

## THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

The necessity of including university supervisors in teacher education is assumed in accreditation guidelines by the *National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NATE)* and by the student teaching guidelines published by the *Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)* in 1969.

We recognize that undergraduate teacher education is a university-based program whether the student attends classes on campus or engages in field experience or student teaching in the schools. Therefore, the university must not abdicate its responsibilities at any point, especially in the practicum or student teaching phase. The university continues to emphasize the need to actively collaborate with school districts to forge partnerships (varying from memoranda of understanding to formal affiliation agreements) which address critical issues of governance, finance, teaching and learning, and professional development.

The Association of Teacher Educators and NCATE address these issues in the context of the university supervisor in their recently adopted field experience standards and professional development school standards, respectfully. This partnership is a reality in student teaching only when both partners are continuously involved. There can be no partnership, no continuity, if the university "farms out" its student teachers to the schools without supervision. The supervisor's importance is reflected in the following:

- As a definite link between the university and the school, for the supervisor *is* "the university" for many, and the only identifiable link with the university.
- As the means of providing continuity in teacher education, relating the experience in the field to the experiences in university courses, and by interpreting and integrating overall program objectives with student teaching.
- By linking other field experiences with student teaching.
- By arranging for and accompanying student teachers in other experiences beyond the assigned cooperating teacher's classroom.
- By providing the student teacher a definite identification with the university while serving out in the field.
- By providing the cooperating teacher with in-service training in the areas of supervision, assessment, and professional preparedness.
- As an elevator of student teachers and the student teaching program in relation to the university program.

University supervision is provided for student teachers to make the experience "educational" rather than a matter of "practicing." Although we recognize the vital and extensive role of the cooperating teacher, it is obvious that supervision will be incomplete unless a university supervisor is involved. The university supervisor contributes as:

- A source of demonstrating proficiency for the student teacher when necessary.
- A facilitator for seminar interaction where student teachers benefit from the experiences of others, gaining broader perspectives and avoiding the danger of building their preparation only around the classroom(s) they are assigned.
- An objective evaluator, identifying special needs and opportunities.
- A resource person, introducing suggestions, new ideas, and added resources.
- A means of support and understanding for both cooperating teacher and student teacher.
- The "third person" role, providing objectively and serving as a buffer in periods of tension and difficulty.
- A resource to bring into the student teaching situation the benefits derived from interaction with other college supervisors and cooperating teachers.

The partnership of the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor provides student teachers with the benefits of their professional expertise. The cooperating teacher has expertise in the teaching of a given subject area or grade level; the university supervisor expertise in supervision and pedagogy. Serious modification to the delicate balance of such a valuable partnership would inhibit the degree and quality of professional services to the student teacher.