

Student teachers' and associate teachers' perceptions about their roles

Catherine Lang

“A sample of associate teachers and student teachers involved in the University of Waikato's primary pre-service teacher education programme was surveyed to find out their perceptions of the roles of the other group.”

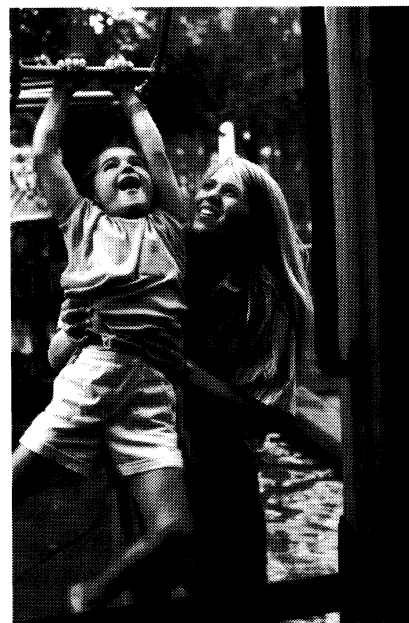
A sample of associate teachers and student teachers involved in the University of Waikato's primary pre-service teacher education programme was surveyed to find out their perceptions of the roles of the other group. Data were collected in March and June/July 2000 from 37 associate teachers and a total of 114 third year student teachers (including 47 Mixed Media Programme distance education student teachers), almost all of whom had recently completed their final practicum.

The student teachers were invited to respond to two questions, namely (1) what they considered to be the characteristics of the 'perfect' associate teacher, and (2) what things they felt associate teachers could help them with that the University couldn't do, or couldn't do as well as an associate teacher. The associate teachers were essentially asked the same two questions, except that in the first they were invited to list the characteristics of the 'perfect' student teacher. Data relating to the second question have not yet been analysed, so this research note focuses on the first question only.

Similarities

For some qualities identified by associates there is a corresponding quality desired by student teachers. Several examples are provided below.

- Associates ask that students present their planning well in advance of teaching. At the same time, the student teachers



ask that associates read their planning and give them feedback.

- Associates ask that student teachers make time to discuss teaching and hear feedback, while the student teachers ask that associates make this time available.
- Student teachers ask to be treated as equals, as colleagues. Associate comments such as student teachers being "...aware of school expectations – they are the professional now, not the pupil" suggest that associates have a similar perception.
- Associates appreciate student teachers who are willing to take risks and try new ideas, while student teachers value associates who allow them to experiment and take risks, that is, associates who do not expect the student teachers to be 'clones' of themselves.



Catherine Lang
School of Education
University of Waikato