An analysis of perceptions of teacher candidates during observations of experienced teachers

Stuart Slutzky

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.rit.edu/theses

Recommended Citation
An Analysis of Perceptions of Teacher Candidates During Observations of Experienced Teachers

Master's Project

Submitted to the Faculty of the Master of Science in Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

National Technical Institute for the Deaf
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Developed by:
Stuart Michael Slutzky

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science

Rochester, New York

Approved: ____________________________
(Project Advisor)

______________________________
(Program Director)
Abstract

The study examines how a teacher candidate in the education of deaf and hard of hearing students develops an awareness and knowledge of best practices by observing videotapes of experienced teachers in real classrooms. Analyses of 32 first year teacher candidates' comments were recorded, providing explanatory and reflective observations of the experienced teachers in real classrooms. The analysis indicates that observations of certain behaviors of the experienced teachers provide valuable insight into effective and efficient means of educating deaf students in grades 5 through 10. The evaluations were based on four criteria, (1) Best practices in Classroom Instruction, (2) Communication in the Classroom, (3) Teaching Strategies, (4) Classroom Management/Classroom Environment.

Based on the results of this study, teacher education programs are encouraged to continue to support teacher candidates by providing a good curriculum, which offers the benefit of observing videotapes of experienced teachers in their classroom habitats.
Introduction

As teacher candidates in the Masters of Science of Secondary Education for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at NTID endure the rigors of formal courses, learn the philosophy and theories of teaching, and the results of research, significant reflection on teaching also takes place in both the college courses and in the secondary classroom. During their studies, teacher candidates are also in need of exposure to actual instruction by experienced teachers through observation in order to expand their awareness and knowledge, in addition to their own student teaching opportunities. The purpose of the classroom observations is to examine the various interpersonal interactions between the teachers, instructional aides, if any, and students in the classroom. Over time patterns of interaction that are complex in nature will emerge. These in turn will assist the teacher candidate in his/her later work as a teacher. The observations will be especially helpful to the teacher candidate in understanding accurately what classroom dynamics exist and how to impact them in the interest of high quality instruction.

Teacher candidates must also learn to balance theory and practice. They must apply what they have learned in teacher preparation courses to design practical classroom activities. For example, many teacher education courses introduce the theories of cooperative learning and inclusion. But, teacher candidates need to know how to plan group work to ensure that each student is responsible for one part of a project, while making sure that learning impaired students are not overwhelmed by the tasks or that faster students do not go unchallenged. Finding a way to establish rapport with students which accounts for these dynamics is a challenge for many beginning teachers. It takes years to learn how to do this effectively. By using the video observations of experienced
teachers, teacher candidates may better prepare for student teaching in the continuing process of becoming an effective educator.

Statement of the Problem

"Although much research has been conducted on the teaching process for hearing students over the past 40 years, the same cannot be said about the systematic study of teaching in academic setting for deaf students" (Lang, McKee, & Conner, 1993). "Some studies have shown that teachers who remain abreast of research findings may enhance the ratings they receive from students and other studies have shown that, if given the appropriate information, teachers can change their behaviors" (McClean, 1979; Murray, 1985). In the quest for providing the essential tools for effective teaching methodologies, training can be implemented at the start of teacher candidate’s studies at the graduate level. Opportunities to observe real classrooms live or in the form of videotapes would be a tremendous asset in developing the abilities to become an effective teacher.

In this study, three research questions guided this inductive analysis:

(1.) Do videotaped observations of experienced teachers enhance teacher candidates perceptions of effective teaching approaches?

(2.) What are the perceptions developed by teacher candidates as they observe taped classes taught by experienced teachers?

(3.) Is watching videotapes an effective approach to meeting the requirements established for teacher candidates for classroom observations? Why or why not?
Hinrichsen and Jarrett (1999) write that over the past 20 years our understanding of how people learn has changed. The belief that students’ brains are like empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge has evolved into a better understanding based on advances in cognitive research and developmental psychology. As a result, the way we think about teaching has transformed. As they explain:

Today, educators and researchers understand that most people learn best through personal experience and by connecting new information to what they already believe or know. Listening to a teacher lecture and reading textbooks aren’t enough to gain depth of knowledge. Students need to personally construct their own understanding by posing their own questions, designing and conducting investigations and analyzing and communicating their findings. Students need to have opportunities to progress from concrete to abstract ideas, rethink their hypothesis, and adapt and retry their investigations and problem solving efforts. In short, students construct their own understanding by taking an active role in their learning (p. #4)

Additionally, Shroyer and Compton (1992) emphasize that there is an alarming rate of pre-service teachers who are not adequately prepared. They have recommended that “Students complete a pre-student teaching field experience that consists of 90 hours of observation and volunteer work with hearing and hearing impaired children before their student teaching” (p. 618)
The Council on Education of the Deaf (CED) Office of Program Evaluation (1991) *Standards for Programs Preparing Teachers of Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing* included an interesting clause which states that teachers should have professional preparation for teaching students without any hearing disabilities as a prerequisite:

Teachers of students who are deaf and hard of hearing prove to have an increasing need to have both the broad general education background described above and expansive professional preparation for teaching. They should acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching students without disabilities prerequisite concurrent with their preparation to teach students who are deaf and hard of hearing. They also must have knowledge of subject matter and the ability to present it to a variety of students. Consequently, prior to, or upon completion, of a program in education of students who are deaf and hard of hearing, candidates also should have completed the course work generally required for a regular state teaching credential in early childhood, elementary, or secondary education. This course work should be in the candidate’s area of specialization in education of students who are deaf and hard of hearing (p. #6)

Many schools offer different approaches in preparing candidates to be effective teachers. Some approach this venue with application of written scripts and former teacher candidates’ journals to compare and contrast their own experiences. Text-based cases cannot adequately address the need for students to observe teachers handling of daily problems in their classrooms. “Learning to teach is difficult when students often have
little time to observe effective teaching in a variety of situations, to practice their own teaching, and to reflect on this experience with others” (Wasserman, 1994).

Another approach noted by Guteng, Tracy and Chappell (2000) is based on their research of teacher candidates communicating the dynamics of teaching by “self-reflecting methods such as evaluating students performance, reviewing videotapes of classroom life, obtaining observation and feedback” (p.416). In an attempt to expand on other experiential learning approaches, “Case methodology has emerged as a powerful tool for bringing the complexities of the classroom into focus and supporting preservice teachers in connecting knowledge and practice” (Perry and Talley, 2001, p.26). Shulman (1993) recommended case methodology as a effective tool to create a bridge between principle and practice in an “engaging more demanding, more intellectually exciting and stimulating” way (p.1). Wasserman (1994) recommended case study methodology as an effective tool to create a bridge between knowing and applying that knowledge to action. Silverman, Welty and Lyon (1996) also advocated case methodology as an appropriate pedagogical technique for teacher education.

Traditionally cases have been created in a print format, usually as narrative text that tells a story or describes a set of events. As we move toward the cutting edge of technology, developments have been made available in new instructional possibilities and multiple ways of presenting cases. “Video can provide a natural medium for enhancing the sense of context and realism in case studies. Using multiple media can capture the complexity of classroom interaction and allow students to replay videos of classroom events to learn to notice classroom clues they might have missed otherwise and see important features that escaped them on first viewing. The use of video allows a group of
students to share a common experience as they view the events of a case study taken in a real classroom” (Perry and Talley, 2001, p.27). In discussing the use of technology as a medium for case studies, Barron and Goldman (1994) said, “From our own experience in using integrated media with preservice teachers, and from similar research and development efforts at other institutions, we are encouraged about the use of such materials in preparing teachers for the challenges of the classroom” (pp. 104-105).

**Method**

In the present study, a resource collection of 8 videotapes of experienced teachers in their own classrooms at various deaf institutions in the United States were produced, each from 45 to 90 minutes long. These tapes were made available for teacher candidates to observe. Thirty-two teacher candidates were asked to record their observations based on a constructed questionnaire reflecting upon their own teaching methodologies and approaches in four distinct categories. The first segment “Observations of Best Practices in Classroom Instruction” deals with student involvement, reflective thinking skills, English language skills, in addition to the use of technology in the classroom session. The second, “Communication in the Classroom” requires observation identifying the mode and possible strategies of communication with all of the contributors in the classroom. The third segment touches on “Teaching Strategies” applied in the classrooms session. The fourth and final segment refers to the teacher candidates perception to what “Classroom Management” strategies were employed and how the “Classroom Environment” was construed.
The data for this study were collected by Harry Lang in the National Technical Institute for the Deaf Department of Research and Nora Shannon and Gerry Bateman in the Master of Science in Secondary Education program.

The present study is based on the analysis of these data. In an inductive analysis, investigators discover patterns, themes, and categories in the analysis of the data rather than imposing patterns on the data prior to collection. The patterns in the data are guided by questions identified at the beginning of the study that may determine how the findings are to be used (Lang & Albertini, 2001).

Once all the questionnaires were completed, each teacher candidate was assigned a number in order to track their responses when the information was assembled in an aggregate format. The teacher candidates responses were carefully analyzed for emerging patterns. New categories were developed to fit the patterns and to recognize what thought processes were employed while the questionnaires were being filled out.

These data were summarized in tables and further assessment of the data was presented. The interpretive information stemming from the data is applied to dictate weather or not the objectives have been met.

Data Categorization and Results

Section 1: Best Practices in Classroom Instruction

The question for Section 1 prompted the teacher candidates to identify examples of best practices witnessed in the classroom session on the videotapes. As shown in Table 1-A, the frequencies were high for three categories that were developed: Interactive learning, discussions, and teacher lead questioning, with frequencies of 35, 24, and 24,
respectively. Some examples from teacher candidates provide an insight to their thoughts about what was occurring in the class session. One candidate, wrote, “The teacher distributed books to the students and they had to prove that the book was a non-fiction book by making a chart together of non-fiction characteristics they found.” Another candidate summarized, “By asking that question related to a topic, and then starts the lesson such as reading a poem and then asking them to explain its meaning”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1-A</th>
<th>Promoting Active Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asking Questions</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student asking Questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Work Sharing</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Learning</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Discovery</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data contained in Table 1-B titled “Promoting Cognitive Development” show that the teacher candidates were able to identify best practices demonstrated by the experienced teachers in their classroom sessions. The highest frequency (26 out of 30) was found for the line of questions involving “Cause and Effect” relationships, which illustrated how the experienced teachers guided the students. As one teacher candidate summarized, the teacher being observed was involved in “inquiring, reviewing, and listing examples while teaching, asking them to explain their answers”. The next highest frequencies were for brainstorming along with discussions, self-discovery, and the reviewing/recapping sessions, with scores of 16, 13, and 14 respectively.
The data summarized in Table 1-C describes best practices related to promoting English language skills. The most frequent practice, according to the teacher candidates, relates to reading to learn, which allows students to follow directions or to extract information from a reading passage. Reading related practices were scored with a frequency of 26. The second highest frequencies were for writing to learn (16) and writing as a task. Examples of the latter include: use of newspaper for current events, giving handouts for the students to read, and reading a poem and attempt to explain what it means.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing to Learn</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming/Discussions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Learning</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Discovery</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review/Recap</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1-C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promoting English Language Development</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading as a Task</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading to Learn</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing as a task</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing to Learn</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-Language</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1-D shows data from the teacher candidate's ability to recognize and describe the use of technology in which it is applied. Is technology being used as a means for learning the content of the class or is it an example of technology as an end, which provides the students to learn to use this technology in the future or both? A much higher number of respondents (14) recorded use of technology as a means for learning that as an end (2). Interestingly, 36 comments related to low use of technology in the classrooms observed.

Table 1-D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology in the Classroom</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology as a Means</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology as an End</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Technology</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Technology</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summative Assessment of Section 1

Teaching demands thoughtfulness. Becoming an outstanding teacher is not generally accomplished through adherence to routine, formula, habit, convention, or standardized ways of speaking and acting. Thoughtfulness requires a willingness to look at the conditions of our lives, to consider the alternative and different possibilities, to challenge received wisdom and the taken for granted, and to link our conduct with our consciousness (Ayers, 1995). Granted, as teachers we have an awesome responsibility to impose a set standard of expectations when it comes to learning. Recognition of these set standards at the graduate level will allow for the teacher candidates to specifically hone their instructional delivery, which will allow for mastery of the disciplines set forth. Mastery of the subject matter is imperative to allow the students in the classroom to experience education in its best with differing approaches. The Questions that were presented in Section 1 related to the element of applications and best practices in the classroom. The teacher candidates were fairly adept at recognizing the elements of what good classroom practices are. There is hope that the teacher candidates will consider taking a good hard look at the methodologies that go into instruction and its delivery. In speaking about the latter, technology is here to stay. Every attempt must be made to revisit the course by applications and outsourcing the data by use of the World Wide Web and other technological advances.
Section 2: Communication in the Classroom

As shown in Table 2 below, teacher candidates carefully observed and recorded the different kinds of communication that existed in the classrooms by all of the contributing members. The two most frequent types noted were ASL (American Sign-Language) and Sim-Com. (Simultaneous Communication: signing and talking at the same time). Examples were provided as: “The teacher used Sim-Com which was very clear to understand, I can see students using ASL and PSE”, during a science video it was also observed “ASL, The kids were great with ASL while the teacher used _ ASL and _ English with spellings”

Table 2-A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication in the Classroom</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sim-Com</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oralism</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSE</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second most frequent modalities were PSE and Oralism. The comments indicated the use of these modalities may be present in the same classrooms, but at a rate about half that of ASL and Sim-Com.

As shown in Table 2-B, the question of whether student to student communication was the same as or different from the communication between student and teacher led to mixed results. The data indicated that approximately 50% of the candidates agreed that the students communicating to other students were different than the way they communicated to the teacher. The other 50% agreed that there were no differences in the
way the entire classroom communicated. Some probable differences can be related to the communication abilities of the classroom teachers, but there may also be a lack of familiarity of communication modalities among the teacher candidates. For example, one of the respondents wrote, “Yes, they all spoke the same, and they were very fluent, fast, and sometimes hard to follow”. This is an indication of a teacher candidate who may not be familiar with tacit methods of communication being observed.

The issue of diversity in the classroom in terms of communication skills was mixed as well. In the number of respondents 24 out of 33 agreed that the communication skills were homogenous and 23 out of 33 respondents also agreed that the skills were heterogeneous. It was overwhelmingly evident that the students all understood each other no matter what communication modalities were implemented. There were also indications of flexibility among the students. One teacher candidate quoted “I don’t feel I got a good sense of this. I think the kids in the science class seemed to support each others strengths and weaknesses.”

As shown in the data that are contained in Table 2-D, there is evidence that teacher candidates recognized differing communication within the classroom session. Code Switching (using different modalities to allow for students of differing communication needs to better understand the subject matter) is recognized by 22 out of 30 teacher candidates and this indicates that the candidates are learning that it may be necessary to undergo communication tweaking to maximize the students comprehension. One teacher candidate wrote that “Sim-Com was used in the classroom, maybe the teacher had some oral students who knew some signs but relied on voice and lip
enunciation.” Another candidate wrote, “She (the teacher) modified to accommodate each student need (voice and sign).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2-D</th>
<th>Effective Communications Strategies</th>
<th>strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic: Teacher/Student Questions</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Code Switching</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participatory/Hands-on</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual Aids</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Alive!</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participatory/Hands-on class work. Students working in groups, cooperative projects, self-discovery assignments were observed in their responses.

**Summative Assessment of Section 2**

Emphasis on becoming adept in sign language will further assist the educator in terms of communication effectiveness; the manual approach to language poses several problems, however, according to the results of this study. There is a need for teacher candidates to understand the complexities of signing and expressing themselves. The main objective for an educator of the deaf is to provide an optimum education by using whatever modes are necessary to get the information across. The candidates in this study saw that there is no one particular way to teach a specified subject matter to all students. Combining the use of Sim-Com and American Sign Language with clarified lip enunciations in the classroom appears to be the preference used by the experienced teachers to reach students with different language backgrounds.
Section 3: Teaching Strategies

Table 3-A summarizes the observations of how the experienced teachers used organizing methods (graphic organizers) to lead and direct their classes. The survey data from teacher candidates showed that the use of outlines, lesson plans, as well as visual reinforcements was recognized. One teacher candidate wrote that “Information diagram given to the students for homework and then displayed clearly on overhead. Teacher consistently outlined information during review of Revolution. Wrote on paper to save for later.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Organizational Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.O./Outlines</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plans/ Objectives</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual References</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Technology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For question L, “Describe how the teacher accommodated individual differences among the students,” there are indications of at least three types of accommodations being observed. Teacher candidates recognized that there were attempts to change the communication modes to fit the student in need for clarification, some indicated that one on one meetings were held, and lastly, the teacher candidates also recognized that there was a slight change in the instructional delivery to accommodate the learning style of the
student in question. “She went up to some students to ensure they understood the materials, making sure that they can participate.”

**Summative Assessment of Section 3**

Teacher candidates recognize that organizational strategies are used to enhance student learning. These include whole class instruction with outlines and objectives, small group or individual instruction, and visual reinforcements. The goal of classroom organization is to provide a learning environment where deaf and hard of hearing students are challenged to achieve to the best of their ability.

**Section 4: Classroom Management/ Classroom Environment**

It became apparent that the teacher candidates are cognizant of the classroom structures in relation to classroom management abilities. Emphasis placed on visual effects as well as motivation as well as discipline was noted by teacher candidates. The use of anticipatory sets was mentioned. Routines included flashing the lights on and off and waving to the students, which indicates that instruction was about to begin. Some motivation strategies were noted by teacher candidates. For example, icebreakers and questions and teachers who motivated the students were the most frequently reported by the respondents. Hands-on activities seemed to break the students out of the traditional passive classroom styles. One teacher candidate observed: “The [science] teacher allowed the students to investigate. She was positive and encouraging. She managed the classroom well.” Another teacher candidate reported that: “[The teacher] always used an
overhead with poem on something that could be shared (seemed like show and tell). Gave the students a few minutes to chat before bringing them together to start the lesson itself.”

For the descriptions dealing with disruptive, unruly, and unmotivated children in the class session four strategies were identified, which includes. (1.) Addressing the student with questions about the behavior, (2.) Addressing the incident by using one on one discussions, (3.) The teacher pauses or visually drawing attention back to the subject matter on hand being discussed. And Lastly, (4.) no action was incurred to respond to the disruptions. For example, one teacher candidate recorded, “The teacher would ignore silliness-when appropriate (good).”

The data, in Table 4-C indicate that there seems to be confusion as to what visual demands specifically are. Hence the total tally of the frequencies were even. 50 percent of the teacher candidates stated that there were multiple visual demands and the other state that there were none. In the classroom the opportunities to absorb the subject matter is promoted in several ways, either through a directed focus by the teacher or the students. For example, one candidate wrote “If the teacher uses a map, she directed attention toward one thing at a time so everyone can pay attention”. Another example in which a student generated search for information was evident in the data “As the students worked they found the answers to questions by looking around for hints among the posters or information hung on the walls”
**Summative Assessment of Section 4**

Given that the students who are deaf and hard of hearing require an environment in which visual effects are necessary for the sake of learning, teacher candidates must implement classroom strategies that reflect understanding of each child's cultural needs, including primarily visual Deaf culture where appropriate. The atmosphere of the classroom also has much to do with student behavior. The setting should be appealing, with attention given to varying the physical features and the schedule to prevent student boredom. Teachers should let students know specific “do's and don'ts,” which behaviors are expected or desired and which will not be tolerated. Then teachers must consistently reinforce the desired behaviors while ignoring or in some other way extinguishing the undesirable ones.

**Discussion**

The author has participated in this exercise in fully understanding the intent and purposes of employing this questionnaire. To better grasp the overall concept of the “Inductive Analysis” exercise, the author also viewed all the tapes that were made available to the teacher candidates. This helped formulate the series of important points the teacher candidates validated as to conceptualize their own teaching approaches. For example, for the first question: “Describe at least two ways that the teacher actively involved the students during the class session,” there were six factors that the teacher candidates found that pertain to the question on hand. (1) Questions by Teachers, (2) Discussions, (3) Questions by Students, (4) Writing and Work Sharing, (5) Interactive Learning, (6) Self-Discovery. The frequencies were recorded and assimilated for the
purpose of examining the multi-level processing of this particular group of candidates in a program preparing them for the education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Do the videotapes assist the candidates in developing the skills and knowledge sets in order to become successful teachers?

Three questions were posed in the beginning of this study. The first question: Do videotaped observations of experienced teachers enhance teacher candidates perceptions of effective teaching approaches?

There is evidence that videotaped observations do prove to be an important part of the teacher candidates' education. In preparation for becoming and effective teacher for the deaf and hard of hearing, videotaped observations provide teacher candidates an abundance of information that may not be recognized in "live" observations. The ability to stop, ponder, discuss and rewind the tape serves as an invaluable tool for teacher readiness.

The second question: What are the perceptions developed by teacher candidates as they observe taped classes taught by experienced teachers? Teacher candidates perceived this opportunity to observe experienced teacher as an overall positive experience. Exposure to a variety of teacher methodologies provided them with some foundations in respect to the topics being taught, the best classroom practices, communication effectiveness, teaching strategies and finally, classroom environment and management skills. An analysis of the teacher candidates comments shows that they recognize the importance of each component and how it relates to the way they would teach.
The third and final question: Is watching videotapes an effective approach to meeting the requirements established for teacher candidates for classroom observations? Why or why not?

Watching videotaped observations of experienced teachers alone cannot provide sufficient exposure to the rigors of preparing teacher candidates for classroom teaching. The curriculum must provide a substantial base with guidelines in theory and language compounded with a strong student teacher opportunity. Based on the commentaries by the teacher candidates, this study proves supports the use of videotaped observations in that they can be especially helpful in developing an awareness that can provide deaf and hard of hearing an effective and efficient means of education.

Conclusion

The MSSE program has a curriculum which is geared towards a highly specialized audience. The goal of having candidates become knowledgeable and skilled with effective teaching methodologies is not one met only through observing experienced teachers in their respective fields by videotape, but through a multitude of opportunities. For example, teacher candidates can capitalize on observations in a real working classroom in which the dynamics can be actually experienced. It has been documented that deaf and hard of hearing students do not fare as well academically compared to their hearing peers. To better prepare teacher candidates with effective teaching strategies, in addition to videotaped observations of experienced teachers for the deaf, opportunities to experience what an effective classroom is like with differing audiences and in a variety of situations are necessary, and these are provided through the field experiences set up by
the program. Another probable benefit would be to observe experienced hearing and deaf teachers the same subject matter and infer on their strengths and weaknesses.

The MSSE program's professional development seminars also provide students with opportunities to learn more about the teaching craft and how to strengthen the theoretical and fundamental rudiments. Other opportunities have been provided by some other teacher education programs, such as: visuals for instruction, computer applications, and distance learning. One graduate program includes a year long internship program which equates to exposure in the classroom on a daily basis first as curriculum and writing assistants, one-on-one tutors, and small group instructors and later as substitute teachers and occasional classroom teachers assisted by the real teacher. Another approach would be to entertain the technique of video streamed case studies to illustrate classroom issues.

A growing body of literature supports the use of case methods in teacher education. Various rationales for the use of case writing and case based teaching have been developed and a range of methods for implementation suggested. (Christensen, 1987; Hutchings, 1993; McAninch, 1993; Schulman, 1992; Silverman, Welty and Lyon; 1992; Wasserman, 1994) The common thread in this literature is that cases are to be developed as stories of situations and experiences that raise issues and address questions about teaching and learning. Cases ought to be written about situations that are problematic and where the causes of the problems are not clear. Cases may vary in length, focus and in point of view since their form should evolve from emerging practices. The purpose of case writing and teaching is not so much to supply answers, but
rather "to raise questions, to encourage problem solving, to call forth faculty experience and judgment, and to promote more effective teaching practices" (Hutchings, 1993, p.14).

Teacher preparation programs struggle with the challenge of preparing our teacher candidates to face the ambiguities and complexities that occur in the classroom. Online video case studies provide our future teachers with another opportunity to observe effective teaching and to reflect with others on their observations. Especially in an era when there is pressure to produce greater numbers of high-quality teachers, we must be open to utilizing new methods of preparation.

The present study has shown that among these many approaches, videotape observations of experienced teachers has much potential to inform and prepare candidates for the profession.
Appendix A:

Resource of classrooms observed:

Technology class, 5th Grade, January 4, 2004, WPSD

Math class, 7th Grade, November 10, 2003, WPSD

Science class, 5th Grade, January 7, 2004, WPSD

History class, 8th Grade, November 17, 2003, WPSD

History class, 10th Grade, December 2, 2003, WPSD

History class, 9th Grade, December 17, 2003, WPSD

Physics class, 11th Grade, October 2003, ASD

Math class, 9th Grade, October 2000, VSDB
Appendix B:

Questions for teacher candidates upon the completion of observing experienced teachers on videotapes:

**Section #1**

*Question A*: Describe at least two ways that a teacher actively involved the students during the class session?

*Question B*: Describe at least two ways that the teacher promoted cognitive development in students during the classroom session.

*Question C*: Describe at least two ways the teacher promoted English language skills development (reading writing) during the class session.

*Question D*: Describe the use of technology in the class sessions. If more than one kind of technology was used, identify the activity and explain whether you think this was:

1. An example of technology used as a means for learning the content of the class.
2. An example of technology as an “end” (students learning to use the technology for the future)
3. Both of the above
Question E: Write down one question that you would like to ask the experienced teacher about how they promote cognitive development, English language skills, use active learning strategies or use technology in the lesson.

Section #2

Question F: Describe your observation of the kind of communication that took place during this class session.

Question G: Was the student-to-student communication same as the teacher to student communication?

Question H: Describe the diversity of this class, weather this class was heterogeneous or homogeneous in terms of the communication skills of the students. Were the students able to understand each other easily?

Question I: Describe the specific communication strategies used by the teacher that was particularly effective?

Question J: Write down one question that you would like to ask the experienced teacher about communication in the classroom.
Section #3

*Question K:* Describe how the teacher used organizers such as outlines, objectives, etc.

*Question L:* Describe how the teacher accommodated individual differences among the students.

*Question M:* Considering the age and abilities of this group of students, write down a question for the teacher about the overall level of instruction of this lesson (materials, content, concepts). Consider such factors as how the teacher monitored the students understanding throughout the class, how the students responded to the teachers questions/ explanations, how they responded to comments/questions from peers, or the types of questions asked by the teacher as well as the students.

*Question N:* Write down one question that you would like to ask the experienced teacher about teaching strategies in the classroom.
Section #4

*Question O:* Describe classroom management routines, including motivation strategies, the teacher began the lessons, and how the teacher got the students attention.

*Question P:* Describe the teacher's classroom management strategies for dealing with inattentive students, disruptive students, students who were not motivated.

*Question Q:* Write down one question you have for the experienced teacher about classroom management of deaf students, based on your study of the videotape.

*Question R:* Did you see any instances where there were multiple visual demands placed simultaneously on the learners? How did the teacher handle this?

*Question S:* Identify one question you have for this teacher about the classroom environment you observed. Consider such factors as how the furniture was arranged, whether the environment was “inviting” or “thought-provoking” or whether there were visual distractions.

*Question T:* Write down a question for the experienced teacher about classroom management style.
References


Guteng, S.I., Tracy, T., & Chappell, B. (2000). Developmental Practicum Experiences of Preservice Teachers in Deaf Education: Implications for Practicum Placement and Faculty-Student Collaborative Research. 145(5), 411-419.

*Change*. November/December, 14-21


