical to program success. They have to be committed to the program vision because they are the ones who will ultimately take the product to the students. Regardless of the uniqueness or the strength of the program plan, unless the faculty is committed to implement that plan, it will become obsolete. The faculty can therefore make or break programs depending on whether or not they choose to align themselves with the direction the program takes.

Most definitely, it is the faculty that determines to a great extent the success or failure of the program as the implementation ultimately rests with them. Evans et al. (2002) portend that the teacher educator is as important to the education of prospective teachers as the classroom teacher is to the education of primary or secondary pupils.

Ducharme (1987) also notes the importance of the faculty to program restructuring success and survival. He says:

If teacher education programs are to change significantly, and they must change if they are to survive, they will do so through the efforts of existing teacher education faculty. The plethora of national reports calling for improvement in the elementary and secondary schools has led to calls for reform in teacher education programs. . . . These conditions must be met by a largely-in place teacher education faculty, a faculty prepared with one set of assumptions confronted during their careers with changing emphases and facing a future filled with change. (p. 71)

In terms of identifying special strategies, *the director* explained that a cadre of faculty members from College of Education, Arts and Sciences, student teachers, supervisors, and those who supervise schools, collaborated to identify what should be the outcomes for the teacher education program. These strategies were ultimately defined by the teacher education faculty. Further, she said, these were carefully examined to determine how best they could be assessed.

The need for standardization in their assessment as well as collaboration is very critical to the success of program goals. She spoke of the challenge that must be embraced if these goals are ever to be realized.

There are from 45 to 47 faculty in the department and so there are different program areas; curriculum, educational psychology and so forth. And so the different program areas got together and looked at the outcomes and they said, we think in our core course, as part of this program, we can be responsible for assessing this outcome or that outcome. And so the different program areas took responsibility for the different program outcomes . . . so we do have a series of shared assessments. If you take curriculum, you will write a curriculum unit and it will be written to these particular standards and will be assessed with this particular group project. And for each core course, there is an assessment of that type. Getting people to work together and coordinate is very challenging, and at the scale that we have here, it is even more challenging, with many, many part-time people.

Program evaluation, as the director mentioned, is also an integral part of the teacher education program. As an NCATE accredited institution, they reevaluate every 5

to 7 years. In addition, there is state evaluation which parallels NCATE as well as evaluation that is done every time a content standard is altered by the state. The University also has its general program of evaluation and each college falls under this structure.

*The interim director's* first response was similar to that of the director. He advised that there is a departmental advisory committee that meets once per semester or two or three times per year. This committee comprised private as well as public practicing classroom teachers, principals, superintendents, and representatives from state department of education. The committee's main responsibility is to address real issues affecting education and advise the University how it can better structure its program to prepare teachers to function as they encounter these challenges.

Second, he spoke of the fact that the department remains cognizant of the state's initiatives as well as NCATE program standards which help them to determine when to reorganize and/or restructure in order to satisfy these requirements for advanced accreditation and continued state approval. Those who are intimately involved in education at the elementary and secondary level as well as those who provide needed sponsorship are equipped to give advice and/or make decisions regarding intelligent course of action that will affect the practice of education at these levels.

It is evidence of wise planning, innovative thinking, and the commitment to serve effectively that would propel Eastern Michigan to operate through advice from a collaboratively structured advisory committee. As the interim director pointed out: "We want to ensure that we do the right things." This definitely suggests commitment to serving effectively and with distinction.

With regard to collaborative planning for standardization and assessment that the director emphasized, Sergiovanni (1992) recommends that, for successful collaboration, there needs to be loyalty to school and shared values, respect for and connectedness to the professional experience of one's colleagues, shared commitment to the goals and values of the profession, and a true concern for real teaching (p. 213). The successful collaborative planning that characterizes Eastern's program structure is indicative of the level of commitment to which Sergiovanni makes reference.

### Assessment Techniques

This section addressed the matter of assessment and its place in pre-service teacher education. Two questions were asked. The first required the program interim director to identify his assessment techniques, while the professor, the teacher graduate, and the senior students' focus group were asked to identify what in their estimation are suitable assessment techniques for pre-service teacher education programs. The responses will be discussed in the order listed previously.

*1. What are your assessment techniques?*

*The interim director* was extremely comprehensive in describing the assessment techniques that are employed in monitoring Eastern's program. Assessment of program was done in three categories: the program offering, the faculty, and the students. According to his explanation, these are distinct aspects and the techniques used had to be suitable for what was being examined and for the information that was needed.

The program offerings are usually assessed based on recommendations from the advisory committee that examines a number of topics/areas which are intimate to the program. Departmental meetings are also another avenue through which assessment of

program is executed. The interim director explained that these meetings are usually held for as long as 3 hours and a couple of hours are spent on a particular topic. As is needed, the group may also spend a month or two on an issue that is deemed critical. For example one topic that has been addressed is ensuring that field experiences and curriculum content are adequate, based on diversity and other challenges in education.

External forces like state laws also impact the assessment procedure as the interim director continued to explain. As often as state laws change, so the program has to be revisited and restructured to reflect and accommodate these new developments.

The faculty members are assessed on three criteria: service, teaching effectiveness, and research. Service is assessed through responsible involvement based on voluntary and assigned duties. Teaching effectiveness is monitored through observation by a personnel committee as well as by the administrators, and faculty are expected to summarize and improve data from student evaluations. Research engagement has to be reported in terms of how it affects their area of specialization as well as their teaching.

Student assessment is done through requirements for their course offerings. A unique feature of Eastern, according to the interim director, is the fact that all teacher education students have to complete a course in assessment. On completion, the students have to compile a classroom assessment project covering four units of study and showing all the areas of the curriculum: units, topics, goals and objectives, assessment/evaluation (traditional paper and pencil tests), reflecting all types of items and an alternative measure. In addition students are expected to do a self reflection on the project.

While assessment is ongoing, the program director informed me that as an NCATE accredited institution, every 5 to 7 years a major assessment for this

accreditation takes place. State evaluation, which parallels NCATE, is also done, while individual programs are altered as often as the state changes its content standards.

2. *What assessment techniques are suitable for teacher education programs?*

*The professor* described assessment as a very sensitive issue with tremendous value. Student assessment in the College of Education is very difficult, however, because of the size of the student population and the time and content intensive nature of the courses. Assessment process is driven by their accreditation program and has to be as practical as possible and of a continuous nature. Student assessment is therefore in keeping with the nature of the course that is being taught. Consequently, therefore, the technique that is used is determined by what is being assessed and the information that is needed. Alternative as well as the traditional paper and pencil measure is used.

In her response *the teacher graduate* described the portfolio as an effective assessment in showing the creativity of a teacher. However, she explained that it does not show the effectiveness of his/her ability to handle situations beyond instruction. To her, there is so much more to a teacher beyond teaching the curriculum. She advised that teachers must know how to effectively manage their classrooms, show flexibility, and develop relationships with their students.

*The student* who responded first described an assignment that they had for their curriculum course. She thought it was very comprehensive, because it required them to use all the skills that they had learned. At the end of the project everyone felt that they had actually produced something that would be very beneficial to them in their future classroom practice. To this, they all agreed wholeheartedly.

In one student's estimation, this assignment is representative of an authentic assessment and it is the ideal technique to be employed. She applauded her assessment professor who instructed them regarding how to select the most suitable method of assessment based on the information that is needed. She cautioned them to ask, "What do you want to find out? What is it really doing for you? If you want to know if the child can change a tire, have him change the tire." In a very confident tone she went on: "It's authentic, it's actually assessing what they want to know, it's not just busy work, it's not just extraneous detailed information and then you forget it. It's practical."

Whatever form assessment takes, when we examine Tellez's (1996) counsels, we must agree that it must be authentic and meaningful for both teacher and students. He instructs that "assessment techniques are authentic according to the degree to which they are meaningful to and helpful for teachers in the exploration of their practices" (p. 707). At Eastern Michigan University, assessment in teacher education is not just another activity, but is strategically planned to ensure authenticity, meaningfulness, and adequacy as it is used to ascertain pertinent information for overall program improvement.

### Program Curriculum

This section dealt with three questions regarding the content of pre-service teacher education program curriculum and its relationship to the practice of education. The first, addressing specifically the content of the curriculum, was asked of the professor, the second was asked of the professor, the teacher graduate, and the senior students' focus group, while the third was asked of the professor. For the second and third questions, I will examine the professor's response first, followed by the responses from the senior students and the teacher graduate.



1. *What do you think should constitute the content of pre-service teacher education curriculum?*

*The professor* was passionate when she stated her opinion.

I would probably list things that you may not find in a teacher education program currently, because I feel that today, to teach the diverse populations of students, there needs to be a very heavy emphasis on what we refer to as cultural competencies.

In identifying other competencies she continued to say:

I believe there needs to be a foundational piece in teacher education that covers the history of education. I do not believe that teachers do get a very comprehensive overview of history, because many of the issues and challenges of education today have their roots in the history and I find that they are very, very unaware of that, so that certainly needs to be a part.

She also spoke of the need for more emphasis on the different foundations, such as the historical, social, cultural, and philosophical as very often these are covered superficially. Placing a heavy emphasis on cultural competencies in teacher education is understandable within the context of an ever-increasing multicultural educational community, especially in American societies.

2. *How should the teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?*

“Very heavily related” is the way *the professor* described what should be the nature of the relationship. A factor that she regarded as being integral to teachers’ success in the classroom is communication. Consequently, in her opinion, prospective teachers ought to be able to communicate with the diverse student population they will encounter in their classes. She counseled:

Communication is the vehicle by which we teach and there are so many issues particularly with the diversity of students we have in the United States today. . . . As a teacher you have to become bicultural in the sense that you have come from

particularly a dominant culture, middle class, you have to understand first who you are and learning needs that you may have that you are not aware of, communicating with families for example, because family is a very integral part of education. This is one that is most challenging.

Another point the professor emphasized was that pre-service students need to be exposed to diverse classrooms at a very early stage in their career training. Field experiences must begin promptly and should be linked to courses that are being completed. As a support base, she advised that faculty members should be aware of what is happening in these schools and this information should be used to inform their pedagogy.

Although communication with parents may be a challenging feat, the National Academy of Education (2005) suggests that

teachers should be prepared to find out more about communities families and individual students. As students become aware of family and community values norms and experiences, they can help mediate the boundary crossing that many students must manage between home and school and they can better engage their students' parents in the work of the school. (p. 21)

Further, Dillard (1997) writes that it is crucial that pre-service teachers be given the opportunities to interact with others of diverse backgrounds and culture. She advised that bilingualism and bidialectalism should be encouraged in teacher education programs (p. 95).

*The students* were clear and transparent in their response. "I think there needs to be a partnership between our professors here at the University and the teachers out in the schools so that we can actually be kept aware of what is happening," was the first student's response. Another expressed the need for standardization in curriculum planning across the nation. She remarked:

I think there should be some amount of standardization where all teacher education programs teach certain courses like assessment. As a nation, we should try to come up with what our students should be learning and ensure that all teacher education programs teach these things.

Another argued:

Those who are our professors should have one foot in the University and the other foot out into the schools, doing research, getting involved with at-risk students, tutoring, mentoring, and staying informed on the cutting edge. We do not want to hear that “20 years ago when I was a teacher. . .” If they are not up-to-date, then by the time we get out there we might be obsolete also.

These responses suggest the need for pre-service teacher education programs to be reflective of the challenges that are perceived through “current research, theory and pedagogy generic as well as related to the wisdom of practice” (Ishler, 1997, p. xi). The Eastern students contended that their training will not be suitable or relevant to the happenings in the societies if their professors are divorced from research and community classroom life. Their comment has to be instructive for strategic planning and reorganization of training programs.

Goodlad (1990) is one of education’s prolific writers and researchers. His recommendations for a restructuring of teacher education state that “programs for the education of educators must be characterized in all respects by the conditions of learning that future teachers are to establish in their own schools and classrooms” (p. 290). This is quite comparative to the students’ views of the relationship that should exist between the teacher education curriculum and the practice of education.

According to *the teacher graduate’s* perspective,

the teacher education curriculum should focus more attention on preparing prospective teachers for situations beyond classroom instruction. Prospective teachers should be trained in dealing with situations such grading, time management, parents, co-workers, extracurricular activities, attendance, tardiness, and homework.

### 3. *What is the place of research in teacher education programs?*

*The director* commented: "I think it is important and is becoming increasingly more important in the states right now." Further, she spoke of the need for teacher education personnel to be always researching and writing in light of political pressure to demonstrate that teacher preparation makes a difference in the schools and classrooms.

Serious people with money, influence and power are asking those questions and demanding to see the research that indicates that teachers who are prepared do a better job than those who are not prepared. To me it's like saying, let's go into the emergency room and see who does better; a nurse who graduated from a nursing school or somebody who has had a two weeks first aid course. . . . And so it is very important especially in the political climate, we must be able to demonstrate the difference between someone who is prepared as a professional educator and someone who knows their content, but doesn't know anything about children and how they work.

*The professor* made reference to action research which she believes should characterize all classroom teachers and teacher education professors' practice. The idea is that it is extremely important for teachers to evaluate their own practice not just in teacher education but at other levels as well. She explained that, at Eastern, students especially at the advanced levels are instructed and required to engage in action research.

Teachers do not see themselves as researchers so it really empowers them and they begin to look at things from a different perspective as they really begin to think seriously about what they are doing. I think it is inspirational for many of the teachers.

The integral place of research in teacher education specifically and in the practice of education in general was clear, although both persons focused on a different dimension.

## Teacher Graduates

This set of two questions addressed the characteristics which should describe the ideal teacher graduate in the context of those attributes and dispositions which are deemed necessary for effective teaching in the primary, elementary, or K-12 classroom. The director and the professor were asked the first question, while the second was asked of the associate dean, the interim director, the teacher graduate, and the senior students' focus group. The responses will be discussed in the order presented.

*1. What characteristics should describe the ideal teacher graduate and how do these compare to the characteristics necessary for effective teaching?*

*The director's* description was direct and encompassing. The teacher must be enthusiastic about teaching and about the content he/she has to teach. In explaining her reasons, she noted that teaching is a difficult and tremendously complex craft and if teachers do not love what they do, they will not be able to do it well. Although it is necessary, she admitted, being a caring person is not sufficient, as "the caring without the content will not go anywhere."

The ideal teacher graduate must also have a great deal of cognitive complexity and must be able to think on his/her feet. Because of the multiplicity of variables that he/she will have to analyze during an instructional period, the teacher cannot be too simplistic or concrete in his thinking. The teacher also needs to know his content well, have a whole repertoire of pedagogies, and must be committed to the development of children as individuals with unique differences.

Being curious, open to, and excited about the world and having a great deal of emotional resiliency are other characteristics that the director identified. Quite often the

teacher will feel as though everything has failed, she explained, but down the road there is the payoff, hence the patience is needed.

*The professor's* number one characteristic was 'culturally competent.' She believes that this is of utmost importance in comparison to knowledge of content, classroom management, and pedagogical skills. In her view:

If they are not culturally competent, they are not going to be effective, because you need to be effective with everybody and I do not believe you can be effective with all the diversity that is found in our classrooms today if you are not culturally competent.

I am an advocate of the notion that if the student has not learned, the teacher has not taught. I believe effectiveness should be measured by the extent to which all the students in a particular class have been transported from a lower to a higher stage in the learning process. The National Academy of Education (2005) portends that a professional teacher can no longer naively assert: "I taught a great lesson but nobody got it" (p. 6). In respect of this idea, the committee makes reference to John Dewey's statement that "teaching is like selling commodities; they are not sold if nobody buys them" (p. 6). Effective teachers must be able to reach all children in their classroom.

*The professor* was also quick to point out that as a complement to cultural competence, teachers must be ready to have this special relationship with all their students and especially those of color. They need to be known and loved and this is only possible if the teacher is committed to what he/she does and is able to do it well. Again, as the director pointed out, the teachers need to be caring, know their content well, have a whole repertoire of pedagogies, and be committed to the development of children as individuals with unique differences. These unique differences, I am certain, will emerge from their diverse backgrounds.

2. *How would you describe an effective teacher?*

In her opening response, *the associate dean* provided clarity regarding the use of the term *characteristics* when describing effective teachers. She explained that in contemporary society, the term that is now more generally accepted is *dispositions* rather than characteristics. While a person's characteristics are inherent and cannot be changed, the dispositions can and therefore are more conducive to growth and development.

Being passionate and knowledgeable about your content area, knowledgeable about pedagogy, caring enough to know about your students, how they learn, being receptive to the fact that students learn in different ways and teaching in different ways to meet the needs of each student, being open to the potential of each child, and being self-reflective are some of the dispositions that the dean described. She remarked that these are all qualities that can be instilled and shaped as teachers remain committed and mature into the profession.

*The interim director* highlighted two dispositions that he admired in his teachers of yesterday. The effective teacher is interesting, exciting, and will make lessons come alive rather than just presented as a bunch of facts. In addition, the effective teacher knows just how to capture the interest of her students without jumping up and screaming and yelling.

According to *the teacher graduate*, an effective teacher is one who has rapport with his/her students and is able to teach to their individual learning needs. He/she is a life-long learner constantly trying to incorporate the very best practices in his/her classroom.

*The students'* concept of the effective teacher can be summarized based on the responses they gave to the question. Their responses can be compared to the general ideas of their professor and administrators and also that which exist in the literature of yesterday and today.

1. The effective teacher presents the material and ties it to real world situations. The student said: "Not just doing things in a mundane way, but instead making the lessons come alive by relating it to the real world."

2. The effective teacher respects the students and the students in turn respect him/her. They work in a collaborative kind of environment.

3. The effective teacher is aware of each student's level of learning. The Student's comment warranted documenting: "Everyone learns at a different rate and in a different way, so the teacher knows what each student needs and teaches so that all their needs are addressed."

4. The effective teacher provides much feedback to students on their progress.

5. The effective teacher is responsible for knowing his content and keeping up to date with new information.

Regarding which is more integral to the teacher's success in the classroom, one student felt strongly that methodology has a greater impact. She believes that although the teacher may not know all his content and still be successful, if he doesn't know how to relate this to the kids, he would have failed already. Another felt that both content and methodology are of equal importance to the teacher's success. The resurgence of these characteristics which have all been identified in the literature is suggestive of their



strength and is instructive for training and preparation of teachers at the pre-service and in-service levels.

### Field Experiences

This section examined the organization and importance of field experiences in pre-service teacher education. Eight questions were asked. The first was directed to the student teaching director and the professor; the second, third, and fourth were directed to the student teaching director and the cooperating teacher; the fifth was directed to the senior students; the sixth and seventh to the teacher graduate; and the eighth to the student teaching director and the cooperating teacher. The responses will be discussed chronologically.

*1. How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher?*

*The student teaching director* described the massive student teaching program that Eastern organizes and directs for approximately 700 students each semester. This is an extremely arduous task, but strategic planning and collaborative endeavor have facilitated the success that has always been realized.

In order for students to receive maximum benefits from the experience, a cadre of trained, experienced supervisors is responsible for organizing their placements in and around the neighboring towns of Ypsilanti, where the University is located. These persons with a minimum of a master's degree are drawn from faculty, superintendents, building principals, and experienced classroom teachers. The director emphasized the fact that her supervisors are educated, trained, experienced in the classroom, and good at coaching and mentoring student teachers.

Those who are not faculty members are brought to the University campus for professional training, where they are exposed to the curriculum, and work together with the faculty from pre-student teaching through to the culmination of the student teaching experience. Of importance, too, the director mentioned that approximately 50% of all supervisors are full time, which means that these persons carry a light or no teaching assignments and they reside in the areas where the students they supervise are placed.

*The professor* recommended that the “Professional Development Schools Model” would be ideal and effective for the organization of field experiences. “It is the most authentic,” she proposed first of all, because students are immersed into it and the arrangement affords them the opportunities to experience various cultural climates over their practicum period. Second, she made reference to the relationship between the cooperating teachers and the University supervisors that the model facilitates: “I think that the teachers in the cooperating schools and the University supervisors should have a collaborative relationship. I see field experience as a team effort between these two entities.”

With regard to Professional Development Schools, Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) have this to say:

These are partnerships between schools of education and local schools in which the school becomes a site for the clinical preparation of groups of prospective teachers. The PDS models state-of-art practice, involves school – and university-based faculty in developing a program of learning for beginning teachers, and frequently also provides a site for developing collegial research on teaching. (p. 38)

Another area of challenge the professor voiced is the lack of enough culturally competent supervisors for the teaching practice. This is an area that is very critical and has to be pertinently addressed in any field experience, in order for students in culturally

diverse classrooms to be properly supervised. After all, if students are to benefit successfully from their field experience, they have to be suitably placed and adequately supervised.

The organization of field experience at Eastern Michigan reflects the level of thought and work that characterize this planning to ensure that students have a rich and fulfilling experience. Assigning student teachers to mature, experienced, trained teachers who demonstrate mentoring skills is ideal for the caliber of quality teachers that is needed in the K-12 classrooms.

2. *How should cooperating teachers be chosen?*

*The student teaching director* explained that cooperating teachers must meet the requirements of the school district and the University. For the school district they have to be tenured and for the University they are required to have a master's degree and certification in the area in which they are exercising supervision. In addition to these requirements, the University expects extensive classroom teaching experience and the ability to mentor.

According to *the cooperating teacher*, the choice of such persons should be the responsibility of the University coordinator and the building principal or his nominee of the cooperating school. They must be chosen based on tenure, experience, and commitment to teaching and mentoring. "It is a difficult responsibility," she commented thoughtfully, "so if you have not developed good practice skills and are not committed you will not be able to follow through with it and the student teacher will suffer."

3. *What are the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher?*

*The director* pointed out that the cooperating teacher's responsibilities are outlined in the student teaching handbook and each cooperating teacher is given a copy of this text. Supervisors in the districts are responsible to conduct training with these persons so that the University's expectations are clarified and understood.

*The cooperating teacher* regarded flexibility as her biggest responsibility. She believes that it's a challenge to have to open up yourself and your class to these new persons, making them understand that they are welcomed there as a teacher and not a helper for you. In keeping with that, she informed me that her duty is to guide the student teacher so that he/she will advance from one stage of development in classroom management and instruction to the next. She does not subscribe to the view that student teachers must copy their cooperating teachers' teaching style; instead she believes that as far as possible they should be allowed to display their individuality as they are guided.

One cannot deny that those teachers who are already overwhelmed will not be able to adequately provide the kind of supervision that student teaching supervision demands. Establishing an atmosphere that renders a cordial relationship possible is crucial to any measure of success to be attained during the exercise. According to Morehead, Lyman, and Foyle (2003), cooperating teachers need to be reminded of the time-intensive nature of their responsibility especially if they are already "stretched to the limit."

4. *How long should teachers remain in the classroom before they are eligible to function as cooperating teachers?*

*The director* advised that if the district requires tenure, the teacher has to be in the classroom for at least 4 years before he/she can be asked to operate in this capacity. She

emphasized, however, that the time period is not the only factor that is taken into consideration when selecting these persons. As was already mentioned, they must be trained with a master's degree; however, in situations where an experienced tenured teacher displays the master teaching skills and attributes, but does not have a master's degree, the director advised that exceptions would be given and this teacher would be assigned a student teacher.

*The cooperating teacher* agreed that at least for the first 4 years, new teachers should not be used as cooperating teachers. In her opinion, this is the period during which they will be developing and honing their classroom management and instructional skills. She recalled that her first couple of years in the classroom were extremely difficult and would not have facilitated her mentoring anyone as she needed to be mentored herself.

5. *What is the most important part of your training?*

The first answer from *the senior students* was classroom management, to which a second student sighed in agreement. Another explained how she had an entire course which dealt only with the management of disciplinary problems. She remarked: "I don't know because I have had a full course with nothing but classroom management. I had a whole semester on that. If I hadn't gone through it, I can't imagine not being prepared for that." One student's experience was not positive, however. He said, "I don't feel like I have had any classroom management yet. So I don't know. You couldn't take it away if it wasn't there already."

On the matter of classroom management, Morehead et al. (2003) remind student teachers that classroom management in diverse settings is the key to successful practice. This can be carried over into the regular in-service practice. From experience, I can

underscore that classroom management is critical, and the teacher's success actually begins when he/she can organize and plan meaningful, interesting, instructional experiences that will capture and hold the attention of his/her class.

In addressing this aspect of classroom life, The National Academy of Education (2005) documents the following statement:

Teachers who know how to structure activities and interactions so that they are orderly, purposeful and based on common understandings of what to do and how to behave gives students more opportunity to succeed because they understand more of what is expected of them. (p. 26)

But how does a course in classroom management compare with an entire semester of student teaching? The students agreed with each other that their field experiences allowed them to transfer most of what they were learning into practice. Here is how one of them expressed it:

If I should narrow it down to one thing, the actual experience would probably be the most important thing. The pre-experience, the observation, the getting into the classroom and working with the kids gradually has prepared me more than anything else. I now feel more confident about going into the field and actually student teaching.

This discussion seemed to have inspired the students into unearthing their concerns regarding some of their field experiences. Here is a gist of what they divulged:

1. I actually found the class observations disappointing. We've been told this is what you need to do; lesson plans. I've gone to classes and there are no lesson plans. There is no assessment. There is no evaluation of the teacher or his/her lesson. Kids are running all around and there is definitely no management in there and I keep thinking to myself; this is what I don't wanna be, this is what I don't wanna be.
2. I am from this area, so I was able to pick out the teachers, knowing them and having had them before in the past. I picked out my best teachers. I knew those whose classes I should avoid.
3. I am grateful to have learned that, but I want the school to conduct evaluation of their teachers so they will be in a position to advise us on the

classes we are to observe. We need to observe teachers who plan and execute lessons well, who have good classroom management skills, who evaluate their lessons and who in general know how to interact with students. We need to listen in on positive type environments.

4. I never really learned too much from the early field experiences. Maybe because I am so young and just out of high school. I just sat there in the class and said to myself, this is my high school again. There was not much to learn. I think I would prefer if we were going to have one year of student teaching and a shorter period of early field experiences.
5. After the first 50 hours, there is nothing more to learn. It's: seen it done, seen it done, seen it done. I had a lousy observation and, at some point, you don't get much more out of it.

These concerns are instructive and should be used to inform the organization and structure of students' early as well as other field experiences. In their work on "Developing Practice through early Field Experiences," Knowles and Cole (1996) document the comments of a university supervisor relative to the placement of student teachers for early field experiences. The supervisor says:

The placement of teachers in their early field experiences is crucial. The first experiences back in schools reinforce or refute their memories of schools and classrooms. Early experiences should be structured to challenge the perceptions about the profession of teaching and set preservice teachers on appropriate paths of development. (p. 652)

*6. How did your field experience help you to develop the skills relevant to effective teaching?*

*The teacher graduate's field experience helped her to modify her lessons and groom her classroom management skills in an effort to teach effectively. Planning and organizational skills have to be in place for teachers to experience significant success in the classroom. Significant success is realized when the teacher is able to meet the needs of all her students and this includes planning lessons well, organizing the learning environment in respect of those lessons, and keeping students actively involved on task.*

7. *How did your training influence the development of these skills?*

*The teacher graduate* explained that although her “training from Eastern did not directly teach classroom management, however, the creation, modification, and execution of lesson plans were deeply stressed and practiced.” Here again is the emphasis on the need for planning and organization as pre-requisites for success in the classroom.

8. *How long do you think students should be required to practice before they are certified?*

*The student teaching director* commented that 4 years is a good time frame for certification to be given to new teachers. She mentioned that she learned that in one particular state, the period is 2 years, however, the districts do not agree as they do not believe that they can adequately assess strengths and weaknesses in such a short period of time. Because tenure is an important step for a district to take, she agrees that 4 years is a suitable time within which this certification can be done.

From the perspective of the cooperating teacher, knowledge of being in the business of teaching; adequate knowledge of children’s learning and development; love for children; and commitment to the classroom and to children’s learning are more important for certification than the number of years in the classroom.

### University – Cooperating School Relationship

In this section, I examine the program director, the student teaching director, and the cooperating teacher’s responses to the question of relationship between cooperating school and university. Only one question was asked of these persons.

1. *What relationship should exist between the University and the practicing schools?*



*The program director's* remark was explicit as she veered toward the need for school/university relationships in teacher preparation:

Yes, if I had my ideal world, all of our students would do their practicum experiences in schools we knew well where we had relationships with the entire faculty there. Our scale just does not make that practical. We are working now to move in that direction, because right now we have so many students and they are all over Michigan. We have relationships with some of these schools, but the students aren't necessarily focused in those schools where we have the strongest relationships and we are working to try to get students more clustered in schools where we can build relationships over a period of time and that's the direction we are working towards.

An honest and directed response and the importance of forging this link with the community schools cannot be overemphasized. From as far back as 1984, Sizer (1984) in speaking to this issue admonished that

teacher educators can thus only save their souls by joining with their colleague professionals in the schools in an effort to redesign the ways that students and teachers spend their time in order that effective teaching and thus learning can take place. (p. 8)

*The student teaching director* described the relationship among the University supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the student teacher as a triad. They must work together to ensure the student's success in the experience. She cautioned that the better the communication, the better the student's experience will be, and a breakdown in this relationship will be problematic for the student.

*The cooperating teacher* sensed the need for a strengthening of the relationship among these persons and also between the University and their school. She lamented the fact that quite often there is not much communication between herself and the University supervisor. She thinks that each member of the group has a part to play in ensuring that the relationship is maintained.

## Teacher Educators

This section examines the criteria for faculty selection as well as the characteristics that should describe these persons who form the backbone of the teacher education program. The directors, the associate dean, the professor, and the senior students were questioned. The directors' and associate dean's criteria for selecting faculty were compared against the professor and the senior students' characteristics of the ideal teacher educator. The responses will be discussed in the order listed.

*1. What criteria do you use to select faculty for your program?*

*The director's* response identified the following as the main factors that guide their search committees: (a) Disciplinary specialty, (b) Terminal degrees or ABD's, (c) Teaching experience except in rare cases, (d) Doctoral level preparation in the content area to be taught, (e) Grounding in schools.

Prospective faculty members have to demonstrate their craft either through a research presentation to the resident faculty or by classroom instruction under faculty observation. This is highly valued, the director noted, "because the place you get yourself into trouble most quickly is, if you don't teach well. If you can't teach well in the teacher education department, what's wrong with business?"

Faculty supervision and evaluation are also characteristic of Eastern's program. As she reminisced about her experience as the person responsible for evaluating non-tenured faculty, she spoke with such pride of their commitment to modeling effective classroom strategies for the benefit of their students. She regarded this as one of the real advantages of emphasizing teaching as one of the criteria for faculty employment.

*The interim director* outlined that, first of all, by virtue of the fact that there are six program departments, recommendations for faculty would be required from these departments. Basically, however, the ideal choice would be someone with a K-12 teaching experience, the potential for a track record in scholarship if that is not already there and third, the potential for being an effective teacher.

*The associate dean's* perspective is similar to those of the directors. She wants good teachers or they should have a background in teaching. This, she advised, is highly necessary especially if they will be teaching courses that involve the skills necessary for good teaching. "Having been in the classroom is critical as it brings credibility to students," the dean added.

The teacher education faculty can be regarded as the 'hub on which the wheel turns.' The extent to which they believe and are committed to this challenge, however, will determine how well prospective teachers are prepared for the realities of the teaching profession in today's world. With regard to faculty involvement in research, Orlofsky (2001) argues that teacher educators should be held to a degree accountable for their contribution to a field that is in need of reform (p. 4). The matter of scholarly research engagement must therefore be brought to bear on the criteria for selection and retention definitely in contemporary teacher education.

In comparison, however, Goodlad's (1990) findings regarding how faculty members are generally chosen for university teacher education programs are revealing. He found that

given a choice between an applicant for an assistant professorship with no school experience and little or no interest in teacher education, but a substantial list of published research articles, and another with a short publication list but experience

in schools and interest in teacher education, the former invariably got the nod in these flagships. (p. 175)

2. *What is your profile of the ideal teacher educator?*

First of all, *the professor* remarked, “it would be someone who has been a teacher and has taught for a minimum of 5 years in the classroom.” Other characteristics she identified were as follows: (a) someone with a willingness to return to the classroom in order to keep abreast of school and societal changes and to be acquainted with the challenges that exist there, (b) someone who is culturally competent who understands ethnic, gender, economic, and historical differences among groups, (c) someone who is tolerant and able to instruct using multicultural methods and culturally congruent strategies, (d) someone who models effective teaching strategies in his/her classroom, (e) someone who has an advanced level of knowledge in his/her area of content. The professor concluded by saying “In all honesty, the ideal teacher educator is not different from the ideal teacher except for the completion of an advanced degree.”

3. *How would you describe an effective teacher educator?*

*The students* concurred that it was easy for them to distinguish between those professors who had been and were still involved in K-12 education and those who were naïve to what was happening or had no previous experiences. Those who were working with community schools provided a more enriching and fulfilling instructional time in their classroom. They modeled the effective strategies that they knew the student teachers ought to learn, and their knowledge of the challenges of diverse classrooms informed their practice. They knew their content well and their information was quite current. These traits were the foundations on which they based their opinion of who they regard as effective teacher educators.

Some of their responses were revealing. One student said:

For me, I definitely noticed right away that the teachers in the education department know how to teach and how to assess in a way that does not frustrate. . . . I don't agree with the way other teachers assess and I think they could do with a couple of lessons in that area.

Another agreed with this remark wholeheartedly. Here is how this was expressed:

Those who are teacher educators are so much better, just the way they explain things differently from other teachers who are not in teacher education. There is a big difference in the way we are taught in my major and minor areas. This particular teacher that I have is terrible even with multicultural situations in the classroom. She is not in touch with what is happening outside in the schools. I had a situation where she said several things and I said if she were in the teacher ed. class, she would know that she should not say that.

In response to her comment, another student's retort was that a teacher educator ought to have teacher training. She claimed: "If you haven't done it for yourself, don't tell me how to do it. I want to learn from someone who has been there and has done that."

Another student felt that a teacher educator should model the instructional methods, so the student teacher will learn two different things all at once. "You learn the content as well as the methodology," he explained.

### Program Effectiveness

The following three questions required the senior students to reflect on their overall training experience with respect to their expectations and make a critical assessment of their program in terms of the training they had already received.

*1. What are your expectations of a pre-service teacher education program?*

It was such a refreshing and enriching experience to have had this dialogue with these *senior students*. They were informed, they knew exactly what they were about, and they were not inhibited as they expressed themselves. Their expectations can be

summarized accordingly: They expected to be taught how to prepare for the public school classroom and the challenges that will be faced there. They expected to be taught by the most competent professors with some of the most progressive and current technology available. They expected to be given the tools to be the best teacher (“I know first year will be tough, but given the tools I can work on it and be successful”). They expected to be treated by professors as individuals and not just as numbers in very large classes. They expected to be taught classroom management skills – how to work with different students in different situations. They expected to be taught enough content in special areas so they will be able to adequately meet the needs of students.

There were five students in this focus group, and interestingly, as each voiced their expectations, the others sanctioned unanimously and even added further explanation to what was said.

2. *How has this program met and is meeting those expectations?*

“Hmmm” was the first direct response that one of *the students* gave after hearing this question. This evoked a sense of humor and everyone chuckled. One student said that all the professors she has had at Eastern were found to be very “competent and personable. I definitely felt like I got to know my professors and that they are really there outside as well as inside the classroom ensuring our success.” She felt this was very important not just to her but was the general feeling across the board.

Another *student* spoke of the fact that she came to Eastern because she had learned it was supposed to be one of the best schools in the country for teacher education and taking assessment. She added: “I believe it is the only college that offers an entire

course in assessment; I believe that is a very crucial topic. It has many courses in it and that was very important for me.”

In support of her colleague, one *student* commented:

I was also happy with assessment. I came to Eastern from California only to go to the College of Ed. . . . The teachers for the most part I have been happy with and they have all been very helpful and even after you do not have them for a couple of semesters, you can still email them and call them back and use them as resource.

The National Academy of Education (2005) describes assessment as an “integral part of the learning process.” The group counsels that teaching, learning, and assessment ought not to be considered as “discrete linear activities,” instead they must be understood as “interactive and cyclical” (p. 23).

*The fourth student*, a Special Education major, spoke directly about her program.

She has been impressed with the “hands-on structure” of her program. She explained:

It’s not read this book, regurgitate the facts. We read the theory; we discussed it and how to apply it. Now you go out and apply it in the classroom and then come back and we discussed it again and look at ways to make more applications. So there’s a lot of micro teaching. . . . It’s logical that you may go out and may or may not succeed, but you come and they may say, Now what went well? What didn’t go well? How would you change that?

The last *student* was somewhat disappointed with some of her assignments which did not allow her the scope to be directly involved with real students in the classroom. In defense of pre-student teaching, one student reminded her that that should have provided a lot of opportunities for her to interact with students.

With reference to adequacy of content, two of the five students felt they had not received enough. The others were satisfied that the foundations had been laid.

3. *What would you do differently were you the director of the program under which you were trained?*

*The students'* responses were instructive and transparent. They would provide more experience in student teaching instead of doing unnecessary courses that are not relevant to classroom teaching. They would change some of the advising rules to facilitate new and older students who get lost in the program, especially when they have transferred from other universities. They would provide more guidance to students, especially in course selection so they do not complete courses then discover that they become obsolete soon afterwards. They would make advisors more aware of what goes on in the University, so they will be able to provide the kind of information that students need.

### **Summary**

Chapter 6 has presented an overview of Eastern Michigan University. This included a brief history of the University, its institutional mission, guiding principles, and values. The contemporary pre-service teacher education program was described as well as some of the distinctive features of the College of Education, its national affiliations, and accrediting organizations. The chapter concludes with a presentation and analysis of the interviewees' response to the eight research questions that guided the study.

Pre-service teacher education components should include strong content knowledge, professional development, assessment, and must be reflective of a conceptual framework. Assessment that has to be integral to the program must be used to maintain standards of accountability, guide program restructuring, and enhance the teaching-learning environment, not just for prospective teachers but for teacher educators as well. Assessment should be characterized by continuity and authenticity, and be reflective of a variety of practical alternative techniques.



The curriculum has to be relevant to students' needs especially in regard to what they shall encounter in the classrooms. There must be emphasis on diversity issues, making prospective teachers culturally competent to function in multicultural classrooms. Faculty members ought to be cognizant of the K-12 classrooms and this knowledge should inform their practice.

Teacher graduates need to be caring and develop a healthy relationship with their students. They must be passionate about their content, and be reflective lifelong learners. Planning and organization skills are critical for their effectiveness in diverse classrooms. The teacher graduates need to have good grounding in their content area and must be equipped with a repertoire of pedagogical skills. They must recognize their students as the center of the learning experience, and cater to the needs of each child.

Field experiences are inextricably linked to pre-service teacher education. Consequently, they have to be properly planned in keeping with the program structure and theme in order for prospective teachers to realize the development of their instructional and initial skills. There ought to be a collaborative partnership between the University and the practicing schools; the cooperating teachers who mentor the prospective teachers must be tenured and experienced; and they need to be well aware of their responsibilities with respect to the mentoring of students. The students have to be suitably placed to ensure mental and emotional stability during the practice, and their time in the field should be adequate for growth to take place. Finally, what they learn in the various courses should be connected to what they are expected to do in the classrooms.

University/school relationships should be characterized by close collaboration, open lines of communication, and provision for training for participants in the host schools. Teacher educators are important in pre-service teacher education. They are expected to model the kinds of instructional techniques that students are to use in the practice, they must show scholarly research engagement, and their knowledge base must be current. Professors are also to have experience in K-12 classrooms as this is critical for their own professional development and, in addition, they ought to be culturally competent.

The senior students expected to be taught how to prepare for the public school classroom and the challenges that will be faced there; to be taught by the most competent professors with some of the most progressive and current technology available; given the tools to be the best teacher; to be treated by professors as individuals and not just as numbers in very large classes; taught classroom management skills; and to be taught enough content in special areas so they will be able to adequately meet the needs of students.

In general, they felt that their program was effective. They had excellent professors, assessment techniques were suitable, they were given adequate practical feedback, and they could relate most of what they learned to what they had to teach.

For program improvement, they would provide more experience in student teaching instead of doing unnecessary courses, which are not relevant to classroom teaching; change some of the advising rules to facilitate new and older students who get lost in the program, especially when they have transferred from other universities; provide more guidance to students, especially in course selection so they do not complete

courses then discover that they become obsolete soon afterwards; and make advisors more aware of what goes on in the University, so they will be able to provide the kind of information that students need.

## CHAPTER 7

### CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

*The practitioner must choose. Shall he remain on the high ground where he can solve relatively unimportant problems according to prevailing standards of rigor, or shall he descend to the swamp of important problems and non-rigorous inquiry.*

—Donald A. Schön

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the interview protocol in relation to the questions that formed the basis of this research. The research questions focused on one main area of pre-service teacher education: “The Components.” This was further divided into seven areas for the purpose of collecting data. These areas were:

1. curriculum
2. assessment
3. teacher educators
4. teacher graduates
5. field experiences
6. school/university/college relationship
7. program effectiveness.

With respect to these seven areas of concern, I generated eight questions:

1. What are the major components of effective/productive teacher education

programs?

2. What assessment techniques are effective for teacher education programs?
3. How should teacher pre-service teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?
4. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher graduate?
5. How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher?
6. What relationship should exist between the university/college and the practicing schools?
7. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher educator?
8. What are students' expectations of pre-service teacher education programs?

With respect to these eight areas of concern, theoretical foundations and literature considerations are explored in light of the data findings which are presented as themes across the three institutions.

### **Emerging Themes**

#### Program Components

The data exploring what should constitute the major components of effective pre-service teacher education programs revealed six main themes: (a) Strong Content Knowledge, (b) Professional Development, (c) Assessment, (d) General Education, (e) Contextualization, and (f) Conceptual Framework. These are individually discussed below.

### **Strong Content Knowledge**

The NCU and EMU program directors concurred that pre-service teacher education programs need to provide prospective teachers with a strong content knowledge base. In her description, the EMU director emphasized the need for students to have “good grounding in their content area.” The NCU director remarked that she wanted her “prospective teachers to be the best and to remain on the cutting edge of knowledge and information.” In addition, demanding self-respect and the respect of other professionals necessitates that this knowledge is in place and is verified.

Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) argue that although “having content knowledge does not guarantee their wise use, not having this knowledge may limit what teachers can do in the classroom and otherwise . . . regardless of whatever teachers need to know they need to know their subject” (p. 71). One of the five propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1990b), entitled *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, states that “teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to the students.”

This is suggesting that teachers need to be knowledgeable in their areas of specialization. If they are familiar with a variety of teaching strategies yet they do not know their subject well, their success in the classroom will be hindered. According to Ishler (1997), the education of the nation’s teachers is vital to the welfare of the country, and since the developing minds of the country are entrusted to teachers, the knowledge, pedagogical skills, and commitment they have will determine whether or not citizenship and democracy are learned and developed.

How will teachers be able to function at this level without a knowledge base in their preparation program? Operating at the top requires expertise in specific and general areas of work inside as well as outside the classroom. Further, this expert knowledge as theorized by Darling-Hammond (1993, 1998), Ferguson and Brown (1998), and Murnane (1996) will be evident in the way students' learning and achievement are directed in the K-12 classroom.

To be able to influence students' learning positively, teachers need to have expert knowledge in the subjects they teach, complemented by professional, general, and cultural awareness. By extension, Evans (2000) comments that subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge are all essential requisites to good teaching.

### **Professional Development**

One administrator from EMU emphasized the need for development of "Initial Skills," which constitute such areas as classroom management, lesson planning, and curriculum development. In addition to all of this, programs have to be sensitive and personal to the needs of pre-service students, and the way they think, feel, and make meaning from their experiences.

In describing the components, the NCU director identified "the professional component, the content component, and the general education component as the areas that are important for students' own individual professional development." Further, she explained that a student with a 'C' in a professional or content course would be deemed to have failed that course and would be required to repeat that particular course. Here again, the emphasis was placed on the need for adequate development in those areas.

It seemed that professional development has to be integral to pre-service teacher education. If the program is effective, it will be built on teacher growth and development, the psychology of learning, child and adolescent development, classroom pedagogy, curriculum development, and field experiences within the context of school, and community. Professional development will ensure that prospective teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are relevant to successful classroom interaction.

Among other things, prospective teachers should understand how children develop and learn, how to manage classrooms so that learning can be achieved, how to develop and organize the curriculum in light of the needs of their students, how to plan and implement a variety of instructional strategies that will address the needs of the different learners, how to assess learning needs and difficulties, and how to solve problems involving students in the classroom.

In their regular classes, prospective teachers should be treated as individuals with unique differences and, in turn, they should be taught to relate to their students in a similar manner. Their classroom environment should reflect a learner centered approach where the cultural differences and learning needs of their students are taken into consideration. These are areas that are critical to the development of professional skills.

Having knowledge of curriculum development is critical to classroom instruction and as prospective teachers are exposed they will develop a “curricular vision” (National Academy of Education, 2005, p. 14) “which will take into account the social purposes of education in a democracy that will guide decisions about what to teach and why.” It is within this context that teachers will select, adapt, and design materials and lessons that will ensure the accomplishment of their teaching-learning goals.



Learning how to connect with parents is definitely an important aspect of professional development to which one director made reference. Many of the problems that teachers will encounter with students in the classroom will have to be addressed through the homes of their students and families, and prospective teachers must understand how to make these connections.

### **Assessment**

One of the research questions that guided this study was based on assessment techniques that are suitable for teacher education programs; consequently this aspect of the pre-service program will be more adequately addressed as a major subheading. At that time, I will examine the issue from the perspective of the stakeholders with the support of relevant literature.

### **General Education**

Two of the three programs examined were designed to be completed in 4 years, while the third offered a 3-year program leading to a diploma. Senior students and recent graduates who were interviewed across the three programs felt their training was generally adequate, although overwhelming, except for field experiences, which they thought could have been more organized and extended. One student from The Mico, felt that the structure of his program should be revisited and reconstructed to facilitate more time for students' involvement in research toward the completion of assignments. Only the NCU program director mentioned general education as one of the major components of effective pre-service teacher education programs.

Although requirements for general education differed across the three programs, it was nonetheless a dominant feature. In two of the programs, the basic requirements were guided by regulations from the governing educational board, while for the third, a private program, the requirements subsumed that of the Board. An in-depth study of the programs was not conducted, hence decisions which influenced the general education requirements were not ascertained.

Based on the general education requirements of these programs: NCU – a minimum of 43 credits for each program; The Mico – a minimum of 17 credits, and Eastern Michigan from 34-47 credits depending on the program being studied, it is safe to suggest that pre-service teacher education needs to encourage a solid preparation in general knowledge.

Teachers are called upon to make informed academic and other decisions for their students, and oftentimes their parents and other members of their school community. The question is, How will this be possible if their knowledge base is limited? Second, how much general knowledge is enough? Where should this begin? What should be the scope? Finding answers to these questions will provide avenues for research and discussion in the improvement of pre-service teacher education.

From the perspective of the three programs, students are guided and given specific instructions regarding their voluntary and compulsory choices of general education courses. Again, these are influenced by their special areas of concentration. The program director from EMU explained that students are given a range of courses and through discussion with their academic advisors, they are able to make decisions regarding which courses would be in their best interest. The NCU director described a

broad-based curriculum to which the students are exposed in her program. As she outlined, a history major, for example, will not be excluded from basic math, but instead will be allowed this exposure to facilitate an all-round development.

Lucas (1997) recommends that this preparation should be done through liberal studies, and later preparation in subject areas. Goodlad (1990) makes reference to a substantial gap between the rhetoric and the reality of teachers needing to be among the best educated citizens of the community. This, he says, is due to the unseemly charge, which is warranted, that the general education curriculum does not receive the serious, continual attention that it deserves (p. 240). As a consequence, prospective teachers are ill-equipped to make intelligent decisions during and after their training.

In order to be able to integrate the curriculum and to enrich learning experiences beyond the requested curriculum, teachers need a breadth of knowledge in many areas. This should form part of the knowledge base that is recommended, especially when quality is to be maintained. And in today's information age, this knowledge has to be in place. As part of the curriculum foundation, Gottesman (2000) recommends the inclusion of content information on learning, covering learning theories and cognitive science research, in such areas as schematic theory, scaffolding, cognitive structuring, multiple intelligence, misconceptions, and expertise in research.

### **Contextualization**

One of the comments that was prevalent throughout the interviews of the three programs was that teacher preparation ought to be relevant to the real world that students will face on completing their training. Students were of the opinion that if their training did not prepare them to adequately address the challenges that exist in

elementary/primary and K-12 classrooms, and in the external community, the program would have failed miserably.

In this regard, they stressed the need for adequate informed research, for their professors/lecturers to be on the cutting edge of information and to be involved in K-12 education, for the curriculum to be structured to meet their needs within the context of societal dynamics, and for constant program evaluation and revision as the situation demanded. The Mico program director suggested that pre-service teacher education programs ought to be “culture based and learner centered, while another remarked that the program should make students culturally aware.”

What does this mean for pre-service teacher education? I believe that this suggests that programs have to be contextual or as one director said it, programs must be “culture-based” if they are to be effective in their preparation. If teacher education programs were all the same, then there would be a serious need for rethinking and restructuring. We must agree that there are and will be similarities and standardized common elements, but structure and cultural norms will vary depending on the society, which must influence their training parameters.

Within the Jamaican context, for example, there is not a strong need to place emphasis on cultural competence. However, because our students are from various economic backgrounds, also common to other societies, which influence their academic potentials, our teachers must be trained to address all these needs. Training has to be relevant to the Jamaican culture with all the influence of the informal language interference, challenges of third-world dynamics, social and other factors, as well as restructuring of the primary and secondary school curriculum. If the culture is not taken

into consideration, then training will not be suitable and/or relevant to the needs of the Jamaican society.

All the graduates interviewed were satisfied that their training prepared them for their work in the classroom. Definitely, if their programs were not culture-based, they would not have been able to function at a satisfactory level.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Of the three programs examined, only EMU had a documented conceptual framework in place. This program is NCATE accredited, and as such would have had to reference and be developed around this framework. The NCU and The Mico program directors made reference to a framework in theory, which, although not documented, explained the underlying focus and principle upon which their programs operate.

In an effort to support the recognition of teaching as a profession, NCATE has introduced the term *conceptual framework*. This should serve to recognize the integration of knowledge and practice toward the design of coherent programs in the preparation of prospective teachers in colleges and universities.

Because programs are guided by a carefully defined theme, a conceptual framework is first developed, following which teaching/learning knowledge, understandings, skills, and abilities are derived from this framework and, finally, the relevant and related activities that will enable the development of these skills and abilities are identified and organized.

A conceptual framework therefore ensures that all courses, projects, assignments, field experiences, and other components are organized around the program philosophy and objectives and a clear vision of teaching and schooling, thus linking theory and

practice in a harmonious relationship. Pre-service teacher education must guard against programs that represent only a conglomerate of academic courses with no connection whatsoever. In this way student teachers cannot consciously find the association between theory and practice because there is no common ground. Reforms in teacher education programs are advocating models that allow the design of an interrelated set of activities designed to enable prospective teachers to acquire and/or refine these understandings and abilities (Howey & Zimpher, 1996).

### Assessment Techniques

Five themes have emerged from the data exploring the legitimacy of assessment in pre-service teacher education and the techniques that would be rendered effective within the context of accountability, accreditation, and the preparation of prospective teachers for K-12 classrooms. Below is a discussion of those themes guided by literature considerations. They are: (a) Standards for Accountability, (b) Program Restructuring, (c) Improvement of Teaching and Learning, (d) Continuity, and (e) Authenticity.

#### **Standards for Accountability**

All three programs validated the place of assessment in pre-service teacher education and the need for standards to complement this assessment. The EMU program director noted that “External Validation,” which is one of their assessment techniques, is used to ensure quality and maintain standards. The Mico director outlined that to “maintain accountability to the Joint Board,” which is the governing body, “quality control” is used in developing and maintaining program operation. EMU reflected that a

continuous process of program evaluation ensures that standards are maintained according to states' requirements, internal standards, and for NCATE accreditation.

One wonders about the possibility of the process of assessment without standards of accountability. In an effort to authenticate and respond to the many criticisms that plague the teaching profession and teacher education, there have been positive steps taken in many states, and in Jamaica as well, to examine and introduce accountable standards for teaching to enhance assessment of programs.

The development of teaching as a profession has to be directly related to the development of standards which should serve as a measure of accountability for what the outcomes of teaching should be. Speaking in a dialogue with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education about the necessity of standards in teacher education, Pecheone (1998) agrees that for teachers to be able to make the link between learning and practice, they need to have the opportunity to systematically examine and evaluate students' work in relation to their teaching.

Teachers and specifically those in training must be clear regarding the relationship which exists between teaching and learning. Darling-Hammond (1998) warns that teachers need to understand that teaching is not just the formulaic demonstration of a set of "canned" teaching behaviors, which are performed without attention to whether children are learning or not. However, good teaching will result in students' learning. I am an advocate of the notion that if the students do not learn, the teacher has not taught, regardless of the many variables that will impact their learning growth in the classroom.

In light of the above arguments in favor of the development of standards for teacher education, there is the question of how these standards will be determined and by whose responsibility. First of all, I believe that the teaching profession must be abundantly clear regarding what constitutes good teaching. Second, I believe that the wisdom of the lay person must be recognized.

In the United States, some of these are led by The New National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS); The Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); and the National Certification for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996). Although these are not cast in stone, they do provide a reasonable measure of what should constitute standards/framework for good teaching, and critical aspects of professional practice.

In Jamaica, the University Council of Jamaica, the Joint Board of Teacher Education, the Institute of Education, and the Ministry of Education have all been instrumental in identifying and developing standards which should characterize the practice of education, effective teacher training programs, and good teaching.

### **Program Restructuring**

It was interesting to listen to the program directors across the three institutions speak about assessment geared toward improvement of program development and operation. From her administrative platform, the NCU director explained that assessment allowed her to evaluate the success of her program through the performance of the graduates in local schools. Depending on feedback from their employees, they are able to determine the adjustments that are needed for program review or otherwise. "Continuous



self-evaluation” is also conducted to ensure optimum program level function and operation, she noted.

The EMU interim program director emphasized the import of assessment in that institution, to the extent that students are taught a complete course in the subject. Assessment enhances his program review also, as he uses an “Advisory Committee” to address real issues affecting education and to advise the University how they can better structure their program to produce quality teachers. He maintained that “they want to ensure that they do the right things.”

It seems that to maintain “quality control” as was described by The Mico director, in keeping with program standards, assessment has to become a regular feature of training programs. Assessment is critical to program evaluation and reform as it seems that it is by virtue of assessment that administrators are able to determine whether or not they are achieving their program goals in respect of learning outcomes for prospective teachers and K-12 students, community service, and research engagement.

Assessment is integral to maintaining standards of performance in teacher education. Roth (1996) explains that standards allow the qualification of those persons who are teaching in the schools of children and youth to be verified. To accomplish any level of reform, teacher education programs need to have delineated standards by which the performance can be measured. Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) contend that any teacher education faculty who is interested in accomplishing reform cannot stop at the adoption of standards. These are better conceptualized as tools for inquiry and as such serve as guideposts for local change.

Program review and accountability have to be based on a demonstration that the school's program provides learning opportunities that enhance successful attainment of knowledge, skills, and disposition needed for teaching.

### **Improvement of Teaching and Learning**

A striking difference between the focus of the program directors and those of the senior students and the professors was observed from the responses to the question regarding the assessment in pre-service teacher education. Whereas the directors saw assessment as a means of enhancing program quality and reform first and foremost, the students and professors addressed assessment as a means of encouraging and evaluating learning. As a consequence, they examined what they believe should be the principles of classroom assessment and evaluation.

Assessment they believe must be meaningful and should encourage learning. It should not induce fear into students but instead should allow them to reflect on what they have been learning and should be practical and true to life. "If you need to know whether or not a child can change a tire, then provide the child with that opportunity as a means of assessment." This was pertinent advice that one EMU student rehearsed from her assessment course. It is sensible and instructive, I believe; a model, that if followed, will safeguard against meaningless assessment. Assignments must not be "busy work" as another EMU student cautioned, they should provide the teacher with accurate information that is relevant for improvement of instruction rather than put pressure on students. I have known this to be the case where students are given assignments as a means of control or to fill time.

Assessment must be used to enhance the teaching-learning environment at all levels of the education system. For one recent Mico graduate, “assessment breaks the barrier of swatting and allows for students to develop more understanding of the material they are expected to learn.” Prospective teachers must be exposed to a variety of learning experiences and they in turn will understand how to organize similar experiences for their students. If teachers, whether at the K-12 level or otherwise, understand that teaching, learning, and assessment are interactive and cyclical, then assessment will be adequately used to improve the teaching-learning environment.

In planning assessment, teachers must understand how to choose and develop assignments that will reflect their learning goals for their students and how to determine whether or not those goals have been realized. Assessment that improves teaching-learning has to be complemented by regular feedback to the learner. The student is then aware of weaknesses and strengths as well as the corrective measures that can be employed to enhance movement to the next level.

The teacher having this knowledge will be in a better position to plan subsequent learning experiences for students. For classroom instruction to be worthwhile and meaningful, teachers need to move beyond the mere formality of giving tests that match learning objectives to framing assessment that will aid in the discovery of what students understand about a particular subject, so that intelligent decisions about instruction can be made (National Academy of Education, 2005).

### **Continuity**

It was recommended across the three programs that assessment should be continuous rather than administered at the end of a program of study. Students made

reference to the fact that when assessment is done only summatively, there is tension and stress for many students and the whole purpose of the assessment may be lost. The teacher graduate from NCU suggested that students “should be assessed continuously rather than with a one-shot examination at the end of a semester or term.” The focus group of senior students at The Mico agreed with their colleague who said, “We believe in continuous assessment and it is very unfair for you to judge my performance in a 3-hour span of time.”

Students’ fears and concerns are well grounded. Examinations have always been stressful for many students and this is no surprise. Since assessment should provide a measure of performance and achievement, and improve learning and instruction, then we would want to conduct ongoing or continuous evaluation. Why wait until the end of a program or course to evaluate whether or not the goals are being realized? It seems more rational to assess during the process so that adjustments can be made and/or corrective measures applied.

From EMU, the professor agreed that their assessment ought to be continuous and as practical as possible to facilitate the process of program accreditation. This is quite similar to what was voiced by the NCU professor who recommended continuous self-evaluation to ensure optimum program level function, and operation for accreditation.

### **Authenticity**

An important observation that came out of the discussion across the three programs, especially from the students’ point of view, was the matter of multiple assessment techniques and authenticity. Students concurred that alternative measures of assessment should complement the traditional pen and paper tests.

At NCU, they portended the need for alternative measures of assessment such as: “action research in the field/cooperating schools, projects, portfolios, writing in journals, debates, discussions, interviews, and the traditional pen and paper tests and major examinations.” Those from The Mico voiced a similar opinion, as they argued for projects, portfolios, presentations, field assignments, debates, and most of all, extensive micro teaching. Speaking on behalf of her colleagues, one senior student from EMU described one of her major project assignments, which they all agreed was one of the most beneficial, as it required them to use all the skills they had learned in that particular course. Another said, “It’s authentic, it’s actually assessing what they want to know, it’s not just busy work, it’s not just extraneous detailed information and then you forget it. It’s practical.”

Speaking from the perspective of a teacher educator, I have found that allowing students a variety of assessment opportunities and using various techniques provide a more extensive view of the level of learning that is advancing, as well the academic and other abilities that are present among students. Of course, for authenticity, the most suitable measure must be employed in light of what is to be assessed and the information that is needed.

As one NCU student explained it, “I think though that the type of assessment for students should be dependent on the course that is being assessed, the class that is being assessed, the classroom atmosphere and the condition. The good teacher will be flexible enough to adjust and select the most suitable assessment for the situation.” The Mico lecturer and the EMU professors concurred that the “skills to be measured should be the main determinant in selecting the measure of assessment.” Another group noted that the

assessment should be flexible and suitable for the course/content that is being taught and it should be reflective of a variety of alternative measures.

Are we then concluding that good assessment must reflect a combination of techniques? I would think so. One teacher graduate explained that she prefers projects or practical assignments over the traditional paper and pencil tests.

Tellez (1996) writes that assessment must be authentic. This authenticity implies that the process is real, uncompromised, natural, and meaningful. How can the assessment process be authentic? He instructs that assessment techniques are authentic according to the degree to which they are meaningful to and helpful for teachers in the exploration of their practices (p. 707).

The purpose of the assessment must first be established, says Moss (1998), in the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. "In the context of teaching, assessment serves the purposes of licensure and/or certification, enable ongoing mentoring, evaluate learning in a particular course, and support professional development" (p. 18). Certainly we must not forget that assessment also serves to improve program structure and operation.

Moss (1998) suggests that good assessment will enable sound decisions in light of its purpose. Darling-Hammond (1998) describes good assessment as an authentic representation of the task we want to measure or to assess competence in (p. 19). What was the real purpose served, if after an assessment, neither those assessed nor those who administered the assessment were not positively affected?

## Program Curriculum

The data regarding what should constitute pre-service teacher education curriculum within the context of the practice of education revealed three themes: (a) Meaningfulness and Relevance, (b) Diversity Issues, (c) Research. These are discussed below.

### **Meaningfulness and Relevance**

According to the views of the various respondents who were interviewed regarding the nature of the pre-service teacher education curriculum, the curriculum must be meaningful and relevant to societal needs. Prospective teachers' preparation cannot be divorced from the happenings in the society, although it must be borne in mind that the main goal of preparing teachers is not just to satisfy workforce demands but to transform students' lives beginning from the context of the classroom. Training therefore has to prepare them to influence their students' lives toward meaningful ends.

“As technology advances,” the professor from NCU explained, “there will be a need for individuals who are more apt in that area, and as we learn from time to time what these needs are, we should inform our programs to reflect these needs.” Here, the relationship between curriculum planning and societal needs cannot be lost sight of.

In explaining one of the strategies that he has been using to ensure that his program goals are relevant based on societal expectations, the Interim director from EMU described how his advisory committee operates. The committee is comprised of representatives from private as well as public schools, the state board of education, and citizens from the community. It is their duty to examine educational issues and suggest how the program can best be structured so that prospective teachers will be well equipped

to function within the context of those issues. “We want to ensure that we are doing the right things,” the director said.

Doing the right things the wrong way can be as detrimental as doing the wrong things. It seems then that so far as is possible, if the right things are to be done, they must be accomplished against the background of the purpose for which they are to be done, the goals to be achieved, and the persons who will be benefited.

Wise curriculum planning according to a group of students necessitates asking questions such as, For whom are we planning? Who will our students serve when they leave here? What do they need to know so they can serve well? What is the impact of the global environment? The curriculum should therefore include research on culture and learning styles as well as case studies of teachers who have been successful in a variety of cultural settings. Taking the above questions in mind, the curriculum should prepare prospective educators to use strategies and methods that have been proven to be effective in raising the academic level of all students.

“The renewal of schools and of teacher education programs must go hand in hand to ensure teachers who see curriculum content as means, not ends, and who are prepared as educators not trainers” (Goodlad, 1994, p. 136). If prospective teachers acquire the needed skills, they will be able to make sound curriculum decisions in the interest of their own students as a direct result of those decisions that were made with and for them.

Goodlad (1990) reported that the most common lament of students in schools, colleges, professional schools, and programs focuses on the irrelevance of much of what they study to what they perceive to be the real world. Where is the connection? This is a pertinent question that needs due consideration in light of these issues. In one of his



recommendations for restructuring of teacher education, Goodlad suggests that “programs for the education of educators must be characterized in all respects by the conditions of learning that future teachers are to establish in their own schools and classrooms” (p. 290).

Based on Odell’s (1997) explanation, the curriculum does not stand alone, but is influenced by other common places of education: the learner, the teacher, and the social milieu in which the teaching and learning process occurs. That, of course, should embrace planning that is relevant, meaningful, and contextual for those to be served and those who are serving.

It is understandable that the challenges of designing such a curriculum that is adequate for undergraduate teacher education is neither straightforward nor easy. The task however has to be accomplished and students’ curricular must be reviewed periodically to ensure and maintain balance (Goodlad, 1990). Further, the determination of the general education required of an elementary school teacher is as likely a route as any for arriving at an exemplary undergraduate curriculum.

It seems highly unlikely that if teacher educators are instrumental in the planning and organization of this curriculum, then it will be purposefully designed to produce the kind of education that prospective teachers require to be effective teachers. There will be linkages in the learning experience, and theory will be transferred to practice because of the relationship between what students learn and what they are asked to do.

### **Diversity Issues**

The professor from NCU remarked decisively that “educational practice in today’s multicultural society will be very irrelevant and impractical if it does not

address the cultural diversity that exists in the schools.” How can programs not educate teachers accordingly? “To teach the diverse populations of students, there needs to be a very heavy emphasis on what we refer to as cultural competencies,” the professor from EMU advised.

The teacher who is culturally aware understands how to learn about their students’ experiences, and how to communicate with families of students in order to bridge the gap between home and school environment. In multicultural nations and also in less diverse situations, the effective teacher believes that all students possess the potential to learn and will therefore organize the learning experiences that will encourage rather than hinder that learning. Contemporary teacher education programs cannot ignore the cultural diversity that exists in schools today. According to the National Academy of Education (2005), 40% of all elementary and secondary students in American classrooms are students of color.

It would be foolhardy to think that no other form of diversity exists in schools. Of course, there is a wide range of cultural and language differences, differences in academic ability, differences in socioeconomic background and the variances that accompany these, differences in gender, and differences in interest and learning styles. Though daunting, the challenge of the beginning teacher must be to take all those differences into consideration and plan and coordinate an accommodating learning environment that will enhance the realization of all students’ learning capacity.

How will prospective teachers be able to teach all children well if they are not culturally competent in a diversified setting? And how can they be regarded as effective teachers, if they cannot address the needs of all the students in their classrooms? And

how can pre-service teacher education programs be outstanding if they do not prepare prospective teachers to plan meaningful learning experiences suitable for all students? Can teachers be good and not good? It is paradoxical.

Many factors influence educational outcomes in schools which serve diverse student populations. However, according to Hollins and Guzman (2005), in the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, there is agreement that teacher quality is the major factor. Sanders (1998) and Sanders and Horn (1998, as cited in Hollins & Guzman, 2005) in judging teachers by their value and students' test scores suggest that teacher quality is the most important influence on school success and students' achievement. The writers argue that socioeconomic status, class size, family background, school context, and all other factors that influence achievement do not surpass the impact of teacher quality.

What of educators in the teacher education programs? Is it rational to suggest that before prospective teachers can become culturally competent, their professors ought to be one step ahead? I would think it would be a reasonable expectation. After all, the education of prospective teachers ultimately rests with those who form the core of the program. As the EMU professor commented, "We need culturally competent professors in our programs if our students are to develop these skills.

Because of the cultural, gender, socioeconomic, special needs and other diversities that characterize most classrooms, there is a whole range of learning differences among students. In general, the prospective teacher should be taught through theory and practice how to diagnose and adapt learning goals in respect to those differences.

Ducette, Sewell, and Shapiro (as cited in Murray, 1996) make reference to the technological and multicultural richness of the world and complexity that this engenders. Within this context, they write that teacher education must be aware of these changes and structure their programs to reflect the same.

As a recommendation from research conducted on “cross-ethnic and cross-racial dynamics of instruction,” Duhon and Manson (2000) suggest the need for multicultural collegiate training, while Dilworth (1992) and Obidah and Teel (2001) advocate that the professional preparation of teachers must include additional academic knowledge related to diversity and multicultural contexts, which can be incorporated in the professional education curricular and the clinical teaching experiences.

### **Research Based**

From the interview discussions, the participants across the three programs indicated that research has a central place in teacher education. The professor from NCU contended that in order to make the curriculum relevant to societal needs, the tool that is needed for this to be accomplished is research. The program director from EMU bemoaned the idea of political pressure being brought to bear on the profession to prove that teacher training really makes a difference in the academic achievement of students. The means through which these answers can be provided will be through the avenue of research.

Students across the three programs admire and want to emulate their professors who are steeped in research. They spoke to the need for their professors to be on the “cutting edge of research and technology.” In their estimation, knowledge of 10 or 15 years ago is obsolete, hence those professors who acquired their advanced degrees from

then should be even more engaged in constant research to upgrade their skills. Professors must truly remain current on the information highway and no less those in teacher education, in light of the negative criticisms that threaten the status of teaching and teacher education.

Pre-service teacher education will not be adequately informed without adequate research. This research must inform the practice of education and provide the essential knowledge base that is needed. Knowledge of this nature must be acquired through research that is devoted to inquiry about the impact of teacher education programs on prospective teachers and their students (Cruickshank, 1990; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000)

If classrooms are to become communities of active, enquiring learners, the teachers who provide the leadership in such classrooms must themselves have professional developmental opportunities that are enquiry-oriented and collaborative (Poeter, 1997). First, they should be encouraged to become researchers in their own classrooms, carrying out inquiries about student learning and the conditions and practices that most effectively support it. Second, there must be institutional conditions, which enable them to share the results of their inquiries with their colleagues in an ongoing attempt to create a better curriculum, guided by collaboratively determined goals.

Newton (1999) in articulating the role of the university in teacher training counseled that teacher training and education must be nurtured and informed by research and the collecting of relevant data and information by curriculum and materials development, by cultural and contextual issues and problems, as well as a host of other problems.

## Teacher Graduates

The data that explored the characteristics that should describe graduates of pre-service teacher education programs revealed eight themes: (a) Involvement in Action Research, (b) Reflective Practice, (c) Good Human Relations Skills, (d) Planning and Organizational Skills, (e) Knowledge of Content, (f) Knowledge of Pedagogy, (g) Cultural Competence, and (h) Student-Centered Perspective.

### **Involvement in Action Research**

While they may not be researchers in the restrictive sense, The Mico lecturer argued that graduates “must believe in continuous research for improvement of their teaching-learning environment.” From NCU, the professor believes the graduate ought to be “research oriented.” Good teachers are lifelong learners and they usually teach their students how to acquire, construct, and use knowledge to their advantage. They facilitate learning rather than impart knowledge. The teacher who remains current by making research an integral part of his teaching/learning environment will be more credible and will earn more respect in the eyes of his students than those who are routine and unaware.

Teachers who display the disposition to question their own teaching or to collaborate with their colleagues in researching common problems are more likely to make adjustments that will improve their instructional and professional skills. According to the EMU program director, students do not see themselves as researchers, so engagement in action research empowers them so they will begin to examine things from a different perspective.

Quite early in their training, prospective teachers need to be led into action research involvement. As they are so engaged, Burnaford (1996) posits that they will

develop an increased awareness of the decisions they will be making as teachers. He continues that

in order for practicing teachers to learn to reflect, weigh alternatives and test their own assumptions about learning and teaching, they need experience in posing a problem or question, adapting that line of inquiry to a particular context or situation (classroom in which some field experience is occurring) and experiment with some designed plan to discover its implications and consequences. (p. 144)

It would be expected that the transition and transfer will be made as prospective teachers become regular teachers and they make action research a significant part of their career. It is hoped that beginning teachers will understand that the process of researching is continuous because learning never ends. Throughout the span of their professional teaching career, good teachers will learn from their experiences, from experiences of colleagues, and from students, because they are open to and are always looking for innovative ways to improve their practice, not so much for themselves, but for the development of their students.

### **Reflective Practice**

Two institutions emphasized the need for teacher graduates to be reflective. The lecturer from The Mico observed thoughtfully that in recent years it has not been stressed, but currently they are trying to get student-teachers to understand that they need to be reflective, to examine their teaching in light of students' level of learning and the challenges facing them, as well as to identify problems and how they can change or address them. The professor from EMU made reference to action research, as she believes all teachers should be able to evaluate their own practice not just in teacher education but at other levels as well. She explained that, at Eastern, students especially at the advanced levels are instructed and required to engage in action research.

Pre-service teacher education programs have the responsibility to promote the development of reflective thinking among prospective teachers. They must ensure that their graduates understand the critical role that reflection plays in their effectiveness in the classroom.

The effective teacher is reflective. He/she will inquire into or examine his/her practice with an aim to make improvement. In doing this, the teacher will carefully consider how his actions affect his students, others, and himself. Quite often, teachers ask students to think seriously about what they are doing, why they are doing it and whether or not it is working, without an understanding of how this is done and the connections that are to be made. Needless to say, reflection is a natural part of everyone's life, but within the context of learning and instruction, teachers need to be guided in this process.

Reflective thinking goes beyond merely discovering whether or not a particular method is or is not working or is "consistent with a list of competencies or outcomes" (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995, p. 16). The process of understanding and improving one's teaching must begin with a reflection on one's own experience and how meaning is made and justified in light of the knowledge constructed and the internal and external context of the learning environment.

As a reflective practitioner, the teacher will always seek to research his own practice, be informed of the results of the research of others, "implement or model best practices which grow out of research (Zeichner, 1996), and enter into intelligent discourse about the new knowledge in relation to his/her practice.

According to Reynolds (1992), the competent beginning teacher has three phases of teaching activity: During the third phase, the post-active phase, "competent teachers



evaluate their own teaching effectiveness by reflecting on their own actions and student responses in order to improve their practice” (p. 25).

It must be understood that within the scope of a 3- or 4-year program, prospective teachers should not be expected to perfect these skills, instead, however, training should facilitate and provide avenues through which the process can begin and eventually lead to lifelong learning.

### **Good Human Relations Skills**

The students across the three programs showed no signs of inhibitions when they spoke of the importance of a healthy relationship with their professors/lecturers. Those professors/lecturers who facilitated and developed such relationships with their students were regarded as exemplary. Notwithstanding, this relationship being in place does not render any of the other dispositions identified of any less importance.

The need to communicate with their professors/lecturers inside as well as outside the formal classroom, and even after they had moved on to another course, was deemed a necessity from the students' perspective. One student from EMU described all the professors she had encountered in her program as competent and personable. “I definitely felt like I got to know my professors and that they are really there outside as well as inside the classroom ensuring our success.” She felt this was very important not just to her but was the general feeling from the others as well.

Developing good communications skills is critical to the development of good human relations skills. The teacher who does not master good communication skills may experience difficulty in initiating classroom relationships. In the EMU professor's opinion, communication is key to what happens inside as well as outside the classroom.

Teachers need to be understand how to communicate not just with students but with other teachers, administrators, and students' parents as well.

As a complement to cultural competence, the professor further reiterated that prospective and graduate teachers should be ready to have this special relationship with all their students and especially with those of color. They need to be known and loved and this is only possible if the teacher is committed to what he/she does and is able to do it well. It is sometimes easier for teachers to establish good relations with some students than with others. Having good human relations skills was highly recommended by another professor.

The relationship between teachers and their students is regarded as important to the welfare of the students and I want to believe the teacher will be impacted as well. Teachers who establish a positive psychosocial environment in their classrooms are preparing the kind of environment within which learning is better able to occur. Does this make a difference only at the K-12 levels? It seems to me that a positive teacher-student relationship makes a difference to learning at all levels.

Students who are mannerly, respectful, pay attention to instructional matters, are tolerant of others, and display good overall deportment are the ones who usually draw others to them in a friendly way. Writing on *Inside Jamaican Classrooms*, Evans (2001) explains that the physical appearance and behavior of a child, such as being well mannered, can influence the teacher's reaction to children. The students' social class also affects this relationship, Evans says.

Students from upper and middle classes are more likely to be accepted and receive much attention from their teachers, because these students are more likely to

display proper study habits, have a healthy appearance, and conduct themselves appropriately in and outside classrooms. Although the above may be true, it is the responsibility of the teacher to initiate and establish a healthy relationship with all his/her students regardless of color, race, academic ability, department, or otherwise. The teacher who is effective is a teacher of all students, and graduates of pre-service teacher education need to possess the human relations skills that will enhance these relationships.

### **Planning and Organizational Skills**

Two of the three institutions recommended that planning and organizational skills should characterize the graduate teacher. The teacher graduate from NCU said, “An effective teacher plans, organizes, and makes the necessary preparation for his class.” According to the senior students from EMU, the effective teacher presents lesson material and ties it to real world situations. They do not just do things in a mundane way, but instead make the lessons come alive by relating them to the real world. They know each student, and teach in such a way that all their needs are met.

The Interim director from EMU, described one of his favorite teachers as a person who understands how to make lessons come alive and capture children’s interest without jumping and screaming. Effective instructional planning is a hallmark of excellent teaching. Planning and organizational skills therefore have to be intimate to the teacher’s role in the classroom. It is crucial that the teacher is able to plan and organize the learning experiences of his/her students. Lessons have to be planned in respect to the various needs that exist within the classroom. Students of diverse backgrounds and the impact of all these differences on the learning mode of the students have to be consistently taken into consideration. The prospective teacher has to develop planning skills that will allow

him/her to transform subject into real life learning experiences to which the students can meaningfully identify.

The National Academy of Education (2005) suggests that organizing a classroom for learning is extremely important to safeguard the loss of valuable time and to ensure that a positive environment is created for teaching and learning to be made possible. The group advises that teachers must know how to organize the classroom to provide an orderly, purposeful environment that optimizes learning time and minimizes distractions.

Creating rules, establishing expectations, setting up schedules, assigning responsibilities, being alert to students' responses, provide prompt feedback, managing the flow of activities, and organizing the physical environment purposefully in keeping with the lessons to be learned are some of the skills that prospective teachers need to understand and graduate teachers must be able to demonstrate.

Reynolds (1992) says

competent teachers create classrooms in which students want to learn. They develop empathy, rapport, and personal interactions with students. They maximize time spent actively engaged in worthwhile academic activities and minimize time spent waiting activities to get started.

Of course, being able to plan and organize well does not guarantee that classrooms of such teachers will be free of problematic disturbances. However, I must agree that a properly organized curriculum, with creative, intentional, instructional experiences, will promote a favorable classroom environment and the achievement of more learning goals.

### **Knowledge of Content**

“The teacher needs to know his content well, have a whole repertoire of pedagogies and must be committed to the development of children as individuals with unique differences.” This was one of the attributes that the EMU professor used to describe the ideal teacher graduate. The NCU professor and students suggested that the teacher graduate should have a good foundation and be research oriented to ensure that he is able to address students’ needs at the K-12 levels. The EMU students advocated that the effective teacher is responsible for knowing his content well and keeping up with new information in his field.

Having a knowledge of content alone with the exclusion of all other complementary variables will not guarantee any measure of success in the classroom. The importance of this knowledge, however, is far reaching and absolutely critical to whatever success is to be realized in the learning environment. Listening to senior students reiterate aspects of their training experience, and distinguish between those of their lecturers/professors who knew their content well and those who did not, gave me a deeper sense of the level of credibility that this disposition affords.

Like their lecturers/professors, prospective and graduate teachers need to be aware of their content. It is this knowledge that allows teachers to be able to select, adapt, and design or create the instructional environments within which learning goals can be realized. Those teachers who do not know their subject matter well will develop a sense of inadequacy in the learning environment and sooner or later will lose control.

The Board of Education in Michigan requires that prospective teachers complete a major and minor or three minors in subject area content. In Jamaica, the Joint Board

requires that secondary teachers complete a major and a minor in their subject content, while primary students complete one of their content courses at an advanced level. Certainly, this speaks to the emphasis that is placed on knowing, understanding, and having a solid foundation in the area that the teacher chooses to specialize.

Knowing content is good and well intentioned, but that alone is not enough. The teacher needs to be able to use that knowledge to plan and enact a set of learning opportunities that provide students' access to key concepts and skills for all students. During what Reynolds (1992) describes as the interactive phase of the competent beginning teachers' three phases of teaching activity, he writes that

they use appropriate ways to represent and present subject matter; These ways range from teacher directed to student directed. They assess student needs and adapt instruction to meet these needs. They maintain consistent accountability procedures of all students' progress with interventions to student learning. (pp. 23-24)

### **Knowledge of Pedagogy**

Knowledge of pedagogy is closely related to knowledge of content. It seems to me that they complement each other. When asked which in their estimation was more important to classroom delivery, the senior students from EMU felt that none was of a greater importance. Their program director emphasized the need for graduate teachers to not only have a whole repertoire of pedagogies but must also be committed to the development of children as individuals with unique differences.

Students from NCU noted that as the ideal teacher graduate, "You are aware of the different learning styles that you will encounter in your classroom and will cater to these learning needs as they are identified." According to the The Mico graduate, the

graduate teacher will use different methodology that will cater to the needs of every student.

An effective teacher has to be able to cater to all the learning needs of all the children and must ensure that all the children who are entrusted to him/her learn. It is a debatable issue, however; hence it will attract strong arguments on either side. Some persons will argue that once the subject matter/content is well known, then three-quarters of the problem is already solved. Others will agree that knowing the subject matter and not being able to deliver it so that students will construct meaning will create hindrances in the learning environment.

This discussion is not intended to debate the greater or least importance of a knowledge of pedagogy in comparison to knowledge of content. Instead, it seeks to establish the place of the former in the graduate teacher's repertoire of skills in preparation for a career in the K-12 classroom.

To teach successfully, teachers need to know a variety of strategies that are suitable for teaching the many areas of content to which they are exposed as well as that which is covered in the curriculum. As effective teachers they will be able to present the material and link it to real world situations. Lessons will not be done in a mundane way, as the student described, but instead they will come alive because they would have been related to the students' living experiences.

Reynolds (1992) asserts that among other skills, the beginning teacher should be armed with knowledge of strategies, techniques, and tools for creating and sustaining a learning community and skills and abilities to employ these strategies, techniques, and tools. They should also be knowledgeable of pedagogy appropriate for the content area

they will teach. It is this knowledge that differentiates between different groups of teachers, their conceptions of teaching, and how this is reflected in their instructional techniques.

Because of the diversity which characterizes today's schools and the challenges that accompany these differences, the need for beginning teachers to be armed with a plethora of pedagogical strategies is more urgent. Some instructional practices and approaches may be more effective in promoting student learning than others. Some may be more effective with one particular group than with others. Some strategies are general and inclusive both for student learning and for content delivery. The teacher needs to be cognizant of the pool of resources from which he can draw to create the environment that is suitable for the content to be taught or the students' needs that are to be addressed.

### **Cultural Competence**

NCU, The Mico, and EMU made reference to the point that prospective teachers should be prepared to address the needs of all students in all societies. One student from NCU expressed the concern that they will not only serve in local schools after graduation, but also internationally where they will have to deal with different cultural environments. As such, he contended that whatever the program that is being prepared, it should be able to fit a global international standard while it allows the teacher to be flexible in whatever situation he finds himself. One professor from NCU remarked that "Educational practice in today's multicultural society will be very irrelevant and impractical if it does not address the cultural diversity that exists in the schools."

According to the EMU professor, one of the most important characteristics of the ideal teacher, especially in a multicultural society, is to be culturally competent. She



emphasized that only those teachers who possess these skills will be able to address the needs of all students in their class. For her, being effective means that you are able to address the learning needs of all your students. I agree wholeheartedly. It is interesting to note here, that the EMU program theme –“Caring Professionals for a Diverse and Democratic Society” is reflective of the nature, and content of the pre-service program, with respect to the preparation of such quality teachers for a multicultural society.

There is ample evidence that all students can indeed learn, and if they are to show significant achievement, their learning styles must be taken into consideration by those who are planning their learning goals. It is the responsibility of the teacher education programs to have prospective teachers acquire the knowledge and develop the skills to identify and use the various techniques at their disposal to ensure that all students benefit from a wholesome and inclusive educational environment.

When a pre-service or graduate teacher enters a culturally inclusive classroom to begin student teaching or assume total responsibility, he will be encountering a complex culture that is driven by all sorts of ideas, notions, beliefs, and politics. If the teacher is not competently prepared, he will feel overwhelmed and threatened by fear of inadequacy and failure or he may conclude that some students do not have the capacity to learn. He/she may even believe that coming into the classroom was a terrible mistake.

Culture cannot be ignored in the education enterprise if we are committed to the highest quality of education for all, according to Haberman (1996). Consequently, the culturally competent teacher will create the kind of environment that will accommodate the differences that characterize students.

### **Student-Centered Perspective**

The need for teacher graduates to display a sense of student-centered perspective to their instructional practice was emphasized by The Mico lecturer, and program director. I am certain it was implied in the discussion which ensued in the other institutions, as the students as well as the professors spoke strongly of the need for teachers to be able to address the needs of all children. One need not question the essence of placing all children at the focus and center of the learning experience. Whenever this is the case, the teacher's planning takes their uniqueness into consideration and instead of his point of view in terms of what he will accomplish, he will identify what the students will be able to do after they have been exposed to the learning environment. A student-centered teacher will facilitate learning, because the environment within which students operate will provide the opportunities that will allow them to be intimately involved in the learning experiences.

The Mico lecturer affirmed that teacher graduates should have a "student-centered perspective" which will impact their approach to the teaching-learning environment. The program director contended that they should be enthusiastic and caring and should be able to address the learning needs of all the students who are placed under their care. For this to be altogether possible, it seems the teacher ought to be able to place her students at the center of the learning milieu.

All students need to be taught to develop the skill of critical thinking and problem solving. They should not be allowed to only parrot and regurgitate their teachers' thoughts and ideas. In a teacher-centered learning environment, the teacher becomes the focus. She speaks and the students listen; she demonstrates and the students emulate; she

dramatizes and the students observe; she instructs and the students follow, sometimes without questions; she transmits knowledge and the students retain and regurgitate, and the endless rounds go on and on.

Of course, effective teachers will speak, demonstrate, dramatize, instruct, and transmit knowledge. They will do all and more and their students will not be passive but will be fully engaged. The matter of child-centered pedagogy is associated with such concepts as learning by discovery, active learning, meeting the needs and interest of the child, the child as a problem solver, independent thinker, learning at his/her own pace, and an integrated approach to leaning (Jennings, 2000).

Within this context, teachers will allow the students to not only listen but to speak, they will demonstrate to emulate, they will observe, then plan and dramatize; they will ask questions for clarification and understanding, they will be taught to construct and use knowledge rather than to reflect other peoples' thoughts and they will develop life-long learning goals. These will only be learned within the context of training and preparation, when one considers that teachers will invariably teach the way they had been taught and influenced by their own beliefs and value systems.

If the goal of teacher education programs is to prepare prospective teachers who are facilitators of learning, then professors/lecturers need to live that pedagogical mode in their own classrooms by being themselves facilitators of learning.

### Field Experiences

The data which sought to ascertain the importance of and organization of field experiences for the effective implementation and practice of knowledge and pedagogical and professional content learned by student teachers yielded the following six themes: (a)

Collaboration between Host Schools and University/College, (b) Intelligent Choice of Cooperating Teachers, (c) Awareness of Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers, (d) Placing Students Suitably, (e) Adequate Time for Practice, (f) Coherence Between Field Experience and Content and Pedagogical Knowledge. These are discussed below.

### **Collaboration Between Host Schools and University/College**

Across the three programs, there was a strong consensus that a successful and rewarding practicum experience begins with a close collaborative partnership between the cooperating schools and the university/college. In reiterating the importance of this relationship, the NCU professor explained that collaboration will certainly serve as the needed bridge to pave the way for both entities to blend for a successful practice. He explained that the absence of a cordial and cohesive relationship will encourage neglect, apathy, and lack of commitment among those who must be instrumental in forming this bond.

The Mico lecturer thought it was important for the smooth functioning of the practice and the success of the student teacher. "I think that the teachers in the cooperating schools and the university supervisors should have a collaborative relationship." "I see field experience as a team effort between these two entities," was how the EMU professor expressed it.

As a longtime proponent of site-based, university-school collaboration, Goodlad (1984) advocates that a renewal of schools and the education of educators are possible through an organic or symbiotic collaboration between universities and schools as equal partners. The focus then must be on ensuring that this relationship is duly established in

consideration of the tremendous role that colleges, universities, and practicing schools have to play in the training of teachers.

This topic will be further discussed later as it is one of the major areas of pre-service teacher education that was examined.

### **Intelligent Choice of Cooperating Teachers**

The consensus across the three programs was that cooperating teachers should be carefully chosen, based on experience and training, commitment, extensive classroom teaching, and expertise. From experience, I have observed that some cooperating teachers are chosen based on convenience rather than on experience, competence and/or commitment to mentoring and service. Usually, in these instances, student teachers are left to chart and develop their own program whether good or bad. There have also been situations where student teachers are left to manage classrooms while cooperating teachers use this opportunity to access what in their estimation is a well-needed break. No one needs to debate that this is not the ideal, and student teachers cannot be adequately served in these kinds of environments.

The student-teaching director at EMU reported that cooperating teachers have to be tenured and in most instances must have a master's degree. One cooperating teacher noted that teachers need to develop a level of maturity before they are asked to function as cooperating teachers. The Mico cooperating teacher addressed the fact that they must show a level of commitment to this awesome responsibility.

I could identify with the NCU professor's concern, that schools are sometimes not receptive of students as they ought to be, and understandably so. He explained that the practicum is regarded as an encroachment on the schools' program and teachers are not

so keen on giving up their classes, especially when they are preparing students for examinations. Whenever this happens, the practicing students are met with all sorts of negativities inclusive of unsuitable placement, which do not augur well for their practice.

The cooperating teacher is usually assigned the responsibility of guiding the student teacher, and acting as a model, while he/she discusses and explains pedagogical practices (Evans, 1991). By virtue of their responsibilities they fall into the categories of mentors. In this relationship the classroom teacher who is a more skilled or more experienced person serves as a role model, and “teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development (Wiseman et al., 1999).

For the success of this venture, mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé. Subsequent to this crucial relationship, however, must be the critical task of selecting cooperating teachers. Botnarescue and Machado (2001) suggest that expertise must be one of the criteria for their selection. To be effective, a cooperating teacher/mentor must first be a competent teacher in the school and classroom and must display the behaviors and attitudes that are hallmarks of and that are expected of good teachers. It is important that this person is able to establish and maintain a positive psychosocial environment, conducive to learning in his classroom.

Morehead et al. (2003) advise that the most dedicated and best teachers must be given first priority for operation as cooperating teachers. In the state of Michigan, these persons must first be tenured teachers, which means that they must have been in the

classroom for at least 4 years. To be eligible for serving in one of the programs under consideration, cooperating teachers must, among other factors, have at least a master's degree, while in other programs, they need to be experienced and dedicated to the job of teaching and be nurturing.

Although it is obvious that cooperating teachers have a significant impact on the professional career of student teachers, Lucas (1997) decries the fact that very few are well trained to provide the careful mentoring that student teachers require. Is it any wonder that some are so ill-advised resulting in their regarding their training as too impractical and idealistic for the norms of the local school. This is a sad indictment on pre-service teacher education, and an area that needs urgent attention.

Building principals, and vice principals, senior and master teachers must collaborate with university coordinators and supervisors in the identification and selection of the most qualified and suitable classroom teachers so that prospective teachers can be adequately prepared for the teaching profession. It must be emphasized that the placement of a student teacher is not to support or assist a mediocre teacher. There can be no doubt that they will be better served if they are placed with effective, competent classroom teachers.

### **Awareness of Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers**

Although it appeared that the relationship between the cooperating teacher/schools and the college has deteriorated in some instances, the awareness of the importance and need for this to be reinstated was abundantly clear from the discussion across the three programs. In the absence of a planned and organized training program, the institutions reported that cooperating teachers are given materials that outline the

universities' and colleges' expectations as well as their distinct roles and responsibilities. In the long run this can only be of great benefit to the students.

If cooperating teachers are to do a good job, they have to be aware of their responsibilities or of what is expected of them. They cannot be left to figure out what is or is not acceptable for student teachers. Regardless of the expertise of the individual, if he is to operate at his best he must be cognizant of what his responsibilities are or what is expected of him. Participants described their training program where all the cooperating teachers are invited on campus for a few days to advance collaboration, understanding, and university/college expectations.

The NCU cooperating teacher commented, "You should be able to assist this teacher to grow by demonstrating and transmitting the elements of good teaching without making a carbon copy of yourself." This is powerful, I think. In reflecting on her practicum experience, the Mico graduate teacher spoke with such pride: "I have been guided by a great supervisor and cooperating teacher and that made the experience very challenging, yet rewarding." Consequently, she is a strong contender that the supervisor and the cooperating teacher are very crucial to the success of the practicum for the student teacher.

Blair and Jones (1998) identify 10 responsibilities of the cooperating or supervising teacher. These are: becomes familiar with the student teacher's background and introduce him or her to the school, orients the teacher to the philosophy, curriculum, and school policies, informs teacher regarding students' cultural and academic background, meets regularly for lesson planning while modeling lessons in content areas, assists teacher in developing classroom management techniques, provides expert



supervision, evaluates students' performance, and encourages student teachers to attend conferences that will stimulate growth and development (p. 23).

Morehead et al. (2003) add that the cooperating teacher must be willing to accept input from the student teacher regarding the learning process occurring in the classroom. The teacher must also be willing to open up his classroom without reluctance to this person. Student teachers need to learn from the wisdom of practice possessed by their collaborating teachers, from the wisdom of educational research, and from academic discipline so that they will become clearer about their own personal theories, which inform and are informed by their own practice.

Darling-Hammond (1999) contends that "the most important contribution academe can make to supporting learning, is if colleges and universities would commit their resources to better preparing those who will become elementary and secondary teachers" (p. 18). In this context, therefore, teacher training must provide students with the opportunities to reflect on various teaching situations and problems in light of theory and educational practice.

For the Joint Board of Teacher Education, the practicum is the capstone experience of the teacher education program. As a period of exploration and self-evaluation, Brown (1999) anticipates that through the guidance received during this period, student teachers are expected to "gain a better understanding of students, the processes of learning and the relative merits of various teaching methods/materials and become more adept at identifying and defining their individual needs for further study and professional development" (p. 2).

One of the most important functions of the cooperating teacher, according to Morehead et al. (2003), is to provide feedback about instructional performance. The writers identified five characteristics which are intimate to feedback:

1. Amount – this must be appropriate. Too much can be confusing, while too little may inhibit growth.

2. Specificity – Specific examples from the student teacher's daily instructional techniques should be shared as this will enhance understanding and performance.

3. Frequency – This is the regularity with which the feedback is offered. Shorter, more frequent conferences are preferred as these can be informal and put the teacher at ease. Usually these can be given early in the experience and later when difficult situations are encountered.

4. Timing – Feedback should be timed so that it can be helpful to the student teacher. It can be most effective in the early weeks because the student teacher will have the opportunities to apply the recommendations.

5. Relevancy – Best feedbacks are usually relevant and specific. These deal with issues that impart instruction and student learning during lessons.

### **Placing Students Suitably**

The matter of placing students suitably, although not mentioned in so many words across all three programs, was well implied from the discussion that ensued with the interviewees. Due to the emphasis that students, cooperating teachers, professors, and teacher graduates placed on the intelligent choice of cooperating teachers, and the critical place of the practicum in students' training, it seems to suggest that students ought to be suitably placed if they are to function well during this phase of their program.

Another important point that was made by the student teacher director from EMU was the blending of personalities. She suggested that for a successful practice, student teachers must be assigned to situations where their personalities are a suitable match for that of their cooperating teachers. It is important that student teachers are comfortable, she advised, if they are expected to give of their best. She explained that in their program placement, students are given the opportunity to select the areas and schools within which they think they will feel most comfortable. The EMU professor felt strongly that the 'Professional Development Schools Model' should be adapted as it would allow students to be given a wide variety of experiences during their practice.

Although their requests were not always satisfied, as far as is possible under the constraints of a large contingent of students, EMU usually does its utmost to ensure that each student is comfortable. In addition, if students are not comfortable with their placement, they have 3 weeks within which to make a formal request for transfer. It is sad that many times in the Jamaican context with all the challenges of third-world dynamics, students are placed in situations that are not altogether conducive for a successful practice.

The practicum should be viewed as a time for student learning and not just an opportunity for them to demonstrate the theory they had previously learned. Research has indicated that the lessons of experience that student teachers learn during the practicum will be strongly influenced by the assumptions, conceptions, beliefs, dispositions, and capabilities that they bring to the practicum. Some student teachers believe that some children cannot learn because of their socio-economic background, others believe that

teaching is basically “telling” and “chalk and talk.” These are myths that must be altered if student teachers are to achieve the success that they can during this important exercise.

The situations within which they are placed should provide the opportunities where these sometimes negative traits and beliefs can be effectively altered for the better. I do not believe that young and inexperienced teachers should be asked to supervise student teachers, as they themselves are still in the process of maturing and developing their practice. The EMU cooperating teacher remarked to me that during her first year in the classroom she could not guide student teachers because she herself needed guidance at that time.

It is true that some of these young teachers can be more effective than older and more experienced ones, but if this is not the general case then care should be taken in this selection. Some classroom teachers are of the opinion that the practicum period provides the opportune time for semester vacation; hence, as soon as the student teacher takes over, they begin to take regular breaks. Clearly, these teachers are not suitable for supervising student teachers and their classes must be avoided at all costs.

Placing students correctly is therefore a matter that should not be taken lightly. Their placement should allow them to practice the subject content for which they had been adequately prepared. The classroom environment should not be overwhelming, and the number of pupils should not pose a compelling challenge. Quite often student teachers are assigned to undesirable situations which hinder rather than enhance their practice experience.

### **Adequate Time for Practice**

Students across the three programs contended that their practicum experience would have been more fulfilling if it were extended to at least 6 months to 1 year. Although they were generally satisfied with the amount of time that was scheduled for early field experiences, the EMU group felt that the program needed more structure and purposeful planning to ensure that they received maximum benefits from their involvement. From The Mico, students bemoaned the fact that practicing schools, which were established to facilitate adequate practice, have been transformed into autonomous schools, leaving them deficient in satisfactory practicing opportunities. Of course, this information should be instructive for those who are instrumental in planning and organizing early as well as regular field experiences.

Extending practicum experiences, however, will not necessarily result in an increase in student teachers' instructional awareness or knowledge of children's learning and development. Unless students are placed in situations that are conducive to professional development and are properly supervised, an extended practicum may only provide busy work and frustration.

On the other hand, however, it seems that if student teachers are to adequately hone their instructional skills, develop a fair understanding of classroom operation and the interdependence with respect to the different modes of learning, teaching, and subject matter, plan, construct and assess curriculum goals in light of the diverse student population, then certainly they need adequate time in supervised practice.

Another factor that must be borne in mind is the fact that students will inevitably take to their practice their own beliefs about learning and values and attitude, which may

or may not conflict with the principles established during their training. Under these constraints, student teachers need to spend enough time in practice so that they can at least begin to unlearn incorrect and undesirable behavior patterns and inculcate those that are more in keeping with positive instructional practices.

### **Coherence Between Field Experience, Content, and Pedagogical Knowledge**

The practicum is supposed to be structured to give all students an opportunity to practice within their content area. The teaching assignments therefore, have to be carried out in their areas of specialization and in environments that are as comfortable and facilitating as is possible. Although the other courses are important, without the practicum, students felt they would not have been able to make the necessary transfer of learning. They reiterated that it afforded them the opportunity to make the transition from theory to practice, it provided the opportunity for them to implement some of the teaching methodologies they had learned during the program, it provided opportunity for them to internalize the information to which they have been exposed, it facilitated decision making regarding their capacity to handle the challenges of the teaching profession, it enhanced modification of lessons and grooming of classroom management skills in an support of effective teaching, and it righted some of the wrongs they had taken for granted.

Although coherence between field experience, content, and pedagogical knowledge was not mentioned directly, it is understood that in order for the practicum to accomplish those goals as the students stated, there ought to have been some amount of collaboration, coherence, or harmony between the content and pedagogy that students

learn in their program and their field experience. The graduate teachers from the three programs concurred that their practicum enhanced the development of skills and transfer of theory, which would not have been possible had there not been some level of coherence in the organization.

Societies and schools today are multicultural and diverse, and that makes teaching a challenging and demanding duty. For this reason, I believe that teachers ought to be properly prepared. Teacher preparation has to be purposeful, engaging, and meaningful so prospective teachers can be fully integrated into the teaching process. Programs of this nature definitely have to be well conceptualized, articulated, planned, and organized.

Rather than just completing a whole list of unnecessary subjects and projects, prospective teachers would be involved in a program of study that is meaningful and far reaching in respect to teacher preparation for K-12 education. Courses, assignments, and field experiences; all program components are organized around a particular frame of reference, philosophy, and vision of teaching and learning.

When this happens, there is no doubt that prospective teachers will be able to see the linkages in the learning experience and inevitably will understand and construct the kind of knowledge that will inspire good teaching. Effective pre-service teacher education programs must be coherent and contextual in respect to the diversity that exists in schools. The identification and articulation of a conceptual framework will serve to ensure that programs are uniquely developed around a particular theme that is representative of the philosophy and vision of teaching and learning.

### University/College—Cooperating School Relationship

A review of the data regarding the relationship that should exist between the university/college and practicing schools revealed three descriptions: (a) Close Collaboration, (b) Open Lines of Communication, and (c) Training for Host School Participants.

#### **Close Collaboration**

The cooperating teachers and the program directors advocated that a close, collaborative, working relationship is necessary for the successful operation of field experiences, and teacher training in general. Regarding the establishment of this relationship, the NCU cooperating teacher argued that the university, through the supervisor, needs to take the initiative to begin the conversational process. "If the students are to succeed in their practice, this collaborative relationship must be prioritized," he emphasized. The EMU director commented that for the ideal situation they would have liked to have their students in schools where they have established the best relationship. The size of their program, however, does not always facilitate this, and so to remedy the situation, they try as far as possible to take steps to keep open lines of communication with these school districts.

It is rational and not exaggerating if cooperating teachers expect to be treated as equal participants in the practicum and not as second-class citizens. Unless they are treated as colleagues and teacher educators, no one should blame them for acting otherwise. Student teachers should be prepared for work in a collaborative rather than narrow and restrictive environment. They should be prepared for work in classrooms, for



collaborative work in schools as a part of learning communities, and for developing positive relationships with the external communities served by schools.

Many of the calls for reform in teacher education have focused on collaborative partnerships between schools and universities (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; Kennedy, 1992; Levine, 1992; Thomas, 2002). Most of these reform initiatives are geared toward partners working cooperatively in a mutually beneficial relationship. According to McIntyre (1994), partnerships like these are quite complicated and challenging, because educational institutions are unique and distinct in their mission, vision, culture, and organizational structure. In spite of these challenges, however, Sandholtz (1997) informs us that these ventures hold considerable promise and potential.

According to Darling-Hammond (1994), many school-university partnerships are successfully restructuring the knowledge, nature, and governance of teaching as well as the form and content of teacher education. This is understandably so, if universities are preparing teachers for community schools, then both entities need to have a common understanding of societal dynamics and goals in respect to the education of children.

The involvement of teachers as researchers, according to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), also generates knowledge that is useful for teachers as well as for the wider school and university communities. Educational materials and instructional strategies are improved through sustained collaboration between researchers and teachers, according to Bickel and Hatrup (1995).

Universities, colleges, and practicing/cooperating schools should recognize and accept their important place in this community of teaching, learning, and training. These experiences should enable students to develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually. In

this context, therefore, the need for collaboration among these entities need not be overlooked.

### **Open Lines of Communication**

The EMU student-teaching director described the relationship among the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the student teacher as a triad. She advised that they must work together to ensure the students' success in the experience. She cautioned that if nothing else, these persons must at least have open lines of communication. The better the communication, the better the students' experience will be and, inevitably, a breakdown in this relationship will definitely be problematic for the students. How can anyone disagree? The NCU professor's concern was that if the colleges expect that community schools are to accommodate their student teachers, then there must be some level of purposeful and cordial communication between both entities.

It was disconcerting to listen to the negative comments of the Mico cooperating teacher who bemoaned the fact that whenever the college supervisor visited the student teacher, she never communicated with her. She felt that as the teacher who worked most closely with the student teacher during the practice, the supervisor needed to have communicated with her. Sitting in her class, observing the student teacher, then leaving without consultation with her as the cooperating teacher was quite unsatisfactory, and for her it meant that she was not regarded as important in the practice.

The EMU cooperating teacher sensed the need for a strengthening of the relationship among the persons involved in the practice and also between the university and their school. She lamented the fact that quite often there is not much communication

between herself and the university supervisor. She thinks that each member of the group has a part to play in ensuring that the relationship works successfully.

The ideal student teaching experience has to be characterized by many opportunities for consultation and the sharing of ideas and information both formally and informally. There must be continuous dialogue between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, the college/university supervisor and the student teacher, and the cooperating teacher and the university/college supervisor. If cooperating teachers are regarded as partners in the training of prospective teachers, then university/college supervisors will see the need to have regular consultation relating to students' challenges, progress, or failure. Exchange of this kind of pertinent information should serve to inform program content, and/or structure of future field experiences toward greater compatibility for student teachers.

Morehead et al. (2003) posits that the cooperating teacher provides critical support and guidance for the intern/prospective teacher who is assigned to her class. This person helps to ensure a positive student teaching experience by developing an affirmative professional relationship, supervising the student's work competently, and evaluating progress. Certainly, this responsibility is significant enough to merit regular formal or informal conferencing between both persons to prevent misunderstandings, address conflicts, clarify expectations, and maintain dialogue for university/college relationship and for the direct benefit of the student teacher.

### **Training for Host-School Participants**

According to the comments of one teacher, it is the responsibility of the university/college to take the initiative in establishing partnership and in coordinating

plans for the success of this venture. Individuals tend to be more accommodating when they feel a sense of belonging and self-worth; therefore it is wise to establish this kind of relationship that will allow host-school participants to understand that they are equal partners in the training of student teachers.

The director from EMU explained that a field experience handbook is prepared and each cooperating school, supervisor, and teacher is given a copy to enhance their training. In addition, supervisors who are not faculty members are brought to the university campus for professional training. Although there are challenges of consistency regarding training for host/school participants, the Mico, and NCU program directors were quick to point out that, in recognition of the importance of this professional awareness, they have been making definite plans to address and restructure the process. In the interim however, they ensure that adequate documentation is provided to these persons so they are aware of what the institutions expect of them.

In addition to being competent, those who are chosen to operate as cooperating teachers must model the behaviors and attitudes that are expected of good teachers, and must be committed and willing to assume the responsibility of mentoring student teachers. This is a tremendous responsibility and can be overwhelming, especially for first-time participants. It must therefore never be taken for granted that because a teacher is competent and willing, he/she will be effective at mentoring.

In strategic planning for field experiences, training for host/school participants must be included. Building principals, superintendents, retired and in-service teachers, regardless of their maturity, must be required to attend training seminars. These sessions

should equip and/or make them cognizant of the roles and responsibilities of host-school participants as well as their individual roles in the practicum process.

McIntyre (1994) emphasizes that working together toward a common goal requires much planning, commitment, and effort. With the establishment of successful partnership, awareness or training sessions will be highly collaborative, and those concerned will find the exercise fulfilling and rewarding as expectations are exchanged in a purposeful and cordial environment.

### Teacher Educators

A critical analysis of the data which sought to identify criteria for faculty recruitment and the qualities students expect from them revealed five themes, which are discussed below: (a) Model Instructional Techniques, (b) Scholarly Research Engagement, (c) Expert Current Content Knowledge, (d) Experience in K-12 Classrooms, (e) Cultural Competence.

#### **Model Instructional Techniques**

The information ascertained from students and administrative personnel was increasingly clear that faculty members were not recruited haphazardly. Although the students' criteria for selection differed slightly based on the factors that they deemed most important, they nonetheless were generally satisfied that their professors/lecturers were of high caliber. The EMU professor expressed her concept of the ideal professor this way: "In all honesty, the ideal teacher educator is not different from the ideal teacher except for the completion of an advanced degree." One Mico student remarked that "the teacher educator must be teacher squared. All the characteristics of a good teacher are

embedded in an effective teacher educator.” This is so instructive, I believe. Now more than ever in our history, prospective teachers, young people, and children need role models and careful nurturing in schools.

In general, I was impressed by the degree to which the students across the three programs described the high expectations they had for their professors/lecturers. Students recognized the fact that usually they enter college or university with their preconceived ideas and notions, established attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding teaching. Some of these are quite often not in keeping with behavior patterns or professional principles that are recommended for the teaching profession.

In light of this, one EMU student remarked so interestingly that when their professors model innovative teaching strategies, they would be learning two things at the same time—the content and the pedagogy. They emphasized therefore that they expected to be taught by professors who understand and who would provide a caring, nurturing environment and most of all who would model the effective instructional strategies that they were being taught.

One Mico student remarked so thoughtfully that habits, and values are hard to change, so if their professors did not constantly model the correct behaviors, when they go to their own classroom, they would automatically revert to what is embedded in them. By observing the constant modeling of the appropriate behaviors, attitude, and pedagogical skills, eventually this would become the norm and it would be somewhat easier for them to inculcate these positive practices. The NCU students expect the teacher educator to be a teacher himself and must be familiar with, and have had experience in K-12 school system.

This is tremendous and it is unfortunate that modeling of curricular and instructional practices is not exemplified by all professors in pre-service teacher education. As the students reflected, it was not difficult for them to distinguish between those professors who had K-12 teaching experience and those who had none. There was a marked difference in the way they organize their instructional environment, the students divulged. While one class was always uninteresting and boring, the other was interesting, lively, and consistent with a variety of enriching and fulfilling learning experiences.

Thompson (2001), speaking on challenges and solutions in tertiary education in Jamaica, posits:

Our universities and other tertiary institutions can be no better than the students who attend them, so our students can be no better than the teachers to whom we entrust them. The training of our teachers is so important that it should be an integral part of any new system, directly nurtured and watched over in the university itself and able to share in the excitement of any intellectual renaissance. (p. 67)

One of Goodlad's (1990) postulates for an agenda for change in teacher education suggests that programs must be characterized in all respects by the conditions of learning that future teachers are to establish in their own schools and classrooms. Teacher educators must be aware that their responsibilities go beyond transmitting the contents of their courses to modeling what they intend their students to do as teachers. Goodlad suggest that this modeling is a powerful component of the professional curriculum and not just a mode of delivery and should not just be left to chance.

Orlofsky's (2001) exegesis on the theories of Bruner and the training of teachers provides food for thought on this issue. She postures:

By virtue of our subject matter, teacher educators should be among the finest in the world. After all, if we are teaching others the key elements necessary for successful teaching, then it follows that we should be ideal pedagogical models. . . . We

also need to understand that to be a pedagogical model requires a cutting edge and mentor mentality in addition to a strong competent and inspiring classroom presence. (p. 71)

In preparation for the practicum experience and the way it will contribute to the development of teaching expertise for the student teacher, Zeichner (1996) admonishes that subject matter knowledge and research on teaching and learning must be taught so that students will understand the key concepts in their discipline rather than memorizing lots of information. I believe that those who are teaching teachers how to teach should themselves know and practice effective teaching skills.

### **Scholarly Research Engagement**

One of the criteria that was highly rated for faculty recruitment across the three programs is scholarly research engagement. Interestingly, although students also felt that this was an important criterion, and they expected their professors to be on the cutting edge of research and technology, they did not think it should supersede teaching-learning experience and commitment to teacher education.

Comments across the three programs include: Professors should model some of the characteristics of good teaching to include being a prolific writer, an avid reader, and an ardent researcher; professors are encouraged to publish rather than perish, to the extent that a Research Day has been introduced in the annual program of activities; the professors need to show the potential for a track record in scholarship.

Be that as it may, Smith (2003) advises that teacher education faculty must be involved in research and add to the knowledge base on teacher education as well as to develop a strong collaboration with schools to promote education. Citing Oser (1998), Smith (2003) further suggests that the professional development of teacher educators is



therefore not limited to expanded theoretical knowledge in a specific subject area, but to a more rounded development with cognitive and affective domains.

There are countless aspects of teacher education that are in need of research, and while responsibilities of teaching and community service are already overwhelming, faculty members are well advised to organize and balance their limited time so that research needs can be addressed. As a matter of fact, meaningful community service and teaching and clinical responsibilities are all affected by research directly/and or indirectly. The faculty member who is committed to make a significant impact in the academic community and to the development of knowledge is well aware of the critical role that research has to play in this endeavor.

A strong knowledge base is needed in teacher education as is important to all professions. This knowledge, which must inform practice, has to be held in high regard according to Newton (1999). I wonder about the extent to which the practice of education will be intelligently informed and recognition possible without adequate research on issues that are directly related to pre-service teacher education. Certainly, there is research, but when educational problems are studied not with a view to improve teacher education or the general practice of education, I believe the mission and purpose would have been lost.

It is the information from research studies that will clarify and strengthen faculty beliefs regarding the various aspects of teacher education to which they are directly involved. Recruitment, curriculum development, organization and implementation of successful field experiences, college/university and practicing school partnership, professional development schools, influence of faculty pedagogy on students'

performance and attitudes to instruction, and teaching diverse learners are only a few of the many aspects of pre-service teacher education that need to be researched.

### **Expert Current Content Knowledge**

The students exemplified those professors whose knowledge and pedagogical practices are not obsolete by virtue of the period of neither their advanced degrees nor exclusion from research. In the students' opinion, those professors with advanced degrees beyond 10 years are now obsolete if they have not been upgrading their skills. For the students, their knowledge will also be obsolete and redundant since their professors' educational background impacts their training so directly. They want them to bear in mind that "the students of today's classrooms are different from those of 5 or 10 years ago." They should be willing to move on to broaden their scope of knowledge, so they are lifelong learners.

I like the way one NCU student expressed it. He said: The teacher educator must be an erudite, with such a vast expanse of knowledge that we are in awe when we sit before him. A professor's knowledge base is inextricably related to his or her colleagues' research involvement. I would want to believe, however, that there will be a stronger and more beneficial relationship when he/she is directly involved. It is this knowledge base, acquired through rigorous inquiry into their discipline that will facilitate expertise in the teacher educator's teaching and advisory role. Although all the programs emphasized the need for faculty to be involved in continued research, only two of the three actually mentioned expert current knowledge. It is interesting, however, as knowledge of this nature will be acquired through some form of research engagement, whether formal or informal.

Evans et al. (2002) in their study on the preparation of new teacher educators explain that the teacher educator is as important to the education of the prospective teacher as the classroom teacher is to the education of K-12 students (p. 84). With that knowledge and with the various calls for a restructure and renewal of teacher education in structure and pedagogy, the writers contend that teacher educator's preparation, subject matter knowledge, perception of their role, and the quality of their teaching have to be considered with respect to changes that are envisaged in teacher education and that affect teaching at the K-12 levels (p. 84).

Is it any wonder that prospective teachers demand that their professors/lecturers possess expert current knowledge in their areas of specialization and generally otherwise? I do not think so. Because there is a high degree of continuity or similarity between being a teacher and a teacher educator, and because of the exclusion of a planned program of induction for new teacher educator recruits, Evans et al. (2002) suggest that there is the possibility that these new educators may not have the professional competence to make the necessary adjustments regarding their previous roles and new roles.

Principles and assumptions that govern K-12 teaching experiences regarding goals, classroom pedagogy, students, and learning outcomes may influence their new roles and the relationships they form with students at the college or university levels. In addition, the required knowledge and professional skills needed to operate as educators of teachers may not be in place. The essence therefore is that teacher educators reorganize, restructure, and redefine their knowledge base so that they will be in a better position to operate not as teachers of K-12 students, but as teachers of teachers.

### **Experience in K-12 Classrooms**

It was a pleasant surprise to learn that in faculty recruitment, experience in K-12 instruction is duly considered especially in university-based programs. This was prevalent across the three programs, but was not the quality that was given top priority in any of them. As a contrast, students regarded K-12 experience as critical to the success of their professors. Their views are therefore not confounded, and the program directors who are advocates that their recruits need to have K-12 experience in addition to their advanced degree are paving the way for more successful preparation of teachers for the nation's schools.

To be eligible to teach at the college level in Jamaica, the minimum qualification is 5 years' teaching experience at K-12, at least a first degree in the subject to be taught and professional education. This is, however, not an indication of the general educational background of college tutors, as presently many lecturers have now earned advanced degrees. For teacher education in university-based programs in the United States, generally, professors may or may not have K-12 teaching experience but must have advanced degrees or be at the ABD (All But Dissertation) stage of their advanced degree.

Teaching experience at the K-12 level provides experiential background in classroom pedagogy and instruction, classroom interaction, development of student-teacher relationship, curriculum development and implementation, assessment of learning goals, subject matter preparation, impact of the home and community environment on student learning and achievement, and a host of other school-related issues. The students across the three programs could easily differentiate between those faculty members who

have had experience at the K-12 level and those who did not. In addition they were more satisfied with classroom instructions of the latter than those of the former.

This background knowledge is applicable to teaching at the college or university level of teacher education. Evans et al. (2002) advise that “since the teaching methods that teacher educators use are a powerful influence on future teachers, the teaching approaches recommended at the primary and secondary levels must be reflected in teaching methods at the college level” (p. 90). Although teaching methods must be age and stage appropriate, those professors/lecturers who have had K-12 experience will be at an advantage for successful operation with prospective teachers.

According to Kostner and Dengerink (2001), the foundation of instructional competencies is one of the fundamental characteristics of the professional development standards for teacher educators in Holland. This was articulated on the notion that the teacher educator’s core task is to enable students to develop into competent teachers. The task force which comprised teacher educators themselves believes that if they are to enhance the development of competence in students, they themselves need to be competent in their areas of specialization, which include content, pedagogy, organization, group dynamics, and communicative and developmental and personal growth.

### **Cultural Competence**

The theme of EMU which is highly inclusive, and the organization of a “Center for Urban Education” and the Minority Achievement Retention and Success Program (MARS) are indications of the structures that have been introduced to complement training in preparation for diversified student groups. While I cannot verify the success

that has been realized from these initiatives and innovations, one must agree that these are giant steps in the right direction.

Despite the innovations that have been instituted in respect to planning for the diverse needs of prospective teachers and the diverse K-12 student body with whom they will interact, one professor's concern cannot be ignored. She recognizes the shortage of culturally competently qualified professors in pre-service teacher education programs, and in her program notwithstanding. If professors of our teacher education programs are not culturally competent, then it is reasonable to suspect that their curriculum and instructional strategies are nonetheless reflective of this limitation. In addition, it can be assumed that prospective teachers are in no better position to effect any kind of or only minimal academic change in their own diversified classrooms.

Successful teaching, especially at the K-12 levels, requires that teachers acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to work effectively with and adequately address the needs of their diverse student population. Effective pre-service teacher education programs have the challenging task of preparing all prospective teachers to teach this culturally diverse group of students. Montecinos (1996) reminds us that although teachers and students may share a significant part of their cultural background, one cannot assume that teachers will be able to easily translate cultural knowledge into culturally relevant pedagogy. Hence, the need for purposeful training cannot be an afterthought.

#### Program Effectiveness

Analysis of the data regarding what students expect of effective pre-service teacher education programs revealed seven themes: (a) Program adequately structured to

facilitate students' involvement in adequate research for the completion of assignments and development of research skills, (b) adequate practicum experience in real classrooms, (c) program coherence between theories and practical experiences, (d) knowledge suitable for addressing students' needs at all levels and to cope with the challenges of today's schools, (e) competent professors who model effective teaching strategies in their classrooms, (f) cutting edge technological awareness, and (g) classroom management and assessment skills. These are identified and discussed below.

*1. Program adequately structured to facilitate students involvement in research for the completion of assignments and development of research skills.*

Program structure can make a difference in the quality of its graduates. One student from The Mico advocated for a structured program that will facilitate their development of research skills, especially through completion of assignments. Time for him is of the essence and he expected that their training program should be purposefully structured to provide them time for self-development. If the program is too overwhelming, in the long run, instead of producing graduates of high caliber, they will become dependent without the ability to use the tools that will enhance growth, development, and maturity in the teaching profession. On a similar note, one student in another program felt that some of the courses were not necessary and could have been replaced with extended field experiences.

*2. Adequate practicum experience in real classrooms.*

The practicum is an important aspect of pre-service teacher education, and students are mindful of the critical role that it plays in the development of professional, teaching, and interpersonal skills for school and classroom operation. What is adequate is

debatable, and will be reflective of individual programs and their structure. Be that as it may, however, students expect that their practicum experiences will allow them to experience real classrooms and will be long enough to facilitate development of the basic teaching skills inclusive of reasoning, problem solving, and decision making. They do not want to be overwhelmed with too much content and not enough practice as they believe that teaching is a practical discipline, hence the need for adequate field experiences.

Field experience should expose student teachers to real problems, and teacher educators/supervisors should be on hand to provide guidance in identifying suitable solutions. Students believe these experiences should coordinate with their regular courses, especially in curriculum development; and supervision and feedback should serve to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Students expect to be suitably placed in situations that are conducive to their development. The practicum should be strategically planned so that they can achieve maximum benefits from it.

*3. Knowledge suitable for addressing students' needs at all levels and to cope with the challenges of today's diverse schools.*

Knowledge is power but only when it is used intelligently. Students expect that their training program should make them knowledgeable enough to address their students' needs in today's diverse classrooms. They understand that with the multicultural and diverse student population, there will be engendered a multiplicity of challenges: academic, emotional, social, physical, and otherwise.

The pre-service teacher education curriculum should encompass knowledge of the theories of learning and child and adolescent development, general and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of content across the K-12 levels, general knowledge



for adequate functioning in society, and professional development. In addition they expect to be taught how to construct and use knowledge in the process of becoming lifelong learners. At the end of their program of study they expect that they will be well equipped with the requisite knowledge that will enhance a successful teaching career.

*4. Competent professors who model effective teaching strategies in their classrooms and treat students as individuals rather than as numbers.*

Students expressed a high regard for faculty members who demonstrate competence in their classroom delivery and display overall professional development. Their maturity, previous experiences, need for problem-solving approaches, and conflict-resolution techniques must influence their teaching styles. While they expect to be taught as adults, they, however, require their professors to, at the same time, model some of the appropriate strategies that they will have to employ in their own classrooms. They expect their professors/lecturers to be able to teach through methods that are recommended for use at the K-12 levels. Their general and subject-specific pedagogical and content knowledge must be extensive and current.

After all, as the students commented, if they are teaching us how to teach, they should be able to teach themselves, and this should be reflected in their own classroom delivery. They need to see effective teaching skills displayed by their professors/lecturers. In addition, students expect to have a personal relationship with their professors. They desire to be treated as individuals rather than as mere numbers in a large group. They placed much emphasis on interpersonal relationships.

*5. Cutting edge technological awareness.*

In this age of advanced technology, when information is easily accessible to the ordinary person, students expect to be taught how to explore the information highway. They need to be introduced to innovative ways of using the computer and other forms of technology to enhance their classroom delivery and for their own professional development. In modeling effective teaching strategies, they expect their professors/lecturers to employ the latest cutting edge technology at their disposal.

The increased development of information technology is a call to educators to re-examine their teaching strategies and discover more modern and effective techniques that are suitable for teaching and learning at all educational levels. In recognition of this, student teachers expect their program to remain abreast with these new developments and provide them with the needed skills to be creative and effective.

*6. Classroom management and assessment skills.*

Good teachers are able to manage their classes so that learning can be achieved. They understand how to structure activities and interactions so that they are orderly, purposeful, and students are clear regarding what is expected of them. These teachers know how to create the kind of environment where undesirable behaviors are reduced and learning is optimized.

Students expect to be taught classroom management skills as they believe that this is critical to success in the classroom. Regardless of how well they know their content and pedagogy, they understand that those teachers who are able to create meaningful instructions that are motivating and engaging will encounter fewer distractions during lesson delivery and learning activities.

Being able to monitor the learning goals is an essential part of the learning process, and students want to be knowledgeable about the different modes of assessment so they can adequately discover what their students think and adapt instruction to meet their needs.

### **Summary**

A summary of the responses to the research questions reveals the similarities and differences according to the emphasis that the institutions placed on each of the themes that emerged. Table 6 presents a visual representation of how the themes were recognized across the three institutions identified as, 1 – Northern Caribbean University, 2 – The Mico, and 3 – Eastern Michigan University.

The following are those themes that have been identified from discussions across the three institutions according to the categories represented by the research questions. Some themes, as the table indicates, have been mentioned three times, and are common across the three programs; others have been identified twice, while a few were mentioned only once.

Themes that were mentioned only once should not be regarded as least in importance or insignificance. It must be remembered that all the programs, though similar in many respects, are also different in context, structure, and operational paradigm. A particular theme may be emphasized more or less because of this contextual influence.

Components: For this category, assessment and conceptual framework were identified across the three institutions, while strong content knowledge and professional development were identified by two. General knowledge, although evidently a characteristic of each institution, and contextualization were mentioned by only one.

Table 6

*Ratings of Themes According to Program Responses*

| Research Questions   | Response Themes   | Institutions |   |   |
|--|---|--------------|---|---|
|  |   | 1            | 2 | 3 |
| 1<br>Components  | Strong Content Knowledge                                  | x            |   | x |
|  | Professional Development                                  | x            |   | x |
|  | Assessment  | x            | x | x |
|  | General Knowledge   | x            |   |   |
|  | Contextualization   |              | x |   |
|  | Conceptual Framework                                      | x            | x | x |
| 2<br>Assessment  | Standards for Accountability                              | x            | x | x |
|  | Program Restructuring                                     | x            | x | x |
|  | Improvement of Teaching and Learning                      | x            | x | x |
|  | Continuity  | x            | x | x |
|  | Authenticity  | x            | x | x |
| 3<br>Curriculum  | Meaningful and Relevance                                  | x            | x | x |
|  | Diversity Issues  |              | x | x |
|  | Research Based  | x            | x | x |
| 4<br>Teacher<br>Graduates                                      | Involvement in Action Research                            | x            | x | x |
|  | Reflective Practice                                       |              | x | x |
|  | Good Human Relations Skills                               | x            |   | x |
|  | Planning and Organizational Skills                        | x            |   | x |
|  | Knowledge of Content                                      | x            |   | x |
|  | Knowledge of Pedagogy                                     | x            | x | x |
|  | Cultural Competence                                       | x            | x | x |
| Student-Centered Perspective                                   |   | x            |   |   |
| 5<br>Field<br>Experiences                                      | Collaboration between Host Schools and University/College | x            | x | x |
|  | Intelligent Choice of Cooperating Teachers                | x            | x | x |
|  | Awareness of the Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers | x            | x | x |
|  | Placing Students Suitably                                 | x            | x | x |
|  | Adequate Time for Practice                                | x            | x | x |
|  | Coherence Between Field Experience and Content . . .      | x            | x | x |
| 6<br>School/University/<br>College<br>Relationship             | Close Collaboration                                       | x            | x | x |
|  | Open Lines of Communications                              | x            | x | x |
|  | Training for Host Schools Participants                    | x            | x | x |
| 7<br>Teacher<br>Educators                                      | Model Instructional Techniques                            | x            | x | x |
|  | Scholarly Research Engagement                             | x            | x | x |
|  | Expert Current Knowledge                                  | x            |   | x |
|  | Experience in K-12 Classrooms                             | x            | x | x |
|  | Cultural Competence                                       |              |   | x |
| 8<br>Program<br>Effectiveness<br>and Students'<br>Expectations | Program Adequately Structured to Facilitate . . .         |              | x |   |
|  | Adequate Practicum in Real Classrooms                     | x            | x | x |
|  | Knowledge Suitable for Addressing Students' Needs . . .   | x            |   | x |
|  | Competent Professors who Model Effective Teaching . . .   | x            | x | x |
|  | Cutting-edge Technological Awareness                      |              | x | x |
|  | Classroom Management and Assessment Skills                |              |   | x |

Assessment: For this category, all the themes were identified across all three institutions.

Curriculum: For this category, all the themes were identified across all the three programs.

Teacher Graduates: For this category, involvement in action research, knowledge of pedagogy, and cultural competence were mentioned across the three programs. Reflective practice, good human relations skills, and planning and organizational skills were identified across two programs, while knowledge of content identified and student-centered perspective by one.

Field Experiences: All six themes were identified across the three institutions; collaboration between host schools and university/college, intelligent choice of cooperating teachers, awareness of the responsibilities of cooperating teachers, adequate time for practice, coherence between field experiences, content and pedagogical knowledge, and placing students suitably.

School/University/College relationship: All three themes were identified across the three institutions: close collaboration, training for host-school participants, and open lines of communication.

Teacher Educators: Of the five themes identified under this category, three were identified across the three institutions; model instructional techniques, scholarly research engagement, and experience in K-12 classrooms. Expert current knowledge was identified by two, while cultural competence was identified by only one.

Students' Expectations and Program Effectiveness: For this category, adequate practicum in real classrooms and competent professors who model effective teaching

strategies in their classrooms were identified across all three institutions. Knowledge suitable for addressing students at all levels and cutting-edge technological awareness were identified by two, while program adequately structured to facilitate students involvement in adequate research and the development of research skills, and classroom management and assessment skills were identified by only one institution.

The students were generally satisfied that their program was adequate and it prepared them well to function effectively in the schools. They were impressed with the performance of their lecturers/professors who were quite personable, modeled interesting and innovative instructional strategies, and use a variety of alternative assessment techniques. In general, they felt that their courses/content was relevant for K-12 classroom environment and they could relate most of what they learned to what they had to teach.

For program improvement, they would provide more experience in student teaching instead of doing unnecessary courses that are not relevant to classroom teaching; change some of the advising rules to facilitate new and older students who get lost in the program, especially when they have transferred from other universities; provide more guidance to students, especially in course selection so they do not complete courses then discover that they become obsolete soon afterwards; make advisors more aware of what goes on in the university, so they will be able to provide the kind of information that students need.

## CHAPTER 8

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Education . . . is the provision of means to fellow human beings enabling them to continually enlarge their knowledge, understanding, authenticity, virtue and sense of place in the past present and future of the human race.*

—Gary D. Fenstermacher

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a brief summary of the study: the problem, purpose, research questions, methodology, and an overview of the literature. This is followed by a summary of the findings from the data representing the eight research questions, conclusions drawn, implications for pre-service teacher education, and recommendations for future research.

#### **Problem**

The business of pre-service teacher preparation in today's contemporary society is a formidable and overwhelming task. This is a result of the numerous challenges that confront the education system in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Social, economical, and political problems, multicultural and diversity issues, overpopulation, and technological challenges are only a few of the problems that have to be considered in the preparation of teachers. It is no wonder that some administrators and classroom teachers are bereft and

bewildered in their quest for effective solutions that will facilitate the achievement of educational goals.

In light of these challenges, this study investigated three exemplary pre-service teacher education programs in the country of Jamaica and the state of Michigan, in order to provide an account of how these are structured in different contexts of tertiary institutions. In addition, the study sought to identify how these programs ensure that their graduates are prepared to function effectively in today's schools amidst the formidable challenges.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to investigate and provide an in-depth account of how pre-service teacher education is structured and conducted in three different contexts of tertiary institutions in the country of Jamaica and the state of Michigan. Eight different areas of pre-service teacher education were examined, mainly through the perspectives of various stakeholders who serve and are served by this area of teacher education. The study was guided by one main research question from which seven related questions were developed.

### **Research Questions**

The following are the research questions which guided this study. The first is the focus question from which the remaining seven were developed to facilitate the process of a fairly comprehensive data collection. Each question represented a different area of pre-service teacher education, and it was from these areas that the interview protocols were established.



The areas are: Program Components – Assessment techniques: Curriculum; Teacher Graduate; Field Experiences; University/College–School partnership; Teacher Educator; Program Effectiveness; and Students' Expectations.

1. What are the major components of effective/productive teacher education programs?
2. What assessment techniques are effective for teacher education programs?
3. How should pre-service teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?
4. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher graduate?
5. How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher?
6. What relationship should exist between the university/college and the practicing schools?
7. What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher educator?
8. What are students' expectations of pre-service teacher education programs?

### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative case study design. Five categories of stakeholders (program administrators, senior students, faculty member, graduate teacher, cooperating teacher) in three different contexts of tertiary institutions were interviewed regarding their perceptions and expectations of pre-service teacher education in general as well as in the context of their program. These interview protocols were constructed with standardized semi-structured questions and conducted in the context of the three

institutions. All interviews were electronically recorded to ensure reliability and validity of information received.

The responses from these persons were described in narrative form then analyzed and compared based on the similarities and differences that existed among them. The study examined documental evidence as part of the data collection as well. The analysis led to the emergence of various themes across the three institutions, and these were used to draw conclusions relative to the structure of pre-service teacher education within those three contexts.

### **Overview of Literature**

The importance of education to a country's economic welfare is emphasized by Brimley and Garfield (2002). As a result of this reality, there is need for an educated workforce that will keep the country on the road to economic sustenance. The educated workforce is related to the quality of the teachers and the programs, through which they are prepared (Fullan, 1995; Guyton, 2000; Kostner & Dengerink, 2001).

If quality teachers are to be produced for the education system that is faced with many challenging problems, these problems have to be taken into consideration when teachers are being trained (Ben-Peretz, 2001; Egan, 2000; Sikula, 1996; Sindelar & Rosenberg, 2000). School renewal and change are needed to create more stability in our education system so our students can be better served and the country will benefit eventually (Goodlad, 1994; Jennings, 2000; O'Hare & Odell, 1995; Orlofsky, 2001; Sikula, 1996).

Teacher education is being reformed and these initiatives are built around major questions related to attributes of good teachers, prospective teachers, and/teacher

education programs; strategies used by effective teachers; education processes that will ensure that prospective teachers learn these strategies; knowledge regarding what teachers should know and be able to do, and outcomes that should result from teacher learning, professional practice, and student learning (Cochran-Smith, 2002).

Pre-service teacher education in contemporary society has to be built around a conceptual framework that will ensure that programs are intelligently structured based on a keen vision of teaching and learning. In keeping with contemporary research, reforms in teacher education programs are advocating models that allow the design of an interrelated set of activities that will enable prospective teachers to acquire and/or refine the understandings and abilities relevant to effective operation in today's schools (Howey & Zimpher, 1996).

Brownell et al. (2003) in their study of 15 pre-service programs discovered that contemporary exemplary programs are characterized by seven features. These are (a) conceptual framework, (b) a coherent program vision, (c) diversity issues, (d) collaborative partnerships, (e) standards that ensure quality performance, (f) faculty pedagogy that employs modeling and help students connect theory and practice and promote reflection, and (g) carefully planned field experiences and a conscious blend of theory and pedagogy.

Researchers such as Joyce et al. (2000) and Houston and Warner (2000) advocate that reflection should be embedded in teacher education programs and thus allow prospective teachers to understand and begin to inculcate the practice. In the same breath, teacher education ought to be built on and informed by active research, according to

Cruikshank (1990), Poeter (1997), and McIntyre and Byrd (2000). Without this knowledge, the practice will be ill-informed and the public respect cannot be guaranteed.

As a result of the multicultural society into which schools exist today, teacher education has to assume a culture which is reflective of this diversity. In this regard prospective teachers need to be exposed to and be prepared to teach all children of these varying backgrounds (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Dilworth, 1992; Duhon & Manson, 2000; Mark & Ribeiro, 1999; Obidah & Teel, 2001; Striedieck, 1997; Thomas, 2002; Tom, 1997).

We are living in the age of technological advancement, and this alters the way things are done. Consequently, according to Major and Pines (1999), the use of technology goes to the core of educational reform. The technology, however, will be useless if the human mind is not educated to handle this powerful medium (Levine, 1996). Teacher preparation therefore has to be infused with the development and use of technology for teaching and learning.

Thomas (2002), Levine (1992), Kennedy (1992), Carnegie Forum (1986), and the Holmes Group (1986) address the need for partnerships in teacher education reform. Although this will induce many and varied challenges, Darling-Hammond (1994), Grossman (1994), McIntyre (1994), Miller & Silvernail (1994), Neufeld (1992), Sandholtz and Merseth (1992), and Snyder (1994) advocate that the initiative is well worth the effort.

Teacher education curriculum must be linked to what prospective teachers will be expected to do in their schools and classrooms (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Fullan, 1991; Hawley & Evertson, 1993; Joyce & Showers, 1995). A solid preparation

in knowledge base must be given to prospective teachers according to Lucas (1997) and Evans (2000). A study done by Wilson et al. (2001) reveals that teachers with subject matter preparation tend to achieve more in the classroom than those without.

Field experiences are important aspects of teacher education. These are to be properly planned and implemented to allow prospective teachers to achieve maximum benefits in the honing of their instructional and classroom management skills (Evans, 1991; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; McIntyre et al., 1996; Thomas, 2002).

If teaching is to be regarded as a profession, then it must be characterized by standards (Roth, 1996). And Engvall (1997) suggests that standards ought to be used as a measure of assessment and accountability not just for programs but for teachers' performance as well. Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) identify the New National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS); the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); and the National Certification for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which serve as guidelines for the development of quality standards in teacher education.

The success of teacher education depends to a great extent on the quality of its faculty. According to Kostner and Dengerink (2001) and Goodlad (1990), there is a connection between what happens in the classroom and the quality of teacher training, which is inextricably linked to the quality of their program and the quality of the faculty in those programs. In keeping with societal trends, teachers must be trained differently in order to teach and meet the needs of all students according to today's standards.

### Summary of Data Findings Based on Research Questions

For this section, the themes that emerged across the three programs in response to the categories representing the research questions have been summarized according to the regularity with which they have been mentioned. Those that were common to the three programs will be identified first, those mentioned in two programs second, and those mentioned in only one program will be noted last.

#### Research Question 1

The first question asked: What are the major components of effective/productive teacher education programs? The data produced six components.

1. *Assessment and Conceptual Framework.* Assessment has to be integral to pre-service teacher education. It should serve as a measure of accountability and must be authentic to the degree to which it is meaningful for the purpose for which it was established. Pre-service teacher education programs should be built on a conceptual framework that is clearly articulated. It should be fundamental to the organization as it provides the basis for all areas of program structure and development.

2. *Strong Content Knowledge and Professional Development.* Pre-service teacher education programs need to be built on a strong content knowledge that will provide the fundamental basis on which the various areas of the teaching profession will be built. The professional development of teachers should be embedded in pre-service teacher education programs. Teachers will develop a repertoire of instructional skills, they will understand the psychology of child and adolescent development and learning, they will develop expertise in their areas of specialization, and they will develop interpersonal skills and lifelong learning attitudes towards their own growth and development.

3. *General knowledge and Contextualization.* Knowledge for enrichment is critical to pre-service teacher education. Prospective teachers need to be empowered with general knowledge that will facilitate their own professional growth and provide their students with some level of experience with various subject matters of human conversation. Preparatory programs should depict the shared patterns of institutions, behaviors, traditions, values, and beliefs.

Professional education should therefore train educators to place students and their culture at the center of learning, to acknowledge, respect, and build on the knowledge, beliefs and experiences that students bring with them to the classroom and to affirm rather than negate the value of students' culture. As far as possible, the programs should be highly reflective of the context within which students are expected to operate and serve.

#### Research Question 2

The second question asked: What assessment techniques are effective for teacher education programs? The data produced five themes, which have all been emphasized across all three programs with respect to the importance of assessment and the techniques that are most suitable for pre-service teacher education. They have been itemized for discussion and not according to level of importance.

1. *Standards for Accountability.* The place of assessment in pre-service teacher education has already been validated. Assessment denotes a measure of accountability and this should ensure that programs are based on measurable standards which are representative of good learning outcomes.

2. *Program Restructuring.* Assessment is critical to program evaluation and reform. It is by virtue of assessment that administrators are able to determine whether or not they are achieving their program goals in respect to learning outcomes for prospective teachers and K-12 students, community service, and research engagement.

3. *Improvement of Teaching and Learning.* Assessment ensures teachers engage in thoughtful, reflective, continuous evaluation of their work within the context of the teaching-learning environment at all levels of the education system. Prospective teachers should be exposed to a variety of learning experiences and assessment techniques and they in turn will understand how to organize similar and suitable experiences for their students.

4. *Continuity.* If teaching and learning is continuous, then it follows that assessment must be continuous also. In order to monitor the learning experiences of students at all educational levels, some measure of assessment has to be administered during and also at the end of the experience. Assessment should be formative as well as summative.

5. *Authenticity.* The extent to which the assessment serves its purpose, whether for self-evaluation, improvement of teaching and learning, program evaluation, denoting accountability standards, or providing for certification, will determine its authenticity. Assessment has to be authentic if the results are to be used intelligently for reform in preservice teacher education. A variety of alternative techniques should be used in preservice teacher education and these ought to be chosen dependent on the purpose and nature of the information that is being sought.



### Research Question 3

The third question asked: How should pre-service teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education? The data produced three themes which were emphasized across all three programs. These have been itemized for discussion and not according to any measure of importance.

1. *Meaningfulness and Relevance.* Programs for the education of prospective teachers should be characterized in all respects by the conditions of learning that they are to establish in their own schools and classrooms. The curriculum should be meaningful and relevant to societal dynamics and make prospective teachers capable of influencing their students' lives to meaningful ends.

2. *Diversity Issues.* The pre-service teacher education curriculum has to be suitable for the preparation of teachers who are culturally competent or culturally aware. If teachers are to be successful in the classroom, they should be able to teach all children, and only culturally competent teachers or those who are aware of diversity issues will be able to adequately and/or successfully address the needs of all their students. Programs have to be reflective of and address multicultural and/or diversity issues.

3. *Research Based.* Pre-service teacher education should be informed by accurate research. This knowledge should be diverse and should form a solid base on which curriculum and other program components are built.

### Research Question 4

The fourth question asked: What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher graduate? The data produced eight dispositions:

1. *Involvement in Action Research, Knowledge of Pedagogy, and Cultural Competence.* These were identified across all three programs. Successful teachers engage in and rely on research and inquiry to inform their practice. Prospective teachers should be exposed to and given the opportunity to be involved in action research during their period of preparation. Teachers are very important in the classroom and their performance there will depend to a great extent on how much they are able to be reflective in their teaching.

A repertoire of pedagogical skills is needed for successful teaching in the K-12 diverse classrooms of today's schools. Beginning teachers need to be aware of subject-specific pedagogy as well as general pedagogy. They should also be knowledgeable of pedagogy appropriate for the content area they will teach.

If no child is to be left behind in the educational arena, then there must be quality teachers in all classrooms. In order to teach all children successfully, teachers have to be culturally competent. It is important that prospective and beginning teachers acquire such skills. If programs take diversity issues into consideration, then it follows that prospective teachers will eventually become culturally competent

2. *Reflective Practice, Good Human Relations Skills, Planning and Organizational Skills, and knowledge of content,* were identified across two programs. Effective teachers are reflective rather than routine. Beginning teachers are expected to be cognizant that the process of understanding and improving their teaching has to begin with a reflection of their actions and experience in the classroom. The process is never complete and is characteristic of teachers who are really committed to making a

difference in their schools and classroom by paying attention to what they say and do.

This attitude of reflection will lead to continued involvement in action research.

Creating a warm, pleasant, and comfortable learning environment is a contributing factor to learning and achievement, especially at the K-12 levels.

Prospective and beginning teachers need to possess good human relations skills and these must enhance their relationship with all their students.

In order for learning goals to be achieved, teachers are expected to develop the skills to plan and organize their classrooms purposefully in respect of those goals.

Planning and organizing an orderly, purposeful environment will minimize distractions and optimize learning. The beginning teacher needs to acquire these management skills.

Beginning teachers need to be cognizant of the fact that their students must be at the center of the learning experience. Within this environment, they become the focus of everything that happens in the classroom. They are active rather than passive and their learning is encouraged and facilitated rather than discouraged and impeded.

Teachers are better able to function at their best when they know and understand their subject matter. With this expert knowledge, they can enrich the learning environment of their students as they are taught to construct, explore, and build their own knowledge base. These teachers earn more credibility and respect from their students.

3. *Student-centered perspective.* Students need to be taught to develop the skill of critical thinking and problem solving. They should not be allowed to only parrot and regurgitate their teachers' thoughts and ideas, instead they need to be given the opportunity to develop and express themselves in a teachable classroom atmosphere. They should be motivated in a student-friendly environment.

## Research Question 5

The fifth question asked: How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher? The data produced six themes that were emphasized across all three programs. These have been itemized for discussion and not as an indication of any measure of importance.

1. *Collaboration Between Host Schools and University/College.* A successful field experience begins with a close collaboration between the university/college and the cooperating/participating community schools. It is the responsibility of the university/college to initiate and establish this relationship.

2. *Intelligent Choice of Cooperating Teachers.* Cooperating teachers are integral to the success of student teachers during field experiences. Because they have a significant impact on their professional career, it is important that they are chosen with utmost care. Only those teachers who are mature, committed, dedicated, and demonstrate good teaching and mentoring skills should be chosen as cooperating teachers.

3. *Awareness of Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers.* To be effective, cooperating teachers have to be knowledgeable of their responsibilities. This necessitates some amount of professional training, collaboratively organized by the university/college and the host schools, where principles for guiding the practice and expectations can be duly clarified.

4. *Placing Students Suitably.* Student teachers should be strategically placed in environments where they can be emotionally stable and comfortable. In addition, placement should facilitate the use of the skills they have been inculcating specific to their areas of specialization. Convenient placement should be avoided and classroom size

should not be too overwhelming for the student teacher. Cooperating teachers and student teachers should be able to work amicably together.

5. *Adequate Time for Practice.* Student teachers need adequate time in diverse, supervised practice. Their personal beliefs and previous experiences, some of which may be unconventional and negative, will most definitely be brought to bear on the practice. Consequently, there should be time enough for some, if not all of these to be altered for the better. What is adequate may depend on the culture and structure of the various programs.

6. *Coherence Between Field Experience and Content and Pedagogical Knowledge.* Good preservice teacher education programs are coherent. Courses, assignments, and field experiences are organized around a particular frame of reference, philosophy, or vision, and students are able to see the linkages in the learning experience. What students learn in college or university courses should be linked in some way to what they are expected to do in their own classrooms.

#### Research Question 6

The sixth question asked: What relationship should exist between the university/college and the practicing schools? The data produced three distinguishing features and these were identified across all three programs. They have been itemized for discussion and not to indicate any level of importance.

1. *Close Collaboration.* Collaborative partnerships between community schools and universities/colleges are recommendations for reform initiatives in teacher education. These partnerships are geared toward partners working cooperatively in a mutually beneficial relationship. If universities/colleges are preparing teachers for community

schools, then both entities need to have a common understanding of societal dynamics and goals in respect to the education of children.

2. *Open Lines of Communication.* The ideal student teaching experience should be characterized by many opportunities for consultation and the sharing of ideas and information both formally and informally. There should be continuous dialogue between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, the college/university supervisor and the student teacher, and the cooperating teacher and the university/college supervisor.

3. *Training for Host-School Participants.* It should be regarded as a tremendous and important responsibility to partner in the education of teachers. Host schools should be made to understand that they are important in this triad and in respect of that, they need to be included in collaborative planning for training and development.

#### Research Question 7

The seventh question asked: What characteristics are common to the ideal teacher educator? The data produced five characteristics/dispositions. Three were identified across all three programs, while one was identified by two programs, and the remaining by one program.

1. *Model Instructional Techniques, Scholarly Research Engagement, and Experience in K-12 Classrooms.* Professors/lecturers should be exemplified by their expertise in modeling of curricular and instructional practices in pre-service teacher education. Their learning environment must be enriching and fulfilling for those who are future teachers in K-12 classrooms. They are expected to demonstrate teaching skills in much the same way they expect their students to operate.

Pre-service teacher education has to be informed by a strong knowledge base. It is information from research engagement that will support this knowledge base and clarify and strengthen faculty beliefs regarding the various aspects of teacher education to which they are directly involved. Fundamentally, pre-service teacher educators' major responsibility is to enable prospective teachers to develop into competent teachers.

Consequently, if they are to be instrumental in enhancing this development of competence in their students, they themselves need to be competent in their areas of specialization. These include among other things: content, pedagogy, organization, group dynamics, and communicative, developmental, and personal growth. Experience in K-12 classrooms will certainly enhance this growth.

2. *Expert Current Content Knowledge.* The time has come for teacher educators to reorganize, restructure, and redefine their knowledge base so that they will be in a better position to operate not as teachers of K-12 students, but as teachers of teachers. Their knowledge has to be current and extensive in order for them to effectively prepare teachers for the challenges they will face in their profession.

3. *Culturally Competent.* Effective pre-service teacher education programs have the challenging task of preparing all prospective teachers to teach a culturally diverse group of students. The need for culturally competent professors is salient within programs that are purposefully structured to achieve this goal. There definitely cannot be culturally competent prospective teachers without culturally competent professors.

#### Research Question 8

This section required the students to do a critical evaluation of their program with respect to their expectations and in comparison to what their program provided. In

general, they concurred that their individual programs had strong as well as weak areas, but did indeed give them overall preparation. Although they agreed that there were areas that needed improvement, they were basically satisfied that they were provided with a fairly solid foundation on which they can build successful careers.

The data representing the expectations they had for their programs revealed seven components:

*1. Program adequately structured to facilitate students' involvement in adequate research for the completion of assignments and development of research skills.*

Students expected pre-service teacher education programs to be organized and structured to enhance and facilitate their development of research skills. Although they anticipated that their programs would be rigorous, they expected that it would be structured to allow them enough time for engagement in their own research.

*2. Adequate practicum experience in real classrooms.* Students expected to be allowed adequate practice for their field experiences in real classroom situations.

*3. Program coherence between theories and practical experiences.* Students expected their teacher education programs would prepare them to function in the real world with all the challenges. They needed to see a relationship between the theory they learned and the practice in the field.

*4. Knowledge suitable for addressing students' needs at all levels and to cope with the challenges of today's schools.* Students expected that their training program should make them knowledgeable and competent enough to address their students' needs in today's diverse classrooms.



5. *Competent professors who model effective teaching strategies in their classrooms.* Students expressed a high regard for faculty members who demonstrate competence in their classroom delivery and display overall professional development. Consequently, they expected their professors to be able to model a plethora of instructional strategies that are applicable for use in K-12 classrooms.

6. *Cutting-edge technological awareness.* In this age of advanced technology, students expected to be taught how to explore the information highway. They also expected to be introduced to innovative ways of using the computer and other forms of technology to enhance their classroom delivery and professional development.

7. *Classroom management and assessment skills.* Students expected to be taught classroom management skills as they believe that this is critical to success in the K-12 classroom.

For program improvement, students suggested that the programs should: provide more experience in student teaching instead of doing unnecessary courses that are not relevant to classroom teaching; change some of the advising rules to facilitate new and older students who get lost in the program, especially when they have transferred from other universities; provide more guidance to students, especially in course selection so they do not complete courses then discover that they become obsolete soon afterwards; make advisors more aware of what goes on in the university, so they will be able to provide the kind of information that students need.

## Conclusions

The following are the conclusions which have been drawn from the results of this study with respect to the eight research questions. The major components of effective/productive teacher education programs are:

1. Assessment
2. Conceptual Framework
3. Strong Content Knowledge
4. Professional Development
5. General knowledge
6. Contextualization.

Assessment techniques are critical for effective pre-service teacher education programs. The process should ensure that the following program elements are present:

1. Standards for Accountability
2. Program Restructuring
3. Improvement of Teaching and Learning

Furthermore, Assessment should be characterized by the following hallmarks:

1. Continuity
2. Authenticity
3. Employment of traditional as well as alternative methods.

Pre-service teacher education curriculum should be linked to the practice of education. It should demonstrate or address the following:

1. Meaningfulness
2. Relevance

3. Diversity Issues
4. Research Focus.

Ideal teacher graduates should display the following dispositions:

1. Involvement in Action Research
2. Knowledge of Pedagogy
3. Cultural Competence
4. Reflective Practice
5. Good Human Relations Skills
6. Planning and Organizational Skills
7. Knowledge of Content
8. Student-centered Perspective.

Field experiences should be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learned by the student teacher. There needs to be the following elements:

1. Collaboration between Host Schools and the University/College
2. Intelligent Choice of Cooperating Teachers
3. Awareness of the Responsibilities of Cooperating Teachers
4. Adequate Time for Practice
5. Coherence between Field Experience and Content and Pedagogical

Knowledge

6. Suitable Placement for Practicing Students.

The relationship between the university/college and the practicing schools should be characterized by:

1. Close Collaboration
2. Open Lines of Communication
3. Training for Host-School Participants.

The ideal teacher educator should possess the following skills:

1. Model Instructional Techniques
2. Demonstrate Scholarly Research Engagement
3. Experience in K-12 Classrooms
4. Expert Current Content Knowledge
5. Cultural Competence.

The following are students' expectations of pre-service teacher education programs:

1. Adequately structured to facilitate their involvement in adequate research for the completion of assignments and development of research skills
2. Adequate practicum experience in real classrooms
3. Program coherence between theories and practical experiences
4. Knowledge suitable for addressing their needs at all levels and to cope with the challenges of today's schools
5. Competent professors who model effective teaching strategies in their classrooms
6. Cutting-edge technological awareness
7. Classroom management and assessment skills.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

This study examined eight different aspects of three pre-service teacher education programs mainly from the perspectives of various stakeholders. These represent two categories of persons: those who have been served by the institution and those who provide service through the institution. Graduate students, senior students, cooperating teachers, faculty, and program directors have all served and have been served by pre-service teacher education. The following are the recommendations that have been suggested for the continued development of pre-service teacher education.

Field experiences need to be revisited and properly structured to allow adequate time for effectively supervised practice. This is an area in pre-service teacher education that seems to lack the kind of organization that it needs to ensure coherence between content and pedagogical courses and regular practice. No longer can cooperating teachers be conveniently or haphazardly chosen. These have to be teachers who demonstrate competence in the classroom and possess the mentoring skills that will influence their supervisory practice.

The matter of collaborative partnership, especially between community schools and training colleges/universities, should to be given urgent attention, in light of the significant role that these schools play in the training of teachers. Teacher training has to be a joint partnership between communities, educational experts, universities/colleges, and the knowledgeable lay person.

Faculty members who are fundamental to the success of pre-service teacher education programs should be selected with utmost care. Their knowledge base should be current; they should be technologically advanced and should be able to use those skills in

the planning and organization of curriculum and instruction in their own classroom. Criteria for selection should also include K-12 experience, cultural competence, and commitment to teacher education.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by an inflow of knowledge, and pre-service teacher education programs are expected to have the kind of knowledge base that will produce professionals who have the capacity to address social and economical issues. Student teachers will need to acquire critical skills, decision making, and communicative skills and must have the cognitive flexibility to use these in the process of decision making. In this regard, programs may need to pay more attention to the quality of their entrants.

Schools and classrooms in today's society are quite diverse, and pre-service teacher education programs have the responsibility to be more responsive and structured to prepare teachers who are culturally competent to adequately teach all K-12 students. However, this will not be possible unless the cognitive and affective needs of the multicultural student population are acquired and the relevant instructional strategies that are suitable for addressing those needs are identified. The need for continued research in this area is timely.

Pre-service teacher education programs need to ensure that prospective teachers acquire the technological skills that are critical for optimal functioning in this information age. No longer can teachers rely on chalk and talk, and create teacher-centered authoritative classrooms. Their students will not develop problem-solving or critical-thinking skills if they are passive and only expected to parrot and regurgitate their teachers. Prospective teachers need to be taught how to facilitate learning and organize

child-centered learning environments using innovative, technological strategies that will influence the learning modes of all their students.

Pre-service teacher education has to be as dynamic as the society it is designed to serve. The programs should be contextualized, and learner-centered reflecting the culture within which prospective teachers are expected to operate. As rapid changes occur, programs for teachers must remain informed and have to be restructured to reflect these changes if educational demands are to be sufficiently met. Prospective teachers will never acquire all the competencies they need to satisfactorily serve in the future. Consequently, pre-service programs must inspire them to be lifelong learners, always seeking for greater awareness and a deeper understanding and knowledge of the changing world.

Effective pre-service teacher education programs should show coherence. There needs to be a common thread that harmoniously connects all aspects of the program. By identifying and organizing a conceptual framework, the program philosophy, vision, objectives, structure, and content will blend as each will be an element of this main frame. Curriculum courses in content and pedagogy will not be disjointed and will be inextricably linked to their field experiences. Rather than just completing a whole list of unnecessary courses and projects, students would have been involved in a program of study that is meaningful and far reaching in respect to teacher preparation for K-12 education.

There needs to be defined, measurable standards in pre-service teacher education. These should be based on a general consensus of what constitutes good teaching and its relationship to learning. As often as research reveals new knowledge, these standards must be revisited, evaluated, and continually revised. Assessment of these standards

should be authentic, and extensive, and should incorporate multiple strategies and techniques in respect to what is being measured. Continuous assessment, therefore, ought to be a significant feature of pre-service teacher education programs.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Pre-service teacher education is complex and there is no one best structure or organization that will yield the best quality teachers for K-12 classrooms. Programs have to be contextual and cultural as they are guided by their philosophy, vision, purpose, and most importantly by a knowledge of what constitutes quality teaching.

The following are questions that I believe, if researched, will add to the knowledge base in pre-service teacher education. These could also serve as extensions to this study.

1. What is the relationship between various models of pre-service teacher education and the performance and retention rates of their graduates in the classroom?
2. What is the impact of different structures of field experiences on teacher quality? One-year internships could be examined against shorter or longer periods.
3. Is there a relationship between pre-service teacher education program duration and the quality of the graduates?
4. What strategies can be used to establish and enhance collaborative partnership between university/college and community schools for greater success in pre-service teacher preparation?
5. What are the cognitive and affective needs of minority students? What instructional strategies are effective for advancing their learning?
6. What strategies can pre-service teacher education programs implement to attract, recruit, and retain academically advanced candidates for the teaching profession?



7. What should be the general knowledge base of pre-service teacher education programs?

APPENDIX 1  
CORRESPONDENCE

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY**  
**Educational Administration & Leadership**  
**School of Education**

**Informed Consent**

**Title of Study**

*Profiles of Pre-service Teacher Education: An Investigation into the Nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan*

The purpose of this study is to investigate and provide an in-depth account, of how pre-service teacher education is structured and conducted in different contexts of tertiary institutions in Jamaica and the state of Michigan. Second, the study will seek to provide information that can serve as valuable resource for the development of teacher education in Jamaica

I understand that in order to participate in this study, I must be a stakeholder in teacher education. I must be either a director of a program, a faculty member, a senior pre-service student, a teacher education graduate or a cooperating teacher.

I understand that I will be asked questions in a personal one-to-one interview session, and that I will be given the opportunity to respond according to my own personal experiences. I understand that I will be given the right to indicate any information given that I deem necessary to be held in confidence. I understand that a summary transcript will be submitted to me upon request.

I understand that my participation in this study will not expose me to any known risks whatsoever. I retain the right to cease or postpone the interview at any time that I feel there is an intrusion of my privacy leading to discomfort.

I understand that I will not receive any direct benefits from participation in this study. I understand that the benefits of my participation will facilitate an understanding regarding the structure of teacher education in Michigan. I understand that the information gleaned from my involvement in this study will be included in a doctoral dissertation.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I have the right to discontinue my involvement at any time without prejudice or penalty. I also understand that there is no compensation in return for my participation.

I understand that if I have any questions concerning this project, I can contact Dr. Hinsdale Bernard at (269) 471-6702. I can also contact the researcher at (269) 471-6953, Sunday through Friday between 9:00 A.M and 10:00 P.M.

I understand that if I have questions concerning my rights as a research subject, I can contact the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University at (269) 471 6360.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I need to sign two consent forms, return one to the researcher and keep one for my records.

Competent Adult Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Signature of Investigator:

“I have reviewed the contents of this form with the person signing above. I have explained the potential risks and benefits of the study.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone:

*Heather Smith-Sherwood, 500 Garland Ave, Apt. E8, Berrien Springs  
Michigan 49103, U.S.A. Email: [smithshe@andrews.edu](mailto:smithshe@andrews.edu)  
Phone: 269-471 6953*

Oct. 24, 2005

Dear Cooperating Teacher:

**RE: PARTICIPATION IN A STUDY OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Sincere Greetings,

In an effort to complete the requirements for the PhD Degree in Educational Administration and Leadership, I am soliciting your participation in a study of the Pre-service Teacher Education Program in operation at Eastern Michigan University.

I am Heather Smith-Sherwood, a Jamaican teacher educator currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Andrews University here in Michigan. The title of my study is:

***“Profiles of Pre-service Teacher Education: An Investigation into the Nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan.”***

This study will seek to examine and gain insights into the current reform trends influencing teacher education in the twenty-first century in Jamaica, a developing country and in the state of Michigan in the United States, a well-developed country. It has been accepted that the quality of schools depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers, who in turn are influenced tremendously by their training. This seems to suggest that if the education system is to make progress, a continuous review of teacher training must be paramount in light of the economic, social and other challenges facing education to day.

As a Jamaican teacher educator, I am very grateful for the opportunity that this research will afford. Having the privilege to conduct a review of two teacher education programs in the United States, and to compare the structure of these programs with the one to which I am affiliated, will undoubtedly provide extensive resource for my professional growth and development. In addition, the comparative analysis will yield invaluable information, which I hope can serve as a benchmark for future analytical reviews, paving the way for sustained growth and expansion of the Jamaican structure of teacher education.

The study will include five categories of stakeholders in the teacher education program- the program director/chair, faculty member, senior students, trained in-service teacher, and a cooperating school teacher. To facilitate the selection of these individuals, I will collaborate with the director of the teacher education program at Eastern Michigan

University. As the study will be highly qualitative, a personal one-on-one interview will be conducted with each of these participants.

I request your kind assistance in the completion of this study, as you are very crucial to its success. If you consent, the study will include an interview with you in which you will be asked questions regarding your role as a cooperating teacher. You will also be asked to give your perspectives relative to the importance of field experiences in pre-service teacher education, as well the need for collaboration between the university and the cooperating schools.

Kindly note that no hazards or risks are anticipated or will be associated with the interview that will be conducted and your consent will be completely voluntary. Consequently, you will have the right to withdraw from or terminate the interview at anytime without prejudice.

Additional information regarding this study can be ascertained from my dissertation chair- Dr. Hinsdale Bernard at (269)471-6702 or email: [hbernard@andrews.edu](mailto:hbernard@andrews.edu). Information relative to my contact particulars are documented above. Questions regarding your rights as a research subject can be ascertained from the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University, (269)471-6360.

Thank you wholeheartedly for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

---

Heather Smith-Sherwood.

*Heather Smith-Sherwood, 500 Garland Ave, Apt. E8, Berrien Springs  
Michigan 49103, U.S.A. Email: [smithshe@andrews.edu](mailto:smithshe@andrews.edu)  
Phone: 269-471 6953*

May 10, 2005

Senior Student  
College of Education  
Eastern Michigan University  
Ypsilanti  
Michigan

Dear Senior Student:

**RE: PARTICIPATION IN A STUDY OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Sincere Greetings,

In an effort to complete the requirements for the PhD Degree in Educational Administration and Leadership, I am soliciting your participation in a study of the Pre-service Teacher Education Program in operation at Eastern Michigan University.

I am Heather Smith-Sherwood, a Jamaican teacher educator currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Andrews University here in Michigan. The title of my study is:

***“Profiles of Pre-service Teacher Education: An Investigation into the Nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan.”***

This study will seek to examine and gain insights into the current reform trends influencing teacher education in the twenty-first century in Jamaica, a developing country and the state of Michigan in the United States, a well-developed country. It has been accepted that the quality of schools depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers, who in turn are influenced tremendously by their training. This seems to suggest that if the education system is to make progress, a continuous review of teacher training must be paramount in light of the economic, social and other challenges facing education to day.

As a Jamaican teacher educator, I am very grateful for the opportunity that this research will afford. Having the privilege to conduct an in-depth review of two teacher education programs in the United States, and to compare the structure of these programs with the one to which I am affiliated, will undoubtedly provide extensive resource for my professional growth and development. In addition, the comparative analysis will yield invaluable information, which I hope can serve as a benchmark for future analytical reviews, paving the way for sustained growth and expansion of the Jamaican structure of teacher education.

The study will include five categories of stakeholders in the teacher education program- the program director/chair, faculty member, senior students, trained in-service teacher, and a cooperating school teacher. To facilitate the selection of these individuals, I will collaborate with the director of the teacher education program at Eastern Michigan University. As the study will be highly qualitative, a personal one-on-one interview will be conducted with each of these participants

I request your kind assistance in the completion of this study, as you are very crucial to its success. If you consent, the study will include an interview with you in which you will be asked questions regarding your perceptions regarding the expectations you have of your university as a student in training. You will also be asked to give your perspectives relative to the importance of training for effective performance, the characteristics of the ideal classroom teacher and teacher educator.

Kindly note that no hazards or risks are anticipated or will be associated with the interview and your consent will be completely voluntary. Consequently, you will have the right to withdraw from or terminate the interview at anytime without prejudice.

Additional information regarding this study can be ascertained from my dissertation chair- Dr. Hinsdale Bernard at (269)471-6702 or email: [hbernard@andrews.edu](mailto:hbernard@andrews.edu). Information relative to my contact particulars are documented above. Questions regarding your rights as a research subject can be ascertained from the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University, (269)471-6360.

Thank you wholeheartedly for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

---

Heather Smith-Sherwood



*Heather Smith-Sherwood, 500 Garland Ave, Apt. E8, Berrien Springs  
Michigan 49103, U.S.A. Email: [smithshe@andrews.edu](mailto:smithshe@andrews.edu)  
Phone: 269-471 6953*

July 20, 2005

Mrs. Kay Anderson  
Vice Principal  
Academic Administration  
Mico Teachers' College  
Marescue Rd  
Kingston

Dear Mrs. Anderson:

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Sincere Greetings,

In an effort to complete the requirements for the PhD Degree in Educational Administration and Leadership, I am soliciting your permission to conduct a study of the Teacher Education Program in operation at Mico Teachers' College.

I am Heather Smith-Sherwood, a Jamaican teacher educator currently enrolled in the Educational Administration and Leadership Program in the School of Education. The title of my study is:

***“Profiles of Pre-service Teacher Education: An Investigation into the Nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan.”***

This study will seek to examine and gain insights into the current reform trends influencing teacher education in the twenty-first century in Jamaica, a developing country and the state of Michigan in the United States, a well-developed country. It has been accepted that the quality of schools depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers, who in turn are influenced tremendously by their training. This seems to suggest that if the education system is to make progress, a continuous review of teacher training must be paramount in light of the economic, social and other challenges facing education today.

As a Jamaican teacher educator, I am very grateful for the opportunity that this research will afford. Having the privilege to conduct an in-depth review of two teacher education programs in the United States, and to compare the structure of these programs with the one to which I am affiliated, will undoubtedly provide extensive resource for my professional growth and development. In addition, the comparative analysis will yield invaluable information, which I hope can serve as a benchmark for future analytical

reviews, paving the way for sustained growth and expansion of teacher education both at Mico and in Jamaica in general.

The study will include five categories of stakeholders in the teacher education program- the program director/principal, faculty member, senior students, trained in-service teacher, and a cooperating school teacher. To facilitate the selection of these individuals, I will collaborate with you or your nominee. As the study will be highly qualitative, a personal one-on-one interview will be conducted with each of these participants.

Kindly note Mrs. Anderson that no hazards or risks are anticipated or will be associated with the interviews that will be conducted and the respondents' consent will be completely voluntary. Consequently, each participant will have the right to withdraw from or terminate the interview at anytime without prejudice.

Additional information regarding this study can be ascertained from my dissertation chair- Dr. Hinsdale Bernard at 269-471 6702 or email: [hbernard@andrews.edu](mailto:hbernard@andrews.edu). Information relative to my contact particulars are documented above.

Thank you wholeheartedly for your earliest and kind consideration.

Sincerely,

---

Heather Smith-Sherwood.

*Heather Smith-Sherwood, 500 Garland Ave, Apt. E8, Berrien Springs  
Michigan 49103, U.S.A. Email: [smithshe@andrews.edu](mailto:smithshe@andrews.edu)  
Phone: 269-471 6953*

May 10, 2005

Professor  
College of Education  
Northern Caribbean University  
Mandeville  
Jamaica

Dear Professor:

**RE: PARTICIPATION IN A STUDY OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Sincere Greetings,

In an effort to complete the requirements for the PhD Degree in Educational Administration and Leadership, I am soliciting your participation in a study of the Pre-service Teacher Education Program in operation at Northern Caribbean University.

I am Heather Smith-Sherwood, a Jamaican teacher educator currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program at Andrews University in Michigan. The title of my study is:

***“Profiles of Pre-service Teacher Education: An Investigation into the Nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan.”***

This study will seek to examine and gain insights into the current reform trends influencing teacher education in the twenty-first century in Jamaica, a developing country and the state of Michigan in the United States, a well-developed country. It has been accepted that the quality of schools depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers, who in turn are influenced tremendously by their training. This seems to suggest that if the education system is to make progress, a continuous review of teacher training must be paramount in light of the economic, social and other challenges facing education to day. In addition, teacher educators, I believe, are sine qua non to the program of teacher education.

As a Jamaican teacher educator, I am very grateful for the opportunity that this research will afford. Having the privilege to conduct an in-depth review of two teacher education programs in the United States, and to compare the structure of these programs with the one to which I am affiliated, will undoubtedly provide extensive resource for my professional growth and development. In addition, the comparative analysis will yield invaluable information, which I hope can serve as a benchmark for future analytical

reviews, paving the way for sustained growth and expansion of the Jamaican structure of teacher education.

The study will include five categories of stakeholders in the teacher education program- the program director/chair, faculty member, senior students, trained in-service teacher, and a cooperating school teacher. To facilitate the selection of these individuals, I will collaborate with the director of the teacher education program. As the study will be highly qualitative, a personal one-on-one interview will be conducted with each of these participants

I request your kind assistance in the completion of this study, as you are very crucial to its success. If you consent, the study will include an interview with you in which you will be asked questions regarding your perceptions of your role as a teacher educator, the content of the teacher education curriculum and the characteristics of the ideal teacher graduate.

No hazards or risks are anticipated or will be associated with the interview that will be conducted and your consent will be completely voluntary. Consequently, you will have the right to withdraw from or terminate the interview at anytime without prejudice.

Additional information regarding this study can be ascertained from my dissertation chair- Dr. Hinsdale Bernard at (269)471-6702 or email: [hbernard@andrews.edu](mailto:hbernard@andrews.edu). Information relative to my contact particulars are documented above. Questions regarding your rights as a research subject can be ascertained from the Institutional Review Board at Andrews University, (269)471-6360.

Thank you wholeheartedly for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

---

Heather Smith-Sherwood

Ms. Smith-Sherwood,

The faculty Expedited Review committee of the UHSRC has recommended approval of your doctoral research protocol from Andrews University 'Profiles of Pre-service Teacher Education: An Investigation into the Nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan'. You are approved to use Eastern Michigan University faculty members and students in your data population providing they are willing to participate.

Our review faculty did recommend that you add a cover note to your Consent Agreement that indicates that you have received approval from the EMU IRB to conduct this research on our campus and if the subjects have any concerns regarding the approval process of the protocol that they contact '... either Dr. Patrick Melia or Dr. Steven Pernecky, Co-Chairs of the EMU Human Subjects Review Board at 734-487-0379.'

You will be receiving an official letter of approval for your protocol Following our July 21st meeting but until that time this email will serve as your approval to begin your data collection on the EMU campus effective immediately.

With best wishes.

Dr. Patrick Melia  
Associate Graduate Dean  
Administrative Co-Chair  
UHSRC

**NORTHERN CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY**  
A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST INSTITUTION

Mandeville, Jamaica W.I.

*College of Teacher Education & Behavioural Sciences*

June 28, 2005

Institutional Review Board  
Andrews University  
Berrien Spring MI 49104  
USA

Dear Sir or Madam

**Re: Mrs. Heather Sherwood-Smith**

This letter serves to inform you that Mrs. Sherwood-Smith has been granted permission to conduct her research using the Department of Teacher Education on the Northern Caribbean University campus as the phenomenon to be studied. This research is intended to be used as a requirement towards her doctoral degree at Andrews University.

We will appreciate if a copy of the final document could be made available to this Institution upon completion.

Respectfully



Teran Milford, Ph.D.

**Dean**

/d

c: Dr. William Smith  
Dr. Patrick Williams  
Dr. Enid McLymont  
Mrs. Heather Sherwood-Smith

*"Ubi Semper Discimus"*

Tel.: (876) 962-2204

E-mail: [info@ncu.edu.jm](mailto:info@ncu.edu.jm)

Website: [www.ncu.edu.jm](http://www.ncu.edu.jm)

Fax: (876) 962-0075



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE

2 NATIONAL HEROES CIRCLE

P.O. BOX 498

KINGSTON, JAMAICA

REPLY OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCE  
TO THIS COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE

ADDRESSED TO THE PERMANENT  
SECRETARY AND THE FOLLOWING  
REFERENCE QUOTED:

NO. \_\_\_\_\_

May 9, 2005

**Mrs. Heather Smith-Sherwood**  
**500 Garland Avenue, Apt. E8**  
**Berrien Springs**  
**Michigan 49103**  
**USA**

Dear Mrs. Smith-Sherwood

We have received your letter of April 28, 2005, explaining your plans for your doctoral thesis, and the aspect which you wish to take place in Jamaica. You have our permission to undertake your research in Jamaican institutions and we will facilitate your access to these when you arrive.

We wish you continued success in your studies.

Yours sincerely

Philbert Dhyll (Mr.)  
Assistant Chief Education Officer  
Tertiary Unit  
for Permanent Secretary

- c. Miss Jean Hastings, Project Manager - PESP  
Mrs. Diane Browne, Pre-Service Coordinator, Tertiary/PESP



# EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

July 22, 2005

Ms. Heather Smith-Sherwood  
School of Education  
Andrews University

RE: "*Profiles of Preservice Teacher Education: An Investigation into the nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan*"

The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Eastern Michigan University has granted approval to your proposal: "Profiles of Preservice Teacher Education: An Investigation into the nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan".

After careful review of your application, the IRB determined that the rights and welfare of the individual subjects involved in this research are carefully guarded. Additionally, the methods used to obtain informed consent are appropriate, and the individuals are not at a risk.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the IRB of any change in the protocol that might alter your research in any manner that differs from that upon which this approval is based. Approval of this project applies for one year from the date of this letter. If your data collection continues beyond the one-year period, you must apply for a renewal.

On behalf of the Human Subjects Committee, I wish you success in conducting your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Melia".

Dr. Patrick Melia  
Administrative Co-Chair  
Human Subjects Committee

CC: Dr. Steve Pernecky, Faculty Co-Chair



December 9, 2005

Heather Smith-Sherwood  
500 Garland Ave. E8  
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Dear Heather,

**RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

**IRB Protocol #:** 05-063      **Application Type:** Revised      **Dept:** School of Education  
**Review Category:** Exempt      **Action Taken:** Conditional Approval      **Advisor:** Hinsdale Bernard  
**Protocol Title:** Profiles of Preservice Teacher Education: An Investigation Into the Nature of Selected Exemplary Programs in Jamaica and Michigan.

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your proposal for research. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form, after initiation of the project, require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

Some proposal and research design designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If your project is one of this nature and in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Institutional Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University physician, Dr. Loren Hamel, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,



Samuel Millen  
Graduate Assistant  
Institutional Review Board

**APPROVED**  
Office of Scholarly Research

Office of Scholarly Research  
(269) 471-6360 Fax: (269) 471-6246 E-mail: [irb@andrews.edu](mailto:irb@andrews.edu)  
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104

APPENDIX 2  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **Interview Schedules**

### **Program Directors**

1. What are the major components of effective teacher education programs?
2. How is your program structured to reflect these components?
3. What is your program vision and how does this influence the program structure?
4. What is the conceptual framework that guides your program development?
5. What strategies do you employ to ensure that your program achieves its goals and objectives?
6. What relationship should exist between the university/college, and the practicing schools?
7. What criteria are used to select faculty for your program?
8. What are your assessment techniques?

### **Teacher Educators**

1. What do you think should constitute the content of pre-service teacher education curriculum?
2. How should the teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?
3. What characteristics should describe the ideal teacher graduate, and how do these compare to the characteristics necessary for/of effective teaching?
4. What is your profile of the ideal teacher educator?
5. How should field experiences be organized to effect the implementation of pedagogical content learnt by the student teachers?

6. What is the place of research in pre-service teacher education?
7. What assessment techniques are effective for pre-service teacher education programs?
8. How long do you think teachers should remain in the classroom before they are eligible to function as cooperating teachers?

#### **Pre-service Senior Students**

1. What are your expectations of a pre-service teacher education program?
2. How has this program met and is meeting those expectations?
3. What for you is the most important part of your training?
4. How would you describe an effective teacher?
5. How would you describe an effective teacher educator?
6. What assessment techniques are most effective for pre-service teacher education programs?
7. How should the teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?

#### **Teacher Graduates**

1. How would you describe an effective teacher?
2. How did your teaching practice experience help you to develop the skills that are relevant to effective teaching?
3. How did your training influence the development of these skills?
4. What assessment techniques are effective for pre-service teacher education programs?
5. How long do you think students should be required to practice before they are

certified?

6. How should the teacher education curriculum be linked to the practice of education?

### **Cooperating Teachers**

1. What are the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher?
2. What relationship should exist between the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor?
3. How should cooperating teachers be chosen and why?
4. How long do you think students should be required to practice before they are certified?
5. How long should teachers remain in the classroom before they are asked to be cooperating teachers?

## REFERENCE LIST

## REFERENCE LIST

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## VITA



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#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

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- 1998- Senior Lecturer, Bethlehem Moravian College, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, West Indies
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Jan-August Acting Head, Education Department, Bethlehem Moravian College, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, West Indies
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