PRESERVICE TEACHERS' VIEWS OF SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Submitted by

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Abstract

This is a report of an investigation of aspects of preservice teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning English and mathematics and factors influencing them.

The participants of the investigation were primary preservice teachers from two tertiary institutions of Victoria, one located inner city, and the other in a regional centre. Of the 349 participants, 163 were commencing and 186 were graduating from their degrees.

Preservice teachers completed questionnaires indicating their intentions to use particular practices in their literacy and numeracy lessons. Thirty-one of the 349 surveyed voluntarily discussed key issues arising from the survey during semistructured audiotaped sessions. Five lecturers responsible for the planning of the compulsory English and mathematics education units at both institutions were interviewed about the survey data and provided written documentation for their units as evidence of their coursework.

Data analyses indicated that preservice teachers often considered practices equally appropriate for literacy and numeracy teaching and intended to use them in similar ways. It seemed that preservice teachers enter their degrees with strong opinions about teaching and learning based not only on their recollections of experiences as learners but also from more recent relevant experiences such as their dealings with children as babysitters, tutors, and classroom helpers. They also gained knowledge about teaching contexts from their informal but regular conversations with friends and family who teach.

From the examination of the documentation for coursework and discussions with lecturers, it seemed that the content of the literacy and numeracy education units at the two institutions were similar. Overall, the data indicated that many of the preservice teachers' intentions were consistent with the intent of coursework especially when they described general teaching practices. However, in cases where practices were discipline-specific there were limited changes in preservice teachers' intentions even after completing their courses. The prospective teachers reported that they considered their recent salient experiences of teaching and their observations of teachers' practices in schools more influential than coursework.

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

The thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the relevant Ethics or Safety Committee or authorised officer as appropriate.

Signed November 2005

ANNE L SCOTT

Publications

The following lists the peer-reviewed articles using content contained in thesis published in conference proceedings or journals.

- Scott, A. (2003). Links between beliefs of pre-service teachers about literacy and numeracy learning. In L. Bragg, C. Campbell, G. Herbert & J. Mousley (Eds.), 26th Annual Conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia, Mathematics Education Research: Innovation, Networking, Opportunity (Vol. 1, pp. 152-159). Sydney: MERGA.
- Scott, A. (2005). Preservice teachers intend providing children with good examples and helping to replicate them. In P. Clarkson, A. Downton, D. Gronn, M. Horne, A. McDonough, R. Pierce & A. Roche (Eds.), 28th Annual Conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia, Mathematics Education Research: Building connections: Theory, Research and Practice (Vol. 2, pp. 656-663). Sydney: MERGA.
- Scott, A. (2005 accepted for publication). Preservice teachers' experiences and the influences on their intentions for teaching primary school mathematics. *Mathematics Education Research Journal.*

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