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## Interns' and Cooperating Teachers' Concerns During the Extended Practicum

*This study examined teacher interns' and their classroom cooperating teachers' concerns about the extended practicum both before and after their completion of the 16-week program. Respondents completed pre- and post-internship surveys identifying their initial concerns about the internship and the subsequent alleviation of these concerns (or the emergence of others). All the respondents reported that some of their initial apprehensions were alleviated by the end of the internship, but nearly all also stated that some concerns remained and that some new concerns had emerged. The teacher interns all reported having developed specific professional strengths during the internship. Evidence supporting some of Fuller and Bown's (1975) three-stage concern theory was found. Implications of these findings are drawn for enhancing the effectiveness of extended practicum programs.*

*Cette recherche porte sur un groupe de stagiaires et les préoccupations de leurs enseignants coopérants quant aux stages prolongés de 16 semaines. Les répondants ont complété des questionnaires avant et après le stage, identifiant leurs préoccupations initiales quant au stage et par la suite, l'atténuation de celles-ci (ou l'émergence de nouvelles). Tous les répondants ont indiqué que certaines de leurs préoccupations initiales s'étaient atténuées avant la fin du stage, mais presque tous ont également signalé que quelques préoccupations avaient subsisté et que d'autres étaient apparues. Les stagiaires ont tous indiqué qu'ils avaient développé certaines habiletés professionnelles précises pendant leur stage. Cette étude vient appuyer certains éléments de la théorie de Fuller et Bown (1975) sur les trois étapes des préoccupations. Les implications des résultats sont évoquées pour augmenter l'efficacité des stages prolongés.*

Before beginning her 16-week extended practicum in a grade 2 classroom in a Western Canadian rural school, Marie reported that she was concerned about the following four matters: (a) coping with the workload and planning her instructional units, (b) having effective classroom management, (c) evaluating pupils' work, and (d) being observed by the college supervisor. When asked at the conclusion of the practicum to reassess these initial concerns, she reported that the first two and fourth concerns were alleviated during the course of the internship as she became accustomed to the daily routines. However, she indicated that the third issue about evaluating students was still a concern to her "because I still don't feel prepared in it as much as I could be. There is not enough training for us in this area." On the other hand, some teacher candidates reported that classroom management and dealing with pupil misbehavior became a growing concern throughout their extended practicum.

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Despite their preservice preparation, many beginning teachers leave the profession early because of the mounting pressures they experience during their induction years. Veenman (1984) documented this finding two decades ago. It seems that for these novice teachers their sense of personal efficacy declines due to the lack of appropriate support and assistance they require at this critical stage in their career (Britzman, 1991; Hammerness, 2003). For them the transition between their preservice education and the actualities of real-world classroom life seems insurmountable (Ralph, 1994a). To help bridge this chasm, an espoused goal of teacher education today is to prepare preservice teachers—through a social constructivist process that entails collaboratively creating professional knowledge—who are capable of employing critical rationality as they seek to become observant and reflective decision-makers in the classroom (Sparks-Langer, Pasch, Starko, Moody, & Gardner, 2000). This growth process by which novice teachers expand their professional expertise (Berliner, 1986; Shulman, 1986, 1987) involves (a) their piecing together of their personal and professional identities (Miller Marsh, 2003); (b) the development of their teaching self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Soodak & Podell, 1996); and (c) their progression through a series of stages of professional improvement in their teaching practice (Borich & Tombari, 1995; Pigge & Marso, 1997).

Marie's comments at the opening of this article reflect some of these characteristics of the professional growth process experienced by teachers on their career path from novice to expert practitioner. Her reflections about her reduced anxiety demonstrate a self-evaluatory stance with respect to her progressive advancement in teaching competence and confidence. To develop professionally, however, does not mean eliminating all concerns about one's teaching practice. Rather, as reported in the research and as confirmed by this study, it means to arrive at a stage in one's career where one's accumulated practical knowledge, experience, and wisdom provide a sound foundation on which to base ongoing pedagogical decisions (Berliner, 1986; Ralph, 1998a; Shulman, 1987).

Experienced educators recognize that learning to teach encompasses more than the technical-rational goal of mastering a set of generic instructional competences (e.g., planning, presenting, questioning, responding, classroom management, assessing, and incorporating a variety of methodologies, Palmer, 1998). Although these professional skills are indeed necessary, they are not sufficient, because an expert practitioner's repertoire also includes other such elements as a sound grasp of the subject matter, a considerable degree of pedagogical content knowledge, an understanding of how humans learn, and an acceptance of the moral dimension that pervades human interaction in the teaching-learning process (Eble, 1988; Shulman, 1987).

In assisting beginning teachers to narrow the proverbial theory-practice gap that they claim to encounter in their preservice preparation (Ralph, 1994c; Wideen & Grimmer, 1995), teacher educators and practicum supervisors must ensure that student teachers are "put at the center of the process—naming their purposes and finding the questions, sharing responsibility for shaping the process, and taking account of the learning" (Paris & Gespass, 2001, p. 411).

A key purpose of extended practicum programs in teacher education has been to provide opportunities for neophyte teachers to experience the reality of

day-to-day school life as they begin to develop their professional teaching repertoire for their future career (Beynon, Geddis, & Onslow, 2001; Housego, 1992) and to encourage them to engage in a reflexive process whereby theory and practice inform each other (Schön, 1987; Zeichner, 1992).

Although educational reformers have critically appraised the effectiveness of practicum programs (Dalzell, 1997; Paris & Gespass, 2001), and although these programs have produced a variety of results (Churukian, Kissock, & Lock, 1995), there is one point on which most educators agree. This is that effective practicum programs facilitate the passage of beginning teachers through the transition period between being a preservice student of teaching to being an inductee into the profession (Ralph, 1994a).

One measure of how effectively an extended practicum program achieves this objective would be to ascertain to what extent the program helps to alleviate the personal and professional concerns (and to reduce the apprehensions) about the practicum that both the preservice and the supervising teachers experience.

The twofold purpose of this study was: (a) to examine teacher interns' and their cooperating teachers' expressed concerns about the internship, both before and after their extended practicum experience, and (b) to draw implications from these findings for helping beginning teachers to resolve their concerns and thereby to improve the overall effectiveness of extended practicum programs.

### *Background*

The pertinent literature about the concerns of novice teachers, including the early work of Fuller and Bown (1975), identifies a range of findings. On the one hand, some researchers have suggested that novice teachers pass through a linear progression of developmental stages en route to their achievement of professional expertise (Fuller & Bown; Nyquist & Wulff, 1996). For example, Allen and Casbergue (1997) identified a grouping of three stages; Piland and Anglin (1993) from their research derived four stages of teacher development; and Head, Reiman, and Theis-Sprinthall (1992) reported a progression of four to six phases or steps that neophytes traverse toward achieving teaching competence.

Fuller and Bown (1975) originally maintained that novices were primarily concerned with *self* and *survival* issues, then with *task* concerns, and finally with *impact* concerns. Subsequent research on this model yielded mixed results. For example, Pigge and Marso (1997) confirmed the original findings, whereas other research indicated that the stages did not necessarily follow in sequence (Calderhead, 1989) because of intervening personal, program, or context variables such as sex, cognitive ability, belief systems, and time frame (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999).

Extending the early work of Fuller (1969), Hall and Hord (1987) developed the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) to ascertain teachers' concerns about adopting an innovation in school settings. This model comprised seven stages grouped into the original three dimensions of self, task, and impact components. The researchers found that teachers' movement through the stages often occurred in a wave-like pattern that was affected by their self-beliefs of teacher efficacy, their outcome expectation (to what extent success is

possible), the outcome value (the importance the individual places on the initiative), and the type and amount of assistance or mentorship they received (Bandura, 1993).

Borich (2000), Rogan, Borich, and Taylor (1992), and Rutherford and Hall (1990) further extended, refined, and validated Fuller's original research on stages of concerns and found that: (a) student teachers typically show a shift of concern from self (e.g., "Will the students like me?") to task (e.g., "Am I implementing this method correctly?") and to impact (e.g., "Are the pupils understanding this concept?"); (b) inservice teachers frequently exhibit larger shifts, especially from task to impact concerns during their first years of teaching; (c) similar but smaller shifts have been noted among preservice teachers, who had not yet engaged in practice-teaching, but who had only had guided school-site observations of others' teaching; (d) this developmental growth pattern varies with individual teachers: some move more quickly through the stages than others; (e) teachers may move back and forth across the stages according to the specific context of their assigned teaching duties each year; and (f) teachers could exhibit concerns from multiple stages at the same time, depending on the particular teaching situation(s), subject(s) taught, students enrolled in the course, and existing conditions surrounding the particular course, class, or period in question.

Moreover, Good and Brophy's (2000) review of the pertinent research on the professional needs and problems of beginning teachers revealed that new teachers simply have not yet acquired the requisite experience and skills to conduct their teaching so as to reflect continually a learner-centered priority. These authors further advise novice teachers not to be afraid to admit their difficulties and to seek out experienced colleagues for assistance, because: "a broader, more pervasive problem is failing to obtain help" (p. 505).

On the other hand, some researchers have shown that neophyte teachers are not necessarily characterized by a strict passage through these hierarchical stages (Housego, 1992; Sandlin, Young, & Karge, 1992-1993). Furthermore, professionals at any age or stage may exhibit a range of attributes characterizing a variety of developmental stages depending on the context of their unique situations (Smith & Sanche, 1992, 1993). Thus a more realistic perspective seems to be one that conceptualizes beginning teachers' professional development as an individual path that may reflect a general pattern toward increased professional autonomy, but that also allows for specific and contextual differences according to the individual's personality, experience, and immediate context (Valli, 1993).

In a recent study of the anxieties experienced by a group of beginning teachers in Texas, Wilson, Ireton, and Wood (1997) found that these novices expressed several apprehensions, some of which were anxiety about the relationship with the mentor and the assigned placement, timing/pacing of lessons, concerns about being accepted by colleagues, fear of being evaluated, apprehensions of classroom discipline or student violence, concerns of being inadequately prepared, and inability to deal with pupils' learning and its assessment.

In a study of the concerns reported by groups of teacher interns from the University of Saskatchewan, Smith and Sanche (1992, 1993) found that these beginning teachers changed in their concerns during the 16-month internship.



Initially, the interns expressed apprehension about survival and *self* concerns, but this concern gradually subsided throughout the internship. However, the researchers also noted that at any given time during the practicum some degree of all three levels of concern were evident among all the teacher interns: overlapping of these concern stages was present. These findings corroborated the results reported by Hall and Hord (1987).

All this research—although not in perfect agreement as to the particular pathway that teachers follow as they negotiate their professional development journey—agrees that teachers do develop their professional knowledge and skills in a progressively sequential manner as they encounter and deal with a variety of difficulties and concerns. However, this sequence is individual and contextual. In the light of this research, the purpose of the present study was to investigate this developmental process among several cohorts of teachers at various career stages and to ascertain to what extent the stages-of-concern model reflects their experience. Although the findings of this study apply to one geographical location, I affirm with scholars in the qualitative line of inquiry (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990) that generalizability should be best thought of as a matter of comparability, transferability, and fit. This fit occurs where findings from one situation are examined by observers in other similar situations to help them inform and understand the latter. Thus my intention in reporting this study is to provide teacher educators with increased knowledge about helping beginning teachers to identify and ameliorate their professional concerns, and thereby to enhance their overall teaching effectiveness, both on an individual and collective basis (Fullan, 1995).

#### *Procedure*

In this study, as the College Supervisor of nine cohorts of teacher interns ( $n=82$ ) and their classroom cooperating teachers (CCTs,  $n=36$ ), I requested the interns to identify their concerns about the internship and teaching both before and after their extended practicum experiences. As a matter of comparison, I also asked five of the nine subcohorts of CCTs to identify their pre- and post-session concerns about the practicum and their supervisory role in it.

#### *Participants*

The nine cohorts with whom I worked from 1998 to 2002 were representative both of the graduates from the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan (i.e., the teacher interns) and of the population of experienced, tenured teachers (i.e., the CCTs) employed by the school divisions in the province, in terms of sex, age, subject/major preparation, grade/subject/school placement, and urban/rural/school-type internship location.

#### *Surveys*

Each teacher intern in the nine cohorts and the CCTs in the five groups completed a pre- and a post-internship survey. As illustrated by Marie's responses at the beginning of this article, the first survey consisted of one open-ended question: it requested the teacher interns to indicate any concerns they had about their upcoming extended practicum; and similarly, it asked the CCTs to identify any concerns they had about the practicum from their supervisory perspective. For the post-internship survey the interns answered the following four questions:

1. Refer back to your "pre-internship" comments. What concerns were alleviated?
2. What concerns do you still have?
3. Which, if any, have arisen during the internship?
4. What strengths have you developed during the past four months?

The CCTs' post-survey consisted of the same first three questions, plus two additional questions, namely, (a) What overall strengths characterize the practicum program? and (b) What changes would you recommend to the extended practicum program in order to improve it?

#### *Data Analysis and Interpretation*

I collated the pre- and post-practicum responses from both subgroups and analyzed the data employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For the qualitative aspect I used the constant comparison and analytic induction techniques, whereby I systematically classified and reclassified the responses into emerging categories that yielded common patterns and themes (Best & Kahn, 1998; Gay & Airasian, 2000). For the quantitative aspect I calculated simple tallies and percentages of the participants' responses in each of the categories (Anderson & Burns, 1989).

After compiling the findings that are displayed in Tables 1 through 7, I compared the results with those found in earlier related research and also drew inferences not only for enhancing the supervisory practice in the extended practicum program investigated here, but also for informing other institutions seeking to improve their practicum initiatives (Donmoyer, 1990).

#### *Results*

Not surprisingly, a clear finding was that respondents from both subgroups reported experiencing initial apprehension in some form about certain facets of the internship. Similarly, these teacher interns reported that most of their early concerns were alleviated as the practicum progressed, but that either some concerns lingered or new concerns emerged. Specific results from each subgroup are presented below.

#### *General Findings for Teacher-Interns*

Although a certain degree of apprehension about one's future performance in an unknown situation is normal and even healthy to some extent (Buskist & Gerbing, 1990), it would be unrealistic to expect preservice teacher education, no matter how effective it purports to be, to prevent such concerns from arising. A critical principle of constructivism in cognitive development psychology in general and current teacher education reform specifically is that the mentoring practices during the practicum period should not merely seek to prevent dissonance from arising among teacher interns, but that the practicum should assist them to deal constructively with their concerns (Brown & Palinscar, 1989; Housego, 1994; Mayer, 2002).

A second general finding from the present study was that *all* the interns indicated that many of their initial concerns had been alleviated during the four-month internship. However, most of the interns also said that they had one or more lingering concerns, although they stated that most of these later concerns did not seem as pressing as those that they had reported at the beginning. Third, all teacher interns reported having gained positive personal

results from their practicum experience. Each respondent identified two or more areas of professional strength.

Thus the teacher interns' experiences seemed to reflect the *general* movement through Fuller's (1969) three stages of professional concern, as did the findings for those CCTs who were new to the supervisory role. For example, at the beginning of the term, one mentor who was working with her first intern said, "Will I be an effective mentor—What and how much do I have to offer my intern? Can I give criticism in a professional way? I might want to be too nice." The veteran CCTs on the other hand expressed concerns largely at the third level (e.g., "Will the intern learn? Will he [or she] find it rewarding and come away and say, 'This has been a great experience.'")

#### *Specific Findings for Teacher Interns*

*Initial concerns.* Table 1 presents the areas of concern identified by interns before the internship. In terms of the Fuller stages, four of the categories related to their concerns about *self* (i.e., #2, #5, #6, and #7, whereas three categories related to *task* concerns and interns' desire to perform well in their instructional role (i.e., #1, #3, and #4).

Thus in terms of the stages-of-concern theory, the teacher interns' initial responses demonstrated their commitment to the first two stages with the third stage being nonexistent. This generalization is illustrated by Marie's concerns: her task goals of managing the workload, having good classroom management, and evaluating pupils' work, together with her self-concern of performing well when the college supervisor was present.

All respondents reported being concerned about two or more of the issues shown in the listed categories of Table 1, and this list is not unlike those reported in earlier research (Housego, 1992, 1994; Wilson et al., 1997). Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that some of the reported apprehensions are not exclusive to neophyte teachers encountering a new situation, because several of the items (e.g., fear of failure, having adequate funding, getting along with new supervisors and colleagues, prioritizing one's time, and managing groups of students) require the attention of *all* professionals regardless of their age or stage throughout their professional lives (Meadows, 1994). A key difference, however, is that the latter typically have more wisdom of experience on which

Table 1  
Interns' Expressed Concerns Prior to Their Extended Practicum ( $n=82$ )

<i>Initial concerns</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
1. Implementing instructional skills effectively	100
2. Having positive relationships with supervisor(s)/staff	72
3. Managing/organizing time appropriately	63
4. Having successful classroom management	60
5. Dealing with feelings of inadequacy	34
6. Distance (from loved ones and from resources)	10
7. Handling financial obligations	7

Note. One week prior to beginning the extended practicum, all of the interns reported experiencing two or more of these concerns.

to draw than do novices when confronting such situations (Berliner, 1986; Ralph, 1994c; Shulman, 1987).

All teacher interns in the present study indicated that many of their initially identified concerns had been reduced by the end of the practicum, and yet many reported that certain concerns still remained at the conclusion. Several interns also identified new concerns that arose during the course of the 16 weeks. These persisting and/or new concerns are identified in Table 2.

*Lingering concerns.* At the end of the practicum interns reported concerns in five of the original categories: #1, #2, #3, #6, and #8. Two of the three newly emerging concerns (i.e., #5 and #7) reflected the third or student (or effect) level of concern.

The existence of these lingering anxieties did not suggest that interns failed to develop their teaching skills, nor that the practicum program did not promote their professional growth, but rather that these novice teachers were beginning to demonstrate the characteristics of professional and reflective practitioners (McGown et al., 1999). Their comments suggested that they had reflected on their practice and were cognizant of their strengths and limitations, and that they were attempting to meet pupils' learning needs.

A general comparison of the values in Tables 1 and 2 show that for five of the eight initial categories, the respondents registered a decline in their level of concern by the end of the practicum. Moreover, their two initial concerns of time management of workload and travel distance were apparently eliminated. These findings support those from earlier research, which suggest that as novices develop their professional competence and confidence (i.e., increase their personal teaching efficacy), the degree of concern diminishes in inverse proportions (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

It should also be noted that although the numerical values for concern #1 in both Tables 1 and 2 (i.e., implementation of teaching skills) were high (i.e., 100% and 74%, respectively), an examination of the respondents' comments for each category revealed distinct differences. For example, interns' initially expressed fears about success in teaching recorded in the pre-survey reflected a generalized and global perspective (e.g., "I want to be an effective teacher"). On the other hand, their post-internship comments about their teaching practice were typically more specific, suggesting that they had engaged in a higher degree of professional reflection (e.g., "I still have to work on my own spelling,

Table 2  
Interns' Enduring Concerns at the Completion of Their Practicum ( $n=70$ )

<i>Persisting concerns</i>	<i>Percentage of respondents</i>
1. Implementing teaching skills effectively	74
2. Having successful classroom management	39
3. Having positive relationships with supervisors/staff	13
4. Adjusting to unfamiliar situation	11
5. Assessing pupils' learning correctly	10
6. Handling financial obligations	6
7. Meeting needs of exceptional pupils	6
8. Dealing with feelings of inadequacy	4

handwriting, and oral-questioning skills ... they have improved, but they still need work").

In the case of Marie, her post-internship comments reveal that her initial self concerns gave way to task levels (i.e., a lingering concern about evaluating pupils). Her initial apprehensions about workload/planning and classroom management virtually disappeared and were later identified by her as strengths because, as she wrote, "I learned to deal with them both." This learning took place in a nurturing environment in which the CCT and the college supervisor applied Contextual Supervision (CS) as a mentorship model (Ralph, 1993, 1996, 1998a, 2002a, 2003). It is not the purpose of this report to discuss CS, because it has been extensively described and evaluated elsewhere. Suffice it to say that CS guides mentors to match their supervisory thinking and behavior to meet the developing professional needs of their protégés. The essence of CS is that: (a) as interns increase in skill-specific competence, mentors may reduce the amount of their directive or task-oriented guidance given to their protégés; and (b) as interns increase in their skill-specific confidence, mentors correspondingly reduce the amount of socioemotional support given to their charges. By means of this developmental model that grows out of the particular needs, goals, and constraints related to each intern, novice teachers are mentored "to become teachers who are responsible for their own professional development and deliberate about their teaching" (Paris & Gespass, 2001, p. 411). This process can be conceptualized through the stages-of-concern framework.

*Strengths.* Table 3 presents interns' self-reported teaching strengths. All interns identified one or more strengths in the category of instructional skills. Marie, for example, reported her strengths as instructional planning, showing creativity and enthusiasm, and having a positive relationship with her students. In terms of the concerns model, these elements had moved from being concerns at the self and task levels to being considered strong qualities of professional effectiveness. Like Marie, 70% of the interns expressed satisfaction with their increased confidence, the development of their basic instructional and communication skills, and their demonstrated ability to establish and maintain a positive rapport with their CCTs, colleagues, and students.

Nearly half the respondents saw themselves by the end of the practicum as being strong in classroom management, with fewer respondents registering strengths in oral questioning and pupil-evaluation skills. Interestingly, an examination of the respondents' written comments corroborate what earlier research has revealed (Housego, 1994; Kohn, 1996; McGown et al., 1999; Meadows, 1994; Ralph, 1994b), namely, (a) that effective classroom management is a chronic concern for many educators at all levels and that it is not an easy skill for novice teachers to master; (b) that effective oral questioning is related to good classroom management; (c) that beginning teachers lack skills in effectively evaluating pupils' performance; and (d) that teacher education institutions need to address more effectively these three lesser-ranked skills in their preservice and/or practicum programs.

Incidentally, when I triangulated these self-reported assessments with two other relevant data sources (namely, the college's formal final evaluation documents of interns' teaching performance and my own formal supervisory notes recorded during my required four observations of each intern's teaching over



**Table 3**  
**Interns' Self-Reported Teaching Strengths at the Completion of Their**  
**Extended Practicum ( $n=70$ )**

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
1. Instructional/pedagogical skills	100
2. Confidence/rapport/communication abilities	70
3. Classroom management	49
4. Oral-questioning/responding/discussion	14
5. Assessment of pupil progress	10

Note. All interns reported two or more of these competences.

the four-month period), I confirmed the agreement of the results of the interns' own self-reports of their teaching performance across all three sources. This finding is consistent with those from earlier research (Ralph, 1995a, 1998a).

In sum, the data from teacher interns synthesized in Tables 1, 2, and 3 substantiate the earlier research on novice teachers' concerns (Borich, 2000; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999), namely, that (a) initial concerns center mainly on self and task categories; (b) these concerns diminish with increased professional experience; (c) novices' concerns are individualized and are not necessarily experienced in a rigid sequence; (d) these individualized contexts are framed by unique sets of variables such as personal beliefs, personal teacher efficacy, cognition, maturity, environmental conditions, and supervisory relationship; and (e) an increase in teachers' sense of efficacy alleviates the negative effect of teaching concerns.

#### *Findings for Classroom Cooperating Teachers*

In addition to investigating the teacher interns' expressed concerns about the extended practicum, I elicited the views of 36 CCTs regarding supervisors' concerns about the internship. The CCTs completed two questionnaires similar to those completed by teacher interns, identifying CCTs' (a) initial concerns, (b) the concerns that were alleviated, (c) new concerns that may have emerged, (d) suggested program changes, and (e) positive aspects of the internship practicum. These surveys were completed during the first week of the four-month internship and at its conclusion. The results are summarized in Tables 4 through 7.

*Initial concerns.* The major concern of CCTs was related to the successful fulfillment of their mentorship duties. The CCTs wished to be able to provide the optimum degree of supervisory direction and support to match their protégés' respective levels of competence and confidence in performing their internship obligations. Achieving this goal would help interns to develop their professional skills appropriately. For example, Marie's CCT—a first-time supervisor—wrote, "Will I give her helpful feedback? Will I evaluate her fairly? When should I interfere during the intern's teaching?" In terms of the stages-of-concern model, these questions generally reflect the task level of concern in that the teacher expresses a desire to conduct the procedural component correctly. Yet one could also argue that both the self and the impact or student-learning concerns are also being addressed in these statements, because after

all, as one CCT reported, "A lot of responsibility rests on me, since I hold her whole future in my hands by means of my final evaluation of her internship in my class! She may or may not get her first job because of what I write. I don't know if I like this pressure. It's a serious thing!"

Approximately one third of the CCTs identified concerns about being able to accomplish all their own teaching duties, plus all the added supervisory obligations, in the constrained time-frame of the practicum. Related to this issue was the question among one quarter of the CCTs (including Marie's supervisor) who reported experiencing anxiety about judging whether (and when) to interfere if they felt their interns were getting into difficult situations.

The first three concerns listed in Table 4 tend to reflect the second level of the concerns model (Borich, 2000; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Smith & Sanche, 1992, 1993). Some of the CCTs initial comments reflected concerns at the self/survival stage, and a few of them fitted directly in the learner/impact category. Moreover, because of the new CCTs' unfamiliarity with the program and with the Contextual Supervision approach that was being introduced to guide their mentoring decisions (Ralph, 1996, 1998a, 2002b), these mentors—although considered to be expert in the realm of teaching—were themselves novices with regard to the supervisory process. Therefore, like their intern counterparts, the new CCTs were also experiencing anxieties about their respective duties, competence, and confidence in carrying out their expected obligations and similarly expressed concerns at the task stage of the concerns model, as illustrated by one new CCT who wrote in September, "I'm concerned that I won't be the perfect role model for her. Letting go of control of my classes will be difficult. I hope I let her have control without losing my own sense of belonging with my classes." Here one can detect concerns at all three levels, and it is evident that the CCT did wish to mentor appropriately in order to have the protégé develop her teaching effectiveness (although the CCT's words reflected concerns at the self and task levels).

A fourth issue raised by one fifth of the CCTs was their concern that some of the interns did not seem to be ready to accept the full range of challenges of

Table 4  
Cooperating Teachers' Expressed Concerns At the Beginning of the Practicum ( $n=36$ )

<i>Initial concerns</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
1. Overall effectiveness as a mentor/supervisor	53
2. Limitations of time constraints	36
3. Judging when to intervene in intern's teaching	25
4. Provincial teachers—union job action	19
5. Intern's readiness for practicum	19
6. Intern's classroom-management abilities	19
7. Making the entire internship positive/rewarding	14
8. Relinquishing teacher role to the intern	14
9. Securing support from other teachers	8

Note. 26% of the cooperating teachers indicated that they had no initial concerns. The remainder reported having one or more of the concerns identified here.

the extended practicum. These CCTs advised the College to be better gatekeepers for the teaching profession by preventing marginal or weak preservice teachers from continuing on this career path, until their academic and professional background and/or their personal maturity was adequately developed. Similarly, one fifth of the CCTs expressed initial concerns that their interns did not seem to possess adequate classroom management ability. They wondered if their protégés would be able to develop their skills sufficiently to sustain an orderly learning environment throughout the four months.

Fourteen percent of the CCTs identified their concern for making the whole practicum experience rewarding for the interns and to conduct it so as to make the teaching profession appealing to interns as a lifelong career. A similar percentage of CCTs expressed anxiety with what the above respondent reported: that is, having to share their teaching authority with a beginning professional, and thereby potentially diminishing their own daily input into the lives of the pupils. An eighth issue identified by some of the CCTs was a concern over being able to secure support from other staff members to permit the intern to teach occasionally in these others' classes.

An analysis of the data shown in Tables 1 to 4 reveals that although—like the interns—the CCTs initially expressed concerns reflecting all three stages of the concerns model, the CCTs' early concerns were weighted more toward the second and third stages than were those of their protégés.

It is also noteworthy that, as was the case for the interns in the post-survey, all the CCTs identified a decline in the extent of their original concerns. Furthermore, the CCTs' initial concerns about the interns' professional learning were either eliminated or somewhat alleviated because of the interns' development of pedagogical competence and confidence that occurred as the practicum progressed. Yet by the end of the practicum only a few of the cooperating teachers reported either that new concerns had arisen or that some degree of their initial anxieties still remained. However, compared with the number of interns who had lingering concerns (see Table 3), the number of CCTs having such concerns was small, as shown in Table 5.

*Later concerns.* Table 5 reveals that four of the mentors identified the interns' evaluation of pupils' progress over the course of the practicum as an area that required more attention. The CCTs apparently continued to see a weakness in the interns' competence in assessment.

By the end of the practicum three of the cooperating teachers reported having lingering concerns with the interns' apparent unfamiliarity with their particular field of subject matter; and two of the CCTs expressed a new concern over interns' lack of job-search skills. Because a few of the interns had already begun to seek permanent teaching positions before the end of the internship, their CCTs apparently felt they could conduct this job-search in a more effective manner.

It is worth noting that the CCTs shown in Table 5, who still questioned their self-efficacy in appropriately mentoring their interns were all first-time supervisors. One member of this group wrote on the post-survey, "I still feel at times that I am not always the best mentor.... I certainly feel that a good mentor should not claim to know it all. This feeling still lingers a bit, but not as much as it did in the beginning." This statement reveals that although the CCT had developed her own supervisory competence and confidence to some degree,

Table 5  
Cooperating Teachers' Ongoing Concerns at the End of the Practicum ( $n=36$ )

<i>Lingering concerns</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
1. Intern's limitations in assessing pupils' learning	11
2. Intern's limitations in content/subject matter	8
3. Cooperating teacher's overall effectiveness as a mentor	8
4. Intern's limitations in job-search skills	6

Note. All cooperating teachers (who reported having initial concerns) indicated that most of them had been alleviated. However, the respondents represented here still identified some persistent concerns (or ones that newly emerged).

she still experienced a certain amount of personal concern at the self level. However, overall, three of four of the CCTs' lingering concerns reported in Table 5 reflect the third level of the concerns model, which supports the earlier research indicating that experienced teachers tend to consider the welfare of the learner more than self- or task-oriented concerns (Borich, 2000).

These concerns reported in Table 5 prompted several of the cooperating teachers to recommend certain changes be made to the extended practicum program. Their suggestions are summarized in Table 6.

*Suggested changes.* The great majority of CCTs suggested no changes to the practicum program and therefore were apparently satisfied with its quality. Those who did suggest changes felt that the bulk of their concerns could be eliminated if the College of Education would ensure that all prospective interns would acquire certain prerequisite knowledge and skills before the practicum. For example, six of the CCTs recommended prior coursework for interns in what one school principal called "more nuts and bolts skills on basic record keeping, how to calculate and weight marks, and how to prepare their pupils' files for parent-teacher interviews." Another teacher wrote, "Do they know how to set up a primary classroom and organize everything before the first day of school? It was done for them when they got here in September!"

Two of the CCTs suggested that the College of Education needs to do a better job of preparing interns for performing the regular and sometimes tedious duties of school life. For example, one of these CCTs advised, "Get them ready for the actual daily routines, stresses, and time pressure of real planning, organizing, teaching, marking; and then starting it all again for tomorrow!"

*Program strengths.* With respect to the CCTs' perceptions of positive aspects of the practicum-program, nearly four fifths of the respondents identified the monthly seminars as being characterized by such qualities as "excellent," "sup-

Table 6  
Cooperating Teachers' Recommendations for Improving the Practicum ( $n=36$ )

<i>Suggested changes</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
1. Pre-internship preparation for routines (report cards, balancing the register etc.)	17
2. Clearer forewarning for interns about job stress	6

portive," "helpful," "a block of uninterrupted, dedicated time to talk with the intern," and "it gave us ideas of what to look for and showed if we were on the right path."

Nearly half the CCTs identified the college supervisor as being a key strength of the practicum program. They wrote such comments as: "The college supervisor was cooperative," "effective," "supportive," "had knowledge of the supervisory process," "thorough," "approachable," and "constructively critical." Also, one fourth of the respondents indicated that *The Internship Manual* (University of Saskatchewan, 2003-2004) had a positive influence on the practicum program's success. They indicated that it was "an excellent resource" and that "it laid out the guidelines and expectations clearly."

Approximately one fifth of the cooperating teachers mentioned that the Contextual Supervision model, which was used to guide the mentoring process throughout the practicum, was helpful (Ralph, 1993, 1996, 1998b, 2000, 2002a, 2003); and a 10th of them recorded that they valued the opportunity to communicate with other classroom cooperating teachers in order to share supervisory experiences and to discuss effective mentoring and teaching strategies.

#### *A Synthesis of the Findings*

A synthesis of the above findings corroborates the results from earlier research both in the areas of differences between expert and novice teachers (Berliner, 1986; Shulman, 1987) and of the stages or levels of teachers' professional development (Borich, 2000; Valli, 1993). It is evident that although both groups (i.e., interns and CCTs) identified specific concerns, these concerns were different for each group due to their different sets of roles and responsibilities in that the interns were learning to teach and the CCTs were developing their supervisory skills. Although each group reflected the three stages-of-concern, the CCTs' concerns were generally in the second and third categories, and those of the interns were typically in the first and second categories. Thus this study verifies, first, that experienced teachers in their professional roles tend to center on concerns and priorities that are at a higher level than the concerns of beginning teachers (Livingston & Borko, 1989). Interns, initially concerned about self and task issues, shifted to task and impact concerns as they developed their instructional competence and confidence throughout the practicum. Similarly, new CCTs expressed early concerns at the self and task stages and similarly shifted to task and impact concerns as they gained supervisory experience during the 16 weeks. Experienced supervisors, on the other hand, iden-

Table 7  
Cooperating Teachers' Views of the Strengths of the Extended Practicum  
(*n*=36)

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
1. Internship inservices	78
2. College supervisor's role	44
3. The internship manual	25
4. The supervisory process	19
5. Collaboration/communication among the participants	11



tified initial concerns at the impact level; in fact a few of them wrote on their pre-survey that they had no initial concerns.

A second related finding, confirmed both by the related research and by educators' personal experiences in a variety of teaching/learning settings, is that expert teachers—by virtue of their richer background of accumulated experience—have developed not only a more integrated cognitive schemata about the teaching process than their neophyte counterparts (Borich, 2000; Livingston & Borko, 1989), but also a keener ability to discriminate between important and unimportant facts, events, or situations (Berliner, 1986). Hence the CCTs in this study could draw the interns' attention to certain broader issues that these novices might not have even considered at that point (e.g., "Why not begin gathering materials from all over now to help you when you get your own classroom?" or "Think ahead about how you can put your 'best foot forward' in your upcoming job interviews").

A third finding that emerged from this study was that although the CCTs had more pedagogical expertise than their protégés, inexperienced supervisors often expressed the same levels of concern (i.e., at the self and task stages) that interns identified, but in the area of developing their own levels of competence and confidence in applying the model of Contextual Supervision (Ralph, 1996, 2002a, 2003). Just as the CCTs mentored their interns to develop their teaching efficacy, as the College Supervisor I mentored the CCTs to develop their mentoring efficacy in their understanding and application of the CS model.

#### *Discussion and Implications*

To make blind generalizations from these specific findings from one college's practicum experience to extended practicum programs in other teacher education institutions is not only unwise, but untenable (Donmoyer, 1990; Schofield, 1990). However, what can be accomplished is for interested individuals to look for transferability and fittingness or similarity between two contexts rather than for precise statistical probabilities leading to verification of a priori hypotheses (Schofield). In the light of this type of comparability or translatability, I draw four implications from the present study for the improvement of the practicum program in which I work. However, I also invite organizers and operators of other similar programs to examine the results in order to help them inform their judgments about their own future program and policy decisions.

One implication emerging from this study of the differences between experienced and novice teachers' concerns is that neophytes' professional development must be facilitated individually and contextually. Although the Contextual Supervision model used in our internship program permits mentors to recognize that novices (whether teachers or CCTs) may pass through general stages of professional and personal concern, it requires supervisors (whether CCTs or college supervisors) to accept individuals at whatever developmental level they are, and to assist them to grow in their professional confidence and competence from that point (Ralph, 2000, 2002a). Thus a key insight is not to deny or prevent protégés' concerns from arising, but to assist them to work through these difficulties. Thus rather than being decried for addressing novices' low-level self and survival issues, teacher education programs should bolster their efforts in this regard, with the realization that with

sensitive and sensible mentoring, their preservice neophytes will shift their areas of concern from self to task and to learner considerations (Ralph, 1993). To operationalize this goal I have recently initiated in my supervisory role a more intensive orientation and training period for CCTs in order to better prepare them to synchronize their mentorship styles more closely with the existing developmental stages of the interns with whom they are working.

A second inference that I draw from the data in this study is that continued work needs to be done by our College of Education personnel to assist teacher interns to improve in the three areas identified as weak, namely, classroom management, instructional methodologies, and evaluating pupils' progress. To illustrate how we are seeking to achieve this goal, our college is currently restructuring each of our pre-internship courses and student-teaching sessions, in order to deal more directly and specifically with the theory-practice link in these three areas. These concerns have been repeatedly identified in other research (Ralph, 1995b, 1998b), but we have realized that the typical prescriptive rhetoric had to be replaced with action. Perhaps teacher educators in other campus- and field-based programs could use our experience to inform their action to assist their populations of prospective teachers in a like manner to reduce the proverbial practice-theory gap with respect to these elements of classroom teaching.

The resolving of interns' and CCTs' concerns and their continued professional development will not occur as a result of mere experience or practice alone, however (McGown et al., 1999). Novices must be mentored in the development of the reflective construction of their personal theories of teaching or mentoring (Livingston & Borko, 1989). This study has confirmed that veteran teachers in their mentorship and supervisory roles do in fact help their inexperienced colleagues on this reflective journey. During the practicum program examined here, the mentors aligned their task and supportive responses in inverse proportions to their protégés' respective levels of competence and confidence. As illustrated above, low supervisee competence would require high supervisor task direction; but high supervisee competence would require low levels of supervisor guidance and directiveness. By following this pattern, the supervisory pairs were able to confront collaboratively the novices' specific concerns and "to take on the negative' emotions ... working through the discomfort of diversity" (Fullan, 1997, p. 231), which so often characterizes the anxieties that both arise and recede for beginning teachers and mentors during their early respective teaching or supervisory experiences.

A third implication is that the key stakeholders responsible for the organization and operation of the internship, namely, the College of Education and the school divisions, have further work to do—individually and jointly—in order to improve the program. To illustrate how we have sought to accomplish this goal, representatives of the College of Education, the provincial Department of Learning, and the provincial Teachers' Federation meet regularly to assess the effectiveness of the extended practicum program and to adjust policies and procedures to improve it. Furthermore, several rural school divisions have reinstated a program (i.e., a monthly stipend of \$100-\$200) as an incentive for teacher candidates to do their extended practicum in a rural area (Ralph, 2002b).

### Conclusion

Although most teachers and supervisors move through a general developmental growth pattern during their careers and eventually reach the learner-centered level in their professional commitment, this path is unique for each individual. Some may advance more quickly and with varying degrees of intensity than others; they may return to lower stages of concern when encountering unfamiliar professional situations; and they may simultaneously experience multiple levels of concern for various areas of the teaching-learning process (Borich, 2000). Nevertheless, the ultimate goal for those in the mentoring role is to deal seriously with their protégés' needs in order to help them "to structure their own self-improvement plans" (Good & Brophy, 2000, p. 506). By doing so, mentors will help novices on their way to becoming effective and exemplary professionals who themselves will eventually be enabled to mentor future generations of educators.

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