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Title: Mediating Occupational Socialization and Occupational Individuation in Teacher Education: A Multiple Case Study of Five Elementary Pre-service Student Teachers

This multiple case study examines how five elementary pre-service student teachers (EPSTs) at Midwestern University mediate occupational socialization with what this study has termed “occupational individuation.” Occupational socialization (which suggests how a person becomes a participating member of a profession) and occupational individuation (implying how a person develops and individuates himself or herself in a profession) appear to have distinctly important, yet often contrary, aims and objectives. Using in-depth, qualitative data collection (including formal and informal interviews with student teachers and their mentors, classroom observations, field notes, and written artifacts) and case study analysis, this study analytically portrays the experiences of these five EPSTs as they traverse the fifteen-week student teaching phase of their teacher education program, specifically examining how these EPSTs mediate the potential tensions associated with their occupational socialization and individuation. The study further explores the psychosocial dynamics and processes that occur as these student teachers develop into practicing teachers in today’s school contexts. Findings show that these EPSTs apply five distinct strategies in their attempt to mediate occupational socialization and occupational individuation, including: 1) masquerading, 2) mimicking, 3) rebelling, 4) asserting, and 5) integrating. In addition, findings show that there are certain psychosocial conditions that appear to aid these EPSTs in their adjustment phase. These include: feeling a part of a professional “team,” having one’s professional opinion sought, developing one’s own support system, having a supervising teacher who approaches mentoring from an asset-based approach, and experiencing a balanced sense of internal and external locus of control. This research further analyzes the implications of these findings and offers recommendations to educational policymakers, teacher education instructors, and teacher education coordinators and mentors for ways to support further student teachers.