DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 259 509 EC 180 245

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TITLE Interdisciplinary Team Training: A National Survey of Special Education Teacher Training Programs.
INSTITUTION Dissemin/Action Products Center, Vienna, VA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Special Education (ED), Washington, D.C. Div. of Personnel Preparation.
PUB DATE 84
GRANT G008200310
NOTE 25p.; Use of colored paper may affect legibility.
AVAILABLE FROM Dissemin/Action Products Center, 9618 Percussion Way, Vienna, VA 22180 ($1.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Disabilities; Higher Education; *Interdisciplinary Approach; National Surveys; Professional Education; *Teacher Education; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted nationally to determine the number of colleges and universities involved in team training and the manner in which training is provided. Results indicated that 48% of the 360 responding institutions do not offer team training. Of those programs with team training, the majority infuse the training components into existing courses/practica. Among other findings were that the majority of institutions which provide interdisciplinary training require team training of special education majors; that team training components follow closely to team operations found in school settings; and that very little inservice team training is given by special education teacher trainers. Recommendations are made, including that interdisciplinary team training should be made available to all student trainees in the appropriate career areas, regardless of major. (CL)

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INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM TRAINING: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

By

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1984

A NATIONAL SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

Abstract

With the advent of Public Law 94-142, the interdisciplinary team has acquired responsibilities not previously associated with more traditional team operations. The team approach has received recent criticism concerning cost-effectiveness and the issue of whether teams are more effective than other approaches. Indications are that many of the barriers to effective team operations will continue unless there is a greater commitment from those responsible for preservice education.

A survey was conducted nationally to determine the number of colleges and universities involved in team training and the manner in which training is provided. Results indicate that 48% of the 360 responding institutions do not offer team training. Of those programs with team training, the majority infuse the training components into existing courses/practica. Among other findings: the majority of institutions (where interdisciplinary training is offered) require team training of special education majors; team training components follow closely to team operations found in school settings; and very little inservice team training is given by special education teacher trainers. This article also draws implications for teacher trainers and their relationships to school districts.

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The preparation of this article was supported, in part, by Grant No. G008200310 (Dissemin/Action), awarded by the Division of Personnel Preparation, Special Education Program, OSERS, U.S. Department of Education.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM TRAINING:

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During the past decade, the school team has become an important resource for the successful delivery of services to handicapped pupils. Torres (1977) was one of the first to apply an interdisciplinary approach to the definition of the team that was in compliance with Public Law 94-142: "Composed of a group of professionals and the parent who equally participate in the decision-making process to determine the specific educational needs of the child, develop an individualized education for the child and determine the appropriate educational placement for the exceptional child." (p. 3)

Even though the interdisciplinary team is not new to special education, it was not until after the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 that the emphasis on the team approach became more of a mandate than a matter of choice. The value of the team approach is based on the premise that representatives from several disciplines, working together as a group, can make better decisions concerning pupils than can professionals acting alone when each individual represents a different orientation.

Most articles which have surfaced in the literature since Public Law 94-142 was enacted generally support the use of interdisciplinary teams as an effective approach for the referral, evaluation, and placement of pupils with special needs (Allen, Holm, & Schiefelbusch, 1978; Bailey & Harbin, 1980; Egbert & Kluender, 1979; Golin & Ducanis, 1981; Kaye & Aserlind, 1979; Pfeiffer, 1980; Trachlman, 1981). These reports, however, are generally descriptive in nature and often reflect the subjective value of the author's opinion on team operations.

Few empirical studies have been done to compare interdisciplinary team functions with individual decision-making. Several studies comparing individual decision making with decisions made by teams do suggest that the group process facilitates superior decision-making (Pfeiffer, 1983; Preiffer, 1981; Pfeiffer & Naglieri, 1983; Vautour, 1976). The investigators of these studies contend that a cooperative team brings different professional perspectives together, enhancing problem-solving and allowing for better decision-making than occurs when individuals act alone. The team approach, however, has received recent criticism concerning questions of cost effectiveness and whether teams can make better decisions than individuals (Kakalik, Furry, Thomas, & Carney, 1981; Yoshida, 1983). These authors argue that justification of the team approach must be based on solid evidence which demonstrates that group decisions are more effective than less costly methods. Yoshida (1983) specifically proposed more effective use of teams and investigation into the changes necessary within the school structure in order to allow for better team operations. Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1982) believe that current research fails to give a positive report in support of the school team. These investigators point out that too often teams get bogged down by reporting large amounts of test data, fail to make accurate diagnostic discriminations between handicapped categories when making placement decisions, and tend to devote very little time to making decisions about educational interventions.

Advocates of the team approach concerned with the problems facing effective team activities have proposed a number of suggestions to improve the team process (Bailey, Helsel-DeWert, Thiele, & Ware, 1983; Fenton, Yoshida, Maxwell, & Kaufmann, 1979; Knoff, 1983a; Knoff, 1983b; Rhode, Leininger, Egan, & Bluhm, 1981; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Mitchell, 1982). Included in the major recommendations have been: increased participation of less involved team members (e.g., parents and regular classroom teachers), role clarification to avoid misunderstanding of individual team functions, a greater clarity of team goals, decision-making that is shared by all group members, a communication system that encourages each member of the team to contribute expertise, and the application of management techniques to team meetings (e.g., using a structured agenda for meetings).

Although some research has been devoted to interdisciplinary teams in practice, virtually no research or related literature appears to exist relative to higher education's responsibility for team training. Two important questions may be raised when discussing the role of higher education. First, should those responsible for preservice and inservice training shoulder some of the current problems encountered with team operations? Second, and equally important, have those persons responsible for personnel preparation failed to make a commitment to interdisciplinary team training? A number of articles are appearing in the literature which indicate that many of the barriers to effective team activities will continue unless a greater commitment to such training is made by teacher trainers (Abelson & Woodman, 1983; Allen-Meares & Pugach, 1982; Garner, 1976; Holland, 1980; Knoff, 1983b; Prasse & Fafard, 1982). Yoshida (1983) reports that fewer than 35% of teachers surveyed had received either preservice or inservice preparation on the team process or the types of decisions teams make. Smith-Davis, Burke, and Noel (1984), who pinpointed quality deficiencies in preservice programming, found that practitioners were generally lacking in group process skills, communication skills, and teaming skills. Their major concern with preservice training is summarized in the following statement, reflecting reports from all of the states and several territories:

> Higher education reportedly exhibits great variation in its approach to training in the individual education program (IEP). Where deficiencies exist, a central problem cited is that teacher trainees are taught to write the IEP by themselves, but not taught how to participate in the group processes necessary to its development and implementation. School districts find that new teachers are not asking the right questions in the IEP meetings and have not learned to integrate multidisciplinary information into educational planning. It is of concern to more than half of the respondents that new personnel are not well trained in the IEP process nor in teamwork in general. (p. 177)

The commitment made to team training is important if effective use of teams is to become a shared responsibility between practitioners and teacher trainers. Very little has been reported in the literature concerning undergraduate and graduate programs with team training components. Courtnage and Healy (1984) presented a competency-procedure-based approach to preservice team training and, in a literature search, located only seven other institutions with distinct team training programs. Apparently these eight training programs had emerged after the advent of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, inasmuch as no such programs were found in the literature prior to that time.

Given the need for personnel training to improve the effectiveness of teams, a number of questions arise. Are training institutions addressing the emerging needs for improved team operations? How many universities and colleges offer interdisciplinary team training? For those institutions that offer team training, is it offered through the infusion of content into existing courses or is it through self-contained courses devoted exlusively to team training? What training components relevant to the team process are included in the course work and practica? Is the training program required of students or offered as an elective?

The rather large set of barriers confronting the effective use of teams has preceded the apparent need for team training. The remainder of this article will respond to the foregoing discussion about the need for team training in relation to personnel preparation. A national survey was conducted to ascertain the extent to which special education teacher trainers have become involved in team training. The study, therefore, may be considered as a state-of-the-art report on the commitment made to team training by the nation's special education preparation programs. Implications for teacher trainers and their relationships to school districts are also made concerning the effective use of interdisciplinary teams.

Method

A questionnaire was developed to gather data from training institutions concerning interdisciplinary team training (ITT) programs. For purposes of the survey, ITT was defined as a preservice teacher training program which focuses on the interdisciplinary team approach as applied by the Torres (1977) definition. The ITT definition excludes the longstanding courses or practica that focus on counseling techniques, consultation skills, group dynamic processes, and the more traditional student teaching setting <u>unless</u> such training explicitly includes interdisciplinary team training.

The survey instrument consisted of two sections. The first section requested demographic data concerning student enrollment and the number and type of degree levels and special education majors. The second section sought data from institutions that included ITT in the special education preservice program. The response options in section two covered six major areas: (a) the identification of the training components that emphasize the pre-referral, referral, staffing, and IEP sequence of the various team activities; (b) the identification of the instructional methods by which ITT is presented; (c) the manner in which the practicum or internship is supervised and whether it is offered on campus or in the field; (d) determination of whether ITT is required or is offered as an elective; (e) the identification of degree majors in related career fields outside of special education for which ITT is required or recommended as an elective; and (f) the estimated number of ITT inservice sessions given to schools and other groups.

The population consisted of 553 colleges and universities representing preparation programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A national directory containing the names and addresses of special education teacher preparation programs was obtained from the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (Geiger, 1983). The directory contained a listing of certification and degree level preservice training programs applicable to special education but excluded career fields for those wanting to become adaptive physical educators, speech pathologists, and psychological/educational examiners. The survey instruments were mailed directly to the administrator of the department or college

designated as responsible for the preparation of special education personnel. Follow-up letters and questionnaires were mailed to nonrespondents six weeks after the first mailing.

Results

Questionnaires were received from 375 special education teacher training programs as a result of the original and follow-up mailings. Fifteen of the questionnaires were not completed correctly and, consequently, were not used in the analysis of data. The 360 useable questionnaires constituted a return rate of 65% of the 553 institutions targeted for the survey.

The first section of the questionnaire requested demographic data. Respondents were requested to report on the size of the total institutional student enrollment. As Table 1 shows, the largest number of responses were received from institutions with student enrollments under 5,000 (184 responses). As may be expected, fewer responses were received from the largest institutions with enrollments over 20,000 (39 responses) since fewer of the larger universities exist in proportion to the number of smaller ones.

Demographic data were also collected on the number and type of majors offered for each degree level in special education. The greatest number of different special education majors was indicated for the master's degree level (846), followed by BA/BS (735), Ed.S (144), and Ed.D./Ph.D. (140). The types of special education majors offered most frequently were mental retardation (361 majors), learning disability (350 majors), and emotional/behavior disorders (266 majors). As expected, the responding training institutions offer fewer majors in the low-incidence areas (e.g., visual impairment/40 majors).

The second section of the survey was designed to determine the presence or absence of team training in the special education training program. In response to this question, 172 institutions (48%) indicated that ITT was not a part of the training program. As noted in Table 1, the size of the institution does not materially affect the availability of team training. Only a 5 percentage point differential is indicated among the four student enrollment classifications.

The remainder of the questionnaire was applicable to the 52% of the colleges and universities with interdisciplinary team training programs. The respondents with ITT programs were asked to indicate whether the training was offered through: (a) a self-contained course(s) and/or practicum/internship whose context was devoted exclusively to ITT; (b) infusion of ITT into an existing course(s) and/or practicum/internship with only a portion of the instruction or practicum content devoted to team training; or (c) both self-contained and infused course(s) and practicum/internships (a and b). The majority of the institutions with ITT have chosen to infuse team training into existing coursework and/or practicum rather than offer separate self-contained course(s) and practicum. As indicated by Table 1, these training institutions constituted 154 of the 188 training programs with ITT. From these same institutions with ITT, 34 respondents indicated that the training was offered through self-contained course(s) and/or practicum. Fifteen of these same 34 respondents indicated that ITT was also infused into existing courses or practica. Table 1 shows that the size of the training institution does not markedly influence the manner in which team training is offered. A somewhat higher percentage of the larger institutions of over 10,000 and 20,000 student enrollments are inclined to offer a self-contained course and/or practicum than are smaller institutions with student enrollments under 10,000.

Respondents were requested to indicate the various training components/activities which are incorporated into the ITT. Table 2 lists 17 training components which may be identified with team operations and the number of institutions incorporating such components/activities.

The majority of the respondents indicated that the training components were included in the coursework and/or practicum which constituted the team training program. With few exceptions, the 17 training components were fairly evenly distributed throughout each of the five self-contained and infused coursework or practicum areas. The entire referral and staffing process, illustrated in Table 2, begins with the identification of the pupil in need of referral and continues as long as the pupil needs special education. Several affective components important to team activities are also included. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents indicated that team activities within this referral-staffing interface were important training components. As expected, training components appeared with greater frequency in courses and practica which infuse ITT. Since only 18% of the institutions with team training offered ITT through self-contained courses or practica, the training components appeared with less frequency in those programs.

Table 3 summarizes the instructional methods which characterize the courses taught in the ITT program. The instructional methods are fairly uniformly distributed throughout the self-contained courses offered by the training institutions. Lectures and simulations were included with greater frequency in the infused courses. The three methods receiving the most responses for both the self-contained and infused courses were: lectures, simulations, and independent readings. Those methods less commonly used were video recordings, literature/research reviews, and methods listed under "other."

Institutions which offer a practicum and/or an internship were asked to characterize the format in which student experiences are delivered. Table 4 shows that student experiences which are devoted exclusively to ITT are fairly evenly distributed among the practicum/field based (2-4 hours), internship/field based (4-12 hours), and an on-campus practicum of 2 to 4 hours credit. Department faculty with primary responsibility for self-contained, off-campus practicum supervision appeared with greater frequency than supervision by local school staff. Institutions with infused practicum offer such experiences with almost equal frequency in the shorter 2 to 4 hour field-based practicum and the longer internship. The primary supervision for the infused practicum is closely distributed between department faculty and local school personnel. In many cases, respondents with either self-contained or infused practicum indicated that both faculty and local school staff were equally responsible for practicum supervision. Only 19 institutions offered an on-campus-based infused practicum.

Respondents were requested to indicate whether the coursework or practicum was required or offered as an elective for students majoring in special education. In order to accomplish this, a section for each of four degree levels was included in the survey instrument to gather data on the various special education major/certification areas offered by the institution. The major/certification categories listed were: deaf education, behavior disorders, learning disabilities, mental retardation, physical handicaps, preschool handicapped, severe/profound handicaps, visual impairment, multicategorical, speech pathology, and special education administration. A frequency count was completed for each separate major/certification category. The number of frequencies gathered for each category was further

collapsed and reported in Table 5 as the sum for each of the four degree levels. Data from Table 5 indicate that the majority of institutions with infused courses and/or practica require students at all degree levels to complete the team program. Undergraduate and master's level students in self-contained courses and/or practica are also required with greater frequency to complete the training components. Only in those specialist and doctoral programs with self-contained courses and practica is the distribution noted to favor the elective option.

Respondents had difficulty fully responding to the section concerning ITT courses/practicum required of students majoring in career fields outside of special education (e.g., school administration). Of the 188 institutions with ITT training programs, 92 did not provide the requested information. Two factors appeared to influence the completion of the section. Many respondents reported that they did not have access to the data; others gave only partial data, stating that they were familiar with some department requirements and not others.

Few institutions indicated that inservice training had been given on interdisciplinary team training. Only 39 of the 188 universities and colleges with ITT programs (25 from infused; 14 from self-contained) reported that their departments conducted inservice training for schools or other agencies. One respondent indicated that over 100 workshops had been given. Other than this one exception, the number of inservice sessions ranged from 2 to 40.

Discussion

The definition of team training is very important to the discussion of the results of this study. Several respondents stated that team training was incorporated into special education coursework or practica but that such training did not meet the definition outlined in the questionnaire. The data derived from this study are restricted to those responding institutions with definitive ITT programs.

The definition of interdisciplinary team training as used in this study focuses on team activities which have been fostered by Public Law 94-142. The definition excludes courses and practica (e.g., student teaching) unless such training includes team operations which focus on pre-referral, referral, placement, IEP, and other such activities. Under a more traditional approach to group processes and decision-making, many training programs have for years offered courses and practica which stress group dynamics, counseling techniques, communication skills, and the affective domain. For example, a course in counseling parents of the handicapped usually emphasizes communication skills and effective collaboration between home and school. This study, however, intended to search out the preservice training developments applicable to team operations which, by and large, have been generated since the middle 1970's. Even though longstanding special education courses or practica may have placed some emphasis on the affective domain and group processes, such training probably did little to prepare students to become effective members of the interdisciplinary team.

Major findings do emerge when analyzing data. Approximately half (48%) of the institutions surveyed do not offer ITT. Of the 52 percent that do, most infuse ITT into existing courses or practica. Only 34 institutions have chosen to offer a program through self-contained courses and/or practica devoted exclusively to team training. Likewise, data derived from the study indicate that the size of the institutional student enrollment does not influence the availability of team training or the manner in which it is offered.

Apparently, ITT has received some priority thinking on the part of those responsible for program development. Once institutions decide to offer ITT, the majority indicated that courses and/or practica are required of students majoring in special education. Unfortunately, the survey was unable to ascertain team training requirements made of students majoring in fields outside of special education. The majority of respondents who were administrators of the special education training program were unable to provide such data adequately.

The insufficient data provided by the respondents raises several concerns about the uncertainty of ITT availability beyond that offered by the special education training programs. First, the fact that most respondents were unable to provide adequate data suggests that the possibility is low that team training is offered by other departments outside special education. Quite likely, if such training were available, the special education administrators (the respondents) would have knowledge of it, especially if the training were located in the same college or in a major related to special education. If such an assumption is true, the lack of team training appears to extend to other departments and colleges as well. Second, it might be implied that interdisciplinary team training, if it exists at all, is not in itself offered interdepartmentally between the various departments which sponsor majors in related career areas. Stated in another way, teacher training institutions do not seem to have interdisciplinary relationships that serve as models for the consumers that they serve. If regular teachers, special education teachers, school psychologists, school administrators, and other disciplines are expected to work as an effective school team unit, it seems reasonable to expect that those responsible for training the different professionals establish exemplary interdisciplinary teamwork among the departments that profess the importance of team skills to their trainees. Perhaps it is time for the separate departments responsible for training the various specialty areas to truly work together as a team.

Continued skepticism can be expected if the different departments continue to be fragmented from one another or offer needed programs in isolation from majors other than their own. Indeed, if team training is going to succeed as a major instructional unit in teacher training, collaboration from all appropriate departments is necessary to bring together all student requirements into one training unit. In this way, preparatory programs can serve as model programs which truly exemplify effective team operations. In the meantime, additional investigation is needed to respond more adequately to the uncertain status of team training programs that are available across department and college boundaries. In order to obtain more complete data, the respondents of such a proposed study need to be those administrators directly responsible for their respective training programs.

Apparently, the 188 institutions with ITT are in close agreement on the kind of team activities to be included in the courses and/or practica. The majority of the preservice programs include training components commonly identified with team operations related to the school system's referral and staffing process. While some individual training institutions emphasize certain team activities more than others, the majority do tend to give equal attention to the different possible team operations. This is an important finding, since most of the team activities were included in the survey instrument as a result of literature review and of current school team practice. The results, therefore, support the fact that team training is congruent with actual team practices found in school settings.

The fact that most training institutions with ITT programs have apparently adopted team activities from the school system raises an interesting question about

the leadership role of higher education. Should ITT programs be based on how effective teams should function, or should such training follow the dictates of how most school teams actually operate? In short, should higher education establish team training on the basis of what is or what should be? Courtnage, Engleman, and Smith-Davis (1984), concerned with this question, surveyed 44 program graduates (all practicing special educators) who completed a 3-hour semester team training program sometime between 1979 and 1984. They found that, in practice, team operations are less comprehensive than were those required under the training program conditions. The majority of the training program graduates in actual practice seldom engaged in teamwork that required pre-referral activities, activities that involved the pupil and/or parent in team meetings, or in activities that evaluated the effectiveness of referral and staffing operations. Most hands-on experiences were committed to team activities that revolve around filling out referral forms, attending placement and/or IEP meetings, and conforming to federal, state, and local requirements by completing certain forms and IEP materials. Moreover, the graduates surveyed seldom focused on pupil identification procedures, on in-house pupil interventions prior to formal referral, or on pre-meeting activities to prepare the team member for placement, IEP, and other types of team meetings. Furthermore, the program graduates indicated that neither the school system nor individual team members devoted time to establish or improve existing procedures for use when conducting placement and IEP meetings. On the other hand, the program graduates viewed the training program as more idealistic than those team activities experienced in actual school settings. Specifically, the majority of graduates surveyed felt that the team training program placed greater priority on: (a) a thorough understanding of the referral and staffing process; (b) role clarification; (c) team goals; (d) using model procedures when conducting meetings; (e) affective considerations; and (f) team activities that evaluate the success of different referral and staffing operations. In summary, the training program as a whole was viewed more as a model for which many of the team activities were seldom placed in actual operation by the majority of the school districts.

Given the concern about the barriers facing present team operations, it would seem to be an appropriate time to define and delineate roles and communications between the school system and the training institution. While considerable focus has been directed to the barriers confronting school teams, very little effort has been expended on the ways responsible agencies can work together for more efficient and effective teams. A first step might be for these two agencies to agree on how school teams should best operate within the referral and staffing interface. Equally important, the training activities and components should be firmly established in keeping with the need for greater clarification concerning the role of training institutions. In this way, team training would exemplify team operations based on known best practices, as well as encourage research to develop more effective teams.

For the most part, the ITT course instructional methods and practicum formats do not differ much from the way colleges and universities administer other special education courses and practica. Lectures, simulations, independent readings, and other teaching methods are commonly used. Practica and internships, either infused of self-contained, follow a distribution pattern not unlike those of other special education student experiences. About the same number of institutions offer the shorter 2-4 hour practicum as do those that offer the longer 6 to 15 hour internships. In addition, the primary supervision of field experiences appears to be fairly equally divided between faculty members and assigned local school personnel.

Responding institutions with ITT are providing very little inservice training to schools or other agencies. The inservice given is limited to fewer than 40 training institutions. The commitment made to inservice and the extent of inservice sessions delivered concerning team training has not been reported in the literature. If inservice training is being conducted, it appears reasonable to assume that special education teacher trainers are not the major providers of such services.

It would also appear that there are more training institutions offering ITT than suggested by a literature review (Courtnage & Healy, 1984). The preservice programs reported in that review, however, were self-contained and several served as model programs to develop a unique training approach to teaching team skills. On the other hand, the majority of this study's respondents offering team training indicated that such training was infused into existing courses or practica. As such, new input into already existing courses usually does not require curricular approval through committee and administrative channels. As a consequence, infused courses are more convenient to facilitate new training components than are self-contained courses or practica. Since it is not known how such decisions are made, further study is needed to determine why some institutions choose self-contained training, while, in others, the content is infused into existing courses or practica.

Whether progress has been made in the number of institutions offering ITT is difficult to determine because similar studies have not been conducted through which comparison could be made. It may be assumed that much preservice team training is founded in the post Public Law 94-142 era. Inasmuch as the present federal and state regulations (e.g., placement and IEP activities) were not required of team operations prior to the middle 1970's, interdisciplinary team training probably emerged sometime during the past 10 years.

Rather striking is the fact that almost half of the teacher training institutions surveyed do not provide any interdisciplinary team training at all. Additional study is needed to ascertain the full meaning of the absence or presence of team training. Does team training evade priority in the scheme of departmental program development? Has the need for team training received proper notice and publicity to those decision-makers responsible for training special educators? It has been speculated that institutional barriers may interfere with new program offerings. Budgeting priorities, territorial rights, and majors already crowded with requirements all act as political influences which often hinder the development of new courses. Given the need for collaborative team efforts, and inasmuch as the referral and staffing process require the efforts of many disciplines, it appears critical that team training become an integral part of teacher education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Since the advent of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, interdisciplinary teams have carried greater responsibilities than were required of teams prior to that time. The responsibilities placed on current school teams are numerous. Teams working as a unit or as individual members acting alone are accountable for a rather large number of local, state, and federal policies: parent/student rights, unbiases pupil assessment, least restrictive environment, most appropriate educational programs, IEP's, three-year re-evaluations, and a host of other state and local school requirements.

Is it any wonder, then, that interdisciplinary teams have encountered difficulties along the way in meeting the myriad federal and state requirements that impinge upon team operations? Indeed, it is perhaps even more surprising that the interdisciplinary team concept has worked as well as it has, considering the expectations placed on it to successfully meet the federal and state mandates.

The claim made that school teams are largely inefficient and often ineffective may be attributed to the lower priority given to team training. Teacher trainers would most certainly be insulted if asked to prepare special education teachers without regard to needed competencies concerning instructional techniques or pupil behavior management; nor would school employers hire teachers who lacked such skills. Yet, the very success of school teams depends much on the needed team skills that have evolved over the past ten years. The need is at hand for collaborative efforts on the part of the school system and training institutions to prioritize more effective and efficient team operations. In addition, limited funding and the recent thrust toward a more conservative use of resources may force local school decision makers to carefully evaluate ways to make more efficient use of teams. Lest school teams become a victim of shrinking resources, those responsible for their success must become more accountable for both existing team operations and team training.

Based on the results of this study and the concerns others have expressed in the literature about interdisciplinary teams, the authors offer the following recommendations:

1. Team training should become an integral part of teacher training programs. The fact that nearly half of the institutions surveyed do not offer such training indicates that immediate action is needed on the part of higher education.

2. Interdisciplinary team training ought to be made available to all student trainees in the appropriate career areas, regardless of major. The team training should also be offered interdepartmentally with faculty and physical resources jointly shared among the departments involved.

3. Presently, the majority of institutions with ITT conform to the practices found in school team operations. Teacher trainers in collaboration with direct service providers need to develop effective training models which will assure more effective and efficient teams.

4. The results of this study confirm that institutions responsible for preservice programs are conducting little ITT inservice training. Additional study is needed to find a more exact measure of inservice activity that is occurring. Equal attention should also be given to ascertain the specific inservice needs of practicing educators in order to match the resources that can best deliver the needed team skills.

5. Finally, the responsibility for team performance falls within the joint province of both direct service providers and teacher trainers. More important, committed parties will need to devote the necessary energies and planning to reach successful solutions which best advocate for improved team operations.

TABLE 1

Training Institutions Offering Team Training

Size of Institution (Total Student enrollment)	Number of Respondents	ITT Training?				If Yes, How Offered?					
		Yes		No		Self-Contained		Infused		Combination	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Under 5,000	184	93	51	91	49	13	7	80	44	6	3
5,000-9,999	75	39	52	36	48	5	7	34	45	0	0
10,000-19,999	62	34	55	28	45	9	15	25	40	4	6
Over 20,000	39	22	56	17	44	7	18	15	38	5	13
TOTAL	360	188	52	172	48	34	9	154	43	15	4

Table 2

Frequency of Occurrence of Team Training Components

Training Components	Self Contained Course(s)	Self Contained Practicum/ Internship(s)	Infused Course(s)	Infused Practicum/ Internship(s)	Combination of Infused Course(s) & Practica
a. Prereferral activities: Identification of pupils.	18	8	143	71	47
b. Prereferral activities: inbuilding attempted resolution of pupil problems.	16	8	122	62	39
c. Reaching formal referral decisions and completing referral forms.	19	9	107	62	37
d. Preparing pupils for referral and evaluation.	14	12	88	39	21
e. Pupil evaluation/assessment activities.	32	11	142	83	60
f. Preparation for evaluation/placement meetings by team members.	21	10	111	65	43
g. Conducting and evaluating evaluation/placement meetings.	17	9	98	57	37
h. Pupil IEP evaluation/assessment activities.	22	11	145	84	70
i. Preparation for IEP meetings by team members.	19	8	100	64	45
j. Conducting and evaluating IEP meetings.	11	7	95	60	40
k. Re-evaluation activities (3 year re-evaluation requirement).	14	9	83	45	25
l. Other pupil follow-up activities.	13	8	89	44	29
m. Being knowledgeable of the job responsibilities of all team members.	29	14	122	53	37

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Table 2 / Continued

n. Interacting and communicating effectively with parents.	26	11	130	80	55
o. Using needed affective team skills.	24	11	108	72	46
p. Receptiveness to receiving consultation and suggestions from others.	23	10	118	71	52
q. Being a positive, cooperative team member.	24	9	121	80	55

Table 3

Course Instructional Methods

Self Contained		Infused	
Method	Frequency	Method	Frequency
Lecture	24	Lecture	144
Independent Readings	22	Simulations	121
Simulations	21	Independent Readings	107
Student Demonstration	20	Professor Demonstration	106
Professor Demonstration	19	Student Demonstration	91
Video Recordings	18	Video Recordings	80
Literature/research Review	16	Literature/Research Review	74
Other	4	Other	20

Table 4

Characteristics of Practica/Internships

Characteristic	Self Contained (f)	Infused (f)
Field based practicum (2-4 hrs.)	14	50
Field based internship (6-12 hrs.)	11	56
On-campus practicum (2-4 hrs.)	10	19
Supervision by department faculty	20	87
Supervision by local school staff	12	82

f = Frequency

Table 5

Team Training Required or Elective

Degree Level	Self Contained ITT		Infused ITT		
	Courses	Practica/ Internships	Courses	Practica/ Internships	Combination of Courses/Practica
Bachelors					
Required	47	33	342	156	119
Elective	12	0	17	28	2
Masters					
Required	50	43	380	222	180
Elective	23	10	53	40	8
Specialist					
Required	4	8	47	19	16
Elective	8	3	29	19	7
Doctorate					
Required	7	11	41	22	7
Elective	18	4	19	10	1

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