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PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLEGE OF THE BAHAMAS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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The author of the following article is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration at the University of Alberta, Canada. The research study described is that which will eventually form the subject of the dissertation required for completion of that degree. As final data collection is not yet complete, the research is here dealt with primarily from a conceptual point of view. However, some preliminary findings, gleaned from the pilot phase of the study, are discussed.

Evaluation of the total organization or parts of it has been identified by various organizational theorists as one of the important processes in educational administration, since it is only on the basis of data identified and collected for this purpose that informed decisions may be made regarding future developments within the organization. Such activity would seem to be particularly vital in a young institution in which innovative programmes or delivery systems have been installed, for the degree to which existing efforts appear to be effective in attaining desired objectives should influence any determination to be made concerning the continuance or revision of current practices.

The College of The Bahamas is just such a fledgling organization, and one, moreover, whose future direction is still a matter of considerable debate. It seems appropriate, therefore, that some attempt should be made to discover with what degree of success its undertakings appear to be fulfilling their purposes.

One of the most crucial aspects of the work of the College is that devoted to the preparation of teachers for the primary and junior secondary schools of the nation. In the long term, the effects of these endeavours would seem to have the most far-reaching influence upon the life of the community. It is an area of work, too, which is particularly vulnerable to criticism, for public attacks on educational standards within the schools call into question the competence of the teachers themselves and, by extension, the quality of their preparation as well.

This situation is not unique to this country. Over the past few decades, the apparent failure of the schools to bring about desired academic and social results in their students has brought down a storm of criticism upon those responsible for the education of teachers. In the United States, Woodring wrote:

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5	STAGE 6	STAGE 7
Selection from High Schools and Untrained Teaching Force	Placement Registration and Counselling	Academic Courses General Education and Subject Specializa-tions	Professional Courses	Teaching Practice	Final Examinations, Teaching Practice Moderation, Certification	In-Service Teaching
Academic Divisions And Education Division Ministry of Education	Student Services, Academic Divisions, Education Division	HMNS NASC SOSC Divisions	EDUC Division	EDUC Division and Schools	EDUC Division Joint Board of Teacher Education, University of the West Indies	Ministry of Education Schools, Private Schools

Components and Typical Sequence of College of The Bahamas
Teacher Education Programmes

FIGURE 1

FLOW MODEL based in part on "Framework for Collection of Information in Program Evaluation", Faculty of Ecucation, The University of Alberta, in Eugene W. Ratsot et al., "Skills of Beginning Teachers and Perceived Effectiveness of Teacher Education Programs." Program Evaluation Report No. 4, Faculty of Education, The University of Alberta, Page 2.

> Soon after the end of World War II the public schools came under sharp attack from dissatisfied parents, academic professors, journalists, university presidents, a famous admiral, and a popular writer who was convinced that someone named "Johnny" was not learning to read. Much of the criticism was focused on the teachers and the kind of education they were receiving (1975:16).

Lessinger had earlier maintained that:

> in few other fields of any consequence are there any patterns of behaviour so predictable, so unchanged, so inefficient in terms of the contemporary human organism and how it learns as are commonly found in the classroom (1970:341).

In Canada, Macdonald (1970:1) had maintained that the ideas guiding teacher education programmes were not evidence, but ". . . an untidy melange of traditions, the untrustworthy anecdotes of experience and insights which, however brilliant, are unlikely to survive institutionalization." As recently as June, 1980, Time magazine carried an article in which were reported dismaying instances of the lack of competence in basic skills evident in many American public school teachers. Once again, much of the blame for the state of affairs was laid at the door of the colleges that had trained and certificated the teachers.

In a paper delivered at the Twentysixth World Assembly of the International Council on Education for Teaching, William Taylor enumerated specific causes for the dissatisfaction with the outcomes of teacher education programmes which was being shared by both industrialized and industrializing nations (1979:27-28). Among other factors, he identified those major causes for concern: the quality of entrants to teaching and the criteria for their selection; the curricula of teacher education, which were often lacking in relevance to the problems and circumstances of teachers and the schools; the linkages between those individuals and institutions responsible for initial training, certification, in-service provision, teacher supervision and curriculum development, which were often poorly developed and which tended to involve problems of status, rank and accountability that were difficult to resolve.

No doubt, many of the foregoing concerns might be articulated in relation to the teacher education programmes at the College of The Bahamas. Indeed, it has been stated recently that the teaching profession in The Bahamas can in no way be considered as being on a par with other professions, since it appears not to have minimum standards for entry. Such a statement implies scepticism as to the actual professional value of the initial certification acquired by the majority of Bahamian teachers. Some assessment of the apparent quality and specific strengths and weaknesses of the programmes leading to those credentials would, consequently, seem to be both essential and timely.

THE PROGRAMMES

When in 1975 the existing Teachers' Colleges merged with other educational institutions to form the multi-purpose College of The Bahamas, the design (and, to some extent, the content) of the teacher preparation programmes was substantially altered. Where this had formerly represented an integration of academic and professional education with the total responsibility for instruction resting with the same group of faculty, the new programmes were planned to accord with the new administrative arrangements of the College. The academic or "content" component of the programmes was to be provided by the academic teaching divisions, while the professional courses (methodology, foundations, etc.) were to remain in the charge of the teacher education faculty (Figure 1). The programmes reflected the conviction that the successful teacher required "(1) general culture . . . (2) special scholarship . . . (3) professional knowledge . . . (4) technical skill . . ." (Russell, cited in Coutts, 1969:2). It was envisaged, further, that the new approach would use more efficiently the talents of available faculty, and, by allowing for a broader range of course offerings, enrich the preparation experiences of prospective teachers.

Over the past five years, numerous revisions have been made in the specific requirements of the teacher education programmes, although the basic format has remained largely the same. These revisions have tended to be made (i) on the basis of the judgment, intuition or experience of those responsible for programme planning, or (ii) in response to the need to meet particular requirements laid down by the certifying body, the Joint Board of Teacher Education of the University of the West Indies. While the degree of success with which the programmes prepare prospective teachers to meet the standards required for initial certification is measured by those teachers' performance in the final comprehensive examinations and in the moderated teaching practice, to date little assessment has been made of the impact of the programmes upon subsequent classroom performance. It is this latter aspect which forms the focus of the present study.

THE PROBLEM

The object of this study is to determine the extent to which a recently-graduated group of teachers, and their supervisors in the schools, perceive how effective the preparation programmes undergone by those teachers have been in developing in them the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for the successful performance of their teaching roles.

Specifically, answers are being sought to the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of a group of first-year teachers and their supervisors concerning the performance of those teachers during their initial year of teaching after training?

2. To what extent do first-year teachers perceive their preparation programmes as having assisted them to develop attributes which appear to be necessary for competent teaching?

3. To what extent are the perceptions of first-year teaehers concerning their performance and preparation related to (i) differences in grade level, (ii) personal variables, (iii) demographic variables or (iv) experience in teaching prior to professional training?

4. What are the perceptions of first-year teachers concerning specific areas of strength or weakness in their preparation programmes?

5. Are there any organizational factors that teachers or supervisors perceive as having contributed to the level of effectiveness of teacher education programmes?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Two basic assumptions underlie the decision to adopt the perspective stated for the present research: that the overarching objective of programmes of teacher education is to produce teachers who are capable of high quality performance in a school setting, and that the effectiveness of such programmes must ultimately be judged by that criterion.

An important consideration in this regard, however is the determination of what criteria may fairly be used to define successful teaching performance. Further, it must be determined what aspects of teacher behaviour may legitimately be expected to be developed through a programme of teacher preparation.

Before attempting to define successful teaching performance, it would seem to be necessary to analyse first what "teaching" actually entails in a contemporary context. Joyce (1975:112) pointed out that the initial establishment of public education was rooted in the conviction that participants in a mass society, its governmental processes and its economic system required literacy and occupationally-related skills. This conviction continues to obtain today. In addition to fulfilling this basic purpose, however, education through schooling has come to be regarded as an indispensable means of status acquisition and maintenance. It has been asserted that it should be the process by which all citizens acquire such skills, experiences and understanding to allow for a wide range of choices in all vital aspects of life (Pearl et al., 1969:3).

In most societies, then, governments, parents and the public at large value most strongly those educational outcomes which are symbolized by clearly-understood credentials. This is particularly the case in countries which are emerging from a colonial past and seeking to extend to a greater number of their citizens access to improved standards of living and fuller participation in a developing economy. An important function of the teacher must be, therefore, the promotion of academic and vocational learning.

The school, however, also has a responsibility to help to develop those attitudes and values which are considered to be socially desirable, and to encourage among students such aspects of personal development as will fit them to function productively in a rapidly-changing society. These include a sense of self-worth, responsibility and confidence in individual identity. It is essential, then, that the teacher demonstrate an understanding of and sensitivity to the importance of this aspect of the school's work, and contribute actively to the promotion of it.

Certain considerations are pertinent in regard to the response of teacher education to the foregoing conceptualizations of the teacher's role. First, after a long history of research which has striven to establish indicators of effective teaching, — i.e., teaching which would appear to enhance pupil learning — recent efforts have produced promising results which suggest that there are a number of specific strategies which are significantly related to student achievement in core areas, and, importantly, which teachers can be taught to use. Secondly, there are a number of changes occurring within educational systems which reflect a conceptualization of teaching as a cooperative rather than as a teacher-directed endeavour. Goble and Porter (1977:13) reported certain of these, and suggested that they were trends which should be matched within teacher education programmes. These developments include:

— more diversified functions in the instructional process . . .

— a shift in emphasis from transmission of knowledge to organization of the student's learning . . .

— individualization of learning and a changed structure in teacher student relationships;

— wider use of educational technology . . .

— larger acceptance of broader cooperation with other teachers in schools and a changed structure of relationships between teachers;

— the necessity to work more closely with parents and other people in the community . . .

The considerations described suggest possible criteria against which an existing teacher education programme might be judged: its success in providing teachers with the ability to employ strategies known to improve student learning, and its success in providing knowledge and experiences which enable the teacher to deal competently with his changing role.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The design of the present study was suggested in large measure by that of one of the programme evaluation studies carried out by the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education (Ratsoy at al., 1979).

Sample

The research sample consists of the total population of thirty-six primary and thirteen junior secondary school teachers who successfully completed College of The Bahamas teacher education programmes in 1979, and who are currently teaching in Bahamian schools. Some half of these teachers had no teaching experience prior to undergoing professional training, while the rest had worked in schools as untrained teachers for periods of up to ten years.

Seventeen primary and six junior secondary teachers have been posted to schools in New Providence, while the other twenty-six work in schools throughout the Family Islands. Schools range in size from very large (with enrollments of 1500 or more) in urban areas, to very small (with enrollments of less than one hundred) in remote rural settlements.

This group of teachers was selected as the sample for this study for a variety of reasons. They represent the first group of teacher education graduates most of whom would have received their entire professional training at the College of The Bahamas. Moreover, it is generally recognized that the first year of teaching is a critical one for the beginning teacher. It has been suggested that he is in a position at that time to perceive unanticipated gaps in his professional competence — gaps not recognized in his pre-service training as being important to the teaching task (Gaede, 1978:405). Ryan et al. (1979:268) maintained that the first year of teaching was crucial in shaping teachers' attitudes and feelings about their teacher education experiences of years past.

Finally, since this study depends heavily upon the recollection of teachers concerning details of their teacher education programmes, it was deemed appropriate, in order to minimize the possibility of distortion of recall, to focus upon individuals who had not been too long out of the preparation institution.

Instruments

The research instruments consist of two questionnaires (one for teachers and one for supervisors), and semi-structured interviews.

The teachers' questionnaires consist of three parts:

(i) a personal data sheet;

(ii) a list of teacher behaviours, previously established as being important to successful teaching, on which teachers will be asked to rate their own performance and their preparation programmes;

(iii) a section containing a series of open-ended questions through which teachers may assess the value of the various components of their teacher education programmes, and the adequacy of facilities and administrative arrangements at the College of The Bahamas.

Supervisors' questionnaires likewise consist of three parts:

(i) a personal data sheet;

(ii) a list of teacher behaviours, identical to that included in the teacher's. questionnaires, on which supervisors will be asked to rate the performance of the teacher for whom they are responsible;

(iii) a section containing a series of open-ended questions through which supervisors may express their views concerning the perceived strengths and weaknesses of College of The Bahamas teacher education programmes, and give suggestions for their improvement.

Interview guides have been devised to allow teachers and their supervisors to provide information of a more detailed and qualitative nature.

Pilot tests

Teachers' questionnaires were pilot-tested with two groups:

(i) a sample of twenty 1978 College of The Bahamas teacher education graduates;

(ii) a sample of twenty-three 1980 College of The Bahamas teacher education graduates who had recently completed their final teaching practice.

Supervisors' questionnaires were pilot-tested with principals of the 1978 graduates.

Interview schedules were pilot-tested with samples drawn from both groups of teachers, and with a number of principals.

These activities were deemed to be necessary in order to ensure that the language and the format of the research instruments were unambiguous and likely to elicit the appropriate responses.

METHODOLOGY

Identification of samples

Members of the target population and those individuals who would be invited to participate in the pilot phase of the study were identified from the records of the Teacher Education Division of the College of The Bahamas. Details of current postings and permission to seek their participation and that of their supervisors were obtained from the Director of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, Nassau.

Development of questionnaires

Questions were included in the personal data sections of both the teachers' and the supervisors' questionnaires to elicit information pertaining to respondents' age and sex, and the type, size and location of the schools in which they were working. In addition, teachers were asked to provide details of type of certification they had received (whether primary or junior secondary), the nature of their College of The Bahamas programmes (whether Associate Degree or non-Associate Degree), subject specialization(s), and years of teaching prior to professional training. Principals or other supervisors were asked to indicate their years of teaching experience and their years of administrative experience. These details would be used to determine to what extent such factors might influence respondents' perceptions of teacher proficiency and effectiveness of preparation programmes.

Part II. The list of teacher behaviours included in Part II of both the teachers' and the supervisors' questionnaires was devised in the following manner:

1. A preliminary list of skills, attitudes and knowledge likely to be important in effective teaching performance was generated from the literature on teaching and on teacher education. The initial criteria for the inclusion of an item were: (a) the consistency with which the attribute was identified in other, similar studies as being a critical factor in the competent performance of teacher functions; (b) the indications of research findings that an item appeared to be associated with increased pupil learning; (c) the judgment of the researcher that an item was likely to have importance in the Bahamian situation.

2. The list arrived at in the manner described above was distributed to faculty members of the Teacher Education Division at the College of The Bahamas, as well as to a variety of other educational practitioners in The Bahamas, for their comments concerning the relevance and importance of the items included in the Bahamian context. Groups of educators participating in this process were: the Bahamas Union of Teachers, the Primary School Principals Association, the Secondary School Principals' Association, officers of the Ministry of Education and Culture and District Education officers in several Family Islands.

3. A revised list of attributes was formulated on the basis of the results of these procedures, and the essential skills, attitudes and knowledge so identified were translated into the thirty-seven teacher behaviours included on the questionnaires:

TEACHER BEHAVIOURS

A. LESSON PREPARATION

*1. Selecting appropriate subject content
2. Specifying instructional objectives
3. Using knowledge of how children learn in the planning of teaching activities.
*4. Selecting appropriate teaching materials
5. Preparing appropriate teaching aids
6. Drawing on community resources to enhance children's learning experiences

B. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

7. Arranging the classroom environment
8. Grouping students for instruction
*9. Maintaining classroom order
*10. Taking appropriate disciplinary action when necessary
*11. Making efficient use of class time
12. Keeping accurate records

C. LESSON PRESENTATION

*13. Approaching the teaching task in a businesslike manner
14. Displaying thorough knowledge of subject matter
15. Using Standard English appropriately
*16. Displaying enthusiasm
*17. Presenting information clearly
*18. Using effective questioning techniques
*19. Using a variety of questioning techniques
20. Individualizing instruction when necessary
*21. Encouraging students to participate in class
*22. Building positively on students' ideas
*23. Using praise

D. ASSESSMENT

24. Diagnosing students' learning needs
*25. Monitoring students' progress
26. Evaluating students' achievements.
27. Evaluating own performance

E. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

28. Developing positive relationships with students
*29. Displaying warmth and caring for students
*30. Displaying acceptance of students as individuals
*31. Motivating students to learn
32. Encouraging students to develop self-respect
33. Communicating positively with parents
34. Working well with other teachers
35. Working well with administrative staff
36. Working well with school support staff

F. PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS

37. Displaying concern for continuing professional development

* Research indicates that item is positively related to student achievement gain.

Figure 2

4. The behaviours were further validated by an analysis of course objectives of core components of preparation programmes and of evaluative criteria listed on teaching practice evaluation sheets.

Pilot tests

Questionnaire survey. Pilot testing of both teachers' and supervisors' questionnaires was conducted in order to determine the following:

1. whether the instruments would elicit the kind of information desired;
2. whether any of the items included was perceived as being offensive or ambiguous;
3. whether significantly different responses would be obtained in Part II of the questionnaires if the teacher behaviours were listed in random order as opposed to being grouped into categories;
4. whether there appeared to be a danger of an occurrence of response set for each item in Part II of the teachers' questionnaire, since teachers would be asked to rate their performance and their preparation on scales placed side by side.

Alternative forms of each questionnaire were prepared — one in which the items of Part II were listed in random order, and the other with those same items categorized as shown in Figure 2. Half of the subjects in each sample (teachers and supervisors) received each version. Principals' questionnaires were sent first to the teachers concerned, in recognition of the ethical consideration entailed in asking a supervisor to supply to an outsider an assessment of a teacher's work. Teachers were asked to scrutinize the contents of both the covering letter and the principals' questionnaire, and, if they had no objections to their principals participating in the study, to pass the questionnaire on to them.

In Part II of each form of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to indicate, by circling the appropriate number from one to five on each of two Likert-type scales, (a) how well they felt they were performing in each area listed, and (b) how well they felt their teacher education programme had prepared them in each area. Possible responses in each case were: (1) very poorly; (2) poorly; (3) adequately; (4) well; (5) very well.

In Part II of their questionnaire, principals (or other supervisors) were asked to indicate, by circling a number from one to five on a similar Likert-type scale, teachers' degree of proficiency in each area of competency. Possible responses were identical to those offered to the teachers.

In Part III of the teachers' questionnaires, open-ended questions invited teachers to comment on the value to their preparation for teaching of the various components of their programmes, and to assess the adequacy of library and study facilities, counselling arrangements, and opportunities for extra-curricular activities. They were also asked to give suggestions concerning ways in which teacher education programmes might be improved.

In Part III of their questionnaires, supervisors were asked to provide a global assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of College of The Bahamas teacher education graduates as they perceived them. Further, supervisors were also asked to suggest ways in which they felt teacher preparation programmes might be improved.

Interviews

Because of the difficulties and expense entailed in Family Island travel, the pilot-testing of interview guides was restricted to New Providence.

Nine out of the nineteen New Providence teachers included in the pilot sample were interviewed. Six of these (two primary and four junior secondary school teachers) were 1978 graduates. The three 1980 graduates interviewed included two primary and one junior secondary school teachers. Interviews were also held with three primary and one junior high school principals.

In the interviews, respondents were asked to give their reactions to the form and contents of the covering letters and of the questionnaires. Further, teachers were invited to provide more detailed views concerning various aspects of their teacher education programmes as they perceived them in the light of their experience in the schools. Principals were asked to comment in more detail upon the quality of performance observed among College of The Bahamas graduates, and to provide additional views concerning the appropriateness, relevance, strengths and weaknesses of the College of The Bahamas teacher education programmes.

Analysis and Results of Pilot Test Data

T-tests were performed on the data obtained from Part II of the teachers' questionnaires to determine whether there appeared to be any significant differences between (a) the responses provided on the random or grouped versions, (b) the responses provided by 1978 and 1980 graduates. No significant differences were found in either instance.

Correlated t-tests were performed on data obtained from ratings of performance and preparation. Eight of the thirty-seven tests performed were significantly different at the .05 level, and three more were significantly different at the .01 level. Though the total number of significantly different results was not large, the items on which they were obtained were widely distributed throughout both forms of the questionnaire. Further, items which elicited similar responses on both performance and preparation scales were those where teachers might logically be expected to perform well if they perceived their preparation as being adequate. It was concluded, therefore, that response set was unlikely to prove a serious problem.

Instruments were finalized in the light of the results of the pilot tests. It was decided that the categorized version of the items in Part II of the questionnaires should be used for the main study, since all individuals interviewed indicated a preference for this approach. This view appeared to be confirmed by the fact that there was a better rate of return of categorized versions than of random ones: sixteen out of twenty-one teachers receiving questionnaires where items were arranged in categories responded, while only nine of the twenty-two teachers who received the alternative version returned completed forms.

A minor change was made in the wording of each of two of the open-ended questions in Part III of the teachers' and supervisors' questionnaires. Also, an opportunity was provided for teachers to comment separately on their methods courses as opposed to the other education courses. No other changes were deemed to be necessary.

The final forms of the questionnaires will be distributed to members of the target population in New Providence and in the Family Islands. A stratified random sample has been drawn from this group for interview purposes. This sample includes ten primary and three junior secondary school teachers currently posted in the Family Islands, and eight primary and three secondary school teachers in schools in New Providence. This group of twenty-five teachers represents approximately half of the forty-nine teachers in the research sample. Wherever possible, principals or other supervisors will be interviewed also.

DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Deliminations

The study is delimited in two ways:

1. Only teachers who graduated from the College of The Bahamas in 1979 have been included in the population of the main study.
2. The study does not take into account any programme revisions which may have occurred since the present first-year teachers completed their training.

Limitations

1. The study is primarily limited by a factor which affects all follow-up studies of this kind: its dependence on the perceptions and the recollections of the participants.
2. A further limitation resides in the nature of the study itself: as findings are likely to be somewhat situation-specific, generalizations will have to be made with caution.

SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Ratings of Performance on Teacher Behaviours

1. Teachers. Teachers generally rated themselves as performing adequately or well on all of the thirty-seven teacher behaviours listed (Table 1). In the areas of lesson preparation and classroom management, the mean scores of 1980 graduates tended to be higher than those of their 1978 counterparts. This may have resulted from the fact that the 1980 graduates were rating their performance on the basis of their teaching practice experience, and, in the areas in question, they would have tended at that time to have received considerable guidance and support.

TABLE I

Self-Ratings of Performance on Teacher Behaviours: 1978 and 1980 Graduates

TEACHER BEHAVIOURS	Mean of Ratings 1978 Graduates N=15	Mean of Ratings 1980 Graduates N=11
A. LESSON PREPARATION		
1. Selecting appropriate subject content	3.86*	4.36
2. Specifying instructional objectives	3.79*	3.90**
3. Using knowledge of how children learn in the planning of teaching activities	3.79*	4.27
4. Selecting appropriate teaching materials	3.57*	4.36
5. Preparing appropriate teaching aids	3.67	4.36
6. Drawing on community resources to enhance children's learning	3.73	3.82
B. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT		
7. Arranging the classroom environment	3.93	4.00
8. Grouping students for instruction	3.53	4.20
9. Maintaining classroom order	4.07	4.45
10. Taking appropriate disciplinary action when necessary	4.20	4.27
11. Making efficient use of class time	4.07	4.18
12. Keeping accurate records	3.87	3.91
C. LESSON PRESENTATION		
13. Approaching the teaching task in a businesslike manner	3.93	4.00**
14. Displaying thorough knowledge of subject matter	4.40	4.18
15. Using Standard English appropriately	4.00	4.36
16. Displaying enthusiasm	4.29	4.27
17. Presenting information clearly	4.13	4.20**
18. Using effective questioning techniques	4.00*	3.91
19. Using a variety of instructional techniques	3.64*	4.27
20. Individualizing instruction when necessary	3.79*	3.86

TEACHER BEHAVIOURS (Cont'd)

		Mean of Ratings 1978 Graduates N=15	Mean of Ratings 1980 Graduates N=11
21.	Encouraging students to participate in class	4.47	4.36
22.	Building positively on students' ideas	3.87	3.81
23.	Using praise	4.27	4.36
D.	ASSESSMENT		
24.	Diagnosing students' learning needs	3.80	3.86
25.	Monitoring students' progress	3.71*	3.82
26.	Evaluating students' achievements	4.07	4.00
27.	Evaluating own performance	4.07	4.09
E.	INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS		
28.	Developing positive relationships with students	4.40	4.09
3			
29.	Displaying warmth and caring for students	4.43*	4.55
30.	Displaying acceptance of students as individuals	4.40	4.27
31.	Motivating students to learn	4.00	4.09
32.	Encouraging students to develop self-respect	4.40	3.90**
33.	Communicating positively with parents	3.46	3.25****
34.	Working well with other teachers	4.20	4.40
35.	Working well with administrative Staff	4.20	4.00***
36.	Working well with school support staff	4.69	3.89***
F.	PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS		
37.	Displaying concern for continuing professional development	4.29	4.30**

* N=14; ** N=10; *** N=9; **** N=8

1=Very Poorly; 2=Poorly; 3=Adequately; 4=Well; 5=Very Well.

Both groups rated highly their performance of behaviours associated with lesson preparation and assessment. These were areas where preparation received at College was also rated as being strong (Table 2). However, it was in the area of interpersonal relationships that both groups of teachers saw themselves as being most proficient. Only in the instance of the item which referred to communication with parents did teachers indicate a degree of weakness: mean scores for this item revealed that teachers perceived their performance as being barely adequate in this area. Indeed, this was identified as the weakest aspect of the professional performance of both groups.

Table 2

Teacher Ratings of College of The Bahamas Preparation: 1978 and 1980 Graduates

TEACHER BEHAVIOURS	Mean of Ratings 1978 Graduates N=15	Mean of Ratings 1980 Graduates N=11
A. LESSON PREPARATION		
1. Selecting appropriate subject content	3.57**	
2. Specifying instructional objectives	4.27	4.67****
3. Using knowledge of how children learn in the planning of teaching activities	3.29*	4.10***
4. Selecting appropriate teaching materials	3.50*	4.44****
5. Preparing appropriate teaching aids	3.67	4.27
6. Drawing on community resources to enhance children's learning	3.07	4.10***
B. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT		
7. Arranging the classroom environment	3.79*	4.10***
8. Grouping students for instruction	3.67	3.90***
9. Maintaining classroom order	3.87	4.40***
10. Taking appropriate disciplinary action when necessary	3.73	3.80***
11. Making efficient use of class time	3.80	4.10***
12. Keeping accurate records	3.15**	3.50
C. LESSON PRESENTATION		
13. Approaching the teaching task in a businesslike manner	3.60	3.78****
14. Displaying thorough knowledge of subject matter	4.07	4.30***
15. Using Standard English appropriately	4.00	4.36
16. Displaying enthusiasm	3.73	3.90***
17. Presenting information clearly	4.00	4.36
18. Using effective questioning techniques	4.33	4.40***
19. Using a variety of instructional techniques	3.71*	3.90***

TEACHERS BEHAVIOURS (Cont'd)

		Mean of Ratings 1978 Graduates N=15	Mean of Ratings 1980 Graduates N=11
19.	Using a variety of instructional techniques	3.71*	3.90***
20.	Individualizing instruction when necessary	3.79*	3.90***
21.	Encouraging students to participate in class	4.20	4.30***
22.	Building positively on students' ideas	3.73	4.20***
23.	Using praise	4.47	4.50***
D.	ASSESSMENT		
24.	Diagnosing students' learning needs	3.67	3.36
25.	Monitoring students' progress	3.57*	3.80***
26.	Evaluating students' achievements	4.00	3.70***
27.	Evaluating own performance	4.00	4.09
E.	INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS		
28.	Developing positive relationships with students	3.60	4.00***
29.	Displaying warmth and caring for students	4.00*	3.90***
30.	Displaying acceptance of students as individuals	3.93	4.30***
31.	Motivating students to learn	4.00	4.36
32.	Encouraging students to develop self-respect	3.40	3.29*****
33.	Communicating positively with parents	2.78*	3.29******
34.	Working well with other teachers	3.14*	3.89****
35.	Working well with administrative staff	3.00*	3.50*****
36.	Working well with school support staff	2.85**	3.50*****
F.	PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS		
37.	Displaying concern for continuing professional development	4.07*	4.11****

*N=14; **N=14; ***N=10; ****N=9; *****N=8; ******N=7
1= Very Poorly; 2= Poorly; 3= Adequately; 4= Well; 5= Very Well

2. Supervisors. Supervisors' rating of teacher performance of the thirty-seven behaviours was, on the whole, quite favourable, though in general lower than the teachers' self-assessment (Table 3). On only one behaviour did they rate teachers as performing less than adequately, that of drawing on community resources to enhance childrens' learning. Teachers had, however, rated themselves as doing quite well in this regard. Differences in expectations or in understanding of needs in this area would seem to be indicated by this discrepancy, and a clarification of goals called for.

Mean ratings awarded by supervisors fell between the categories "adequately" and "well" for most behaviours, although in the case of six items supervisors' rating fell between "well" and "very well." These were: arranging the classroom environment, approaching the teaching task in a businesslike manner, displaying warmth and caring for students, working well with other teachers, working well with administrative staff, and working well with school support staff.

Table 3

Teachers' Self-Ratings and Principals' Ratings of Teacher Performance

	TEACHER BEHAVIOURS	Mean of Ratings Teachers N=26	Mean of Ratings Principals N=7
A.	LESSON PREPARATION		
1.	Selecting appropriate teaching materials	3.86*	3.57
2.	Specifying instructional objectives	3.79**	3.86
3.	Using knowledge of how children learn in the planning of teaching activities	3.79*	3.43
4.	Selcting appropriate teaching materials	3.57*	3.83
5.	Preparing appropriate teaching aids	3.67	3.43
6.	Drawing on community resources to enhance children's learning	3.73	2.71
B.	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT.		
7.	Arranging the classroom environment	3.93	4.14
8.	Grouping students for instruction	3.53	3.57
9.	Maintaining classroom order	4.07	3.71
10.	Taking appropriate disciplinary action when necessary	4.20	3.57
11.	Making efficient use of class time	4.07	3.29
12.	Keeping accurate records	3.87	3.57
C.	LESSON PRESENTATION		
13.	Approaching the teaching task in a businesslike manner	3.93*	4.14
14.	Displaying thorough knowledge of subject matter	4.40	3.71
15.	Using Standard English appropriately	4.00	3.71
16.	Displaying enthusiasm	4.29*	4.00
17.	Presenting information clearly	4.13*	3.71
18.	Using effective questioning techniques	4.00*	3.33
19.	Using a variety of instructional techniques	3.64*	3.29
20.	Individualizing instruction when necessary	3.79*	3.43
21.	Encouraging students to participate in class	4.47	3.50
22.	Building positively on students' ideas	3.87	3.00

D.	ASSESSMENT		
24.	Diagnosing students' learning needs	3.80	3.29
25.	Monitoring students' progress	3.71*	3.29
26.	Evaluating students' achievements	4.07	3.00
27.	Evaluating own performance	4.07	3.57
E.	INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS		
28.	Developing positive relationships with students	4.40	4.00
29.	Displaying warmth and caring for students	4.43*	4.14
30.	Displaying acceptance of students as individuals	4.40	3.86
31.	Motivating students to learn	4.00	3.00
32.	Encouraging students to develop self-respect	4.40*	3.86

TEACHERS BEHAVIOURS (Cont'd)

		Mean of Ratings Teachers N=26	Mean of Ratings Principals N=7
33.	Communicating positively with parents	3.46***	3.29
34.	Working well with other teachers	4.20	4.57
35.	Working well with administrative staff	4.20**	4.57
36.	Working well with school support staff	4.69**	4.14
F.	PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS		
37.	Displaying concern for continuing professional development	4.29*	3.57

*N=25; **N=24; ***N=23

1 = Very Poorly; 2 = Poorly; 3 = Adequately; 4 = Well; 5 = Very Well.

Preparation

Generally, teachers rated their own performance more positively than their preparation. However, in all but one behaviour — communicating positively with parents — teachers ratings of their preparation ranged between "adequately" and "very well." The weakest overall area of preparation as perceived by the teachers was, ironically, that in which the teachers rated their own performance most highly: interpersonal relationships. Though teachers indicated that they had been well prepared to deal with students, their ratings implied that their preparation for dealing with other individuals in the school setting was barely adequate. In the light of the tendency in schools towards a more cooperative or team approach to teaching, this would seem to be an area of teacher preparation which requires some attention.

College preparation was seen as being strong, however, in areas pertaining to lesson preparation, and lesson presentation, as well as in behaviours associated with assessment of students' needs and achievements.

Information Obtained through Open-ended Questions

1. Principals. In open-ended questions, principals identified as areas of greatest strength among College of The Bahamas teacher education graduates: concern for students and ability to empathize with them; skill in producing good visual aids; and the ability to communicate. Further, these teachers were praised also as being creative and willing to try new ideas.

Some of the most serious shortcomings of teachers trained at the College of The Bahamas were perceived to lie in the areas of classroom management and discipline. In addition, these teachers were seen as not always being able to use effective questioning techniques. Reference was also made to the fact that, in some cases, teachers displayed limited mastery of subject matter, due largely, it was felt, to deficiencies in academic background before training.

2. Teachers. In their comments concerning the value of specific aspects of their preparation programmes, teachers generally perceived their English Language courses (both content and methods) to have been valuable and subsequently useful to their teaching. Views on general education Humanities courses were, however, mixed. Some teachers found these to be very helpful, while others claimed that, in some instances, they had gained very little from courses that they had to take in this area. There was one comment, also, which indicated that certain of the courses seemed merely to repeat work already done at the high school level. It was felt that the standard of work could have been more challenging.

Mathematics courses were generally perceived to be valuable, although in a number of instances it was noted that there was a discrepancy between the type of Mathematics done at the College and that taught in the schools. Other Natural Science courses were primarily appreciated for offering increased understanding of and insights into Science.

Teachers' reactions to the Social Science courses they had had to take were mixed. Several found them to be very helpful to their teaching, while others expressed the view that there were too many such courses required, and that some could have been omitted from the programme.

Education courses were generally perceived to have been of great value. It was noted, however, that these often had to be rushed, and that greater benefit could have been gained from them had more time been available.

Teaching practice was viewed as being the most valuable and rewarding experience of the programme, for it was during this period that student teachers actually came to realize what the demands of a real classroom were like. Even those persons who had taught previously acknowledged that their teaching practice had made a great difference to their competence in the classroom.

In reference to facilities and services provided at the College, comments tended to be damning: library resources and study facilities in general were seen to be totally inadequate and a drawback to students' progress. A more definitive system of counselling for prospective teachers was also seen to be very necessary.

Overall opinions of the teacher education programmes were varied: while it was felt that the preparation provided was generally quite sound, many teachers complained bitterly about the frequent changes occurring in the programmes, which led to the prolongation of many students' stay in College. It was pointed out that, because of this, a number of students had become discouraged and had dropped out. It was suggested, therefore, that clearly established programmes be laid out, and that students be allowed to pursue these without interruption or change.

Further suggestions for improvements to the programme included the following: allow for greater continuity of instruction by reducing the turnover of lecturers from one semester to the next; attempt to establish links with a school where students may gain exposure to real classroom situations before they go out on teaching practice; provide a longer period of time for the Education component of the programmes; provide a longer period of teaching practice for teacher trainees.

SPECIFIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Much additional information was obtained during interviews concerning perceived strengths and weaknesses of the programmes. The numerous changes in requirements mentioned were identified as a major weakness, and teachers felt, moreover, that they had not received adequate information concerning those requirements. They indicated, too, that this seemed to result from the fact that on many occasions faculty members themselves were not certain about the actual requirements of the programmes.

Despite the generally positive comments made about the general education components of the programme in response to the open-ended questions on the questionnaires, many teachers expressed the view that they had been made to do too many courses whose relevance and value to their teaching they had difficulty in appreciating. Primary school teachers, in particular, felt that many of the content courses they had done would have been of greater benefit if they had covered aspects of the subject which related more to the kinds of material they would be dealing with at the primary level.

The methods courses followed in the Education Division were perceived as being most useful, although some junior secondary teachers indicated that where they were called upon to teach very low ability groups, many of the methods they had been taught to use were of little effect. They suggested that more consideration be given to this kind of situation when methodology courses were being devised or revised, particularly in traditional areas of weakness such as Mathematics. In this connection, praise was consistently expressed for the course in remedial reading for junior secondary students, which, it was stated, provided many valuable strategies for dealing with lower ability students.

The quality of instruction provided at the College was rated highly, on the whole, and faculty members were generally perceived as being approachable and helpful, especially in the teaching practice situation.

Teaching practice was confirmed by all teachers — even those who had had considerable previous teaching experience — as being a most rewarding experience. Indeed, several of the teachers interviewed stated that they would have liked to have had an opportunity to have actual contact with schools earlier in their programme, so as to be able to appreciate more fully the practical application of the theoretical material they were studying.

By and large, teachers rated favourably the reception and support they had received in the schools. They did indicate, however, that in some cases they had felt that the schools were tending to become impatient at having to accept student teachers so frequently.

Opinions varied concerning the duration of teaching practice: some teachers felt that the period of time allotted was adequate, but several affirmed that they felt that this should have been longer. Most principals interviewed seemed to favour a much longer period of practice teaching — some even advocated the return to a full probationary year.

A principal at a school where team teaching was employed expressed regret that student teachers were rarely sent to do teaching practice in open plan schools. It was felt that since graduates were frequently posted to such schools some exposure to the concept during the preparation programme would be valuable.

Several principals expressed regret, also, that they were not more closely involved in the planning and follow-up of teaching practice: it was felt that closer links between the College and the schools would be beneficial to all concerned. Some expressed a degree of frustration at not having available to them a clearly-defined channel of communication by means of which they might give feedback regarding the performance of student teachers during teaching practice.

CONCLUSION

The findings which have emerged from the preliminary phase of this research already indicate specific aspects of the teacher preparation experiences provided by the College of The Bahamas, and aspects of the administrative arrangements associated with these, which appear to warrant careful additional scrutiny. Further, they demonstrate the willingness of practitioners in the field to cooperate with the College in its attempts to improve its services.

It would be inappropriate, however to make specific recommendations at this juncture, since the main body of data is still to be gathered in this study. One thing appears to be clear, however: if the College is to function effectively as a truly open system, responsive to the needs of the environment it serves, regular channels of feedback concerning the effectiveness of its activities must be devised. Follow-up studies such as the one in hand would seem to be a promising source of information which can help to keep College offerings relevant and vibrant.

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