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PREVIEW

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Kelly, James LeRoy

THE ROLE OF THE LABORATORY SCHOOL AS PERCEIVED BY
LABORATORY SCHOOL FACULTY, DIRECTORS OF LABORATORY
SCHOOLS AND SELECTED NON-LABORATORY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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DIRECTORS OF LABORATORY SCHOOLS AND
SELECTED NON-LABORATORY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

by

James L. Kelly

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Interdepartmental Area of
Administration, Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor Donald W. McCurdy

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 1984

TITLE

The Role of the Laboratory School As Perceived By Laboratory School Faculty,
Directors of Laboratory Schools and Selected Non-laboratory School
Administrators

BY

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The Role of the Laboratory School
As Perceived By Laboratory School Faculty,
Directors of Laboratory Schools and
Selected Non-laboratory School Administrators

James L. Kelly, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 1984

Adviser: Donald W. McCurdy

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of laboratory schools as perceived by secondary laboratory school faculty, the directors of laboratory schools and selected non-laboratory school administrators. Three objectives were identified: (1) the compilation of census data on present operating laboratory schools that have some form of a secondary phase, (2) the compilation of viewpoints of the role of laboratory schools as perceived by the designated individuals above, and (3) the organization, analysis and presentation of data to facilitate understanding of these objectives.

A survey instrument was designed to obtain the information and sent to 35 laboratory schools that have an operating secondary phase. Numerous descriptive data were obtained, analyzed and summarized. Four major umbrella null hypotheses with each having five subordinate hypotheses were tested at the .05 level. The following conclusions were obtained from the analysis:

1. Five roles that are normally associated with laboratory schools are viable roles as substantiated by the amount of time the respondents actually spend fulfilling the responsibilities for each role.

2. The five roles established with this study can be ranked from least attended to most attended.

3. There is a shift in the perceived importance of the roles as they apply to future trends for laboratory schools.

4. Non-laboratory school administrators tend to agree that laboratory schools must (a) work more closely with other departments within the university, (b) be more accessible for research projects, and (c) must continue to work closely with teacher education programs.

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PREVIEW

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

There is a need to identify the roles laboratory schools have in our present educational system and to suggest future directions for them. This need may have a greater sense of urgency now than ever before as the trend is to eliminate the laboratory school from its host institution. Institutions which once felt a compelling need to have a laboratory school and its function as a vital part of their curriculum, now find they are able to get along without them. This trend would suggest the role the laboratory school played with the host institution has diminished, making it an unnecessary part of the institution.

For a long time, laboratory schools have been a part of the American educational system. Laboratory schools, as we know of them today, had their beginning in the very early 1900's. The campus laboratory school concept, however, was originally established in normal schools with the premise that this would be a place where prospective teachers could observe current teaching practices as well as practice the same. There was a need for a school under the control of the teacher education institution where practice student teaching could be carried out.

Men such as James G. Carter, John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster spoke out to promote the existence of places where teachers could learn to teach.

The beginning of the normal school dates back to April 19, 1838, when the governor of Massachusetts authorized, by signing into law, a bill establishing three normal schools at Lexington, Westfield and Bridgewater. These three schools set the precedence for the development of public normal schools in nine additional states beginning with Massachusetts in 1838 and ending with Minnesota in 1860. The other seven states were: New York, Connecticut, Michigan, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania.

The normal schools, almost from the beginning, included demonstration and supervised practice as a part of their training programs, a practice that has continued in laboratory schools.

Yet, like today's laboratory schools, early normal schools had their problems, least of which, their name. Hutton referred to this problem:

"Normal School" was an unfortunate name. To English speaking people it carried none of the significance of "Normale" in the French "ecole Normale". There was something at least faintly ridiculous about the term and an automatic suggestion of its antonym. (17, p. 5)

Harper identifies that during the novitiate years of the normal school, they were almost closed because the Massachusetts Committee on Education was directed by the

House of Representatives to expedite the abolition of the Board of Education and all normal schools. Their reason, according to Harper:

"Academies and high schools cost the Commonwealth nothing; and they are fully adequate to furnish a competent supply of teachers....Considering that our district schools are kept, on an average, for only three or four months in the year, it is obviously impossible, and perhaps it is not desirable, that the business of keeping these schools should become a distinct and separate profession, which the establishment of Normal Schools seems to anticipate." (11)

This, of course, was exactly the role that normal schools had in mind, to make teaching a recognized profession. The first real laboratory schools included Cook County Normal School where Colonel Francis Parker became the principal in 1883; John Dewey's University Elementary School at the University of Chicago where Mrs. Alice Dewey, his wife, served as principal until 1904; and the Horace Mann School at Columbia Teachers College, a school that Dewey would eventually serve as director. Kelley describes the Horace Mann School as follows:

This laboratory school was designed to be one in which "professors of education might experiment with the curriculum and methods of teaching as professors of science experiment in the laboratory." (19, p. 26)

In 1926, the American Association of Teachers Colleges (AATC), now the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) adopted the following standard as a criterion for accreditation:

Each teachers college shall maintain a training school under its own control as a part of its organization for purposes of observation, demonstration, and supervision of teaching on the part of students. (24, p. 9)

Today, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has as one of its standards, a role similar to that of the 1926 American Association of Teacher Colleges standard; namely, the role of practicum for teacher education. The standard reads as follows:

The professional studies component of each curriculum includes the systematic study of teaching and learning theory with appropriate laboratory and clinical experience. (28, p. 6)

From these two standards, it would appear that practicum, a term often used to mean student teaching, was a required part of teacher training and, as a result, one of the leading roles of laboratory schools.

According to Howd and Browne (15) in 1969, 208 institutions of higher learning had a laboratory school as a part of their teacher education program, a means of meeting the NCATE standard. In his 1964 report, Kelley (19) has reported a high of 212 laboratory schools existing at one time. No literature reference suggested a greater number of such schools having been in existence at one time.

Institutions that did not have laboratory schools provided for practicum experiences by contracting with existing private and public schools. Observation and participation phases were also handled in a like manner.

The point to be made here is that an emphasis on practicum existed with teacher education schools and those that had laboratory schools gave this a high priority. At the same time, other institutions were able to meet their responsibilities without laboratory schools.

When this study was conceived in 1979, the number of laboratory schools that existed, as identified by Howd and Browne (15), had diminished by half to 104. In 1983, this figure had dropped even further to 87.

A few studies, Kelley (19), Howd and Browne (15), Cornthwaite (4), McConnaughay (23), and Duea (7) have been conducted to compile data on the history, demography and function or role of laboratory schools. Most of these data were confined to specific campuses or to the description of programs associated with a specific institution or a sample from a geographical region, such as the southeastern region. In such instances, the laboratory schools from five to nine states were studied. In most instances, only directors of laboratory schools took part in the study as the source from which data was collected. Such limitations are acceptable as they were the expressed limitations when the study was established.

Duea (6), in 1981, conducted a limited survey where 72 institutional members in the National Association of Laboratory Schools (NALS) responded to the priorities of laboratory schools. The faculty polled represented a cross-section of K-12 teachers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

On a national scope, there has been very little recent research completed where data have been collected with regard to the present function and future direction of laboratory schools.

Several studies were listed in the previous section. Of those listed, Howd and Browne's (15) 1969 "National Survey of Campus Laboratory Schools" and Duea's (7) 1976 "An Assessment of Provisions For Practical Teacher Education Experiences and Research in Public, Private and Laboratory Schools" have been recognized by NALS members as best covering the scope of laboratory schools. Kelley's (19) 1964 study, "The Historical Development of the Campus Laboratory School", is rated as one of the best studies of the history of laboratory schools.

The two former studies received financial support, Howd and Browne's (15) from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and Duea's (7) from the National Association of Laboratory Schools (NALS).

This investigation is, in part, a continuation of the aforementioned studies. Its primary purpose is to identify the role of the laboratory school as perceived by secondary faculty of laboratory schools, laboratory school directors and related administrative personnel of selected host institutions where laboratory schools exist.