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OPINION SURVEY OF SELECTED RURAL, SUBURBAN
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ABOUT THEIR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION
PROGRAM AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY.

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OPINION SURVEY OF SELECTED RURAL, SUBURBAN
AND URBAN IN-SERVICE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS
ABOUT THEIR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER
EDUCATION PROGRAM AT MICHIGAN
STATE UNIVERSITY

By

Olga Karpis Creaser

A THESIS

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Michigan State University
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for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

OPINION SURVEY OF SELECTED RURAL, SUBURBAN AND URBAN IN-SERVICE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ABOUT THEIR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

By

Olga Karpis Creaser

The purpose of this study was to survey a selected group of thirty rural, suburban and urban in-service elementary teachers as to the opinions they have of the teacher education program at Michigan State University that had prepared them.

The review of the literature showed a scarcity of studies collecting opinions and attitudes toward teacher education programs. What research had been done did not show a very positive view of education courses and programs.

An interview composed of twenty-five open-ended questions was used as the method for collecting the data. These questions dealt with opinions on required courses, elective courses, traditional scholarship, testing and grading, student teaching, the role of in-service teachers in teacher training and the entire system of teacher certification in Michigan.

Olga Karpis Creaser

There were ten underlying questions that provided the basis for this study. They dealt with the same aforementioned topics covered by the twenty-five questions in the interview. These underlying questions were answered on the basis of the majority replies gathered in the interviews.

The majority of the opinions gathered showed that:

- I. Michigan State University's teacher education program does not adequately prepare its graduates to teach in a rural, a suburban, or an urban setting.
- II. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some beneficial courses for future teachers but more of these courses should not necessarily be added to the program.
- III. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some courses which are not beneficial for future teachers and should be eliminated from the program.
- IV. There is no definite answer to the question of quality of elective courses and provision for the opportunity of the election of these courses.
- V. There should be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program.
- VI. The methods of testing and grading are not satisfactory in education courses.

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- VII. In Michigan State University's teacher education program, students do not spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations.
- VIII. Michigan State University's student teaching experience is very beneficial for future teachers but there are some improvements to be made.
- IX. In-service teachers should play more of a role in the training of future teachers, especially as supervising teachers.
- X. The present system of teacher certification in Michigan does not successfully provide the best possible supply of good teachers; the profession itself should be in charge of certification.

This dissertation is dedicated
to my children, Tasha and Mike

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEM

Many people in Michigan and across the country are busy trying to come up with the solution to the problem of how best to produce good teachers. Suggestions are coming from within the field of education as well as from outside the field.

The assistant superintendent of the Lansing School District, Dr. R. J. Chamberlain, recently presented his views to a special State Senate Committee studying teacher education programs in Michigan. Speaking for Middle Cities Instruction Group, a coalition of urban districts, he urged that teacher training programs prepare their graduates more adequately for urban school assignments. One of his suggestions was that academic talent should not be the most important criterion for teacher candidacy as it now is. He also emphasized that in-service teachers should have input in the training programs.¹

The Student National Education Association has started its own campaign to bring about teacher education

¹Judith Brown, "Educator Advocates New Approach to Teacher Training," The State Journal, December 11, 1971.

reform. Citing the "credit-hour subject-matter syndrome," the 1971 Student NEA delegate assembly demanded a concerted effort "to personalize and humanize the learning process" for future teachers. It is organizing practical teaching and child-related experiences in the community for specific local chapters and it is attempting to influence the election and appointment of education decision-makers across the country.²

State Rep. W. L. Jowett, R-Port Huron, has introduced a bill in the House which would take the entire teacher certification process in Michigan out of the hands of the State Department of Education. Instead, teachers would apply for credentials to the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation. State Senator G. E. Bursley, R-Ann Arbor, has introduced a somewhat similar bill in the Senate which would establish a five-member commission (within the State Department of Education) which would issue, renew or revoke licenses for teachers. This bill would also allow for "certificates of exception," i.e. exceptionally qualified people with special backgrounds or abilities would be allowed to teach in the classroom.³

²"Student NEA Launches Campaign to Change Teacher Certification," NEA Reporter, vol. 10, no. 8 (October, 1971).

³Marcia VanNess, "Teacher Certification Shift Lawmaker's Goal," The State Journal, March 12, 1972.

The program of the Mott Institute for Community Improvement at Michigan State University is one which is trying to better prepare students who will teach in city schools. Before the actual student teaching experience, a student spends an entire academic term in the city, learning about the school and the neighborhood. Mrs. Arlene Johns, director of the MICI program in Detroit, is nevertheless calling for a broadening of this approach since this inner-city experience is still too little and too late in the student's program to be truly meaningful.⁴

A special State Senate Committee, headed by Senator Anthony Stamm, R-Kalamazoo, is conducting studies of the various teacher education programs and is holding public hearings all around the state to gather opinions and suggestions about these programs. A random survey of Black Detroiters shows that parents there are much more concerned about the quality of their children's teachers than they are about integration.⁵ The State Department of Education has issued several position papers on teacher education and teacher certification. Here, too, the emphasis is being

⁴William Grant, "Student Teachers Getting More Inner City Training," The Detroit Free Press, March 6, 1972.

⁵"Quality Teachers Preferred to Integration," The Detroit Free Press, January 23, 1972.

placed on the quality of the actual performance on the part of teachers, rather than on passing grades in college courses.⁶

Clearly then, there is an overwhelming concern on the part of many people about the nature of our teacher education programs. Everyone seems to agree on one point and that is that we could be doing better.

Need

With all this concern and interest, it seems evident that there is a need for information and knowledge before any intelligent conclusions can be reached. There are many experts when it comes to education and the specific area of teacher education is no different. Volumes have been written on what ought to be done. Most of the recent works recommend further scientific study of how one teaches a teacher to teach. This is indeed a laudable goal since there is almost universal agreement on the inadequate basis for decision-making about teacher education. All this research and all these expert opinions should, and no doubt will, be considered. However, there are experts who know whereof they speak and who are nonetheless rarely consulted. These are the students and the graduates of the teacher education programs.

⁶"Teacher Certification and Professional Development: Four Position Statements," State of Michigan Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan, October 19, 1971.

Many modern educators claim that it is essential for a teacher to be aware of the feelings and opinions of his pupils and of their reaction to what is being taught and how it is being taught. It is claimed that there can be few meaningful learning experiences in the classroom without this awareness and the communication and interaction that comes of it. No other field in higher education has made so much for so long of the importance of this communication between teacher and pupil, the importance of adjusting instruction to the "needs" of pupils. Yet education, except for a few shining exceptions, has done so little in the way of applying this theory to its own classrooms. This dissertation is an attempt to keep the lines of communication open; to find out how graduates feel about their teacher training, especially now that they are classroom teachers. These in-service teachers can give us valuable feedback on how our training programs do or do not prepare them to teach. With this knowledge and understanding, along with what research and experts can tell us, we can make more intelligent decisions about the nature of teacher education programs.

Purpose

The major purpose of this dissertation can be divided into the following three parts:

1. to gather data as to the general and specific opinions of in-service elementary teachers about their undergraduate teacher training at Michigan State University;

2. to study and analyze the data collected;
3. to present recommendations for Michigan State University in terms of its teacher education program, with implications for all teacher education programs.

Significance of Study

This study should be of real significance to educators in the teacher training field. It will provide them with new insights and undoubtedly a better understanding of the teachers they are helping to produce. This study should also be of real significance to the administrators creating new teacher education programs or evaluating and revising current ones.

State Departments of Education, as well as legislative committees looking into the status of teacher education and certification, should benefit from the information gathered in this study. Hopefully, they will consider it in making their decisions.

Finally, this study should be of interest to professional organizations, to local school boards and to the administrators of the various public school districts. It should shed some light on how well teachers feel they are prepared for the task at hand.

Design and Methodology

The underlying theory or assumption in this study has already been mentioned and that is that graduates of a

teacher education program (or any other program for that matter) can provide valuable feedback as to the effectiveness of that program.

Following are the underlying questions which will provide the basis for this study.

- I. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program successfully prepare its students to teach in a rural setting, a suburban setting or an urban setting?
- II. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program contain some beneficial courses for future teachers and should there be more of them?
- III. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program contain some courses which are not beneficial for future teachers and therefore unnecessary?
- IV. What is the quality of the elective courses in Michigan State University's teacher education program and is there enough of an opportunity provided for the election of these courses?
- V. Should there be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program?
- VI. Are the methods of testing and grading satisfactory in education courses?

- VII. In Michigan State University's teacher education program, do students spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations?
- VIII. Is Michigan State University's student teaching experience beneficial for future teachers and are there any improvements to be made in that area?
- IX. Should the in-service teacher play more of a role in the training of future teachers and what should the nature of that role be?
- X. Does the present system of teacher certification in Michigan successfully provide the best possible supply of good teachers?

Following are the questions that will be posed to the in-service teachers in this study.

1. Do you feel that your teacher education program adequately prepared you to teach in your particular setting, i.e. rural, suburban, urban? Why or why not?
2. Which education courses, if any, have you found to be of most benefit to you now that you are teaching? Why?
3. Would you recommend the addition of more of these courses to the program? Why or why not?
4. Which education courses, if any, have you found to be of very little benefit to you now that you are teaching? Why?
5. Would you recommend the elimination of these courses from the program? Why or why not?

6. Which elective courses in your teacher education program have you found to be beneficial to you now that you are teaching? Why?
7. Which elective courses have you found not to be beneficial? Why?
8. Do you feel that you were given enough of an opportunity to take elective courses?
If not, how much of your program do you think ought to have consisted of electives? Why?
9. How much freedom should a teacher education student be given to make up his own program? Why?
10. Do you feel that a better scholar makes for a better teacher? Why or why not?
11. What is your opinion of the place of scholarly pursuit in a teacher education program?
12. Would you agree that a majority of the books you were required to read helped you in becoming a good teacher? Why or why not?
13. Would you agree that a majority of the term papers you wrote helped you in becoming a good teacher? Why or why not?
14. What is your opinion of the lecture method of instruction in education courses? Was there too much or too little of it in your courses?
15. What is your opinion of the testing measures used in your education courses? Do you feel this was a valid method of evaluating your learning? Why or why not?

16. Have your undergraduate education grades accurately predicted the kind of teacher you feel you are?
17. Do you feel you spent enough time interacting with children in a learning situation during your undergraduate program?
18. What is your opinion of the student teaching experience at Michigan State University?
19. Do you have any recommendations for improving the student teaching program?
20. Do you feel that in-service teachers should play more or less of a part in the training of future teachers? Why?
21. What are your suggestions for the role in-service teachers could play?
22. Do you feel that the present method of teacher certification in Michigan is a good one? Why or why not?
23. Do you have any recommendations for the improvement of the teacher certification system in Michigan?
24. In your opinion, should the state, the university, the profession itself, or others, be in charge of certification of teachers? Why?
25. Do you have any other recommendations or comments to make about the entire system of teacher education and certification in Michigan?

Although in terms of quantity, more information can be gathered by administering short-answer printed questionnaires to a large sample, this study does not focus on

quantity but rather attempts to get a more in-depth view of the information gathered from a smaller sample. Thus, the personal interview is the method used to collect the opinion data. Since most research in the field of opinion surveys has found that anonymity makes for more honesty and validity, the teachers interviewed are not named in this study. The sample of thirty teachers interviewed has the following characteristics:

1. All are in-service teachers.
2. All are elementary teachers.
3. All are graduates of the Michigan State University teacher education program (of the past eight years).
4. Ten in the sample are from what is commonly agreed upon to be a rural school district.
5. Ten in the sample are from what is commonly agreed upon to be an urban school district.
6. Ten in the sample are from what is commonly agreed upon to be a suburban school district.

All twenty-five questions previously listed are used as the basis for the interview. Since the questions are rather open-ended, the respondents are allowed ample time to answer and go into as much detail as they may wish. A tape recorder is used to keep a record of the interview. In that way, the questioner and the respondent can freely interact on and discuss the questions and answers in depth.

Definition of Terms

Teacher education program--those courses and experiences required by a university which enable a student to receive his Teaching certificate from the state.

Teacher training program--those courses and experiences required by a university which enable a student to receive his teaching certificate from the state.

Teacher certification system--those laws and directives from the state which, when followed, enable a person to become certified to teach in the state.

Overview of Following Chapters

In Chapter II, the pertinent literature is reviewed.

In Chapter III, the design and methodology is presented.

In Chapter IV, the data collected is reported, tabulated and analyzed.

In Chapter V, conclusions are drawn and stated, implications for future research are discussed, and recommendations are made.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There has been very little in-depth research published about the attitudes of in-service teachers toward their undergraduate teacher training programs. None was found that could be considered identical to this interview study.

Most studies done which do bear some resemblance to this one were of the unpublished follow-up type. Western Michigan University is at present time engaged in just such a project. In other words, some universities and colleges of education do send out questionnaires to their graduates. However, these short-answer questionnaires which tend to emphasize follow-up data on present employment and status are usually very general and superficial in terms of attitude and opinion study. What they gain in numbers sampled, they lose in validity and depth. Even so, in the studies done on teacher education opinions, the majority of the attitudes can be characterized as negative.

In one of the earliest studies done on the opinions of education graduates, Stiles found that over fifty percent of the respondents were not satisfied with their education

courses at the University of Wisconsin. Furthermore, the only positive aspect they found in Wisconsin's teacher education program was the off-campus practice teaching experience.¹

In 1970, Barbara Briggs did a follow-up study of Louisville University Elementary Education graduates of the previous ten years. She found that only forty-seven percent felt that the education courses they had taken were valuable to them as teachers. Interestingly enough, the bulk of this forty-seven percent was made up of the earlier graduates. Twenty-seven percent of her sample listed math as "of most benefit." Twenty-six percent listed math as "of least benefit." Thirty-three percent of the respondents listed reading as "of most benefit." Twenty-five percent listed reading as "of least benefit." Again, the earlier graduates were more complimentary while the more recent graduates were more critical. Thirty-six percent listed student teaching as being "of most benefit." Most of these were recent graduates. One of the significant findings, according to Briggs, is that "approximately fifty-six percent of those responding to the question on number of courses that could be eliminated did not suggest any courses that could or should be eliminated from the

¹Lindley J. Stiles, "Student Attitudes Toward Education Courses at the University of Wisconsin," Education Document 89, October 13, 1958 (mimeographed).

program. This was almost evenly distributed over the year divisions."²

In a thesis submitted to the University of Manchester, Weaver found that the attitude toward the Psychology of Education course was particularly favorable. In general, however, he found that the attitudes toward the professional element in the teacher training courses which the students hold when they leave the program do change significantly in a negative direction after one year of teaching in the schools.³

In The Miseducation of American Teachers, James Koerner takes a strong stand against the nature of most teacher education programs in the United States. He feels that students in these programs are not having what he calls "maximally meaningful learning experiences." He bases his conclusion on personal observation and involvement in the teacher education field and on the opinions of students. Using the personal interview as his technique, Koerner determined student response to education courses. He found that in almost every aspect, the overwhelming weight of student opinion toward education courses was negative

²Barbara C. Briggs, "Elementary Education Graduate Follow-up Study" (Doctoral dissertation, Louisville University, 1970).

³D. C. Weaver, "Effect of the First Year of Teaching on Teachers' Attitudes to the Professional Element in Their Initial Training Course," Educational Psychology, vol. 40, November 1970.

and critical. Koerner concludes with a plea for more attempts at determining the opinions and needs of students in education and for adjusting instruction in education to those opinions and needs.⁴

A questionnaire study of the opinions toward education courses was done by Ralph Preston. One-hundred-eight of one-hundred-seventy-five graduates of the school of education of an eastern university were surveyed. They were asked to rate both education and academic courses on a five point scale with respect to nine individual attributes. These attributes included the following: undesirable content repetition, thin or inadequate content, overemphasis on teaching techniques, overemphasis on theory, unsuitable organization of content, uninspiring and dull instructors, shallow and superficial courses, too much lecturing and too much discussion. Academic courses received a higher rating than education courses on eight items and a significantly higher rating on six items. The ratings of education courses were more variable in that there was a tendency for the education courses to elicit a larger number of extreme scores at the lower end of the

⁴James D. Koerner, The Miseducation of American Teachers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963).

scale. Interestingly enough, however, eighty-two percent of the respondents answered yes to the question regarding the necessity of the courses for teaching.⁵

Along with an entourage of assistants and researchers, James Conant went around this country in the early sixties to study the state of teacher education and the nature of teacher certification programs. He and his staff talked with the various principles involved at universities, state departments of education and in the school districts. Although Conant did not publish the specific data collected, he did offer his conclusions and recommendations. They were the following:

1. The various professional organizations such as NCATE, TEPS, AST, and NEA spend entirely too much of their time playing politics.
2. The state should require for initial certification only that the candidate hold a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
3. Teacher education institutions should have the major responsibility for preparation and certification of teachers.
4. Very little certain knowledge exists as to the proper method of teaching teachers but teaching candidates should be top scholars.

⁵Ralph C. Preston, "Education Graduates View Education and Academic Courses," School and Society (New York: Science Press, 1964), p. 233.

5. The school districts should have more responsibility in the preservice education of teachers (such as allowing for more student teaching) and should provide more inservice teacher education dealing with their particular communities and curricula.⁶

Shortly after the flurry of Conant reports and the attending publicity and furor, various colleges of education were sent questionnaires. Weiss reports on the question as to how the Conant report affected teacher education programs. Most of the respondents reported the following changes:

1. The general education requirements in the program were increased.
2. The requirements in the subject majors and minors were also increased.
3. Stricter and more selective admission policies for education programs were put into effect.
4. When possible, the time spent student teaching was also increased.⁷

In a paper presented to the fiftieth anniversary conference of the Association for Student Teaching, Margaret Lindsey delivered a blistering attack on teacher

⁶James Bryant Conant, The Education of American Teachers (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 164.

⁷Robert M. Weiss, The Conant Controversy in Teacher Education (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 165.

education programs in this country. According to her, "there is a woefully inadequate base for decision-making about teacher education and yet an unremitting indoctrination into the very system we should be trying to break out of."⁸ She reports on a study she did of the attitudes of education students toward their education classes as San Francisco State College. The overwhelming majority of the respondents gave negative replies to the majority of the questions posed. With further in-depth study and direct questioning of the students involved, she found that the most frequently repeated complaint was a feeling of lack of freedom and self-determination. She concludes "If we want a free-swinging autonomous, sensitive student at graduation, we cannot afford years of subservient detention in a home for dependents"⁹ which is what she calls most colleges of education.

Charles Gonzales, at the time a teacher education student himself, as well as a leader of various education student organizations, also addressed the fiftieth anniversary conference of the Association for Student Teaching in 1970. According to his study of the opinions of education students, "current teacher education, the people

⁸Margaret Lindsey, editor, Teacher Education: Future Directions, Report of the 50th Anniv. Conf., Assoc. for Student Teaching, 1970, p. 1.

⁹Ibid., p. 13.

it attracts and what we do with them is hopelessly obsolete in terms of the needs of society."¹⁰ He claims that students in general as well as education students specifically are tired of being listened to periodically and then ignored when the actual decisions are made.

Summary

There have been no interview studies published on the attitudes and opinions of in-service elementary teachers toward the teacher education programs that prepared them. A very limited number of questionnaire type follow-up studies on graduates from elementary education programs have been completed.

The Briggs study (1970) found that only 47% of the graduates thought their education courses were valuable. Over 50% of the respondents in the Stiles study (1958) were not satisfied with their education courses at the University of Wisconsin. Weaver (1970) found that attitudes toward teacher training courses drop sharply after one year of actual teaching. Koerner (1963) did an unpublished interview study of education students and found their opinions toward their courses to be negative and critical. In Preston's study (1964), education courses were also negatively rated. At, San Francisco State College, Lindsey

¹⁰Ibid., p. 75.

(1970) found education students to be very critical of their program.

Thus the review of the literature shows a scarcity of studies collecting opinions and attitudes toward teacher education programs. What research has been done shows a rather dismal view of education courses. This study will attempt to find out how Michigan State University educated teachers feel about their training. What do they find positive and negative about that training and for what reasons?

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Although in terms of quantity, more information can be gathered by administering short-answer printed questionnaires to a large sample, this study focused on quality and attempted to get a more in-depth view of information gathered from a smaller selected sample. Research has shown that open-ended questions result in more complete, unbiased reports whereas pre-coded multiple-choice type questions force some subjects to fit answers into categories of answers not really representative of their true replies.¹ Thus, to collect these in-depth opinions on teacher education the personal interview was the method used. Also, since most research in the field of opinion surveys has found that anonymity makes for more validity,² the teachers interviewed are not named in this study.

¹D. Colfax and I. Allen, "Pre-Coded vs. Open-ended Items," Sociology of Education, vol. 40, 1967, p. 9; Leon Festinger and D. Katz, Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences (New York, N. Y.: The Dryden Press, 1953).

²D. C. Pelz, "The Influence of Anonymity on Expressed Attitudes," Human Organization, vol. 18, 1959, p. 90; S. M. Klein, "Differences between Identified and Anonymous Subjects," Journal of Applied Psychology, vol. 51, 1967, p. 220.

Sample

The sample of thirty teachers interviewed had the following characteristics.

1. All were in-service teachers.
2. All were graduates of the Michigan State University teacher education program within the last eight years.
3. Ten in the sample were from what is commonly agreed upon to be a rural school district. In this case, all ten were from the Fowlerville, Michigan, school district.
4. Ten in the sample were from what is commonly agreed upon to be a suburban school district. In this case all ten were from the Okemos, Michigan, school district.
5. Ten in the sample were from what is commonly agreed upon to be an urban school district. In this case all ten were from the Lansing, Michigan, school district.
6. In the rural group of ten, all were female with an age range of twenty-four to thirty-six years and teaching all elementary grades except the fifth.
7. In the suburban group of ten, two were male and eight female with an age range of twenty-five to forty-two and teaching all elementary grades except the fifth and kindergarten.

8. In the urban group of ten, three were male and seven female with an age range of twenty-three to twenty-nine years and teaching all grades except fourth and fifth.

Instrument

Following are the questions that were answered by the in-service teachers in this study.

1. Do you feel that your teacher education program adequately prepared you to teach in your particular setting i.e. rural, urban, suburban? Why or why not?
2. Which education courses if any have you found to be of most benefit to you now that you are teaching? Why?
3. Would you recommend the addition of more of these courses to the program? Why or why not?
4. Which education courses if any have you found to be of very little benefit to you now that you are teaching? Why?
5. Would you recommend the elimination of these courses from the program? Why or why not?
6. Which elective courses in your teacher education program have you found to be beneficial to you now that you are teaching? Why?

7. Which elective courses have you found not to be beneficial? Why?
8. Do you feel that you were given enough of an opportunity to take elective courses?
If not, how much of your program do you think ought to have consisted of electives? Why?
9. How much freedom should a teacher education student be given to make up his own program? Why?
10. Do you feel that a better scholar makes for a better teacher? Why or why not?
11. What is your opinion of the place of scholarly pursuit in a teacher education program?
12. Would you agree that a majority of the books you were required to read helped you in becoming a good teacher? Why or why not?
13. Would you agree that a majority of the term papers you wrote helped you in becoming a good teacher? Why or why not?
14. What is your opinion of the lecture method of instruction in education courses? Was there too much or too little of it in your courses?
15. What is your opinion of the testing measures used in your education courses? Do you feel this was a valid method of evaluating your learning? Why or why not?

16. Have your undergraduate education grades accurately predicted the kind of teacher you feel you are?
17. Do you feel you spent enough time interacting with children in a learning situation during your undergraduate program?
18. What is your opinion of the student teaching experience at Michigan State University?
19. Do you have any recommendations for improving the student teaching program?
20. Do you feel that in-service teachers should play more or less of a part in the training of future teachers? Why?
21. What are your suggestions for the role in-service teachers could play?
22. Do you feel that the present method of teacher certification in Michigan is a good one?
Why or why not?
23. Do you have any recommendations for the improvement of the teacher certification system in Michigan?
24. In your opinion, should the state, the university, the teaching profession itself, or others be in charge of certification of teachers? Why?
25. Do you have any other recommendations or comments to make about the entire system of teacher education and certification in Michigan?

All twenty-five questions listed were used as the basis for the interview. Since the questions were rather open-ended, the subjects were allowed ample time to answer and to go into as much detail as they wished. A tape recorder was used to keep a record of the interview. In that way, the questioner and the respondent were able to freely interact and discuss the questions in depth when desirable.

Design

This is a descriptive study in nature. Opinions of in-service elementary teachers about their teacher education programs were collected, presented, described and analyzed. The conclusions drawn and recommendations made will be based upon the answers to the underlying questions which in turn will be based upon the answers to the specific questions in the interview.

Assumptions

The understood underlying assumption of this study is that graduates of a teacher education program who pursue the career of teaching can be reliable sources of information as to the effect and effectiveness of that program.

Following are the underlying questions which will provide the basis for this study.

- I. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program successfully prepare its students to teach in a rural setting, a suburban setting or an urban setting?
- II. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program contain some beneficial courses for future teachers and should there be more of them?
- III. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program contain some courses which are not beneficial for future teachers and therefore unnecessary?
- IV. What is the quality of the elective courses in Michigan State University's teacher education program and is there enough of an opportunity provided for the election of the courses?
- V. Should there be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program?
- VI. Are the methods of testing and grading satisfactory in education courses?
- VII. In Michigan State University's teacher education program, do students spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations?

- VIII. Is Michigan State University's student teaching experience beneficial for future teachers and are there any improvements to be made in that area?
- IX. Should the in-service teacher play more of a role in the training of future teachers and what should the nature of that role be?
- X. Does the present system of teacher certification in Michigan successfully provide the best possible supply of good teachers?

Analysis

The underlying questions listed above are answered, in order, on the basis of replies given by the teachers interviewed. The majority opinions were used to answer the underlying questions. However, every answer to every question posed in the interviews is presented in paraphrased form and according to rural, suburban and urban groups. Any marked deviation of opinion according to group is also presented and analyzed. Interpretation of the results is discussed.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

I. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program successfully prepare its students to teach in a rural setting, in a suburban setting or in an urban setting?

The first question in the interviews, "Do you feel that your teacher education program adequately prepared you to teach in your particular setting, i.e. rural, suburban or urban?," yielded the following responses.

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied in the negative. Four added that the program had not really prepared them to teach "anywhere," that it had been "a waste of time." They felt that actual classroom teaching is what had taught them to teach. The other six subjects said they were fortunate in that they had come from a rural background themselves and this is what had prepared them to teach in their setting, not their college experience which they described as impractical.

Of the ten suburban respondents, three replied that the program had indeed adequately prepared them to teach in their suburban setting. The reasons they cited were: their program had been middle-class in nature and so was their suburban setting; their program had taught them to

be innovative and in their suburban setting a teacher's attempts to be innovative were not frowned upon; their program had prepared them to teach above average children and their suburban setting has above average children. Seven of the suburban subjects replied that their teacher education program had not adequately prepared them to teach in their setting. Of the seven, four stated that the program had not adequately prepared them to teach anywhere. The other three gave reasons such as: they had learned everything about teaching on their own; the program was useless but it was the way to earn a teaching certificate; they felt comfortable in that setting not because of their program but because they were from a suburban setting themselves.

Of the ten urban respondents, all ten replied that their teacher education program had not adequately prepared them to teach in their setting. Four of the urban subjects talked about the lack of relevance of the teacher education program in terms of urban schooling with everything from materials to experiences being of little applicable value. Four others added that the program had not at all dealt with what they variously called "low achievers," "neglected children" and "abused children." Two of the urban subjects felt that a good teacher education program

ought to deal with all settings and be universal enough to prepare a student for any classroom. One of these two felt that her graduate education courses were doing this much more so than her undergraduate courses had.

Thus, according to the interviews, the first underlying question, "Does Michigan State University's teacher education program successfully prepare its students to teach in a rural setting, a suburban setting or in an urban setting?", would have to be answered in the negative. Twenty-seven of the thirty subjects felt that the program had not adequately prepared them to teach in their particular setting. Various reasons cited were: the program was not practical; it was a waste of time; and most frequently that it had not prepared them to teach at all.

II. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program contain some beneficial courses for future teachers and should there be more of them?

The second question in the interviews, "Which education courses if any have you found to be of most benefit to you now that you are teaching?," yielded the following responses.

Of the ten rural respondents, four named teaching of reading, two named teaching of art and the other four named teaching of math, of music, of social studies and the reading and language bloc. Eight of the ten rural respondents cited only one reason for their choices and

that was the high quality of the teaching on the part of the particular professors involved. The other two, naming math and music courses, gave need for knowledge in the particular area as their reason.

Of the ten suburban respondents, three named teaching of art, two named teaching of social studies and two more named teaching of language arts. The rest listed children's literature, child growth and development, and curriculum courses. Seven of the ten suburban respondents stated the reason for their choice as being the high quality of the teaching on the part of the particular professors involved. The other three reasons given were: for curriculum courses, presentation of broad picture of the public school scene; for children's literature, the successful combination of theory with practice; and for art, the course being useful and practical.

Of the ten urban respondents, two named teaching of art. The rest named teaching of math, the education bloc courses, methods of special education, teaching emotionally disturbed children, children's literature, psychology courses, child growth and development and teaching of language arts. Four of the urban subjects said their choices (teaching of art, methods of special education and teaching emotionally disturbed children) were very practical courses and had given them specific and useful techniques for the classroom. The other six

subjects gave as their reason the high quality of teaching by the particular professors involved.

The third question in the interviews was "Would you recommend the addition of more of these courses to the program and why or why not?" This question was designed in part to determine just how strongly the subjects felt about their choices of beneficial courses in question two.

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied that they would not recommend the addition of their cited courses. Eight replied in the negative saying that the addition of those courses would not help but the addition of good professors would. The other two replied in the negative pointing out that their choices happened to be beneficial for them but should not therefore be required of others.

Of the ten suburban respondents, three replied in the affirmative saying that there should be more curriculum courses, more children's literature and more teaching of art. The other seven suburban respondents replied in the negative saying that the addition of their cited courses would be of no benefit if poor professors were to teach them.

Of the ten urban respondents, four replied in the affirmative, urging the addition of "practical" courses such as methods of special education, teaching of emotionally disturbed children and teaching of art. Six

replied in the negative saying that the addition of more of their cited courses was not the essential thing but that adding good professors was.

Thus, according to the interviews, the second underlying question of the study would have to be answered in the affirmative. None of the thirty subjects stated that Michigan State University's teacher education program had absolutely no beneficial courses. Of the thirty replies, the most frequent choice was teaching of art (seven times), followed by teaching of reading and teaching of language arts (four times each). The most frequently cited (twenty-one times) reason for the choices was the good teaching done by the particular professors. Twenty-three of the subjects did not recommend the addition of what they thought to be beneficial courses.

III. Does Michigan State University's teacher education program contain some courses which are not beneficial for future teachers and therefore unnecessary?

The fourth question in the interviews, "Which education courses, if any, have you found to be of very little benefit to you now that you are teaching and why?", yielded the following responses.

Of the ten rural respondents, three named teaching of reading because it had not taught them anything they could use in the classroom. Two named Education 200 (School and Individual) and two named Education 450 (School

and Society) because they dealt with vague generalities. The other three said the rest of their courses (other than the ones they had mentioned as beneficial in question two). The reasons they gave were: these courses had not taught them anything of practical value; the courses had merely required learning what was in the textbooks; they were boring.

Of the ten suburban respondents, two replied that the rest of their program (other than what they had mentioned as beneficial in question two) was of very little benefit. Their reason was that the courses did not deal with real life situations such as you would have in a classroom and that they had really learned all about teaching on the job. Two suburban subjects named teaching of reading and another two named teaching of language arts. Their reason was that these courses did not teach them anything practical that would work with children in a classroom. Another two suburban subjects named Education 200 (School and Individual) and one other named Education 450 (School and Society) as of very little benefit. They felt these courses were too general and vague. One other suburban subject named the testing and measurement course as the worst course he had ever taken because the professor was the worst he had ever come across.

Of the ten urban respondents, three felt that the rest of their program (other than the beneficial courses they had mentioned in question two) was of very little benefit to them. The reason they cited was that the courses were extremely irrelevant in terms of urban classrooms. Two of the urban subjects named Education 200 (School and Individual) and two more named Education 450 (School and Society) and again the reasons given were vagueness and an overabundance of generalities. Two of the urban subjects named teaching of reading and another named all methods courses as of very little benefit in the program. As in the other groups, the reasons cited were that not enough was taught that could be applied in the classroom.

The fifth question in the interviews was "Would you recommend the elimination of these courses from the program and why or why not?" This question was included in part to determine just how strongly the subjects felt about their choices of poor courses in question four.

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied in the affirmative giving the following reasons: the time involved could be better spent; "no one should have to pay to sit in a boring classroom"; when you are exposed to bad teaching, it tends to lower your genuine interest in education; the time should be spent interacting with children instead of professors. Three of the rural subjects

qualified their affirmative replies saying that if the courses could be improved and taught by better professors then they should not be eliminated.

Of the ten suburban respondents, five urged the elimination of the courses they had cited as of very little benefit if the courses have to be structured the way they are, and, if they have to be taught by the same professors. Four of the suburban respondents replied that the courses they had cited as poor should not be eliminated. They recommended instead that the courses be improved and the quality of instruction should also be improved. One respondent replied that "it depends on the individual". The courses need not necessarily be eliminated but should not be required courses for everyone.

Of the ten urban respondents, six recommended the elimination of the courses they had cited as of very little benefit. They felt that time spent in better courses, in actual classrooms or in the community would be of much more value to the future teacher. Four of the urban subjects did not recommend the elimination of the courses. However, they strongly urged the improvement of the structure, the content and or the quality of the instruction of these courses.

Thus, according to the interviews, the third underlying question of this study "Does Michigan State University's teacher education program contain some courses which are

not beneficial for future teachers and therefore unnecessary?" would have to be answered in the affirmative. None of the thirty subjects replied that there were no courses which were of very little benefit to them as teachers. All thirty named at least one course or many as being of very little benefit. Of the thirty replies, the two most frequent choices were "most" or "rest of my program" (other than what they had cited as beneficial) and the teaching of reading, each being selected seven times. Education 200 (School and Individual) was mentioned six times as of very little benefit and Education 450 (School and Society) was mentioned five times. The most frequently cited reasons were the courses were too vague and general, did not teach anything of practical value, had poor professors teaching them and were very boring. Twenty-one of the thirty subjects also strongly recommended the elimination of these courses. The other nine urged that these courses be improved, the teaching in them be improved or that they not be required.

IV. What is the nature of the quality of the elective courses in Michigan State University's teacher education program and is there enough of an opportunity provided for the election of these courses?

The sixth question in the interviews was "Which elective courses in your teacher education program have you found to be beneficial to you now that you are teaching?"

Of the ten rural respondents, three replied "none," and one replied that she could not remember. Two named sociology courses and gave as their reason good teaching on the part of the professors. The other four respondents named English courses, a geology course, a science course and a growth and development course. The two reasons cited for these replies were personal interest in the subject matter and good teaching by the professors.

Of the ten suburban respondents, two replied "none" and two said they could not remember. Three other respondents named curriculum courses giving as their reason the looseness of the structure and the lack of pressure in these courses. Two of the suburban respondents named sociology courses which they said had been informative and interesting. The other respondent named a series of history courses he had taken adding that he had a special interest in history.

Of the ten urban respondents, four replied that they could not remember any beneficial elective courses and three said that there had been none. Two of the urban teachers named sociology courses saying that these courses were relevant to their urban setting. The other respondent in this group of ten named a geography course which he had benefitted from because of his own personal interest in the subject.

The seventh question in the interviews was "Which elective courses have you found not to be beneficial and why?"

Of the ten rural respondents, three said that they could not really remember and three replied "none". Two of the teachers cited curriculum courses as not being beneficial and gave as their reasons lack of structure and clear purpose. The other two rural teachers named sociology courses characterizing them as too general and boring.

Of the ten suburban respondents, four replied that they could not remember and three said that there were none. Two of the suburban teachers called the curriculum courses they had taken not very beneficial at all because the professors had not given any guidelines nor explained what was expected of students. The other suburban teacher called her psychology courses not very beneficial because they had not taught her anything she could use in her classroom contact with children.

Of the ten urban respondents, five replied that their elective curriculum courses were not very beneficial to them as teachers, although two of them noted that they had "enjoyed" the courses. Four of the urban teachers said that there had not been any that were not beneficial and one said that he could not remember.

The eighth question in the interviews was "Do you feel that you are given enough of an opportunity to take elective courses?" and "If not, how much of your program do you think ought to have consisted of electives and why?"

Of the ten rural respondents, four answered in the affirmative. Six teachers answered in the negative. When asked how much of their program they would have liked to be elective, four of them replied "half of it," one replied "most of it" and the other replied "all of it." The four teachers who replied "half of it" felt that education students need to learn a great deal before being assigned a classroom. However, they also felt that the other half of their program should have provided for some opportunities to make one's own decisions about what courses to take, provided there was good counseling to aid education students in making these decisions.

Of the ten suburban respondents, eight answered in the affirmative saying that they were satisfied with the amount of flexibility they were given in taking electives. The other two teachers answered in the negative. When asked how much of their program they would have wanted to consist of electives, they both replied "about half." One of these two teachers said that she was intelligent enough to make some decisions about her program and the

other teacher reasoned that no one could know as well as she what she needed to learn.

Of the ten urban respondents, three teachers felt that they had been given enough of an opportunity to take elective courses. The other seven replied in the negative. Of these seven, four teachers felt that half of the program should have consisted of electives because that would have given them the opportunity to make their own choices and at the same time provided the college with enough of an opportunity to teach them what had to be learned. Two of the seven teachers replying in the negative stated that most of their program ought to have consisted of electives. They felt that with proper counseling they would have been able to make their own choices as to courses that would help them in becoming good teachers. The other teacher in this group of seven felt that his whole program ought to have been elective because he would have chosen courses that would have better prepared him to teach in urban schools.

The ninth question in the interviews was "How much freedom should a teacher education student be given to make up his own program and why?" It was designed and included in part to determine just how strongly the subjects felt about their replies to the previous question.

Of the ten rural respondents, four teachers answered that about half of of the program ought to be made up by teacher education students. They felt that this provided for enough of a balance between what had to be learned and what the student wanted to learn. Two of the rural teachers replied that students should not be given too much freedom to make up their own program. They felt that there was much that needed to be learned and to allow students the "hit and miss" method of learning through discovery was a waste of valuable time. Two more of the rural teachers replied that they could not say definitely since they felt that it really depends on the individual students. One of the rural teachers replied that a lot of freedom ought to be given to education students to make up their own program. She suggested that the committee method used for doctoral candidates be applied to undergraduate programs thereby assuring guidance as well as freedom. The last of the ten rural teachers replied that teacher education students should be given complete freedom to make up their own program. She reasoned that this would insure real learning since the students would choose courses according to their needs and interests.

Of the ten suburban respondents, seven replied that education students should not be given very much freedom to make up their own program. The various reasons given were: students cannot possibly know what classroom teaching

is like and will therefore not know what they have to learn; most students would not know how to handle freedom and lack of structure; teacher education programs are not liberal arts programs but rather have the specific purpose of training future teachers; teaching is not a matter of doing whatever you feel like doing and therefore teacher education should not be either; personal recollections of themselves and fellow students abusing the freedom they had been given in some of their undergraduate education courses. Two suburban respondents replied that teacher education students should be given the freedom to make up half of their own program. They reasoned that the students should be held responsible for some of their learning experiences and then be given the responsibility for making up the rest. The last of the suburban respondents replied that teacher education students should be given very little, if any, freedom in making up their own program. She felt that the college of education was too lenient in its admissions policies, course requirements and grades which she felt had produced a bad reputation for the college in the rest of the academic community.

Of the ten urban respondents, four teachers replied that teacher education students should be given the opportunity to make up half of their own program. They reasoned that that would give most students enough freedom to make some of their own choices and still allow the

college to make certain that they were prepared to teach in the public schools. Three of the urban teachers replied that teacher education students should not be given very much freedom to make up their own program. They felt that most graduates would be even less prepared to teach in urban schools than they are now. Two of the urban respondents replied that teacher education students should be given the freedom to make up most of their program. These two teachers felt that that would provide the student with the opportunity to take the courses that would better prepare them to teach in urban schools rather than the irrelevant courses that are now required. One of the urban respondents replied that teacher education students should be given total freedom when it comes to making up a program. He felt that most students know what they want and need by the time they reach college.

To repeat, the fourth underlying question in this study was "What is the quality of the elective courses in Michigan State University's teacher education program and is there enough of an opportunity provided for the election of these courses?"

Fifteen of the total thirty subjects in the sample listed beneficial elective courses in their program. Seven of the subjects replied that they really could not remember. Eight of the teachers felt that there had been no beneficial elective courses in the program.

Ten of the total thirty subjects replied that there had not been any elective courses that were poor. Eight of the teachers said that they really could not remember. Twelve of the subjects listed courses that they felt had not been beneficial.

The fourth underlying question would therefore have to be answered in the following manner. The program does indeed contain some beneficial elective courses. However, it should be remembered that seven subjects on the sixth question and eight subjects on the seventh question could not remember and therefore did not provide a definitive reply. Also, twelve subjects felt that the program contained some courses that were not beneficial.

As for the opportunity provided to take elective courses in the program, no definitive statement can be made. There was an even split, with fifteen teachers saying they had been given enough of an opportunity to take electives and fifteen teachers saying they had not been given enough of an opportunity. When asked how much freedom teacher education students should be given to make up their own program, thirteen of the thirty teachers replied "not very much." Ten of the teachers said that half of the program should be up to the student. Three of the teachers felt that most of the program should be made up by the student and two of the teachers felt that the entire program should be left up to the individual

student. Two of the teachers replied that it would depend upon the individual student. For this question as well then, the split seemed to be fairly even with fifteen teachers saying that anywhere from half to all of the program be left up to the student and thirteen teachers saying that not very much of the program ought to be left up to the individual student.

V. Should there be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program?

The tenth question in the interviews was "Do you feel that a better scholar makes for a better teacher and why or why not?"

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied in the negative. The various reasons given were: knowledge of subject matter does not mean that a person can relate to children; knowledge of education theories does not necessarily mean that a person can apply and use them in the classroom; personal recollections and observations of teachers who had been extremely successful in college but were not successful in the classroom; personal recollections of professors whose scholarly reputations were very high but whose teaching abilities were very low.

Of the ten suburban respondents, eight replied that they were not of the opinion that a better scholar makes for a better teacher. The reasons they gave were:

scholarship has nothing to do with knowing how to control a classroom; good common sense makes for a better teacher, not scholarship; most knowledgeable people are too involved with their knowledge to be able to have any empathy for children; personal recollections of teachers who had been "A" students in college but incompetent teachers in the classroom. The other two suburban respondents replied that whether or not a better scholar makes for a better teacher depends on the individual person involved. They reasoned that some scholars were very good teachers because they also knew how to relate to children, and some people who knew how to relate to children were nonetheless not very good teachers because they had no knowledge to impart.

Of the ten urban respondents, seven replied that better scholars do not necessarily make for better teachers. The reasons they gave were: children need understanding from adults much more than they need knowledge; people who have a command of a certain body of knowledge do not seem to be able to transfer that command to others; people who relate well to books do not relate well to children; personal recollections of teachers who had done very well in college but were not able to teach in the public schools; personal recollections of professors who knew their subject area but did not know how to teach it. Three of the urban respondents replied that a better scholar does indeed make for a better teacher. The reasons they

gave were: children (especially in urban schools) should not be "shortchanged" by having teachers who are forever "relating" to them and "empathizing" with them but not teaching them anything; there is an "explosion of knowledge" going on and for a teacher to become a better teacher she necessarily has to keep up with this knowledge; given our society, urban children need knowledge in order to succeed.

The eleventh question in the interviews was "What is your opinion of the place of scholarly pursuit in a teacher education program?" It was included in part to determine just how strongly the subjects felt about their replies to the ninth question.

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied that scholarship and the pursuit of it can be in a teacher education program. Six of the teachers stated that it should not, however, be used as the measuring device or criterion for certification and four teachers stated that it should not be forced on the education students.

Of the ten suburban respondents, seven replied that scholarship has a place in the teacher education program. Four of these seven subjects added that it should be optional in the total program and the other three stating that it should be up to the individual student. Three of the ten suburban respondents replied that scholarly pursuit should occupy a very important place in a teacher education

program. They felt that professors and the college ought to require a certain level of expertise of all students before sending them out to the public schools.

Of the ten urban respondents, seven teachers replied that scholarly pursuit has a place in a teacher education program but it should be optional and not required as the mode of learning. Two of the urban subjects replied that scholarly pursuit make up half the program so that teachers will not be ill-prepared in terms of knowledge. The other urban respondents replied that scholarly pursuit should occupy an important place in a teacher education program. His reasoning was that a teacher without knowledge cannot have anything to teach.

The twelfth question in the interviews was "Would you agree that a majority of the books you were required to read helped you in becoming a good teacher and why or why not?" This question was included in part to determine just how strongly the subjects felt about their previous answers and also to provide some information as to opinions about the specific methodologies of scholarship used in the teacher education program.

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied that the books they were required to read did not help them in becoming a good teacher. The various reasons given were: books cannot possibly teach you how to teach; the required books, especially the texts, were "boring" and

"dull"; children teach you much more than books ever can; what is in the books is usually outdated; no one should ever "require" another person to read a book.

Of the ten suburban respondents, nine of the teachers replied that the majority of the books they had been required to read did not help them in becoming good teachers. The various reasons they gave were: the books were required but the application of what was in the books was never taught in the courses; the professors had chosen very poor books; most knowledge in the required books cannot possibly be put to use in a classroom; most authors and most professors are too far removed from children and their experiences. One of the ten suburban respondents replied that the majority of the books she had been required to read did help her in becoming a good teacher. She stated that in her particular case the books chosen provided her with useful techniques for the classroom.

Of the ten urban respondents, all ten replied that the majority of the books they had been required to read did not help them to become good teachers. The various reasons given were: experience with children teaches you about children, not books; most education books are too boring; most textbooks in education are irrelevant in terms of the urban school; books, as a form of communication

of knowledge, are never current enough; more often than not, ideas that sound good in books are not practical in the classroom.

The thirteenth question in the interviews was "Would you agree that a majority of the term papers you wrote helped you in becoming a good teacher and why or why not?" This question was included in part to determine just how strongly the subjects felt about their previous replies to the questions on scholarship and also to provide some information as to opinions about the specific methodologies of scholarship used in the teacher education program.

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied that the majority of the term papers they had written did not help them in becoming a good teacher. The various reasons they gave were: writing term papers is not a part of teaching and should therefore not be a part of teacher training; writing term papers only teaches a student to hate writing term papers; term papers, like books, can help you in acquiring knowledge but they do not help you in applying that knowledge; writing term papers is "excruciatingly painful" and learning should not be painful; "writing term papers is as boring as reading them."

Of the ten suburban respondents, eight of the teachers replied that the majority of the term papers they had written had not helped them to become good teachers.

The various reasons they gave were: the ability to write term papers does not insure the ability to teach; most term papers were assigned and required and that goes against all theories of meaningful learning; researching a subject may be very interesting but knowing how to apply that knowledge in the classroom is another matter; term papers should be optional, otherwise they become just one more requirement that students dislike but tolerate. Two of the ten suburban respondents replied that a majority of the term papers they had written had indeed helped them in becoming a good teacher. The reasons these two teachers gave were; the writing of term papers had provided the opportunity of "digging into" a subject area of interest; writing term papers is an effective way of acquiring a real understanding of a certain topic.

Of the ten urban respondents, nine teachers replied that the majority of the term papers they had written had not helped them to become good teachers. The various reasons they gave were: term papers are simply a matter of "busy work" which professors feel they must assign; term papers were not beneficial because choice of topic was not optional; teaching is "doing" and term papers are "reading and writing" about what someone else "read or wrote" about; the topics allowed by the professors did not deal with the urban experience; writing term papers amounted to writing what the particular professor wanted

to hear and thereby getting a good grade. The other of the ten urban respondents replied that term papers had neither helped nor hindered him in becoming a good teacher for he had not written any of the papers he had submitted.

The fourteenth question in the interviews was "What is your opinion of the lecture method of instruction in education courses and was there too much or too little of it in your courses?" This question also was included in part to determine just how strongly the subjects felt about their previous replies to the question on the place of scholarly pursuit and also to provide some information as to opinions about the specific methodologies of scholarship used in the teacher education program.

Of the ten rural respondents, eight of the teachers used either the word "boring" or "dull" to describe the lecture method of instruction. Another of the rural respondents replied that she resented the fact that professors used the same lecture notes, semester after semester. The other of the ten rural respondents, although acknowledging the merits of the lecture method in some areas of knowledge which are more exact and definitive, criticized this method of instruction in education. Nine of the rural teachers felt that there had been too much lecturing in their education courses and one felt that there had been just the right amount.

Of the ten suburban respondents, six used the words "dull" and "boring" to describe the lecture method of instruction. One teacher replied that it was a good method so long as it was followed up by discussion of the topic and then practical application of the same. Another suburban teacher replied that it depends on the individual professor, for some are good lecturers and some are not. Another of the suburban teachers said that along with the seminar method, lecturing was an efficient way to expose students to certain topics. The last of the suburban teachers replied that the lecture method or any other method is good so long as the subject matter is interesting. Of the ten suburban respondents, seven subjects replied that there had been "too much" lecturing in their courses, two teachers replied that there had been "just the right amount" and one teacher felt that there had been "too little".

Of the ten urban respondents, eight teachers used the words or expressions "dull," "boring," "blah" interchangeably to describe the lecture method of instruction. One of the urban teachers replied that it was a good method so long as the topic was interesting and the professor was a good lecturer. The last of the urban respondents stated that lecturing was efficient whereas the "talking back and forth" in small group interaction was "a waste of time." Nine of the urban teachers stated

that there had been "too much" lecturing in their courses and one stated that there had been "too little."

To repeat, underlying question number V. was: "Should there be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program?" According to the interviews, there should be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in the program. Twenty-five of the thirty teachers stated that a better scholar does not make for a better teacher, with two saying "it depends." Three of the sample of thirty felt that traditional scholarship has an important place in a teacher education program while the other twenty-seven felt that it should only be there as an option. Twenty-nine of the thirty teachers interviewed stated that the books they had been required to read had not helped them to become good teachers. Twenty-seven of the thirty teachers felt that the term papers they had written had not helped them in becoming good teachers. Twenty-two of the thirty teachers felt that the lecture method of instruction was "boring" and "dull."

VI. Are the methods of testing and grading satisfactory in education courses?

The fifteenth question in the interviews was "What is your opinion of the testing measures used in your education courses? Do you feel this was a valid method of evaluating your learning and why or why not?"

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten stated that the multiple choice test was the most frequently used testing measure in their education courses. Six of the rural respondents felt that the measures used were poor. Their reasons were that it was an unfair method and that as an indicator it was often incorrect. Four of the rural respondents stated that they were very pleased with the testing measures used in their courses. Their reasons were that this type of testing is easy and that the other alternative of writing essay questions is too difficult. Nine of the ten rural respondents replied that the testing measures used in their courses were not a valid method of evaluating their learning. The last of the rural respondents replied that it was a valid method because it "tested nothing" and she had "learned nothing."

Of the ten suburban respondents, all ten stated that objective tests, especially the multiple choice type, were the most frequently used testing measures in their program. Eight of the ten suburban respondents described these testing measures variously as "extremely poor," "bad," "awful" and "terrible." One of the other suburban respondents replied that it made no difference whatsoever since what she had learned of importance she had learned on her own and could not be tested poorly or well by any objective tests. The last of the suburban respondents replied that some of the tests had been good and some had

been bad, but in either event so many of the things she had learned never appeared on the tests. All ten teachers in the suburban sample felt that objective tests were not a valid method of evaluating learning in education courses.

Of the ten urban respondents, all ten stated that objective tests of the multiple choice variety were the most frequently used testing measures in the courses in their program. Nine of the teachers in the urban sample were of the opinion that these were not good testing measures. The reasons they gave were: objective tests test recall of material only; taking tests is simply a matter of ascertaining what the professor would like to hear; whether or not you have prepared someone to be a teacher cannot be determined by paper and pencil tests; objective tests are inherently unfair. The other urban subject expressed a positive attitude toward objective tests. He reasoned that learning should be substantive and cognitive and therefore measurable. Nine of the urban sample felt that these objective tests were not a valid method of evaluating their learning while one urban subject felt that it was definitely a very valid method of evaluating learning.

The sixteenth question in the interviews was "Have your undergraduate education grades accurately predicted the kind of teacher you feel you are?"

Of the ten rural respondents, seven replied that their grades had not accurately predicted their quality of instruction. Five of these seven felt that they were very good teachers but had not received very good grades whereas the other two of these seven felt that they were not yet excellent teachers but had received excellent grades in their undergraduate program. The remaining three rural teachers replied that their grades had indeed accurately predicted the kind of teacher they felt they were. All three stated that they had received good grades in undergraduate school and felt that they were now good teachers. Two of these teachers added, however, that they were of the opinion that quality of grades had no correlation to quality of teaching.

Of the ten suburban respondents, six teachers replied that their undergraduate grades had indeed accurately predicted the kind of teacher they feel they are. All six added that they had received very good grades in their undergraduate program and all six felt that they were very good teachers. The other four suburban respondents felt that their undergraduate grades had not accurately predicted their quality of teaching. All four mentioned that they had received either average or below average grades whereas they felt they were above average teachers.

Of the ten urban respondents, eight replied that their undergraduate grades had not accurately predicted the kind of teacher they think they are. Five of these eight teachers stated that their undergraduate grades were poorer than what they felt the quality of their instruction to be. Three teachers thought their undergraduate grades to be too high to accurately describe the kind of teacher they feel they are. Of the other two teachers in the urban sample, one felt that his grades which had been very good, did indeed accurately predict his quality of instruction and the other teacher felt that it was an absurd question since she was of the opinion that grades cannot possibly predict anything, except perhaps future success in school.

To repeat, underlying question number VI. was: "Are the methods of testing and grading satisfactory in education courses?" Based on the replies in the interviews, the testing and grading measures used in education courses are not satisfactory. Twenty-three of the thirty teachers in the entire sample had negative comments to make about the testing measures used in their courses. Twenty-eight of the total sample were of the opinion that the objective tests widely used in their undergraduate education courses were not a valid method of evaluating learning. Nineteen of the entire sample of thirty teachers were of the opinion that their grades had not

accurately predicted the quality of their instruction and three more felt that there was no direct correlation between grades and how well one teaches.

VII. In Michigan State University's teacher education program, do students spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations?

The seventeenth question in the interviews was "Do you feel you spent enough time interacting with children in a learning situation during your undergraduate program?"

Of the ten rural respondents, eight replied that they did not feel they had spent enough time interacting with children in learning situations. Two replied that they had spent enough time with children during their undergraduate program. They added, however, that they had taught before entering the teacher education program and therefore felt that they did not need these experiences as much as other students do.

Of the ten suburban respondents, nine teachers felt that they had not spent enough time interacting with children in learning situations. The other suburban teacher felt that she had spent enough time interacting with children during her undergraduate program. She explained that she decided to enter the teacher education program after she had already finished college, worked in the field and raised children of her own. Therefore, she felt that her case was an exception.

Of the ten urban respondents, all ten felt that they had not spent enough time interacting with children in a learning situation during their undergraduate program.

To repeat, underlying question number VII. was "In Michigan State University's teacher education program, do students spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations?" Based on the replies in the interviews, students do not spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations. Twenty-seven of the total of thirty teachers in the sample stated that they had not had enough experience with children during their undergraduate programs.

VIII. Is Michigan State University's student teaching experience beneficial for future teachers and are there any improvements to be made in that area?

The eighteenth question in the interviews was "What is your opinion of the student teaching experience at Michigan State University?"

Of the ten rural respondents, six teachers replied that it was a very good experience for them. They described it variously as "meaningful," "best experience in the whole program," and "stimulating as opposed to the dull routine of education courses." Four of the rural teachers had negative opinions about their student teaching experience. Two of the teachers related events which they felt confirmed their feelings that the supervising teachers were merely

using them as aides rather than trying to teach them anything. Another teacher felt that she had never really been given the opportunity to actually take control of the classroom and teach. The other of the four teachers who replied negatively felt that in her particular experience there had been an especially trying personality clash with the supervising teacher.

Of the ten suburban respondents, eight of the teachers had very positive opinions about their student teaching experience. The reasons they gave were: the particular supervising teacher was extremely good; the opportunity for attempting innovations was encouraged; team teaching approach was used and therefore everyone learned from one another; "cluster approach" was used which allowed for student teachers choosing their own teachers. The other two suburban subjects had negative opinions about their student teaching experience. They both gave as their reason the particular supervising teacher's lack of ability.

Of the ten urban respondents, seven teachers had positive opinions about their student teaching experience. The various reasons they gave were: it was the only opportunity to actually learn about urban children and urban schools; more was learned about actual teaching than in all other courses combined; the particular supervising teacher was excellent. Three of the

urban respondents had negative opinions about their student teaching experience at Michigan State University. One of these three stated that the coordinator in her program assigned too much "busy work" that was of no help. Another teacher felt that her particular supervising teacher was not very helpful. The last of the three teachers felt that he had been assigned to an urban classroom with a teacher who was not able to relate to urban children and therefore did not teach him anything.

The nineteenth question in the interviews was "Do you have any recommendations for improving the student teaching program?"

Of the ten rural respondents, two teachers replied that they had no recommendations for improvement and eight teachers replied in the affirmative with suggestions. All eight teachers recommended that the time spent student teaching should be lengthened. The other recommendations they made were: improve the process of placement of student teachers with supervising teachers; require student teaching early in the program as well as later; provide better guidance during the student teaching experience; expose student teachers to a variety of classroom situations i.e. rural, urban and suburban.

Of the ten suburban respondents, one teacher replied that she had no recommendations to make for the student teaching program. Again, all the teachers with

recommendations made the suggestion that the time spent student teaching be lengthened. The other recommendations they made were: better selection of supervising teachers for student teachers; offer student teaching early in the program so that students can make more realistic professional choices; provide more seminar time for discussion and sharing of ideas.

Of the ten urban respondents, all ten replied that they had recommendations for the improvement of the student teaching program and again all ten in this group as well suggested lengthening the time spent student teaching. The other recommendations they made were: require student teaching early in the program so that learning in other education courses becomes realistic, not idealistic; more care should be taken in the placement of student teachers in certain schools and with certain teachers; elimination of the position of coordinator since it serves no useful purpose.

To repeat, underlying question number VIII. was "Is Michigan State University's student teaching experience beneficial for future teachers and are there any improvements to be made in this area?" According to the replies in the interviews, the student teaching experience at Michigan State University is indeed beneficial for future teachers. Twenty-one of the total sample of thirty had positive opinions about their student teaching. Also, according to the interview replies, with all but three of

the thirty teachers having recommendations, there are improvements to be made in the student teaching program. The improvements suggested, in order of frequency, were: more time spent student teaching, student teaching placed earlier as well as later in the program and better placement of student teachers with their supervising teachers.

IX. Should the in-service teacher play more of a role in the training of future teachers and what should the nature of that role be?

The twentieth question in the interviews was "Do you feel that in-service teachers should play more or less of a part in the training of future teachers?"

Of the ten rural respondents, all ten replied that in-service teachers should play more of a part in the training of future teachers. They all gave essentially the same reason. In-service teachers have the necessary experience and know the realities of teaching.

Of the ten suburban respondents, all ten replied that in-service teachers should play more of a part in the training of future teachers. The reasons they all gave were extremely similar and can be summarized into the following statement. In-service teachers have direct knowledge of what teaching is all about.

Of the ten urban respondents, again all ten replied that in-service teachers should play more of a part in the training of future teachers and again all ten in this group also gave experience and direct knowledge as their reasons.

The twenty-first question in the interviews was "What are your suggestions for the role in-service teachers could play?"

Of the ten rural respondents, five teachers suggested that in-service teachers should have more student teachers assigned to them. Two teachers suggested that there be in-service days held with the specific purpose of interacting with the education students from campus. Two teachers recommended that a program be set up in which education professors would teach in the public schools and public school teachers would teach education courses on campus. One teacher recommended that an advisory board of in-service teachers be established at the college of education.

Of the ten suburban respondents, four subjects recommended that in-service teachers be assigned more student teachers and for a longer period of time. Two in the suburban sample recommended that there be more communication between in-service teachers and education students in the form of discussion groups and meetings. Another two subjects recommended that it be required of professors and in-service teachers to periodically exchange teaching assignments. One teacher recommended that in-service teachers allow education students to come to the classroom for observation and for counseling. The other teacher in the sample suggested that in-service

teachers be trained for their role as supervising teacher in the student teaching experience.

Of the ten urban respondents, three teachers recommended that professors be required to exchange positions with classroom teachers in order that experienced teachers realistically teach education students and professors learn how to teach. Three of the urban teachers recommended that in-service teachers be assigned more student teachers and for longer periods of time. Two of the urban teachers recommended that in-service teachers serve in a guidance and counseling capacity in the college of education. One teacher suggested that in-service teachers be brought into education classes regularly as resource people. Another teacher recommended that in-service teachers make up the majority of admissions boards so that they can screen applicants for the teacher education program.

To repeat, underlying question number IX. was "Should the in-service teacher play more of a role in the training of future teachers and what should the nature of that role be?"

According to the replies in the interviews, in-service teachers should definitely play more of a part than they now are in the training of future teachers. All thirty of the teachers in the total sample replied that in-service teachers should play more of a part. The suggestions made as to the nature of that role, in order of frequency, are:

in-service teachers should be assigned more student teachers and for a longer period of time; in-service teachers should teach education courses while professors are teaching children in a classroom; in-service teachers should spend more time communicating with education students, whether in the form of discussion groups, in-service days or as resource people in education classes.

- X. Does the present system of teacher certification in Michigan successfully provide the best possible supply of good teachers?

The twenty-second question in the interviews was "Do you feel that the present method of teacher certification in Michigan is a good one and why or why not?"

Of the ten rural respondents, eight teachers replied in the negative. The various reasons given in order of frequency, were: the certification system is preventing some talented people from teaching because of its strict requirements; the system is not screening out some teachers who do not belong in the classroom; the system is not lenient enough and lacks flexibility; the system is too closely tied to the politics of the state.

Of the ten suburban respondents, eight teachers replied that they felt the present method of certification to be a good one. The various reasons given, in order of frequency, were: this method has produced good teachers;

other proposed methods would be no better; it has strict requirements and high standards. The other two suburban teachers replied in the negative. Their reasons were: in the majority of cases, it has provided the state with ill-prepared teachers; the requirements for certification are too strictly adhered to.

Of the ten urban respondents, nine teachers replied that they felt the present method of certification to be poor. The various reasons they gave, in order of frequency, were: the present method has produced too many incompetent teachers, especially for urban schools; it has prevented some talented teachers from teaching simply because they did not meet certain requirements; it is racist because it has not produced enough Black or Mexican-American teachers. The other of the urban teachers replied that the method was a good one for she could not think of any better method.

The twenty-third question in the interviews was "Do you have any recommendations for the improvement of the teacher certification system in Michigan?"

Of the ten rural respondents, seven replied in the affirmative. The recommendations they made, in order of frequency, were: people who have already taught in the public schools should not be required to take student teaching; people in the community who have special skills

or talents should be allowed to teach despite their lack of certified teaching credentials; more emphasis should be placed on actual teaching competence and less on completion of college courses; teachers who are judged incompetent by the administration should lose their certification. The other three teachers in the rural sample replied that they could not think of any recommendations to make.

Of the ten suburban respondents, seven teachers replied that they could not think of any recommendations for the improvement of the certification system. The other three suburban teachers made the following recommendations: colleges of education should require more student teaching; education professors should be required to teach in the public schools periodically; the present requirements should be more strictly enforced or more requirements be added so that an over-supply of teachers does not occur again.

Of the ten urban respondents, eight teachers recommended that certification be based on some sort of classroom competence test rather than on successful completion of college courses. The other two urban teachers compared teaching to the medical and legal professions and suggested a professional board or council decide who is to be certified.

The twenty-fourth question in the interviews was "In your opinion, should the state, the university, the teaching profession itself or others be in charge of certification of teachers and why?"

Of the ten rural respondents, seven teachers replied that the profession itself should be in charge of certification. Their reasoning was very similar in that they all felt that in-service teachers were qualified to make decisions on certification since they have direct and substantive knowledge of the field. Two of the rural teachers replied that all three, the university, the profession and the state, should have a part in certification since all three have a responsibility in the area as well as a contribution to make. The other of the ten rural teachers replied that the profession as well as the students it teaches should be the evaluators since they are the only ones directly involved.

Of the ten suburban respondents, five teachers replied that the profession itself should be in charge of certification. Their basic reason was that teachers know much more about teaching than anyone else and should therefore have the decision-making power. Three of the suburban teachers replied that the state should be in charge of certification. The reasons they gave were: the state is responsible for public schools and should therefore have the power to certify teachers; the state

would set higher standards than the profession or the university and would adhere to them more strictly; taxpayers support schools and therefore the state, as representatives of the people, should be in charge of certification. The other two suburban teachers replied that the university should be in charge of certification. The reasons they gave were: the university is more aware of the latest knowledge coming from research and would therefore be in a better position to make judgments; of the three, the university would be the likeliest to insist on real acquisition of knowledge which most teachers are lacking.

Of the ten urban respondents, eight teachers replied that the profession itself should be in charge of certification. All eight gave basically the same reason. The state and the university do not have first-hand knowledge of teaching as teachers do. Three of the eight teachers compared the situation to the legal and medical professions where high standards are maintained by the profession itself. Two of the urban teachers replied that the state, the university and the profession should all have a part in the certification of teachers. One reasoned that this would insure a proper balance of perspectives and viewpoints. The other teacher felt that all three have an interest to maintain in public education and should therefore equally share in the decision-making process.

To repeat, underlying question number X. was "Does the present system of teacher certification in Michigan successfully provide the best possible supply of good teachers?" Based on the opinions gathered in these interviews, the teacher certification system in Michigan is not successfully providing a supply of good teachers. Seventeen of the thirty teachers interviewed were of the opinion that the present method of certification was not a good one. Nineteen of the thirty made suggestions for the improvement of the certification method. The recommendation made most frequently was certification should be based on competence in teaching not on completion of course requirements. Twenty of the thirty teachers interviewed were of the opinion that the profession itself should be in charge of certification because it has the necessary expertise.

The twenty-fifth and last question in the interviews was "Do you have any other recommendations or comments to make about the entire system of teacher education and certification in Michigan?"

Of the entire sample of thirty, twenty-nine teachers replied that they could not really think of anything further to add but did want to repeat and reinforce what they had already said in the interview. One of the urban teachers replied that the profession of teaching

should have an examination similar to the "Bar" examination in the legal profession.

The questions which yielded a significant deviation of opinions according to rural, suburban or urban group were:

8. Do you feel you were given enough of an opportunity to take elective courses?

Six of the rural teachers and seven of the urban teachers replied in the negative whereas only two of the suburban teachers felt that they had not been given enough of an opportunity to take elective courses.

9. How much freedom should a teacher education student be given to make up his own program?

Seven of the suburban respondents replied that teacher education students should not be given very much freedom to make up their own program whereas only three of the urban respondents and two of the rural respondents felt the same way.

16. Have your undergraduate education grades accurately predicted the kind of teacher you feel you are?

Six of the suburban subjects replied in the affirmative whereas only two in the urban group and three in the rural group replied in the affirmative.

22. Do you feel that the present method of teacher certification in Michigan is a good one?

Eight of the suburban teachers felt that the present method is a good one whereas only two of the rural teachers and one of the urban teachers replied in the affirmative.

23. Do you have any recommendations for the improvement of the teacher certification system in Michigan?

Nine of the urban teachers and seven of the rural teachers had recommendations to make whereas only three of the suburban teachers had recommendations to make.

24. In your opinion, should the state, the university, the teaching profession itself, or others be in charge of certification of teachers?

A majority of the urban teachers (nine) and a majority of the rural teachers (seven) chose the profession to be in charge of certification. Only five in the suburban group chose the profession.

Discussion

As other researchers have found, opinions about teacher education programs are very negative. An overwhelming twenty-seven of the thirty subjects in this study

felt that their teacher education programs had not adequately prepared them to teach in their particular classroom.

All thirty subjects did list courses that were beneficial to them. Interestingly enough, twenty-one of the respondents did not list these courses because of the value of the content or particular subject matter but because the particular professors involved were good teachers. These same twenty-one subjects, therefore, did not recommend the addition of those beneficial courses because, in their opinion, the courses would not be beneficial if taught by poor instructors. As for the questions on non-beneficial courses, the teachers seemed to be mainly concerned with the lack of practical value of the courses and again with poor instruction. It would have to be assumed then that in evaluating teacher education programs, the quality of instruction would have to be a most significant factor.

The questions on elective courses yielded more indefinite and uncertain answers than any other. When asked about beneficial and non-beneficial elective courses, seven subjects and eight subjects, respectively, replied that they could not remember. Given the fact that all thirty subjects had easily listed at least one or more required courses as being of very little benefit and were, in general, rather critical of the teacher

education program, why did seven and eight subjects respectively encounter such memory difficulties with the question on electives? It is precisely electives that could have provided the opportunity to make up for the deficiencies of the required courses of the teacher education program. One possible explanation is that the other courses in their university experience were not very memorable and beneficial either. Another possible explanation is that recall of negative experiences required by some authority is higher than recall of negative experiences chosen by oneself. Also, interestingly enough, in the following two questions on teacher education students making up their own program, the rural and urban teachers felt strongly that students should be given the freedom to do so whereas the suburban teachers were very wary of the idea. Given the fact that some of the respondents could not recall their elective experiences, it is noteworthy that they nonetheless strongly endorsed the concept of electives.

The questions on scholarly pursuit and techniques yielded very strong negative opinions which were very similar among the three groups. The subjects felt strongly that lecturing, assigning term papers and required books did not constitute meaningful or useful learning to them as classroom teachers.

Twenty-three of the thirty teachers in the entire sample answered negatively to the question on testing measures. The reasoning for some of the positive replies, however, warrants some attention. Four of the ten rural respondents who approved of objective tests did so because these tests were "a snap," as they put it, hardly the kind of reason that proponents of objective testing would delight in. As for the questions on grading, only eight teachers, six of them suburban, one rural and one urban, felt that their education grades had accurately predicted the kind of teachers they are and also that grades in general can predict future success in the field of teaching. The rest of the sample, whether agreeing or disagreeing as to the predictability of their own grades, felt that grades have no correlation to future success in the field of teaching.

There was very strong sentiment expressed on the questions of time spent with children as part of the undergraduate teacher education program. Almost unanimously, twenty-seven of the thirty teachers were of the opinion that they had not spent enough time in actual learning situations involving children. Moreover, the other three teachers in the sample replied in the positive not because they felt their program in general provided enough practical experience with children but because, in their particular cases, they had been exposed to these experiences in some other way.

Twenty-one of the thirty teachers expressed positive opinions about student teaching. However, there was a strong sentiment that the program needed improvement. Only three teachers in the entire sample had no recommendations to make for improving the student teaching experience. The rest of the teachers felt strongly that more time should be devoted to student teaching. It should also be offered earlier in the program, if not early as well as late in the program. The respondents also felt that supervising teachers should be selected more carefully in terms of placement of student teachers.

The questions on the role of the in-service teacher in the preparation of future teachers yielded the only completely unanimous replies. All thirty teachers felt strongly that in-service teachers should play more of a part in teacher training. Also, all thirty in the sample had suggestions as to the nature of that role. Most frequently they recommended that in-service teachers should have more student teachers for a longer period of time and that education professors should exchange teaching positions with public school teachers.

The questions on certification yielded a difference of opinion according to group. The majority of the rural and urban groups were critical of teacher certification in Michigan. However, a majority of the suburban teachers felt that the certification system was very acceptable.

The rural and urban teachers argued for fewer requirements and more leniency in the interpretation and application of requirements. The suburban teachers, on the other hand, were concerned that standards be set, if anything, higher than they are at the present time. As for recommendations for improvement of the system, seven of the suburban teachers did not have any recommendations for improvement. The rural and urban teachers in their various suggestions basically urged that certification be based on a person's ability to teach in the classroom, not on successful completion of college courses.

Twenty of the thirty teachers stated that the profession itself should be in charge of certification. The majority was highest in the urban group (eight) whereas exactly half (five) of the suburban group chose the profession to be in charge of certification.

The last question in the interviews did not yield any comments of significance. Most of the subjects felt that their opinions had been expressed and sufficiently examined in the previous twenty-four questions of the interview.

Summary

On the basis of the majority of the opinions gathered in the interviews, the following are the answers to the basic underlying questions of this study.

- I. Michigan State University's teacher education program does not adequately prepare its graduates to teach in a rural, a suburban or an urban setting.
- II. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some beneficial courses for future teachers but more of these courses should not be added.
- III. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some courses which are not beneficial for future teachers and should be eliminated.
- IV. There is no definite answer to the question on the quality of elective courses and provision for the opportunity of the election of these courses.
- V. There should be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program.
- VI. The methods of testing and grading are not satisfactory in education courses.
- VII. In Michigan State University's teacher education program, students do not spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations.

- VIII. Michigan State University's student teaching experience is very beneficial for future teachers but there are some improvements to be made.
- IX. In-service teachers should play more of a role in the training of future teachers, especially as supervising teachers.
- X. The present system of teacher certification in Michigan does not successfully provide the best possible supply of good teachers; the profession itself should be in charge of certification.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

There have been no interview studies published on the attitudes and opinions of in-service elementary teachers toward the teacher education programs that prepared them. A very limited number of questionnaire-type follow-up studies on graduates from elementary education programs have been completed.

The Briggs study (1970) found that only 47% of the graduates thought their education courses were valuable. Over 50% of the respondents in the Stiles study (1958) were not satisfied with their education courses at the University of Wisconsin. Weaver (1970) found that attitudes toward teacher training courses drop sharply after one year of actual teaching. Koerner (1963) did an unpublished interview study of education students and found their opinions toward their courses to be negative and critical. In Preston's study (1964), education courses were also negatively rated. At San Francisco State College, Lindsey (1970) found education students to be very critical of their program.

Thus the review of the literature shows a scarcity of studies collecting opinions and attitudes toward teacher

education programs. What research has been done shows a rather dismal view of education courses. This study attempted to find out how Michigan State University educated teachers feel about their training. What did they find positive and negative about that training and for what reasons?

An interview composed of open-ended questions was used as the method for collecting the opinion data. The subjects in this sample were thirty in-service elementary school teachers, ten each from a rural, a suburban, and an urban school district. All were graduates of the Michigan State University teacher education program of the last eight years.

Twenty-five questions were posed to the subjects in the interview. These questions dealt with opinions on required courses, elective courses, traditional scholarship, testing and grading, student teaching, the role of in-service teachers in teacher training, and the entire system of teacher certification in Michigan.

There were ten underlying questions that provided the basis for this study. They dealt with the same topics covered by the twenty-five questions in the interview. These underlying questions were answered on the basis of the majority replies gathered in the interviews.

The answers to all questions posed were presented, question by question, and analyzed according to rural,

suburban, and urban group. The answers to the interview questions and to the underlying questions formed the basis for the conclusions and recommendations made.

The majority of the opinions gathered showed that:

- I. Michigan State University's teacher education program does not adequately prepare its graduates to teach in a rural, a suburban or an urban setting.
- II. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some beneficial courses for future teachers but more of these courses should not necessarily be added to the program.
- III. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some courses which are not beneficial for future teachers and should be eliminated from the program.
- IV. There is no definite answer to the question of quality of elective courses and provision for the opportunity of the election of these courses.
- V. There should be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program.
- VI. The methods of testing and grading are not satisfactory in education courses.
- VII. In Michigan State University's teacher education program, students do not spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations.

VIII. Michigan State University's student teaching experience is very beneficial for future teachers but there are some improvements to be made.

IX. In-service teachers should play more of a role in the training of future teachers, especially as supervising teachers.

X. The present system of teacher certification in Michigan does not successfully provide the best possible supply of good teachers; the profession itself should be in charge of certification.

Conclusions

1. Michigan State University's teacher education program does not adequately prepare its graduates to teach, whether in a rural, a suburban or an urban classroom.
2. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some beneficial courses for future teachers.
3. Michigan State University's teacher education program contains some courses which are not beneficial for future teachers.
4. The addition of beneficial courses or the elimination of non-beneficial courses is not advisable.
5. In terms of evaluation of education courses, the quality of instruction is the significant variable, not the subject matter or content.

6. There should be less emphasis placed on traditional scholarship in Michigan State University's teacher education program.
7. Methods of testing and grading in education courses are not satisfactory.
8. In Michigan State University's teacher education program, students do not spend enough time interacting with children in learning situations.
9. Michigan State University's student teaching experience is beneficial for future teachers.
10. Improvements need to be made in the student teaching program at Michigan State University.
11. In-service teachers should play more of a role in the training of future teachers.
12. The present system of teacher certification does not successfully provide Michigan with the best possible supply of good teachers.
13. The profession itself should be in charge of certification.
14. Certification should depend on actual ability to teach in the classroom, rather than on fulfillment of course requirements.

Recommendations

1. Michigan State University's College of Education should undertake a complete evaluation of its teacher education program with input from pre-service and graduate in-service teachers.

2. Michigan State University's College of Education should undertake an evaluation of the quality of instruction in education courses with input from pre-service and graduate in-service teachers.
3. Traditional scholarship, in the form of lecturing and assigning term papers and required books should be emphasized less in education courses.
4. Learning, in the form of combining theory with discussion and with practical application, should be emphasized more.
5. Michigan State University's College of Education should undertake an evaluation of testing and grading methods in education courses with input from pre-service and graduate in-service teachers.
6. The time students spend student teaching under supervising teachers should be increased.
7. Student teaching should be offered early in the teacher education program and late in the program in the form of internship.
8. The process of placement of student teachers with supervising teachers should be evaluated with input from pre-service and graduate in-service teachers.
9. Michigan State University's College of Education should establish a program in which in-service teachers and professors of education exchange assignments periodically.

10. Michigan State University's College of Education should use in-service teachers as resource people, as discussion group leaders and as counselors of students in the teacher education program.
11. The teaching profession itself should be in charge of certification in Michigan.
12. Michigan State University's College of Education, with the State Department of Education and The Michigan Education Association, should join in an effort to research the evaluation of pre-service and in-service teachers based on actual competence in the classroom.

Implications for Future Research

A comprehensive opinion poll, in questionnaire form, should be conducted of Michigan State University educated in-service teachers for a broader sampling of opinions on the effectiveness of Michigan State University's teacher education program.

A comprehensive, follow-up survey, in interview form, should be conducted of a smaller representative sample of Michigan State University educated in-service teachers for the in-depth aspect of the study of their opinions of the teacher education program.

A survey of in-service teachers should be conducted on the opinions they have of their entire university program as well.

An opinion survey of students presently in the teacher education program should be conducted as to the effect of the program on them.

A study should be done on the opinions Michigan State University professors of education have as to the effect and effectiveness of the teacher education program.

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