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Dr. Benson-Burrell has served as Instructional Supervisor and District Curriculum Supervisor at Gateway Regional and Washington Township Schools. Since 1988, she has been teaching and supervising in graduate and undergraduate Education programs at Rowan.

A leader in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development for over a decade, she has served on the Commission for Curriculum and Global Education. She reviews for Educational Leadership and Journal of Curriculum and Supervision. She has edited two ASCD network newsletters and has received two Distinguished Achievement Awards for Excellence in Affiliate Publications. Her collaborative efforts have been recognized by AERA and ASCD.

Collaboration: The Key to the Success of a Pre-Service Program



Brenda Benson-Burrell

The need for quality articulation and collaboration among colleagues at all levels of education is essential if significant changes are to occur. At the college level, there is opportunity to create change in field-based experiences for pre-service teachers in public schools. To improve their experiences, I initiated communication with Rowan's Professional Laboratory Experience Office, regarding the preparation of aspiring teachers.

As an assistant professor teaching Secondary Methods of Social Studies (now called Pedagogy III), I began to seek a more effective field-based experience for students. I did some groundwork before a formal presentation: I met with representatives from Rowan, found a secondary Social Studies Department interested in my proposal, and discussed ideas with my department as well as with the administrators of high school and pre-service teachers.

Establishing the Network

In fall 1988, I planned an informal arrangement for field-based experiences for pre-service teachers in Washington Township Public Schools, in Gloucester County, New Jersey.

These experiences included 20 hours in grades 7–9 and 20 hours in grades 9–12. Coordinating the school grade-level experiences for these students and yet providing a variety of experiences was part of the design. Washington Township provided field experiences in which pre-service teachers might observe and practice in a culturally diverse environment, as encouraged by Rowan's guidelines for clinical and field-based experiences.

After the informal program, I debriefed the coordinating and pre-service teachers and added my own observations. I reached the following conclusions:

- College professors need to establish a professional rapport with coordinating teachers and collaborate with them to develop programs for pre-service teachers.
- College professors, by providing depth of content knowledge and research, can serve as valuable resources to school systems in which pre-service teachers gain their experience. For instance, professors can provide departmental forums.
- When the pre-service teacher is in the classroom, the college professors can coordinate lectures on theories, practices, and applications with experiences provided by the coordinating teacher.
- Pre-service teachers need experiences which more closely mirror actual teaching responsibilities. For example, the school could offer them an opportunity to teach a variety of courses.

In fall 1989, supported by a New Jersey State Challenge Grant awarded to Rowan College, I established a comprehensive faculty development program for teacher education. The course was called Teaching Secondary Social Studies. Using the conclusions from my earlier study, I collaborated with the Social Studies Department at Paulsboro High School, Gloucester County, New Jersey, to design a more comprehensive study. From September to December 1989, I met with mem-

bers of the Social Studies Department about courses, professional growth services, joint on-site activities, and the development of site-based expectations for pre-service teachers. We developed a field-based pre- and post-survey to learn the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their experiences. We distributed the survey in February and May 1990 to 40 collaborating teachers (also called cooperating teachers). Collaborating teachers in this project returned 6 surveys; of the remaining 34 teachers, 16 returned surveys (See Table 1). Cooperating teachers who were not in the project returned 12 post-field-based surveys; all 6 cooperating teachers who participated in the project returned surveys (See Table 2).

Discussion of Data

On both pre- and post-surveys, respondents were asked for comments. Although these data are only descriptive, some conclusions support the collaboration research:

1. Cooperating teachers benefit from full information about the goals and objectives of the field-based experiences.
2. Cooperating teachers favor developing working relationships with college supervisors before and during school-based experiences. Initially, 44% of non-participating teachers anticipated working with college professors. However, only 16% shared information. Cooperating teachers in the project expected 100% participation, yet only 83% experienced direct contact with a college professor.
3. Cooperating teachers desire more input in planning with college supervisors for the school-based experiences of pre-service teachers.
4. Cooperating teachers in the project knew what was expected of them before and after the school-based experiences because of joint planning with the college professor. Planning took place every two weeks. Non-participants said they knew what to expect because of past experiences and exposure to written materials from their college

supervisors, *not* because of coordination with the college professor.

5. Cooperating teachers believe that their college supervisors should be aware of the instructional program and courses taught in the teachers' classes.
6. Cooperating teachers believe that school-based experiences are enhanced when the college supervisor is knowledgeable about the school's students, cultural profile, and program of studies.

Pre-Service Student Teacher Teams

Pre-service student teachers were grouped into teams of three or four. There were six high school social studies teachers and six student teams. Pre-service students met with the high school principal and their teachers before they began their field-based experience. Student teachers taught in six different instructional settings in grades 7–12. The teams visited the school on different days of the week. The pre-service student teachers had one-hour sessions with a variety of high school personnel: the department chairperson, the principal, the guidance director, the curriculum director, and the student activities advisor.

In each cycle (six full days per teacher for six Fridays), teams had the opportunity to observe teachers in the Social Studies Department, as well as in Business Education, Foreign Language, Physical Education, Math, Science, and Art. During the cycle, student-teachers gathered the following information: (1) timing of class periods; (2) observations of teachers; (3) significant events; (4) personal reactions, impressions, and evaluations; and (5) data collection, based on the topics of study in class. During the final cycle, the team spent the whole day with one social studies teacher—four hours for observation and four hours to conduct a mini-lesson. (Each team member taught a lesson while the other team members observed.)

The following comments summarize entries from student teacher logs:

- Students enjoyed working in teams.
- Students appreciated the opportunity to observe the teaching styles of twelve teachers and a variety of student groupings.
- Students enjoyed the comprehensive variety of observations represented by a 7–12 pre-service experience.
- Students felt it a great advantage to observe teachers and students in other content areas.
- Students enjoyed learning about career opportunities in education.
- Students linked their class studies with their field-based experiences.
- Students realized that both their cooperating teacher and their college professors knew what was expected of them in every school-based activity.
- Students transferred concepts learned in Secondary School Environment (now called Pedagogy I) to their field-based experience and gained a better understanding of what is expected in their student teaching experiences.

The conclusion—based on students' logs, data from coordinating teachers, and my own experiences with this course—is that school-based activities like these were beneficial to the pre-service teaching program.

Replicating the Program

This program will be replicated if the following conditions are met:

1. All social science teachers at the school site agree to participate in the project.
2. The college professor and cooperating teachers meet informally to plan the pre-service experiences.
3. The college professor establishes and maintains good rapport on the district level with principal, department chair, and teachers, and also sustains relationships with staff members who support the program.

4. A variety of districts can be targeted for this project so that the same district is not asked to participate annually.
5. The college professor sponsors in-service activities for the department, school, and district.
6. The college professor is kept abreast of curriculum and instructional changes at the target schools.

Future Pre-Service Programs

Since the initial collaboration study, three 7–12 social studies partnerships have developed between school districts and Rowan College. The positive experiences with the initial group of pre-service student teachers and cooperating teachers is being replicated in these partnerships.

Collaboration has been the essential ingredient in the success of the pre-service teacher program—Teaching Secondary Social Studies. These future teachers view highly competent educators in the midst of their daily routines, teaching a variety of classes. The student teachers also note the involvement of classroom teachers in extracurricular activities. Teaching today demands so much. In the pre-service program, prospective teachers see examples of the multiple demands of day-to-day teaching.

TABLE 1

Survey of Perceptions of Secondary
Methods & Techniques School-Based Experiences

Pre-field Based Data

Questions	A*		B**	
	Y	N	Y	N
1. Do you know and understand the goals and objectives of this course?	13	3	6	
2. Has the college supervisor shared the contents of the course?	7	9	6	
3. Has the college supervisor planned the school-based experiences with you?	2	14	6	
4. Do you know what is expected of you as a coordinating teacher?	13	3	6	
5. Is the college supervisor aware of your present instructional program and courses of study?	3	12 (1)	6	
6. Is the college supervisor aware of the types of students in your classes?	3	12 (1)	6	
7. Does the college supervisor understand the cultural profile of the school and its community?	7	9	6	
8. Is the supervisor aware of the scope and sequence of your secondary content area(s)?	5	11	6	

A*—Non-Participants (N = 16). B**—Participants (N = 6).

TABLE 2

Survey of Perceptions of Secondary
Methods & Techniques School-Based Experiences

Post-field Based Data

Questions	A*		B**	
	Y	N	Y	N
1. I have a better understanding of the goals and objectives of this course	10	2	6	
2. During the semester, the college supervisor has continued to share the aspects of this program with me.	2	10	5	1
3. During the semester, the college supervisor and I planned school-based experiences together.	2	10	4	2
4. I now have a better understanding of my role as a coordinating teacher.	10	2	6	
5. The college supervisor has a deeper understanding of the instructional programs and courses of study in my content area(s).	3	9	6	
6. The college supervisor knows the types of students who enroll in my classes.	2	10	6	
7. The college supervisor knows the cultural profile of our school and its community.	2	10	6	
8. The college supervisor is aware of our program of studies with regard to the secondary instructional scope and sequence presented in my content area(s).	2	10	6	

A*—Non-Participants (N = 12). B**—Participants (N = 6).

TABLE 3

Pre/Post Data Presented in Percentage

Item	Pre:		Post:	
	Percent of "Yes"		Percent of "Yes"	
	A*	B**	A*	B**
1	.81	1.0	.83	1.0
2	.44	1.0	.16	.83
3	.13	1.0	.16	.66
4	.81	1.0	.83	1.0
5	.20	1.0	.25	1.0
6	.20	1.0	.16	1.0
7	.44	1.0	.16	1.0
8	.31	1.0	.16	1.0

A*—Non-participants. B**—Participants.