

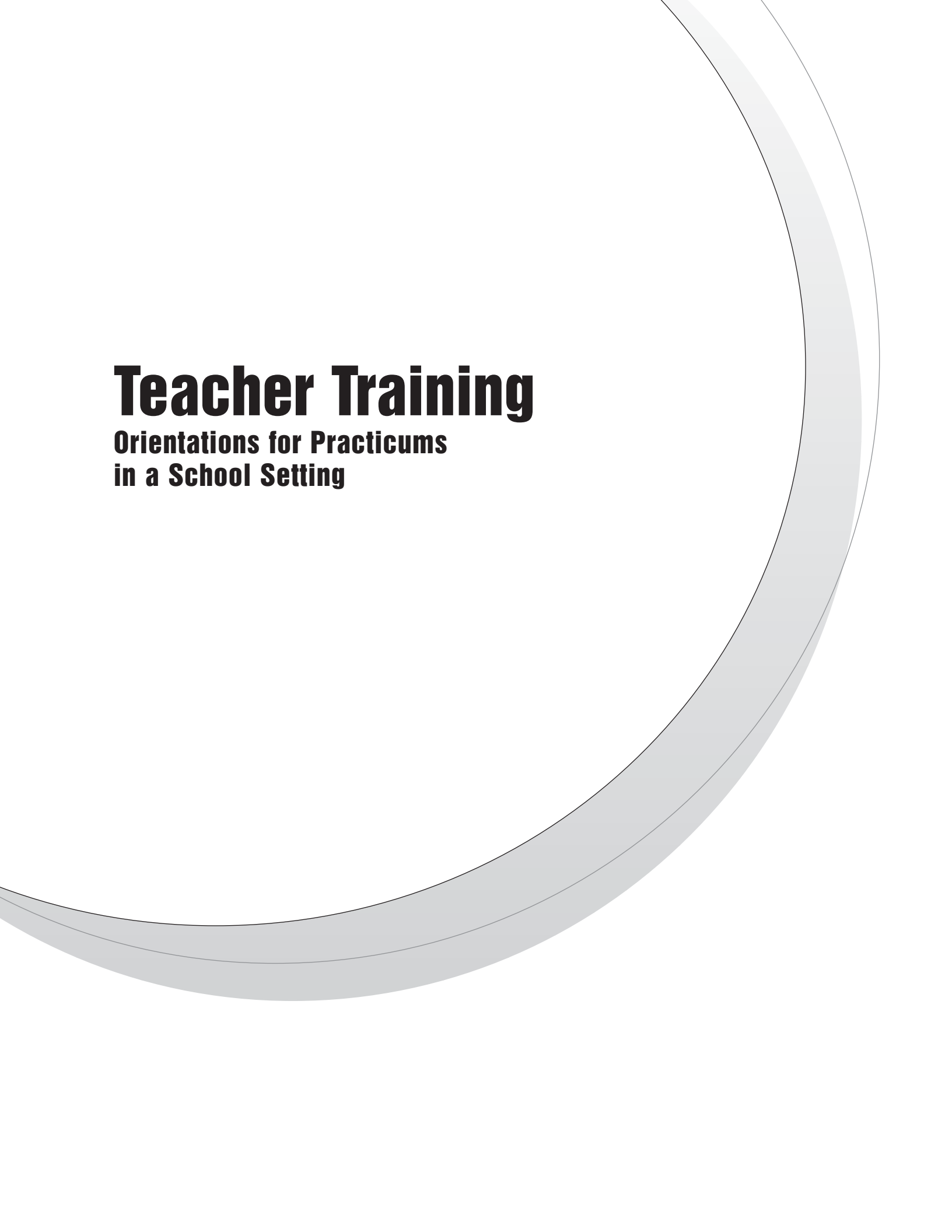
Teacher Training

**Orientations for Practicums
in a School Setting**



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in a School Setting**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	
THE TEACHER TRAINING REFORM	3
CHAPTER 2	
PRACTICUMS IN A SCHOOL SETTING: SITUATION AND GUIDELINES	5
2.1 Training continuum	5
2.2 Pedagogical parameters of practicums in a school setting.....	7
2.2.1 Gradual development of professional autonomy or professional competencies	7
2.2.2 Diversification of experiences	8
2.2.3 Balance between the development of specific competencies and versatility	8
2.3 Organizational parameters of practicums in a school setting.....	9
CHAPTER 3	
MENTORING, SUPERVISING AND EVALUATING STUDENT TEACHERS	11
3.1 The student teacher	12
3.2 The cooperating teacher.....	13
3.2.1 Voluntary involvement	14
3.2.2 Significant teaching experience.....	14
3.2.3 Mastery of professional competencies	15
3.2.4 Appropriate training.....	15
3.2.5 Reflective analysis skills and openness to change	15
3.2.6 Ability to collaborate	15
3.3 The university supervisor	16
3.3.1 Support for student teachers and cooperating teachers.....	16
3.3.2 Observance of the objectives of the practicum	16
3.3.3 Evaluation	17
3.3.4 Liaison between the university and the educational institution.....	17
3.4 The school or centre principal.....	17
3.4.1 Pedagogical leadership	17
3.4.2 Organizational leadership.....	18
3.4.3 Dynamics of the institution.....	18
3.4.4 Evaluation	18
3.5 The school or centre team	19
3.6 Essential collaboration.....	19

CHAPTER 4	
COLLABORATION AMONG THE PARTNERS INVOLVED IN PRACTICAL TEACHER TRAINING	20
4.1 The university	21
4.2 The school board and public and private educational institutions	22
4.3 The Ministère and its regional offices	22
CONCLUSION	23
APPENDIX	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY	26

INTRODUCTION

Developments in scientific and professional knowledge, changes in the labour market, demographic development, new information and communications technologies, the globalization of communications and the emergence of a knowledge-based society are all factors that have led to major reforms of education systems throughout the world.

In Québec, the role of the school and its internal workings were called into question in 1995 with the Estates General on Education, when the orientations of our education system were reviewed in depth. Competency development, i.e. the effective use of resources to perform real-life tasks and activities, became the basis of the school curriculum in Québec.

Thus the role of teachers evolved considerably and grew in importance. Training for what were now referred to as “teaching professionals” was redefined in order to enhance their professional competencies. Today, the education reform is largely based on the participation and collaboration of the school team and, in particular, on teachers’ commitment.

This document, which deals specifically with practical teacher training, is part of the process of professionalizing teacher training. The aim of the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport is to adapt teacher training to the major changes that are still occurring in the school system. The document states principles and orientations that will guide future ministerial action with regard to practical teacher training. Individuals and groups in Québec schools and universities are invited to refer to these orientations in order to improve the mentoring, supervision and evaluation of student teachers.

This text is based on the orientation document on practicums published in 1994¹, which, after more than twelve years, was in need of updating to keep pace with the professional competencies required of teachers today at the end of their teacher training.² The orientations proposed here are based on studies,³ and on a large-scale consultation⁴ held in several stages in 2005 and 2006. Consequently, this document reflects convictions widely held in Québec schools and universities.

This document presents general orientations for all teacher training programs, whether they prepare teachers to teach general education in the youth and adult sectors, or vocational training. However, it must be understood that practical teacher training in vocational training and adult general education, as well as their settings, have characteristics all their own. While respecting the orientations of initial teacher training, it will undoubtedly be necessary, after further study and in conjunction with schools and universities, to develop greater expertise in order to take into account the context in which the practicums take place.

1. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *La formation à l’enseignement: Les stages* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1994).

2. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001) and Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *Teacher Training in Vocational Education: Orientations, Professional Competencies* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001).

3. In particular: Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *Encadrement des stagiaires de la formation à l’enseignement* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002) and Francine Lacroix-Roy, Michel Lessard and Céline Garant, *Étude sur les programmes de formation à l’accompagnement des stagiaires* (Québec: Table MELs-Universités, 2003).

4. A first consultation of major partners involved in practical teacher training (e.g. universities, tables régionales de concertation, CAPFE, COFPE) was launched in April 2005. Then, a validation committee was set up in November 2005. Finally, a province-wide consultation followed in late 2006 and early 2007 (see the Appendix for a list of participants in these consultations).

The following themes are dealt with: the teacher training reform; practicums in a school setting; the mentoring, supervision and evaluation of student teachers; and collaboration between the Ministère and Québec schools and universities. Chapter 1 on the **teacher training reform** reviews the changes that led to the professionalization of teaching and its underlying principles. Chapter 2 on **practicums in a school setting** develops the idea of a training continuum and presents pedagogical and organizational parameters for practicums in a school setting. Chapter 3 on the **mentoring, supervision and evaluation of student teachers** deals with the main players involved: the student teacher, the cooperating teacher,⁵ the university supervisor, the principal and the school or centre team. All of these players must work in collaboration. Chapter 4 on **collaboration** describes the role of the different partners involved in practical teacher training, i.e. universities, educational institutions⁶ and school boards, and the Ministère and its regional offices.

5. Some universities use the term “associate teacher.”

6. “Educational institutions” comprise public- and private-sector elementary and secondary schools, as well as vocational training and adult education centres.

CHAPTER 1

THE TEACHER TRAINING REFORM

In 1992, a teacher training reform initiative,⁷ which, in a way, set the stage for the reform of the entire education system, redefined the rich and complex act of teaching. In 1994, a ministerial orientation document⁸ established a framework for practicums in a school setting for both schools and universities. The results of these efforts included more integrated initial training, an extra year of schooling, competency development and a more important role for practicums in a school setting.

It was only in 2001, however, that teacher training was truly brought into line with the education reform, through the publication of new orientations, a framework of professional competencies and the related exit profiles.⁹ From then on, emphasis was placed on a **cultural approach to teaching**, which not only took the complexity of teaching into account, but also invited teachers to experience a change of professional culture. Now, in carrying out their mandate to instruct, socialize and provide qualifications, teachers are called upon to consider how they give culture the place it is due, act as cultural mediators, and mould young and adult students who are open to a plurality of ideas and able to take a critical look at their own cultural practices. To promote a cultural approach to teaching, teacher training programs should develop a sensitivity to culture, in other words, a sensitivity to their own role and to student teachers. “This sensitivity must be present in all the courses of the teacher training program. This is the challenge posed by an integrated form of teacher training that gives culture the space it is due.”¹⁰

Teacher training is also directed toward the **professionalization of teaching**. With the orientations adopted in 2001, the Ministère chose to emphasize professionalizing training “designed to build an ‘ability to teach,’ in other words a professional culture that integrates knowledge, action outlines, and attitudes.”¹¹ In this framework, student teachers are more than ever seen as professionals who are capable of mobilizing professional knowledge, attitudes and strategies in order to devise realistic solutions, and sharing their expertise with other members of the school or centre team. Professionalization is nothing less than an ongoing process of constructing a socially recognized professional identity.

7. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Faire l'école aujourd'hui et demain: un défi de maître, Renouvellement et valorisation de la profession* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1992).

8. *La formation à l'enseignement: Les stages*.

9. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies and Teacher Training in Vocational Education: Orientations, Professional Competencies*.

10. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies*, p. 38-39.

11. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies*, p. 28.

In this context of culture and professionalization, initial training is considered the first step in a lifelong training process that will enable teachers to acquire **professional competencies**. The competency-based approach to teacher training enables teachers to acquire “an ability to act”¹² based on the mobilization of resources in professional situations. “Generally, a professional competency is applied in a real-life professional setting; follows a progression from simple to complex; is based on a set of resources; is based on the ability to mobilize resources in situations requiring professional action; involves a successful, effective, efficient, recurrent ability to act; is part of intentional practice; and is a project, an ongoing pursuit.”¹³ Thus, practicums in a school setting must reproduce classroom requirements as closely as possible and take teaching practices into account, in particular through the use of reflective analysis.¹⁴

In short, the competency-based approach enables future teachers, in their initial training, to acquire knowledge that will quickly be mobilized and used in a practicum in a school setting.

12. G. Le Boterf, *De la compétence à la navigation professionnelle* (Paris: Éditions d'Organisation, 1997).

13. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies*, p. 43.

14. Reflective analysis is a tool that enables teachers to reflect on their practices and apply the results of their reflection to real-life situations. It also enables teachers to engage in a personal and collective professional development process (*Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies*, p. 114). A portfolio could prove useful in recording the development of professional practices.

CHAPTER 2

PRACTICUMS IN A SCHOOL SETTING: SITUATION AND GUIDELINES

The term “practicums in a school setting” refers to **training in the classroom**, rather than at university. Certain competencies are better developed through practicums, activities in schools, or adult education or vocational training centres, while others are easily developed at university, during courses, seminars or labs. However, competencies are never developed in a single environment, and the university and school settings, like skills and knowledge, are inherently linked. Indeed, the university and the school are both places where “a set of resources can be mobilized in the context of professional action in a competency-based approach.”¹⁵

The text that follows situates practicums in a school setting on the training continuum, then examines related guidelines.

2.1 Training continuum

The 1994 document on ministerial orientations for practicums in a school setting recognized the importance of seeing teacher training as a continuum, in order to achieve professionalization. In a context in which teaching is expected to diversify and evolve, future teachers must be made aware, at the outset of their training, of the need for continuing training (CSE, 2004). Indeed, from initial training along the path to lifelong professional development, a teacher’s academic career is a continuum of distinct stages.

The process begins with **initial training**. In 2001, to ensure quality initial training, the Ministère emphasized the importance of a clear definition of the competencies expected of future teachers, the proper support and supervision, and stringent requirements in terms of oral and written language skills and level of general culture. Initial training must also focus on induction into the profession.¹⁶ To this end, and to develop a high level of professional competency, future teachers undergo integrated initial training. The initial training given in universities is not only theoretical; because it involves practical training, it also concerns professional practices. Practical and more theoretical pedagogical activities should be harmonized in initial training. Future teachers will thus acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills, and develop competencies that they can apply in a real-life professional context.

15. C. Gervais and P. Desrosiers, *L'école, lieu de formation d'enseignants: Questions et repères pour l'accompagnement des stagiaires* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005), p. 16 [free translation].

16. In the case of vocational training, students are usually already teaching at this point.

Practicums in a school setting are an important stage in the continuum, “an essential stage in the professional development of teachers.”¹⁷ A valuable opportunity for learning, practicums in a school setting “provide students with a realistic idea of the workplace and the profession and enable them to gradually develop professional competencies by mobilizing various resources, including knowledge acquired at university and in the classroom.”¹⁸ Here again, both theory and practice come into play.

Practicums in a school setting prepare students for **induction into the profession**, since they enable them to participate fully in the life of the institution (e.g. school and cycle teams, parent-teacher meetings, meetings with company representatives), become familiar with teachers’ working conditions (e.g. legal framework, collective agreement) and learn to work in collaboration with all of the players and partners involved. The aim of practicums in a school setting is to facilitate students’ harmonious induction into the profession and integration into the work force. To this end, it is important to receive new teachers and to provide them with training, mentoring and support.¹⁹

Finally, practicums in a school setting are also part of the larger context of **professional development**. Not only does professional development help teachers consolidate the professional expertise they have acquired, it must also be a concern in initial training, as stated in competencies 11 and 12 of the 2001 Framework, and take effect as soon as teachers enter the profession. At the very beginning of their career, teachers should be able to develop professional strategies, reflect on their practices and implement their personal professional development plan. Since teachers play an important role in the academic success of the young and adult students in their care, we must foster “a professional development culture in schools throughout Québec. Such a culture is essential if educational institutions are to become communities of learners, where school teams are always learning how to help all students learn better.”²⁰ This is all the more reason why professional development should be a concern for the cooperating teachers who receive student teachers in their class.

In short, both initial training and professional development are aimed at developing and maintaining **competent professionals**. Practicums in a school setting are an integral part of this continuum.

17. *La formation à l’enseignement: Les stages*, p. 1 [free translation].

18. *L’école, lieu de formation d’enseignants: Questions et repères pour l’accompagnement des stagiaires*, p. 2 [free translation].

19. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Effective Teachers in Québec: Report by the Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec (Canada) to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2003).

20. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *Orientations for the Professional Development of Teachers: Taking an Active Approach to Change* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1999), p. 3.

2.2 Pedagogical parameters of practicums in a school setting

Over the years, universities, in collaboration with the community, have adopted different and innovative ways of doing things adapted to their particular situation. While all teacher training programs include a minimum of 700 hours of practicums (and the equivalent in vocational training), practices vary in terms of the respective duration of each practicum, their organization and so on. For example, all universities schedule integration activities with their practicums, but the types of activities vary: integration seminars, courses on constructing a professional identity, work force integration activities, etc. The practicums also take different forms from one university to the next: alternation of courses and periods in the classroom, occasional visits to the school or centre over the course of a term or a year, variable intensive periods, different cooperating-teacher/student-teacher ratios (e.g. one cooperating teacher or a team of cooperating teachers for each student teacher, pairing of student teachers).

The Ministère believes that the use of a variety of organizational practices leads to innovation and should be encouraged. Nevertheless, in both schools and universities, there must be pedagogical and administrative guidelines for practicums in a school setting.

2.2.1 Gradual development of professional autonomy or professional competencies

According to the Ministère, it is important to respect the principle of progression in the practicums. Distinct practicums with specific objectives make it possible to evaluate the progress of the student teacher toward greater professional autonomy, a principle held by both education faculties and departments and the school system. In vocational training, where many student teachers are already responsible for a class and have acquired professional autonomy, the logical progression of practicums focuses more on the gradual development of professional competencies.

Generally speaking, the path to professional autonomy involves a first experience in a school setting,²¹ a sort of initiation period in which student teachers explore, observe and adapt to the classroom setting. In the following stages, they gradually determine how much leeway they have, develop their reflective analysis skills, and interact with other teachers and complementary student services staff. They become familiar with the frameworks and the Québec Education Program and gradually take charge of the class. Little by little, interacting with the school team, they develop their professional identity, adjust to the conditions at the school, take into account the available resources, discuss their strategies, and take increasing charge of the class. In their final practicum, the student teachers take full charge of the class, and may become involved in group projects, showing more and more creativity.

21. Based on J. Morin and J.-C. Brief, “Les stages: pratique de la profession ou profession de la pratique?” in Gérald Boutin (ed.), *Formation pratique des enseignants et partenariat: état des lieux et prospective* (Montréal: Éditions nouvelles, 2002).

Several models of the progression of practicums are used in different universities. They enable student teachers to become more and more involved as they progress in their training.

2.2.2 Diversification of experiences

“Since the characteristics of teaching differ significantly depending on the socio-economic community, the urban or rural setting, the region and the sector (public or private), universities must be more open to the diversification of future teachers’ experiences.”²² The Ministère believes that practicums in a school setting should enable student teachers to diversify their experiences as much as possible²³ and prepare them as much as possible to work in different socioeconomic and multi-ethnic communities and with different clientele, in particular with students with learning or adjustment difficulties in integrated classes. Practicums are a good opportunity to experiment with pedagogical differentiation, the aim of which is to foster the success of young and adult students.

Practicums in a school setting must therefore foster the exploration of varied learning contexts, in accordance with the framework of competencies and exit profiles. Thus, practical teacher training for preschool and elementary school must take place in preschool and all three cycles of elementary school. At the secondary level, practicums must take place in both cycles and, for some exit profiles (bachelor of secondary education, language of instruction and mathematics profile, and special education, secondary profile), they must introduce student teachers to the adult sector. In specialty programs (second language, physical education, art), practicums must take place in both elementary and secondary schools. In vocational training, practicums in a school setting must enable student teachers to explore the different facets of teaching a given trade or occupation, i.e. teaching in the classroom, the workshops and the workplace.

2.2.3 Balance between the development of specific competencies and versatility

Future teachers must develop a variety of competencies enabling them to carry out different professional activities related to teaching. To do so, they must receive general purpose professional training, in other words, training that enables them to develop “various competencies that allow them to perform a variety of duties and tasks and take charge of complex professional situations.”²⁴

22. Comité-conseil sur la formation du personnel enseignant, *La formation en milieu de pratique: De nouveaux horizons à explorer, Avis complémentaire* (Québec, 2006), p. 20 [free translation].

23. The distribution of vocational training programs throughout the province makes it difficult to diversify practicum settings, since it is likely that only one vocational training centre will offer a given program. However, in the case of programs with a sister program at the college level, the CAPFE has authorized practicums in a college setting. The Ministère approves of this authorization, which is aimed at harmonizing vocational and technical training programs.

24. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies*, p. 25.

Indeed, the teaching profession demands significant adaptation of educational practices depending on the needs and characteristics of the young or adult students. That is why practicums must help student teachers develop versatility, encouraging them to explore different realities and work with different clientele, a reality they must face once they are inducted into the teaching profession.

However, general purpose training should not result in the dispersion of practicum activities. There must be a certain balance between versatility and the development of professional expertise, as well as between the exploration of different realities and the achievement of the appropriate level of development of the professional competencies expected at the end of the training program. In this respect, the frameworks of professional competencies and the exit profiles are the basis for the development of teacher training programs and for the implementation of practicums in the different education faculties.

2.3 Organizational parameters of practicums in a school setting

All of these pedagogical parameters have an impact on the organization of practicums and the mechanisms for offering practicum opportunities. It is up to the universities, in collaboration with the schools, to develop, test and evaluate different practicum formats and different ways of mentoring student teachers in order to prepare them for the teaching profession. It is also up to the universities to find the most appropriate ways of organizing practicums.

Intent on providing quality support and supervision, the Ministère believes that “it is important to examine, among other things, the range of activities, organization and supervision models and placement venues that will help to ensure that all future teachers receive practical training.”²⁵ Possibilities include supervision by a team of teachers, various forms of mentoring and doing practicums according to two different methods.²⁶ Information and communications technologies can also give rise to new types of mentoring that meet the requirements of quality supervision, even in remote areas.

The Ministère also believes that it is possible for student teachers at the elementary and secondary level to do practicums outside Québec, provided that the appropriate mentoring is available and that the practicum targets the development of relevant professional competencies. However, this enriching experience should not take place too early in the training process, at least not before the student has consolidated his or her professional choice. Neither should it be the final practicum, attesting to the student teacher’s successful development of the competencies needed to teach and leading to a permanent teaching licence in Québec.

25. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies*, p. 25.

26. Comité d’orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant, *Internship Practicums in School Settings: New Horizons to Explore* (Québec, 2005), p. 14.

Finally, the Ministère recognizes remunerated practicums. For example, in the case of accelerated training paths (bridges), practicums have enabled holders of a bachelor's degree in a subject area who are employed to qualify to teach while completing their teacher training. Similarly, special models enable vocational training teachers to enroll in teacher training using the appropriate mentoring and a training path adapted to the reality of the sector. The Ministère believes that remunerated practicums can be profitable insofar as they meet pedagogical needs and not purely administrative considerations.

CHAPTER 3

MENTORING, SUPERVISING AND EVALUATING STUDENT TEACHERS

Before examining the respective roles of the main players involved in practical teacher training, consider the following definitions of “mentoring,” “supervision” and “evaluation.”

Mentoring involves contributing actively to the student teacher’s training in order to provide him or her with every possible opportunity to achieve personal and professional development. It is aimed at helping student teachers develop autonomy by encouraging them to assume professional responsibilities and engage in a professional development process.

Supervision is a process in which a person supports, supervises and guides students engaged in learning a trade, occupation or profession. Certain conditions are necessary for proper supervision: knowledge and understanding of the training objectives, quality training, quality feedback, clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the trainer and the learner, and close collaboration of the players involved.

Evaluation involves observing and assessing the level of development of student teachers’ professional competencies. The evaluation tools must guide the different players (student teachers, cooperating teachers, university supervisors and, sometimes, school or centre principals) in their assessment of the future teachers’ professional competencies in the context of a given practicum. An accurate evaluation of the student teachers’ level of competency development requires the cooperation of all the trainers involved. This means that all the players, in their specific fields of expertise, must have a shared understanding of the professional competencies expected of new teachers.

Evaluation takes into account several human factors. It must take place in a mentoring context, i.e. in a context in which student teachers have an opportunity to experiment and take certain risks, in increasingly complex practical teaching situations. In order to determine the progress of their learning, student teachers must be evaluated correctly. Their level of competency development at the end of each practicum must be recorded and made known to the school. This is the responsibility of each university, in accordance with its own evaluation methods and objectives.

The evaluation process is part of the professionalization of teaching and the accountability of the student teacher for his or her training. It is not a question of merely verifying the level of development of each competency, but of ensuring that evaluation becomes a professional development tool, in particular by getting student teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. Finally, the evaluation

process involves a “certification” component that education faculties and departments must assume by taking into account the opinions of the different players involved in practical teacher training.

3.1 The student teacher

In the context of practical teacher training, student teachers contribute to the educational mission of the school or centre. They are not merely learning; they are also contributing to the school’s educational project. Especially in the context of the education reform, student teachers can also share innovative teaching approaches with their cooperating teachers. They participate in pedagogical, union and social activities, and may join different committees, giving them an opportunity to work with other educators, creating forums for learning, exchanges and discussion with members of the community of practice. All of these experiences and learning activities should be seen as opportunities to develop professional competencies and, consequently, should be discussed and evaluated with the supervisor and the cooperating teacher.

While the contribution of student teachers is an asset for the school or centre, they are, to varying degrees and depending on the training program and the terms of the practicum, **acquiring professional autonomy**. They must be given the opportunity to question themselves, integrate their knowledge, apply and validate theoretical knowledge, and adjust. They are gradually called upon to become proactive by planning activities and developing strategies.²⁷ In their quest for autonomy and professional competencies, student teachers must set guidelines to help themselves progress. They should take advantage of the fact that they can build relationships with other student teachers at the university, school or centre,²⁸ as well as with teachers and other professionals at the institution, the school or centre principal, parents, other institutions or companies in the case of vocational training, etc. They need to be mentored throughout the process of constructing their professional identity.

However, **student teachers are the main players in their training**. Certain conditions, including their commitment, can ensure a successful experience in a school setting. It is therefore important that they invest in their practicum and prepare for it by learning its objectives. To this end, the cooperating teacher should be informed of the challenges to be met by the student teacher and his or her needs depending on where the practicum fits in the training program.²⁹

27. “Les stages: pratique de la profession ou profession de la pratique?”

28. The proliferation of teaching Web sites, newsgroups and other virtual forums is very conducive to professional development, thanks to edumentoring, cyber-mentoring and blogs. See <http://www.insertion.qc.ca/>.

29. See Joanne Pharand and Paul Boudreault, “L’accompagnement par les enseignants associés: les compétences attendues des stagiaires,” in *Accompagnement des stagiaires en enseignement: Le défi de la concertation*, proceedings of the AFORME symposium, held May 11, 12 and 13, 2006, at Université du Québec en Outaouais, p. 86.

In a reflective process, student teachers must be encouraged to interact as much as possible with their cooperating teacher, especially with a view to getting them to verbalize their pedagogical and didactic aims and to find solutions to problems raised. All this contributes to the accountability of student teachers and their gradual development of professional autonomy, or competencies in the case of vocational training. Various activities (e.g. practicum seminars, self-evaluation, formative evaluation) encourage student teachers to assess situations and their teaching. Thus, teacher training graduates must be encouraged to take a stand, defend their ideas and respectfully present coherent, effective and constructive arguments based on their psychopedagogical and didactic knowledge. “To attain this objective, students should be given numerous opportunities to debate and exchange ideas, both in the university setting and during practicums.”³⁰

The Ministère is entitled to expect student teachers to demonstrate a high degree of professional ethics and judgment,³¹ which must be set out in a code or rules of ethics developed by the education faculties and departments. The universities should make these types of documents available to school boards and educational institutions that offer practicum placements.

3.2 The cooperating teacher

Section 22, paragraph 6.1 of the *Education Act* stipulates that teachers must collaborate in the training of future teachers and in the mentoring of newly qualified teachers. Similarly, Appendix XLIII of the 2006 provincial agreement states that “teachers agree to support and supervise student teachers, thereby contributing to the training of future teachers. This function is recognized and valued as an individual contribution to the collective responsibility of all members of the profession with respect to the next generation of teachers.”³²

Cooperating teachers are responsible for providing student teachers with mentoring and supervision. They help them adapt to their new setting and their actions are based on critical and constructive communication in the form of feedback.³³ Cooperating teachers must respectfully mentor student teachers and allow them to discover their own style and develop reflective abilities. They must support them in the development of their professional competencies.³⁴ In this sense, they help student teachers mobilize the resources acquired at university and apply

30. Comité d'orientation sur la formation du personnel enseignant, *Establishing a Common Understanding of the Ethical Dimensions of the Teaching Profession* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004), p. 30.

31. See *Establishing a Common Understanding of the Ethical Dimensions of the Teaching Profession* and M-P. Desaulniers and F. Jutras, *L'éthique professionnelle en enseignement: Fondements et pratiques* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2006).

32. Comité patronal de négociation pour les commissions scolaires francophones (CPNCF), *Dispositions liant d'une part, le Comité patronal de négociation pour les commissions scolaires francophones (CPNCF) et d'autre part, la Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) pour le compte des syndicats d'enseignantes et d'enseignants qu'elle représente dans le cadre de la Loi sur le régime de négociation des conventions collectives dans le secteur public et parapublic* (R.S.Q., c. R-8.2) [free translation].

33. G. Boutin and L. Camaraine, *Accueillir et encadrer un stagiaire: Guide pratique à l'usage de l'enseignant formateur* (Montréal: Éditions nouvelles, 2001).

34. L. Portelance and C. Lebel, *Programme de formation des enseignants associés: Orientations et référentiel de compétences* (Trois-Rivières: Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, 2004).

them appropriately; they also help them learn to collaborate with the school or centre team. They participate actively in the evaluation of student teachers by providing feedback on activities and by assessing their teaching competencies.

In vocational training, education consultants can provide mentoring for student teachers. They may be faced with industrial and technological changes in the trade or occupation taught and have to supervise student teachers who are more in tune with these developments than they are themselves. In addition, student teachers and cooperating teachers are often colleagues. All of these characteristics require the development of a relationship between equals, in which student teachers can develop their own learning strategies and professional competencies, and in which mentors can update their training in the trade or occupation. This situation illustrates that practicums in a school setting are a unique opportunity for professional development, both for student teachers and their mentors.

Generally speaking, playing this role requires that cooperating teachers themselves have certain professional competencies, recognized expertise and particular personal qualities, such as the ability to communicate and the desire to share and lead others in discovery. In this respect, it is a good idea to establish a profile for determining the eligibility of cooperating teachers.³⁵

3.2.1 Voluntary involvement

Teachers must be free to volunteer to mentor student teachers. It would be useless to impose a task that requires such commitment.

3.2.2 Significant teaching experience

Being a qualified teacher and possessing significant teaching experience are essential criteria for mentoring student teachers. In 1994, the minimum number of years of experience was set at five, a condition which became difficult to respect in certain schools. While five years' experience is still desirable, schools and universities are responsible for ensuring that new cooperating teachers are capable of carrying out their duties competently and effectively. To relax the rule while ensuring the desired rigour, new cooperating teachers could, for example, be paired with other, more experienced cooperating teachers in a context of peer training.

³⁵It is to this end that the Ministère asked the Comité-conseil sur la formation du personnel enseignant (CCFPE) to pursue its study of practicums in a school setting begun in 2005 and, in particular, to consider the criteria for selecting cooperating teachers. The CCFPE published its brief in 2006.

3.2.3 **Mastery of professional competencies**

Cooperating teachers must have developed “competencies recognized by their institution, in pedagogy, in the teaching content and in the instructional skills related to that content.”³⁶ In this respect, familiarity with the orientations and the framework for competencies is indispensable for all players involved in practical teacher training, first and foremost for cooperating teachers and university supervisors, but also for school and centre principals, who are responsible for recognizing and evaluating the professional competencies of the cooperating teachers they select.

3.2.4 **Appropriate training**

Cooperating teachers must have the appropriate training. That is why the Ministère provides funding to enable cooperating teachers to provide student teachers with the appropriate support and supervision.³⁷ This funding, a large part of which should be set aside to provide training for cooperating teachers, is the best guarantee of appropriate support and supervision. The players involved in practical teacher training should therefore ensure that the funds are used for their intended purpose, i.e. training cooperating teachers and recognizing their contribution.

3.2.5 **Reflective analysis skills and openness to change**

Cooperating teachers’ observation and reflective analysis skills are professional competencies that will help them provide student teachers with the appropriate feedback. These competencies are well defined in the framework for teacher training³⁸ and its counterpart for vocational training.³⁹ More than teachers in general, cooperating teachers must demonstrate openness to change and support student teachers in carrying out innovative pedagogical projects.

3.2.6 **Ability to collaborate**

Cooperating teachers should demonstrate team spirit and sensitivity to life in the institution, especially since the education reform fosters the development of a community of practice, work in cycle teams and the pedagogical involvement of the school or centre team.

36. *La formation à l’enseignement: Les stages*, p. 12 [free translation].

37. *Encadrement des stagiaires de la formation à l’enseignement: Rapport d’évaluation de programme*.

38. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies*.

39. *Teacher Training in Vocational Education: Orientations, Professional Competencies*.

In short, to play the demanding role of mentor, cooperating teachers must be qualified, competent in their field, experienced and well trained. They must also demonstrate cooperative and creative skills. They must have critical judgment and reflective analysis skills, and must be up to date on the education reform. They must be able to give concrete meaning to the cultural approach to teaching.

Cooperating teachers must demonstrate a high degree of professional ethics and competencies by virtue of their familiarity with the orientations for teacher training, the main ministerial policies and the Québec Education Program. By agreeing to mentor student teachers, they become key partners in practical teacher training, in a word, co-trainers. In this respect, the higher the requirements, the more the position will be valued by those who fill it.

3.3 The university supervisor

Another key player in the supervision and evaluation of student teachers, the university supervisor is a resource person for both student teachers and cooperating teachers, sometimes playing the role of mediator between the two.⁴⁰ More specifically, the duties of the university supervisor comprise different aspects related to support, supervision and evaluation.

3.3.1 Support for student teachers and cooperating teachers

University supervisors must identify student teachers' needs and help them find ways of meeting them. They take a critical and constructive look at student teachers' actions with respect to the professional competencies to be developed. University supervisors are also responsible for helping student teachers analyze their experience in the school setting. They must encourage student teachers to mobilize the aptitudes and knowledge acquired in their training to construct the expected professional competencies.

3.3.2 Observance of the objectives of the practicum

University supervisors make sure that practicums are consistent with the training objectives and the practicum plan. They also make sure that student teachers understand and fill the different requirements of the practicum (e.g. logbook or guide, projects, reports, observation sheets). They participate in related activities, meet with student teachers and cooperating teachers and moderate discussions. They visit the institution as set out in the practicum plan or guide. These visits are essential, since they provide the cooperating teacher with support, reassurance and stimulate the student teacher, and give the supervisor a better understanding of the context of the practicum.

40. *L'école, lieu de formation d'enseignants: Questions et repères pour l'accompagnement des stagiaires.*

3.3.3 Evaluation

University supervisors, along with cooperating teachers, play a key role in evaluation: they provide feedback on the planning and implementation of activities during the practicum, and evaluate and certify the progress and teaching competencies of student teachers.

3.3.4 Liaison between the university and the educational institution

The university supervisor is the liaison between the university and the educational institution, since he or she “plays several roles and sees the cooperating teacher as a co-trainer.”⁴¹ Consequently, supervisors must themselves have access to training activities. Careful attention must be paid to the level of competency of university supervisors. Like cooperating teachers, university supervisors must be familiar with the Québec Education Program, the main ministerial policies and the orientations for teacher training. They must also be aware of the aims of the teacher training programs in which they are participating. For example, for all supervisors, the framework of competencies should constitute an indispensable tool for supervising and evaluating student teachers. Supervisors must be made aware of the importance of the optimal development of each of the professional competencies and be able to discuss their expectations of student teachers with the cooperating teachers.

3.4 The school or centre principal

3.4.1 Pedagogical leadership

The education reform has given school and adult education and vocational training centre principals a larger role to play, at both the pedagogical and organizational levels. As the people responsible for the quality of educational services provided in their institution and for the academic success of young and adult students, principals play a leadership role. They open their doors to universities by receiving student teachers and by encouraging collaborative and action research projects with cooperating teachers and student teachers. They also encourage cooperating teachers to engage in a professional development process, in particular with respect to their role as mentors for student teachers. In this respect, principals recognize the role of cooperating teachers as well as the contribution of practicum activities to all aspects of school life.

41. Colette Gervais, “Accompagnement des stagiaires: un travail en concertation?,” in *Accompagnement des stagiaires en enseignement: Le défi de la concertation*, proceedings of the AFORME symposium, held May 11, 12 and 13, 2006, at Université du Québec en Outaouais, p. 105 [free translation].

3.4.2 Organizational leadership

At the organizational level, school and centre principals establish guidelines concerning the number of student teachers their institution can take in. They report on the practicums to the school board and the university, and apply the memorandum of understanding reached by the two parties. They supervise and coordinate everything concerning the services offered, supply teachers for training activities and communication with the university. It is therefore to their advantage to participate in the development of selection criteria. They promote practicums in a school setting among staff members, emphasize the importance of taking on the responsibility, concretely recognize the contribution of cooperating teachers and give the position a high profile.

3.4.3 Dynamics of the institution

School and centre principals play an essential pedagogical role with respect to the dynamics of the institution. They see to it that student teachers are received and integrated and, if they are new to the institution, introduce them to its educational project and values.⁴² They state their expectations and seek the collaboration of the entire school or centre team in the mentoring process. They also notify the governing board or its equivalent of the presence of student teachers in the institution.

3.4.4 Evaluation

School and centre principals may also play a role in the evaluation of student teachers, particularly for the final practicum in elementary education, secondary general education and vocational training. This evaluation involves aspects other than those observed by the cooperating teachers: student teachers' involvement in the institution, communication with parents or the community, etc. They work alternately with the student teachers and the cooperating teachers, and sometimes with the university supervisors or coordinators. In short, principals engage in observation, consultation and sometimes problem solving. Finally, they play a definite role in mobilizing the teaching team to participate in training the next generation of teachers.

⁴². *L'école, lieu de formation d'enseignants: Questions et repères pour l'accompagnement des stagiaires.*

3.5 The school or centre team⁴³

The school or centre team receives and helps integrate student teachers. With the education reform, which encourages all members of the school or centre team, including complementary services staff, to work in close collaboration, the school or centre team provides a forum for professional discussion that is both reassuring and stimulating for student teachers. In the context of the renewal and recruitment of the teaching staff, the enthusiasm of school or centre teams, with respect to both student teachers and cooperating teachers, contributes significantly to receiving and integrating the next generation of teachers.

3.6 Essential collaboration

With respect to the role played by all the players involved in practical teacher training, it is important to “build a cooperative relationship between those mentoring the student teachers. A relationship, according to Y. St-Arnaud (2003), which never exists at the outset and which requires that the partners recognize each others’ competencies, share their authority and cooperate.”⁴⁴

43. In some institutions, especially in vocational training centres, teams are broken down by department or workshop. In such cases, these teams play the role of the school or centre team.

44. “Accompagnement des stagiaires: un travail en concertation?,” p. 105 [free translation].

CHAPTER 4

COLLABORATION AMONG THE PARTNERS INVOLVED IN PRACTICAL TEACHER TRAINING

The successful training of future teachers, and in particular the success of practicums in a school setting, is based on close collaboration among all partners involved: universities, school boards, public and private educational institutions and the Ministère. This collaboration goes beyond mere organizational considerations. It is pedagogical in nature and its purpose is to set up an appropriate mechanism for ensuring the quality support and supervision of student teachers.

A dynamic partnership requires a clear definition of the roles and functions of those responsible for the pedagogical and administrative organization of practicums, the recognition of the competencies and resources of each player, the establishment of shared objectives, and a shared understanding of the mission to be carried out based on their respective jurisdictions. Such a framework ensures the establishment of a trusting relationship among the players, which facilitates communication and mutual recognition. This partnership structure should constitute a veritable coordination mechanism that goes beyond a mere administrative agreement.

Two factors are necessary for such a collaborative partnership: recognition and respect for each partner's expertise, and the conviction that, in a spirit of collaboration, each partner shares the responsibility for training future teachers. The partnership must therefore exist at every decision-making level, whether provincial, regional or local. It may take various forms, in order to meet the particular needs of the institution and to ensure quality supervision and training of student teachers.

This is why the tables régionales de concertation should solicit the contribution of every player involved in practical teacher training: representatives of school boards and private schools, teachers' unions or representatives, universities and the Ministère. These players are responsible for voicing the concerns of general education in the youth and adult sectors, vocational training, the universities and the Ministère. The tables régionales should agree on the best way of managing practicums, including the placement of student teachers and the administration of funds earmarked for their support and supervision.

The tables régionales are also responsible for negotiating memorandums of understanding⁴⁵ between the educational institution and the university, including communication channels and the mandates and roles of each partner. Since the creation of these coordination mechanisms, simpler and more effective management of practicums in a school setting has resulted in a cooperative atmosphere that is more conducive to receiving student teachers.

45. "A memorandum of understanding between the university and the educational institution should clearly state the responsibilities and functions of the parties in the area of administration of practicums in a spirit of true partnership, in order to provide proper medium- and long-term planning of the supervision of practicums." *Internship Practicums in School Settings: New Horizons to Explore*, p. 12.

Increasingly, the tables régionales de concertation must meet organizational and pedagogical challenges that go beyond practicums in a school setting. These include the sometimes difficult recruitment of teachers, the induction of the next generation of teachers into the profession, the professional development of the school or centre team, and the impact of the special education policy and complementary services on teaching practices.

The impact of closer cooperation between the parties is obvious: the university improves its integration of the different components of teacher training, thereby ensuring its professionalization, as well as its basis in concrete situations in the classroom or workshop; and the educational institution adapts to practicums whose components are based on the development of a set of competencies. This cooperation between the partners is an essential condition for the proper organizational and pedagogical management of practicums in a school setting.

4.1 The university

The role of the university in this partnership can take different forms. The university may set up one or more coordinating mechanisms, bringing together the partners involved in practical teacher training. Also, in collaboration with the educational institution, it develops and periodically updates the memorandum of understanding governing the supervision of practicums in a school setting. It must recognize the role of cooperating teachers in the training of student teachers, and provide support for their own training. In cooperation with the educational institution, the university, usually through its practicum office, sees to it that each student teacher benefits from a practicum placement in an educational institution and that a series of practicums enables each one to develop the professional competencies expected, given the exit profiles of the various training programs. Consequently, the university participates fully in the growth of a professional culture of teaching, since it is responsible for the training of cooperating teachers.

More specifically, as the organization responsible for initial training, the university ensures the integration of the four components of training: subject-related, didactic, pedagogical and practical. On the one hand, it offers the supervisors the training they need to supervise practicums, and it coordinates their actions to ensure the fair treatment of all student teachers. On the other hand, the university recognizes the educational institution, and the cooperating teachers in particular, as co-trainers and essential collaborators in teacher training. In recent years, considerable effort has been expended in this area.⁴⁶ Consider the development of curricula in partnership with the educational institution, the implementation of action research projects, the hiring of practitioners as guest professors in the faculties, the organization of cooperating teacher training, etc. These mechanisms must be continually re-evaluated and updated so that the university can build a permanent partnership with the school system.

46. *Formation pratique des enseignants et partenariat: État des lieux et prospective*, p. 240.

4.2 The school board and public and private educational institutions

For practicums in a school setting, the school board should facilitate the mentoring of teachers and the circulation of information. It has a permanent responsibility in the supervision of practicums, which it shares with its educational institutions, in conjunction with the university. The school board should appoint a person responsible for coordinating practicum supervision, signing a memorandum of understanding with the university, implementing an administrative and pedagogical support structure, and participating in university research on teacher training. At the administrative and organizational levels, the school board or private educational institution ensures that the amounts allocated to the supervision of student teachers are used for the training of cooperating teachers and the recognition of their commitment to the teaching profession.

The school or adult education or vocational training centre answers to the school board and the university, and is a key partner in the practical training of student teachers. The educational institution applies the memorandum of understanding between the two parties and sees to the optimal use of the resources available for the support and supervision of student teachers, on a daily basis. The same is true for private educational institutions, which have the same sort of relationship with the universities. Consequently, the role of the institution is vital to the successful collaboration of the partners involved in practicums in a school setting.

4.3 The Ministère and its regional offices

The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport plays a leadership role in practical teacher training. In addition to establishing the orientations for teacher training, it is responsible for setting up the Table MELS-Universités.

Its regional offices set up tables régionales de concertation with representatives of the universities and educational institutions. They play a strategic role in ensuring funding for practicums in a school setting in order to support the training of cooperating teachers, recognize their contribution to the training of the next generation of teachers and promote the mentoring of student teachers in the school or centre.

Cooperation among the partners enables the Ministère to ensure that actions taken by the universities and educational institutions are consistent with the official orientations. Emphasizing dialogue, this cooperation makes it possible to develop a collective vision of practical teacher training, a vision that ensures that the competency-based approach to teacher training prevails throughout the training process.

CONCLUSION

As it made clear in its 2001 orientations,⁴⁷ the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport wishes to ensure that future teachers have the basic professional competencies they need to teach, while respecting the roles and responsibilities of its partners. Consequently, this document is largely based on the consultations and symposiums held in recent years, on two briefs on practicums in a school setting⁴⁸ and university studies on the topic.

This document, which is intended as a complement to the ministerial orientations for teacher training already published, is not exhaustive. It contains the major guidelines for practical teacher training for educational institutions and universities. While certain aspects require further study, particularly in vocational training, it is important to ensure, in every program, that the practical training component be in touch with the reality of the educational institutions, that it be integrated and anchored in the school setting, and that it be consistent with a cultural approach to teaching and the professional nature of the training that fosters the full development of the professional competencies expected of future teachers.

During their time in a school setting, student teachers are introduced to the professional challenges inherent in the Québec school system and must be prepared to meet them. Thanks to the supervision, mentoring and training they have received, they will have developed the professional competencies they need to contribute to the academic and educational success of the groups of young and adult students in their care.

Choosing to be a teacher requires engaging in a training continuum that ranges from initial training to lifetime professional development. As an integral part of the initial training programs, practicums in a school setting enable student teachers to participate fully in the life of the institution. This valuable learning opportunity prepares student teachers for induction into the profession. Future teachers are engaged in a professional development process aimed at the lifetime development of professional competencies.

This collective vision of practical teacher training must be shared by all of the partners involved: cooperating teachers, university supervisors, principals, school or centre teams and, of course, student teachers. The pedagogical and administrative organization of practicums requires cooperation among universities and educational institutions, which the Ministère encourages, since “it is crucial that all players have the same aims and objectives”⁴⁹ for the development of a collective vision of practicums in a school setting based on the professionalization of teaching.

47. *Teacher Training: Orientations, Professional Competencies and Teacher Training in Vocational Education: Orientations, Professional Competencies*.

48. *Internship Practicums in School Settings: New Horizons to Explore and La formation en milieu de pratique: De nouveaux horizons à explorer, Avis complémentaire*.

49. Thérèse Laferrière, cited in *Accompagnement des stagiaires en enseignement: Le défi de la concertation*, proceedings of the AFORME symposium, held May 11, 12 and 13, 2006, at Université du Québec en Outaouais [free translation].

APPENDIX

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