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ABSTRACT
              This presentation explains the unique needs of
teachers working in rural settings and describes Project CREST
(Collaboration for Rural Education Special Teachers). The model
teacher training program, currently in operation in Ohio, is funded
by a federal grant awarded to Bowling Green State University. The
primary components of Project CREST include the following: (1) a one
year master's level teacher training program for rural special
educators; (2) a one year mentoring program for veteran rural special
educators and first year entering rural special educators; (3) skill
training in the art of collaboration; and (4) skill training programs
in planning and implementing professional development programs.
Participants are taught to use collaborative skills in planning for
staff development programs, to conduct needs assessments, to plan and
implement staff development programs, and to evaluate professional
development programs. In addition, participants focus on various
aspects of adult learning. While this model for teacher training was
developed for use in special education, it could easily be adapted
for use in any inservice or preservice teacher education program.
Copies of a stages of professional development survey and a needs
assessment instrument are appended. (LL)

Training Teachers to Plan Staff Development Programs for Rural Schools

A Presentation

for the

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Training Teachers to Plan Staff Development Programs for Rural Schools

Introduction

Although the greatest number of schools in the United States have been classified as rural, little attention has been given in teacher preparation to unique issues facing rural educators. Hare (1991) points out that the majority of teachers currently employed in rural settings are originally from rural settings themselves. While this familiarity may be helpful to potential rural teaching candidates, it would be far more beneficial if teacher education programs addressed the needs/issues related to rural schools. However, it appears that most of our teacher training programs focus primarily, if not exclusively, on the needs of urban/suburban schools (Campbell, 1986).

What are the unique needs of teachers working in rural school settings? Seifert and Simone (1980) have cited the following characteristics as essential for teachers in rural and small schools: ability and certifiability to teach in more than one grade level or subject area; ability to supervise several extra-curricular activities; ability to adjust to the uniqueness of the community; ability to overcome students' cultural differences; and ability to teach a wide range of abilities in a single classroom. While these characteristics may be helpful in urban/suburban schools, they are almost essential in some rural schools. While there are several universities in the United States which focus on rural teacher training (e.g. Western Montana College, Brigham Young University, Berea Kentucky College, Western Michigan University, University of North Dakota, Murray State University and Western Washington University), it would seem appropriate for more teacher training programs to address the teaching needs related to rural schools and to offer more student teaching opportunities in rural school settings (Horn, 1985). It would also seem advisable for teacher training programs to assist rural schools in developing

staff development programs that would enhance the professional development of rural teachers.

Helge (1981) noted that inadequate staff development has been cited as a major cause of personnel retention problems for rural schools. According to Berkeley and Ludlow (1991), the design and delivery of inservice training for rural educators is complicated by the following three factors: rural schools have limited access to advanced training programs by colleges or universities; rural educators have limited financial support for travel to workshops, conferences and other professional development activities; and attrition among rural educators may impede on-going staff development efforts. Staff development may be an essential answer in addressing the problem of attrition and turn over rates among rural educators.

> "Professional educators in rural America must be able to cope with sparsity, utilize community resources, be creative and visionary, and maintain a learner-centered orientation." (Galbraith, 1992, p. 309)

If rural American educators are to comply with all of the aforementioned expectations, then it seems advisable for rural schools to invest in professional development programs for their teachers. It also seems advisable that teacher training programs provide skill training in the area of professional development or staff development programs. This session highlights such a teacher training program currently in operation in a rural section of Ohio.

Project CREST: A Model Teacher Training Program for Rural Schools

Project CREST (Collaboration for Rural Education Special Teachers) is a federal grant project awarded to Bowling Green State University by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The primary components of Project CREST include the following: 1) a one year master's level teacher training program for rural special educators; 2) a one year mentoring program for veteran rural special educators and first year entering rural special

educators; 3) a skill training program in the art of collaboration; and 4) a skill training program in planning and implementing professional development programs.

This program paired practicing veteran teachers in rural special education with first year novice teachers in special education. These mentor/mentee teaching pairs team taught in the rural classroom of the mentor teacher. In addition to team teaching, they completed coursework from Bowling Green State University leading to a Masters Degree in Special Education with particular emphasis given to collaboration for rural special education personnel.

The mentor and the mentee took turns coming to the distance learning site during the school day for their coursework. When one of the pair would be on site for coursework, the other would be teaching in the rural special education class. At the end of one academic year and one summer, both the mentor and mentee were eligible to receive their Masters Degree upon successful completion of coursework. This allowed mentor teachers to earn a Masters Degree without giving up their contracts, salaries or credit for teaching experience. This project also allowed the mentee teachers to gain one year of mentored teaching experience at the same time they were earning a Masters Degree.

The primary emphasis of the coursework content dealt with learning collaboration skills in order to enhance service delivery for rural special education. The following courses were included in the Masters Degree Program for Project CREST:

EDSE 649: Problems and Issues for Personnel in Rural Special Education, 3 semester hours.
EDSE 680: Foundations and Instructional Strategies for Rural Special Education, 3 semester hours.
EDSE 680: Advanced Instructional Design for Rural Special Education, 3 semester hours.
EDSE 680: Collaboration for Related Educational Services - I, 3 semester hours.
EDSE 680: Collaboration for Related Educational Services - II, 3 semester hours.

EDSE 680: Peer Training as a Change Process in Rural Schools, 3 semester
         hours.
EDSE 641: Practicum in Rural Special Education - I, 6 semester hours.
EDSE 642: Practicum in Rural Special Education - II, 6 semester hours.
EDFI 696: Statistics in Education, 3 semester hours.
EDFI 697: Research in Education, 3 semester hours.
EDSE 680: Professional Development Seminar in Special Education, 1 semester
         hour.

A brief description follows for each of the courses in the project:

EDSE 649: Problems and Issues for Personnel in Rural Special Education, was
modified and related to an understanding of the context of a rural school and
its environment as well as knowledge concerning the state-of-the-art of rural
special education.

EDSE 680: Foundations and Instructional Strategies for Rural Special Education,
a new course, was designed to promote understanding of the differences involved
in serving handicapped students in rural and urban environments as well as
knowledge of effective service delivery models for rural handicapped children
(including low-incidence handicaps such as severely emotionally disturbed,
hearing impaired and visually impaired).

EDSE 680: Advanced Instructional Design for Rural Special Education, a new
course, was designed to address the awareness of alternate resources to provide
services to rural handicapped students and skills to identify alternate
resources.

EDSE 680: Collaboration for Related Educational Services - I, a new course, was
designed to introduce skills needed in working with citizens and agencies in
rural communities to facilitate cooperation among schools and service agencies
to serve handicapped students.

EDSE 680: Collaboration for Related Educational Services - II, a new course, was
designed to facilitate an understanding of personal development skills (a) for
their own professional growth and (b) to build a local support system in their
rural environment.

EDSE 680: Peer Training as a Change Process in Rural Schools, a new course, was
designed to address learning methods and strategies for training others in one's
specific school environment. Participants learn to become trainers of other
adults, thereby extending the concepts of collaboration, learned and practiced
as a part of Project CREST, beyond their own learning experiences, and sharing
with other staff in their home school.

The following courses required minimal modification for use in Project CREST.
These courses already existed, and are presently offered in the program for
graduate students.

EDFI 696: Statistics in Education provided participants with knowledge and
skills related to statistics as a tool in education and research, and will
include descriptive statistics, transformation of scores, sampling and
probability, linear correlation and regression, introduction to statistical
difference, and basic tests of significance. Further, this course provides
participants skills in using statistical methods unique to special populations.

EDFI 697: <u>Research in Education</u> provided participants with knowledge and skills related to research and includes identification and evaluation of research problems, research designs, use of library resources, data gathering, and writing research reports. Unique to Project CREST, this course includes the identification and planning of research projects relative to rural special education settings which team members will then complete during the later phases of project participation.

EDSE 680: <u>Professional Development Seminar in Special Education</u> provided participants with advisement regarding the graduate program in special education. This course includes information on available support services for graduate students, faculty research, areas of specialization, forms needing attention for completion of graduate studies, and other related topics.

EDSE 662: <u>Practicum in Rural Special Education - I</u> provided participants with a planned team teaching experience in a rural special education setting. In particular, this practicum experience emphasized those skills attained in EDSE 680: Foundations and Instructional Strategies for Rural Special Education, EDSE 680: Advanced Instructional Design for Rural Special Education, and EDSE 680: Collaboration for Related Educational Services - I.

EDSE 662: <u>Practicum in Rural Special Education - II</u> provided participants with a second planned team teaching experience in a rural special education setting. In particular, this second practicum experience emphasized those skills attained in EDSE 680: Peer Training as a Change Process in Rural Schools, and EDSE 680: Collaboration for Related Educational Services - II.

Upon completion of these courses, the Project CREST participants had the opportunity to develop: a) knowledge of particular characteristics related to rural schools and rural environments; b) knowledge of the needs involved in the service delivery of special education in rural settings; and c) skills needed to use collaboration as a tool for expanding special education service needs for rural school districts. In addition, a one year mentoring program was accomplished. The mentor and mentee teams completed their Masters Degrees in one academic year and one summer period of time. Further, the participants engaged in rural special education research and numerous collaborative projects.

While the primary focus of this teacher inservice/preservice training program emanated from Special Education Teacher Training, the collaborative skills were applied to activities that expanded the scope of the special educator outside of their own special education classrooms. Examples of the collaboration projects in the Teacher Training Project included the following:

<u>Community Resources Collaboration Project</u>. Teachers were taught collaborative skills to use in working with a specific community resource. (e.g., American Red Cross, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, local banks, etc.)

<u>Auxiliary Services Collaboration Project</u>. Teachers were taught collaborative skills to use in working with support services within their school district. (e.g., School Psychologist, Guidance Counselor, Speech Therapist, etc.)

<u>Systems Change Project</u>. Teachers were taught collaborative skills to use in making changes within the school system. (e.g., Mainstreaming Practices, grading Practices, Working with At-Risk Students, etc.)

<u>Parent Collaboration Project</u>. Teachers were taught collaborative skills to use in working with parents. (e.g., Parent Support Groups, Parent Newsletters, Parent Volunteer Groups, etc.)

<u>Mainstreaming Collaboration Project</u>. Teachers were taught collaborative skills to use in mainstreaming students into the regular classroom. (e.g., IEP involvement, Homework, Instructional Accommodations, etc.)

<u>Volunteer Collaboration Project</u>. Teachers were taught collaborative skills to use in developing volunteer projects. (e.g., Peer Tutoring, Senior Citizen Volunteer Projects, Student Volunteer Service Projects, etc.)

<u>Staff Development Collaboration Project</u>. Teachers were taught collaborative skills to use in developing staff development programs at school. (e.g., Inservices on Mainstreaming, Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder, Competency Testing, Collaboration, etc.)

In addition to the preceding projects, collaborative assignments were inherent within the very nature of the grant project. The mentor teacher and mentee teacher worked together in carrying out cooperative planning, teaching and evaluation. They also worked together to conduct research on various research topics. While this model for teacher training was developed and used in a Special Education Teacher Training Program, it could be easily adapted to use in any teacher training inservice or preservice program. For example, the Staff Development Collaboration Projects were often designed for <u>all</u> faculty within the rural schools.

<u>Training Rural Teachers to Plan Collaborative Staff Development Programs</u>

Project CREST participants gained most of their training on how to plan collaborative staff development programs through the two collaboration courses and through the course entitled "Peer Training as a Change Process in Rural

Schools." The participants in Project CREST were taught to use collaborative skills in planning for staff development programs. Through collaborative efforts they learned to conduct needs assessments, to plan and implement staff development programs and to evaluate these professional development programs. Participants were presented with several models of collaborative program planning and implementation. Examples of the collaborative models included the model used by West, Idol and Cannon (1989) using a six stage process (entry/goal setting; problem identification; intervention recommendations; implementation of recommendations; evaluation and follow-up/redesign). Other collaboration models were also introduced such as the model used by Friend and Cook (1992) where there is a five stage approach (establishing the program and its goals; planning for implementation; preparing for implementation; implementing the program; and maintaining the program).

Within the collaboration courses, project participants were taught to identify at what stage(s) of professional development the inservice participants were. Participants practiced using the Stages of Professional Development Survey developed by Parsons and Meyers (1984). See Figure 1. They were also taught to use various needs assessment tools such as the Needs Assessment Instrument: Training in Collaborative Consultation Skills for Teacher, Support Staff and Administrators developed by West, Idol and Cannon (1989). See Figure 2. The two texts used for the collaboration courses were Collaboration in the Schools: An Inservice and Preservice Curriculum for Teachers, Support Staff and Administrators by West, Idol and Cannon (1989) and Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals by Friend and Cook (1992).

Within the "Peer Training as a Change Process in Rural Schools" course, project participants were taught the basic steps for developing staff professional development programs or inservice programs. Idol (1983) was used

as a source for the University of Illinois Resource/Consulting Teacher Program

model which was introduced to the participants. This framework for conducting

inservice programs included the following components:

1. Gaining administrative support
2. Selecting topics
3. Surveying teacher needs
4. Designing a workshop outline
5. Eliciting preliminary feedback
6. Conducting the workshop
7. Obtaining evaluative feedback

In addition to learning skills relative to carrying out each of the seven

previously cited steps for conducting inservices, the participants spent a great

deal of time focusing on various aspects of adult learning. The primary text

used for this course was Adult Learning Methods by Galbraith (Ed.) (1990). This

text highlights characteristics and needs of the adult learner as well as

providing a variety of methods and techniques to use with the adult learner.

More information is provided on the adult learner in rural settings through the

"Advanced Instructional Design" course. The text used for that course,

Education in the Rural American Community by Galbraith (Ed.) (1992), highlights

information about the adult learner and adult education in the rural area. The

primary assignment of the "Peer Training" course is the completion of an

inservice or staff development program by the participants at each of their

respective schools or school districts. This assignment is organized according

to the seven basic components previously cited by Idol (1983). Participants in

the first year cf Project CREST completed staff development programs on the

topics of "inclusion" or "collaboration." A number of the staff development

programs have been for regular and special educators on the topic of inclusion.

The most common form of staff development programs have been through one or two

day inservice programs held after school. In addition to implementing inservice

programs at their own schools all of the project participants assisted the three

project faculty in planning and implementing two regional inservice programs on

"collaboration" for teachers in neighboring rural communities.

Staff development is an essential element for our ever-changing rural school systems. Teachers must become learners involved in lifelong education in order to keep up with changing needs of rural America. Teacher training institutions should pick up the challenge and begin training teachers on how to better address the needs of staff development for our rural professional educators.

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Figure 1

STAGES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY
[Module 8]

This survey can be used to help consultees grow personally and professionally by considering their current stage of professional development. The best way to learn about the use of this scale is to fill it out yourself. Fill out the survey with reference to your current professional situation; then use the completed survey as a basis for initiating a discussion with a colleague. After the discussion, record process notes pointing to the experienced effects of participating in such a discussion. Such process notes may facilitate your empathic understanding of consultees' experience when this survey is used in your own consultation practice.

The survey asks the respondent to estimate the degree to which each statement accurately describes the issues and concerns currently experienced within his or her profession (1 = very much; 2 = much; 3 = somewhat; 4 = little; 5 = not at all).

STAGE 1: SURVIVAL

_____ I am trying to become clear about each of the job responsibilities and duties tied to my current post.

_____ I make a particular effort to perform competently in each area that is used to assess my performance.

_____ I want to demonstrate my competence to others.

_____ I want to develop new relationships with my colleagues.

_____ I am concerned about establishing professional routines that will help me accomplish the demands of my job.

STAGE 2: CONSOLIDATION

_____ I feel competent in each of my job-related tasks.

_____ I feel that I belong among my colleagues.

_____ I am beginning to identify areas for professional growth and skill development.

_____ I participate in continuing education experiences in order to upgrade myself in terms of status and salary.

_____ I participate in the voluntary inservice training provided at work.

STAGE 3: RENEWAL

_____ I have mastered all the basic skills and tasks associated with my job.

_____ I have been functioning at this high level of mastery for over a year.

_____ I am tired of doing the same old thing in my job.

_____ I would be interested in taking on new job challenges.

_____ I am interested in learning new ideas that have been developed recently.

_____ I have begun experimenting with new approaches to my job.

STAGE 4: MATURITY

_____ I have integrated a variety of professional approaches into my work style.

_____ I have developed a successful approach to the performance of my professional duties.

_____ I am satisfied with the extent and quality of my professional accomplishments.

_____ I feel that my contributions will have an impact on my professional and work setting.

Figure 2

NEEDS ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT
Training in Collaborative Consultation Skills for Teachers, Support Staff, and Administrators

Name _____ Position _____

School/Unit _____

Instructions: The skills listed below have been determined by a national panel of experts to be essential for teachers, support staff, and administrators engaging in collaborative consultation for the benefit of handicapped and at-risk students. Please read each skill carefully. Then *rate your need for training* in each skill using the scale listed below. Thank you for taking your valuable time to complete this instrument so that we may better respond to your training needs.

Training Needs Rating Scale

1 = High (1st priority)

2 = Above Average (2nd priority)

3 = Average (3rd priority)

4 = Below Average (4th priority)

5 = None (lowest priority)

CONSULTATION THEORY/MODELS

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 1. Practice reciprocity of roles between consultant and consultee in facilitating the consultation process.

_____ 2. Demonstrate knowledge of various stages/phases of the consultation process.

_____ 3. Assume joint responsibility for identifying each stage of the consultation process and adjusting behavior accordingly.

_____ 4. Match consultation approaches to specific consultation situations, settings, and needs.

RESEARCH ON CONSULTATION THEORY, TRAINING, AND PRACTICE

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 5. Translate relevant consultation research findings into effective school-based consultation practice.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 6. Exhibit ability to be caring, respectful, empathic, congruent, and open in consultation interactions.

_____ 7. Establish and maintain rapport with all persons involved in the consultation process, in both formal and informal interactions.

_____ 8. Identify and implement appropriate responses to the stage of professional development of all persons involved in the consultation process.

_____ 9. Maintain positive self-concept and enthusiastic attitude throughout the consultation process.

_____ 10. Demonstrate willingness to learn from others throughout the consultation process.

_____ 11. Facilitate progress in consultation situations by managing personal stress, maintaining calm in time of crisis, taking risks, and remaining flexible and resilient.

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Figure 2 – Continued

NEEDS ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT, P. 2

_____ 12. Respect divergent points of view, acknowledging the right to hold different views and to act in accordance with personal convictions.

INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 13. Communicate clearly and effectively in oral and written form.

_____ 14. Use active on-going listening and responding skills to facilitate the consultation process (e.g., acknowledging, paraphrasing, reflecting, clarifying, elaborating, summarizing).

_____ 15. Determine own and others' willingness (readiness) to enter consultative relationship.

_____ 16. Adjust consultation approach to the learning stage of individuals involved in the consultation process.

_____ 17. Exhibit ability to grasp and validate overt/covert meaning and affect in communications (perceptive).

_____ 18. Interpret nonverbal communications of self and others (e.g., eye contact, body language, personal boundaries in space) in appropriate context.

_____ 19. Interview effectively to elicit information, share information, explore problems, set goals and objectives.

_____ 20. Pursue issues (e.g., problems/situations) with appropriate persistence once they arise in the consultation process.

_____ 21. Give and solicit continuous feedback that is specific, immediate, and objective.

_____ 22. Give credit to others for their ideas and accomplishments.

_____ 23. Manage conflict and confrontation skillfully throughout the consultation process to maintain collaborative relationships.

_____ 24. Manage timing of consultation activities to facilitate mutual decision making at each stage of the consultation process.

_____ 25. Apply the principle of positive reinforcement to one another in the collaborative team situation.

_____ 26. Be willing and feel confident enough to say, "I don't know . . . let's find out."

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 27. Recognize that successful and lasting solutions require commonality of goals and collaboration throughout all phases of the problem-solving process.

_____ 28. Develop a variety of data collection techniques for problem identification and clarification.

_____ 29. Generate viable alternatives through brainstorming techniques characterized by active listening, nonjudgmental responding, and appropriate reframing.

_____ 30. Evaluate intervention alternatives to anticipate possible consequences, narrow and combine choices, and assign priorities.

_____ 31. Integrate solutions into a flexible, feasible, and easily implemented Action Plan relevant to all persons affected by the problem.

_____ 32. Adopt a "pilot" problem-solving attitude, recognizing that adjustments to the Action Plan are to be expected.

_____ 33. Remain available throughout implementation for support, modeling, and/or assistance in modification of the Action Plan.

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_____ 34. Redesign, maintain, or discontinue interventions using data-based evaluation.

_____ 35. Use observation, feedback, and interviewing skills to increase objectivity and mutuality throughout the problem-solving process.

Figure 2 - Continued

NEEDS ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT, P. 3

SYSTEMS CHANGE

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 36. Develop role as a change agent (e.g., implementing strategies for gaining support, overcoming resistance).

_____ 37. Identify benefits and negative effects that could result from change efforts.

EQUITY ISSUES AND VALUES/BELIEF SYSTEMS

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 38. Facilitate equal learning opportunities by showing respect for individual differences in physical appearance, race, sex, handicap, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or ability.

_____ 39. Advocate for services that accommodate the educational, social, and vocational needs of all students, handicapped and nonhandicapped.

_____ 40. Encourage implementation of laws and regulations designed to provide appropriate education for all handicapped students.

_____ 41. Use principles of least restrictive environment (LRE) in all decisions regarding handicapped students.

_____ 42. Modify myths, beliefs, and attitudes that impede successful social and educational integration of handicapped students into the least restrictive environment.

_____ 43. Recognize, respect, and respond appropriately to the effects of personal values and belief systems of self and others in the consultation process.

EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION EFFECTIVENESS

General and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation will:

_____ 44. Ensure that persons involved in planning and implementing the consultation process are also involved in its evaluation.

_____ 45. Establish criteria for evaluating input, process, and outcome variables affected by the consultation process.

_____ 46. Engage in self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses to modify personal behaviors influencing the consultation process.

_____ 47. Use continuous evaluative feedback to maintain, revise, or terminate consultation activities.