

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 253 536

SP 025 975

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 TITLE The University of Kansas Extended Teacher Education Program.
 SPONS AGENCY National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education (ED), Washington, DC.
 PUB DATE 84
 NOTE 20p.; For the Commission Final Report, see ED 252 525. For other related documents, see ED 250 287-317, SP 025 976-980, and SP 026 023.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Cooperative Planning; Core Curriculum; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Program Development; *Program Implementation; *Program Length; Schools of Education; State Standards; *Teacher Education Programs
 IDENTIFIERS *Extended Degree Programs; National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Educ

ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1981 the School of Education at the University of Kansas announced that students matriculating subsequent to that date would have to meet the requirements of a new teacher education program of 162 hours spread over five academic years. The decision to initiate an extended teacher education program culminated several years of planning by faculty in the School, faculty from other parts of the University, and colleagues from school districts in northeast Kansas. This paper chronicles the history of the School's decision, describes the major features of the new program, and reports some highlights of the four years of program implementation. In addition, the relationship of the new program to statewide reform activities is noted. (Auth/JD)

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The University of Kansas Extended Teacher Education Program

submitted to

The National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education

Fall, 1984

Dale Scanrell

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In the spring of 1981 the School of Education at the University of Kansas announced that students matriculating subsequent to that date would have to meet the requirements of a new teacher education program of 162 hours spread over five academic years. The announcement also noted that the then-existing four-year program would be phased out as the sophomores of 1981 completed their programs. The decision to initiate an extended teacher education program culminated several years of planning by faculty in the School, faculty from other parts of the University and colleagues from school districts in northeast Kansas.

This paper will chronicle briefly the history of the School's decision, describe the major features of the new program, and report some highlights of the four years of program implementation. In addition, the relationship of our new program to statewide reform activities will be noted.

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The Decision Process

During the 1970s the faculty of the School engaged in a self-study with the major goal of developing short, long-range plans for the future of the School. In current parlance the activities would be called strategic planning. The study focused on three sets of factors: the characteristics of the faculty of the School,

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the students, and the institution; the emerging literature on teacher education; and, the state and national trends in education impinging on the School. The study was premised on the belief that the programs and activities of the School should draw on the strengths and interests of faculty and should respond effectively to the state and national needs encompassed by the institutional mission. Although decisions affecting a variety of School activities resulted from the self-study, this paper will concentrate on the decisions affecting the preservice teacher education program.

During the period of self-study numerous suggestions were made that we should seriously consider major changes in our preservice teacher education program. Although our program compared favorably with other traditional programs in the state and nation, there were concerns about the piecemeal changes made during the 1970s in response to state and federal mandates. In addition there were concerns that we could not accommodate within a four-year model all that prospective teachers needed to experience.

In the fall of 1979 each department in the School selected representatives for an ad hoc committee charged to develop a concept paper describing the program we felt was necessary and appropriate for prospective teachers. The committee was asked to ignore time constraints and to identify the characteristics of a program we could take pride in offering. The concept paper was adopted by the School in December, 1979 and served as the framework for subsequent development of the new program.

The paper included a rationale for a new teacher education program. Among the factors cited are these:

- Because of the constant expansion of knowledge and changing perceptions by society on the role of education, we needed to produce educators with the ability to adapt to change.
- A teacher education program must include a strong research utilization component at the undergraduate level.
- Because of increasing emphasis and need for individualized instruction, teachers need training and field experience to prepare them to individualize for all students.
- Prospective teachers need the capability to use educational technology to improve their instruction and to enhance student learning.

The paper also included nine goals and 53 related objectives for a teacher education program. Because of space limitations only the goals are listed here:

1. The professional teacher possesses self-understanding.
2. The professional teacher has knowledge of human growth, development, and learning and applies this knowledge to teaching children and adolescents.
3. The professional teacher is skilled in human relations.
4. The professional teacher understands curriculum planning and is skilled in choosing and adapting instructional strategies to implement varying curricula.

5. The professional teacher manages a learning environment effectively.
6. The professional teacher evaluates student learning and uses educational research methodologies to improve instruction and student learning.
7. The professional teacher understands the scope of the teaching profession and the school as a social-political organization.
8. The professional teacher is a liberally educated person.
9. The professional teacher has thorough knowledge of the aspects of at least one subject matter area that is included in the public school curriculum.

Even though the concept paper avoided any specification of program length or number of semester hours, it was clear that the comprehensive nature of the objectives would require more coursework and activities than the traditional four-year, baccalaureate degree model could accommodate. Recognizing that development of a program to accomplish the goals might be professionally justified but politically naive, our next step was what might be called reality testing. For several years the School had benefitted from the assistance of an off-campus advisory committee comprised of superintendents and local teacher organization presidents, or their designated representatives, and representatives of the state school board association, the state board of education, the state department of education, and the state teachers association.

Again we turned to this committee for advice and counsel. Copies of the concept paper were sent to the members and a meeting was held to discuss reactions to the program implied by the paper.

The reactions of the advisory committee were more supportive and enthusiastic than we could have anticipated. Superintendents indicated that graduates from such a program would be their first choice when hiring beginning teachers. Several indicated that they would modify salary schedules to provide an appropriate point of entry for graduates of the program. Many of the members expressed interest in working with faculty committees in developing the program.

Concerns and doubts, questions, and suggestions also were expressed. For example:

- Could KU afford to begin unilaterally an extended program? Wouldn't enrollment drop precipitously as students elected to attend a school with a four-year program?
- Was it fair to ask students to spend more than four years to enter a field so poorly compensated?
- Was KU really willing to involve teachers and administrators to the extent the program would require?
- Was the motive to extend the program really an attempt to bolster credit-hour production since enrollments had decreased significantly?

These and other questions were discussed, and evidently answered satisfactorily, and the committee concluded the meeting by encouraging us to proceed and volunteering to assist us in program development.

During the spring semester of 1980 five committees worked on separate aspects of program development, and during the 1980 summer session a committee of the five chairpersons of the previous committees consolidated the separate reports into a comprehensive document providing the framework for a five-year program. The report was adopted by the School Assembly in July of 1980.

Work during the 1980-1 academic year focused on two major tasks, refinement of the program content and ensuring support from constituencies and controlling authorities. The former involved active participation of all groups represented in earlier planning efforts. The latter was critical in many ways, and the process will be described in some detail.

In Kansas institutions under control by the Board of Regents, the authority to establish graduation and program requirements traditionally has been vested with the faculty offering the program. Even so, a change as significant as the one we were planning requires support within the University and among various state agencies.

Great care was taken, from original debates through all planning activities, to keep central administration informed about our plans and decisions. The Chancellor attended one meeting and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs attended several meetings of the school's advisory committee. The support of our off-campus colleagues had a significant influence on the attitudes of central administrators. At one meeting, after the program outline had been developed, the Vice Chancellor interrogated the committee rather vigorously to ascertain their level of support and commitment

and their assessment of the need for such a dramatic change. The information provided and the support indicated by our colleagues helped to convert the Vice Chancellor from a neutral skeptic to an ardent supporter of our efforts. In discussing future allocations, an agreement was reached that the School of Education would not be penalized if semester credit hour production decreased due to a decline in undergraduate enrollments.

As noted earlier, the Commissioner of Education or his representative attended meetings of the Advisory Committee when the concept paper and progress reports on the program were presented. State Board members also were present. Because of this, the Board and the State Department were knowledgeable about our plans and, in fact, had an opportunity to influence our decisions. Even so, a presentation was made about our plans to the entire State Board of Education. We described our rationale and the main advantages we thought our program would have for preparing highly qualified teachers for Kansas schools.

In addition to these aspects of informing important constituencies, presentations also were made to the State post-secondary coordinating commission (mostly legislators), the chair of the Senate Education Committee, the Kansas Association of School Administrators, the Midwest Association of Personnel Directors, and the Kansas Board of Regents, among others.

During discussions with these groups many opinions were expressed about our plans. Some people applauded our efforts and the courage to embark on our course of action alone among

institutions in the state and region. Others, including friends of KU, had reservations and doubts about what the future impact would be on the School. Very few people questioned the need for more comprehensive programs but frequently an observation was made about requiring an additional year of study for students who would enter a field with such low salaries.

A summary of the history of our decision and the planning stages would be incomplete without some comments about faculty reactions throughout the process. In general it could be noted that votes by the School Assembly were virtually unanimous in support of recommendations at the early stages when the issues were near the abstract end of the continuum. The closer the decisions came to being specific, causing changes in courses and activities, the greater the opposition to the recommendations. This will be no surprise to those who have been involved in the process of program change in higher education.

A significant core of faculty enthusiastically endorsed the concept of an extended program, and this group spent long hours in program development and exercised strong leadership within the faculty. As we moved into the phase of specific requirements, credit hour allocation to courses, and similar matters, faculty disagreements increased. "We need more than a three-hour course." "We favor requiring two levels of certification." "We favor requiring two teaching majors of all students." On these and many other issues, faculty votes split. However, the negative

votes were based on different specific issues, and the number of people who opposed the extended program concept was relatively small.

An Overview of Program Content

The new teacher education program at the University of Kansas was designed to accomplish several major purposes, as listed below:

1. To provide students an early opportunity in their college careers to make a well-informed decision about whether to major in teacher education;
2. To provide strong general education and teaching field areas of study;
3. To provide appropriate clinical experiences including frequent activities in K-12 classrooms;
4. To provide careful articulation between theory and practice,
5. An opportunity to study theories of pedagogy and recent research; and
6. To provide an opportunity for students to develop a teaching style best suited to their own preferences and personality.

These purposes are addressed through the general education, teaching field and professional education components of the program. All teachers, regardless of subject or grade level taught, are role models for children and youth. Thus, it is important for all teachers to have a broad general education, to be articulate, and competent to relate content from one field to content in other

disciplines. . . The general education requirement in the new teacher education program is 60 hours distributed across six major fields:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| English and other language arts | 12 hours |
| ← Behavioral sciences, including psychology | 6 hours |
| Social sciences, with courses from at least 3 of the 4 areas of history, geography, political science, and economics | 9 hours |
| Arts and humanities | 9 hours |
| Science and mathematics, to include at least one mathematics course and two laboratory science courses | 12 hours |
| Physical and mental health | 3 hours |
| Electives from the 6 areas above | <u>9 hours</u> |
| | 60 hours |

The second major component of the teacher education program is coursework in the teaching field or fields. The teaching field requirement in the new teacher education program is a minimum of 40 hours. We recommend that middle level and secondary students complete at least one major teaching field and one minor. Elementary teachers are encouraged to take two minors, but they could elect to take one major instead. Even though the requirement specifies a minimum of 40 hours, in actual practice the majors vary from 36 to 45 hours and minors vary from 23 to 28 hours. A review of current records for students in the program indicates that most students will take more than the minimum in the teaching field.

The third major component of the program, pedagogy or professional education, includes both generic coursework and subject/level specific coursework. This component includes a minimum of 62 hours, with courses designed to develop four major themes which spiral through the program. These themes include 1) growth and development including special attention to exceptional children; 2) assessment, research literacy and technology, the skills required for monitoring student progress, comprehending research literature, and evaluating instructional effectiveness; 3) interpersonal relationships including knowing self as a teacher and communication skills for interactions with both children and adults; and, 4) gradual induction into the role of a teacher which is provided through the experiential aspects of the program.

The freshman year includes one course on introduction to teaching. The course is team taught by a teacher educator and a member of the Counseling Department faculty with expertise in career planning. The major focus of the course is on the role of a teacher and the course is designed to help students assess their personal interest in assuming the responsibilities of a teacher. In this course we receive a great deal of assistance from a cadre of teachers and administrators in the local schools, and the course includes structured observations of different types of classrooms.

During the sophomore year two courses in professional education are offered. The content of one course is multicultural education and the second is child study techniques. Both courses include a

series of assignments in the schools. We believe that by the end of the sophomore year students will have a solid basis for deciding to remain in teacher education or, on the other hand, to transfer into another major field of study.

Although the program design includes five semester hours of professional coursework during the freshman and sophomore years, we do work with transfer students at the junior level to plan programs appropriate for the student's background and experiences. In addition, lower division coursework can be made up during the junior year.

The program has quality control measures at key points in the sequence. To be admitted to the junior level, students must have a 2.5 lower division GPA, satisfactory scores on the writing and mathematics sections of the NTE Pre-Professional Skills Tests and endorsement by faculty members. To continue into the fifth year of the program, students must have an overall GPA of 2.75. We recognize that this GPA requirement may erode enrollment but the standard is consistent with our goal of conducting a high quality program with academically competent students.

The first four years of the program include a minimum of 126 hours, with at least 100 of the hours in coursework related to general education and teaching fields. Students will be granted the Bachelor's degree at that point in their careers. Even though the program was designed to assist students in making well-informed career choices early in their college careers, the award of a

Bachelor's degree at the end of four years provides a good opportunity for students to self-select out of teacher education. We hope that few students will continue through the fourth year without a commitment to finish the program, but we recognize that some students may learn late in the Bachelor's degree program that they do not want to become teachers.

The organization and content of the fifth year have continued to be topics of discussion within the School of Education. Although the original conceptualization of the fifth year has been retained, various alternatives have been considered. The organization of the fifth year includes two assignments in K-12 classrooms and intervening study in graduate level courses. The format is presented below:

Fall Semester

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Weeks 1-8 | Student Teaching | 6 hours, undergraduate credit |
| Weeks 9-16 | Coursework in professional topics | 8 hours, graduate credit |

Spring Semester

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Weeks 1-6 | Advanced methods, department specific | 2 hours graduate credit |
| | departmental elective | 4 hours, graduate credit |
| Weeks 7-16 | Internship | 9-12 hours, graduate credit can be granted at dept. discretion if internship is in the same subject and at the same level as student teaching; otherwise undergraduate credit |

The assignments for student teaching and internship will be in two different schools in most cases, and we are encouraging students to take these assignments in different types of schools. For example, if the first assignment is in an urban setting, we recommend the second be taken in a rural setting. If the first is in a wealthy district, we encourage students to take the second in a less advantaged district. Regardless, we hope that students will work under the supervision of two different mentors and gain a broader perspective of teaching styles.

The student teaching assignment includes school opening and the planning that occurs for a semester or year. The internship includes school closing and the activities associated with planning for the subsequent year. The two assignments, we believe, provide important experiences that traditional one-semester assignments lack.

Faculty in the School have engaged in major debate over the nature of credit for the internship. Some have argued that the internship does not warrant graduate credit, it is just a student teaching experience. Others have argued that the internship will build on expertise gained in the fall and could be viewed as comparable to practicum in Counseling, Administration, School Psychology, Special Education and other fields in which graduate credit routinely is granted. The objectives associated with the internship relate to a research component, appropriate for one intending to stay in teaching, but some faculty believe that the

research is too far removed from that normally associated with the Master's degree and thus are opposed to granting graduate credit. The policy described in the outline above is perhaps a compromise of the two positions.

Faculty also have debated the organization of the fifth year. One side has argued for uninterrupted assignments in schools, citing cooperating teacher preferences and what was described as unreasonable loads if students were taking any other courses during student teaching. The other side wanted to extend the student teaching assignment by several weeks and have students meet periodically on specified days for seminars or courses on topics that would tie theory and practice more closely together. Although departments have some discretion with regard to the organization, generally the former position prevailed.

The coursework in the fifth year includes topics which experience has shown to be enhanced by formal responsibilities in schools. The courses draw on the experiences students have had during student teaching and are designed to help students be more effective, both skilled and knowledgeable, during the internship.

At the completion of the program students will have earned the institutional recommendation for certification and will have a minimum of 15 hours of graduate credit which will apply toward a master's degree. Students who qualify for early co-enrollment in the graduate school during the eighth semester of the program will be even closer to a graduate degree. However, the current program is not designed to culminate in a master's degree.

Observations From Four Years of Program Implementation

The first class of students in the new program is now in the fourth year. Thus, these observations are based on limited experience with the program.

Preliminary studies of the students in the new teacher education program suggest that the students are performing better academically than students in the now discontinued four-year program. During the 1983 fall semester data were obtained on students in the junior class of the new program. With most of the credit of the first two years earned from departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or the School of Fine Arts, the average GPAs for students in elementary education was 2.78, for secondary education 2.95, and for music education 2.99. In the College of Liberal Arts at the lower division level the average grade assigned is 2.4 and 2.6 at the freshman and sophomore years, respectively. Thus, it appears that our students are performing quite well in relationship to other students at the lower division level.

An analysis made of ACT scores during the fall of 1983 suggests that the students in our program are substantially above the national average and that the recent classes have higher average scores than earlier classes. Both the GPA and ACT data support a prediction we made, that an intellectually challenging program would attract better students. The number of students enrolled with us in the undergraduate program is lower than it was several years ago. Several factors, however, should be noted. First,

enrollments had been decreasing in the four-year program and we do not know whether the trend is continuing or whether the adoption of an extended program has had an impact. Second, our program was designed specifically to assist students to self-select out of education if they discover that teaching would not be a good occupation for them. Thus, though we have a smaller senior class than we had last year, students who have remained in the program are probably more committed to teaching and we would expect a larger percent of the current senior class to enter teaching after the completion of the fifth year. This phenomenon has been noted at the University of New Hampshire where a five-year program has been in existence for a number of years.

During the 1983-4 academic year all schools and colleges of education within the state-supported institutions of Kansas underwent review by the Board of Regents. Consultants were hired to review the programs and to submit recommendations to the Board. Recently the consultants submitted their report, and included in it is a recommendation that the new program be evaluated as as soon as possible and that the Board, upon a favorable evaluation, consider extending the program to all other state-supported institutions.

Statewide Changes in Standards

During recent years several changes have been made in the requirements for initial certification in Kansas. In addition, the Board of Regent institutions have adopted additional requirements.

In 1981 the Board of Post institutions agreed to a policy, to become effective in the fall of 1983, to require students to have a 2.5 lower division GPA and to earn acceptable scores on basic skill tests covering mathematics and writing, to be admitted to full standing at the junior year in a teacher education program. It is important to note that these policies are only for the state-supported institutions and do not affect the four-year private schools in the state.

During this same period of time the State Board of Education also has adopted some new policies. The first to be enacted was a requirement that students have a 2.5 GPA to qualify for initial certification. More recently the State Board has adopted the National Teachers Exam Core Battery as a pre-certification test; this policy becomes effective on May 1, 1986. A contract has been signed for the validation of the test and for the purpose of establishing the passing scores.

The State Board also has adopted a requirement for an internship year for beginning teachers. This policy becomes effective in the fall of 1987. Plans for the internship year are not complete at the present time, and there is some question about whether the emphasis will be on assistance for beginning teachers or whether the emphasis will be on evaluation of the competence of beginning teachers. Most likely the regulations will include both elements.

Summary

The present fourth year class will be the first to complete the new program, in the spring of 1986. The students in that class appear to be quite capable academically as measured by both ACT and by University GPA. The students appear to be committed to teaching and knowledgeable about the issues that will affect their professional careers as teachers.

As we have moved through the various years of implementing the new program, we have profited from the experiences we have had. Modifications have been made in coursework during the first three years of the program. We will continue to monitor the program and make adjustments as the evidence suggests. We also have established a comprehensive evaluation of the program which we will use to guide decisions in the future. Most faculty members who work in the program are convinced that the students who will finish the program in 1986 will be highly competent professionals, prepared for their first autonomous assignment, and capable of continuing their own professional development.