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ABSTRACT

This monograph presents nine articles that describe innovative programs within small special education teacher education programs at a variety of institutions of higher education. The papers are: (1) "Furman University: A Field-Based Model for Small Liberal Arts Teacher Education Programs" (Shirley A. Ritter and Lesley A. Quast); (2) "Providing a Laboratory Experience for Preservice Special Educators in a Small Special Education Program through Collaboration with the Local Education Agency" (Roberta Strosnider); (3) "Mentorship: An Early Step in Teacher Preparation" (Judith S. Finkel); (4) "The Flagler College Education Program: A Focus on Special Education" (Michelle Gregoire and others); (5) "The Challenges of Implementing a Master of Arts Education Program within the Context of a Small, Liberal Arts College" (Christene K. Bennett and Andrew Frese); (6) "Use of Telecommunications To Enhance Student Teaching Supervision in a Small College Special Education Program" (Rachelle M. Bruno and others); (7) "Recruitment and Retention: Model Program for Training Special Educators" (Elizabeth D. Evans and others); (8) "Supervising Field-Based Experiences: Dealing with Limited Faculty, Time, and Money" (Robbie Ludy); and (9) "Developing New Program Options through a Distance Education Model" (Christine Cheney and Rhoda Cummings). (Papers contain references.) (DB)

Small Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs: Innovative Programming and Solutions to Problems in Higher Education

A Monograph Published by
The Small Special Education Programs Caucus
of the Teacher Education Division of the
Council for Exceptional Children

Edited by
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October, 1994

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PREFACE

The Small Special Education Programs Caucus has been a part of the Teacher Education Division for more than 10 years. It is composed of professionals from colleges and universities throughout the United States who work in special education personnel preparation programs that do not include doctoral studies. The Caucus was formed to provide a voice for the concerns of the smaller programs within the business of TED and to provide opportunities for the members to network, access information, and enhance their professional development. Approximately, three years ago the Caucus decided to publish this monograph to highlight the accomplishments of small special education programs.

There are many problems currently plaguing higher education and, specifically, teacher education . They include lack of financial and personnel resources, the costly nature of good teacher education, the rapidly changing needs of the schools, and the institutional barriers to change and innovation in university bureaucracies. This monograph includes a variety of articles that describe innovative programs and/or responses to some of the these problems common to small special education programs and institutions of higher education. It is hoped that this monograph will be of benefit in examining possible, viable alternatives for quality teacher education programming.

The members of the Small Special Education Programs Caucus wish to thank the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children for providing the vehicle for voicing our concerns and the opportunities to interact with all of our colleagues in teacher education. This monograph would not have been realized without the opportunity to connect through TED.

Barbara J. Reid, Editor
Member of the Small Special
Education Programs Caucus
October, 1994

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Furman University: A Field-Based Model for Small Liberal Arts Teacher Education Programs

Shirley A. Ritter & Lesley A. Quast
Furman University
Greenville, SC

Through an extensive process of redesigning the Furman University teacher education program, the primary purpose has shifted to focus on preparing students to be effective teachers in a pluralistic society. A major emphasis of the program provides coordinated, sequential, and extensive field-based experiences within professional development schools as well as other school settings with exemplary programs. This provides incremental field experiences with the range of diversity found within the entire school population, both general and special education. As the education profession moves towards actualizing models of inclusion, the experiences of teachers in preparation develop knowledge and understanding of all children and youth as well as various effective methods and procedures for teaching them.

Changes in the special education certification program are part of the redesigned program affecting all Furman University undergraduates who certify to teach. In South Carolina, special education can be an initial area of certification and completed in conjunction with the undergraduate program. Until recently, this was the case at Furman. Most undergraduates elected to certify in two areas of special education, some certified in one area of special education as well as in elementary education, while others chose to certify in one area of special education. Rarely, students certified in three areas of special education. Beginning in the late 1980's, the Education Department systematically began to examine its certification program for all students seeking initial certification. The outcome is the recent approval by the university of a redesigned teacher education program.

Our Restructuring Process

Before describing the restructuring process. an overview of the university is appropriate. Furman University, located in Greenville, South Carolina, is a private, independent, liberal arts institution, with approximately 2500 undergraduate students and 180 full-time faculty members. The Department of Education is one of 24 departments in the college. The program in special education is one of four in the department's undergraduate program; the others are elementary, early childhood, and secondary certification. The department has 15 full-time faculty members who teach in both the undergraduate and graduate programs in education. Two and one-half of these positions are designated as special education positions.

The redesign process occurred over a six year period of time with intents of it being an on-going endeavor. Prior to beginning the self-study, a committee comprised of several Department of Education faculty members thoroughly researched the literature to best understand needs of our future teachers. This took one academic year, after which the Department of Education voted to pursue a study of the four certification programs. Recognizing that time to engage in the depth of study needed and the intricacies of change processes, grants were submitted to obtain external resources for retreats, faculty release time, and expert consultants. In addition, support was sought for secretarial assistance, materials, travel, telephone, and copying. Support was obtained from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and The South Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching and School Leadership, a state-funded project.

Within three years of initiating the redesign process in the teacher education program, faculty of Furman University and key personnel of the Northwest Area of The School District of Greenville County met regularly to discuss the feasibility of establishing professional development schools in the geographic area surrounding the college. After one and a half years of systematic planning, a formal partnership was consummated with the implementation of the professional development school concept at three elementary

schools, two middle schools, and one high school, beginning in the 1992-1993 school year.

Furman University, in consortium with four other South Carolina institutions of higher education, was designated in 1991 as a national model site to implement and disseminate results of the John Goodlad postulates required for excellence in teacher education. As a "Goodlad Site" Furman receives a small amount of fiscal support, and oversight consultant support through the Center for Teacher Renewal at the University of Washington. The primary role of Furman University in the Goodlad effort is to serve as a model for other small, private liberal arts teacher education programs in the restructuring initiative. The concept of professional development schools is one of the major tenets of the postulates.

With the emphasis of the Furman University teacher education program to prepare students to be effective teachers in a pluralistic society, a theme evolved reflecting "Learners and Learning in a Changing World". From this theme, six strands emerged. The strands are infused throughout the course of study, with prospective teachers acquiring knowledge and skills related to:

1) the view of school as a culture of diverse learners with varied educational needs,
2) oral and written skills of communication,
3) technology in educational settings and processes,
4) the role of assessment in instruction,
5) the importance of research findings on teacher decisions, and
6) professionalism and lifelong learning.

Each course taught in the Education Department was redesigned by a team rather than by any individual faculty member. The majority of the teams represented individuals with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise. One of the major commitments of the Furman Department of Education is to ensure that every potential student in its program has numerous, comprehensive, and systematic opportunities to participate in directed experiences in local professional development schools and other exemplary programs prior to student teaching. A field experience program was

created in which every student progresses from making casual school visits guided by global goals to learning specific observation and evaluation skills, assisting in the classroom, participating in micro-teaching lessons, and reflecting on and discussing what occurred in the classes and schools in which the students have had experiences leading up to the assumption of major responsibilities acquired during student teaching.

The restructuring process has been lengthy, intense, time consuming, frustrating, challenging, exhausting... and rewarding. The result is a compromise, a program endorsed by all faculty members, one which is reflected in the theme and the strands, and one in which the teachers in preparation will have more opportunities for directed experience and development of skills to teach all students.

Teacher Certification in Special Education

Students choosing to certify in special education must complete all requirements for the elementary or secondary major with certification and may specialize in one or more of the following areas: mental retardation, learning disabilities, and emotional/behavioral disorders. The course of study includes two zero credit hour requirements (Education Labs which are experientially based) and other courses which earn from one to four credit hours; the majority of the courses are either three or four credit hours. Every credit course contains some field experience component.

All students considering teacher certification enroll in Education Labs I and II. These zero credit hour courses are for prospective teachers and for students exploring education as a career possibility. Education Lab I is taken in conjunction with the first of two introductory courses, Perspectives on American Education, which examines the American teacher and profession of teaching in an increasingly diverse society; and the historical, sociological, and philosophical foundations of education. The objectives of Education Lab I include: a) the development of basic observation skills; b) observation and participation in a selection of public school settings that exemplify the school as a multi-cultural community of diverse learners with varied educational needs; c) examination of the skills and abilities required of teachers who are engaged with the

education of diverse learners ; d) critique of video excerpts of model lessons; e) exploration of teaching as a profession through case studies, shadowing, and interviews; and, f) development of self-evaluation skills through reflective teaching and decision-making. The Education Lab I is coordinated by a master's level staff person with extensive experience in the public school at all levels. While there are designated "milestone" class sessions of the Perspectives on American Education course to process the experiences of Education Lab I which directly relate to course topics, there are additional seminars and one-on-one sessions which are directed by the Coordinator of Field Experiences.

The other introductory foundations course is Human Development, which addresses physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of development from conception through senior adulthood. This course provides a field-based component which is independent of the zero credit Education Labs. Applications to parent and teacher education along with on-site observations are conducted to illustrate developmental stages in relation to educational goals.

Education Lab II occurs after the completion of the Perspectives on American Education course and Education Lab I. It may or may not coincide with the taking of the Human Development course but is to be completed prior to enrolling in any methods course. The objectives of the Education Lab II field-experience are: a) identification and practice of basic tutorial skills; b) initiation of a videotape component for the portfolio required for admission to the teacher education program to include a videotaped teaching lesson, reflection on the lesson, selection of a faculty member to serve as mentor for the lesson, and identification of strengths and areas for improvement; and, c) identification and use of basic instructional technology to enhance teaching and learning. As with Education Lab I, the Coordinator of Field Experiences teaches and directs the experiences during seminars, on-site, and individualized sessions to meet specific needs of the undergraduate students involved.

It should be noted that all undergraduate students will complete at least a portion of their Education Lab field experiences in one or more of the professional development schools. When this

occurs, the faculty liaisons for professional development schools are involved in on-site monitoring of the experiences of the Education Lab students, which requires collaboration with the Coordinator of Field Experiences as well as the school personnel. In a recent pilot study conducted by Furman at two professional development schools, the Education Lab was well systematized and monitored with frequent conversations occurring amongst the Lab students, teachers, and university faculty liaisons. The results of the pilot indicated that it was a more qualitative and comprehensive experience for the undergraduate students than the traditional field experience program.

As the teacher in preparation progresses in the elementary major program or the secondary certification program, the various methods and procedures courses offered in the Education Department (Language Development and Children's Literature, Reading and Writing in the Elementary School, Social Studies in the Elementary School, Science in the Elementary School, Discipline and Classroom Management; or Methods of Teaching in the Secondary School and Reading in the Content Area) systematically involve field experiences. Similarly, some of the methods and procedures courses taught in other departments (e.g. Art, Health and Exercise Science, Music, and Mathematics) also incorporate related field-based requirements. The intent of these experiences is to develop skills specific to the teaching content of those courses and require refinement of lesson delivery, teaching in various organizational formats, use of differing styles of effective teaching, and more sophisticated self-evaluation and reflection on teaching through additional videotaped segments.

In coordination with elementary or secondary certification, students at Furman can opt to certify in at least one area of special education. This coursework is additional to the major course of study and, for the elementary major, may be completed in four years with one summer or, for the secondary major, may be completed in an extra summer plus two terms, with many of the courses earning graduate credit. Concurrent with the coursework in special education, students begin their systematic field-based experiences in

settings which are specialized to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities.

All students' individual backgrounds, experiences, and interests are very much taken into account when planning field-based experiences. While there are certain requirements every student must complete, a student's particular preferences are accommodated as appropriate. Since the certification in special education is Kindergarten through Grade 12, field experiences cover the range, and, in fact include both early childhood special education and post secondary experiences. Beginning with the Introduction to Special Education course, students work several hours each week in more than one setting with students with disabilities. Students complete a checklist of roles taken during their field experience, which are reviewed regularly to ensure that each student participates in a variety of roles. Additionally students participate in at least two field trips to preschool and post-secondary sites. Characteristics courses continue with field-based observations of school-age students, the school environment, review of curricular materials, and initial acquisition of an understanding of the "whole-of-school" program for any one student. Procedures courses have the university students heavily involved with preschool or school-age students, typically working directly with school students in individual and small group formats. Since every student in special education completes at least one pre-student teaching practicum placement and a minimum of one-half of the student teaching assignment in leadership roles in classroom settings, there are opportunities to provide at least one placement with younger students and one placement in a setting for older students. Frequently a teacher in preparation "knows" she or he does not want a particular age or grade level, but with the possibility that employment with this "non-preferred" age or grade level might be the only position offered, students are told at the outset of their course of study that they will be required to complete field-based experiences across the grade levels. Occasionally, we even get a "convert" to this previously "non preferred" level!

The field experiences in special education which occur within the professional development schools are less traditional than within other settings. The faculty liaison collaborates with the teaching faculty member (and may be one in the same!) to coordinate the requirements for the particular experience. This usually means opportunities for the teacher in preparation to work with more than one special education teacher, related service professionals, school psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker, parents, teaching assistants, and general classroom teachers in whose classes the students with disabilities may be included. In the student teaching experience a split placement provides experience in both areas of certification being sought. When possible, both placements are made within the same school. The student teacher in special education then becomes a cohort group member with other student teachers in that school. The faculty liaison and all cooperating teachers and other involved personnel regularly meet to discuss the experiences. A triad model of supervision and feedback is used with student teaching wherein the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher and the student teacher each exchange the roles of teacher, mentor and evaluator of lessons which are videotaped. This permits the university supervisor to occasionally conduct demonstration lessons and keep her or his skills in tune, with feedback from the student teacher and cooperating teacher in the mentor and evaluator roles. The mentor observes the lesson for consistency with the lesson plan and for the successes of the lesson dynamics. The evaluator observes the lesson for the areas which need to be improved. All three persons are present for each of the triad model lessons, performing whichever role is assumed for that time, then they confer during and after the viewing of the videotape. The triad model was adapted from the professional development partnership at Brigham Young University and is currently being piloted in two professional development schools in the Furman partnership with plans to expand the use of the model in other exemplary settings within the next two years.

Placing the students on an individualized basis can be time consuming, however it has been found to be well worth the effort.

When a Furman student indicates an interest in an area of special education, one of the three faculty members talks at length with the student to get to know her or him, even though it is likely she has taught or supervised the student in earlier coursework. This usually involves several discussions with the student which are held both formally and informally. When students learn of the responsibilities she or he will eventually be assuming in procedures courses, practicum, and student teaching sites, there is often a degree of anxiety and concern. However, not only are students assured of support, guidance, and incremental expectations, but there is follow through on this commitment by the faculty at Furman. While the majority of the field-based work is the responsibility of the faculty in the Program in Special Education, other Department of Education faculty and faculty from other departments, as appropriate, are involved. Also utilized are professionals located within the community. In the Greenville area, there are quite a number of persons with a diversity of expertise from which we can draw.

At the completion of the four- to five-year program in special education, Furman students are certified to teach in elementary or secondary education and at least one area of special education. They leave Furman as strong first year teachers; enroll in graduate school, in which they compete quite favorably; or make other related (or unrelated) career choices. Graduates indicate their high level of satisfaction with the individualized emphasis and heavily field-based program. With the revised program, one result is the increase in sequential, incremental, and coordinated field placements in both general and special education settings, many of which have been in professional development schools. Furman University, therefore, expects to continue to enjoy the preparation of well-qualified and certified professionals in the field of special education with a continuing effort to be current in its approaches.

Providing A Laboratory Experience For Preservice Special Educators In A Small Special Education Program Through Collaboration with the Local Education Agency

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This article focuses on a collaborative venture between a local education agency and a small special education teacher preparation program . The goals of the project are to provide opportunities for developmentally disabled students attending a special education facility to obtain exposure to the community and to receive instruction in language arts and for the preservice special educators to obtain experience in an on-campus supervised laboratory setting. In its third year of implementation, the program has provided positive opportunities for students with developmental disabilities and for preservice special educators.

In the effort to reform teacher education and to improve the state of the art in teacher education, more field-based experiences have been recommended (Fisher, 1988). In agreement with this movement, Marozas and May (1988) point out that merely tacking on additional courses will not result in better teachers, but that course content will need to ensure that students develop the skills they will need as teachers. They further report that competency based teacher education will result in more effective teachers than a program based only on certification requirements. Westling, Koorland, and Rose (1981) found that superior teachers as a group had more practicum experience including experience teaching exceptional children in their preservice education. Students in the Rock Creek Project are receiving experience teaching exceptional students in a highly structured environment.

Adopted by the Professional Standards and Practice Standing Committee of the Council for Exceptional Children in 1992, the Common Core of Knowledge and Skills Essential for All Beginning Special Education Teachers provides a minimal set of requirements for special educators entering the profession. Selected standards

from that list have been used to determine which skills the preservice students are demonstrating in the project.

This project gives preservice special educators an opportunity to plan in a collaborative atmosphere with each other and their professor for the entire program. Marozas and May (1988) report that preservice special educators should learn how to work with paraprofessionals, so students at the college who do not have the prerequisites for this course work with the students as volunteer paraprofessionals. For the most part these student volunteers are sophomores and juniors who in their senior year will participate as preservice special educators.

The project is planned in a collaborative venture between the self-contained home school in the Frederick County Public Schools, Frederick, Maryland, special education majors, and a special education professor from Hood College, Frederick, Maryland. As Sandholtz and Merseth (1992) report, the demands and rewards of collaboration in teacher education change as projects mature. This project began as an opportunity for adolescent students with developmental disabilities to go out into the community and to receive language arts training in a computer laboratory as a side benefit in the teacher's mind. It began as an opportunity to provide a "professional development school" type concept with the local school but to bring it to campus where the computer laboratory was available. Over the two and one half years of the project, the goals have become more defined, and each year the contributions of both the local school and the college have increased. For example, the local school now provides the cost of transportation, and the college now provides a more intense academic program to the students.

The academic program entails one half day per week of actual laboratory experience on the college campus. It consists of four components. They are Assessment, Planning for Instruction, Implementation of Instruction and Management and Professionalism. In order for a student with developmental disabilities to participate parental permission must be granted. Parents are informed of student progress via the classroom teacher and invited to the open house on the college campus. In each of these areas preservice

special educators have an opportunity to put the content they are learning in their language arts methods class to work in the computer laboratory.

Assessment

In the area of assessment, the special education majors develop curriculum based assessments in the area of language arts for administration to the students they will be teaching. Each preservice special educator is initially assigned two students with developmental disabilities. By the end of the semester the special education majors will have an on hands opportunity to work with all the developmentally disabled students in the program. This provides each preservice educator with exposure to developmental disabilities such as mental retardation, hearing impaired, seriously emotionally disturbed, cerebral palsy, pervasive developmental delay and other health impaired. A language experience approach based on the trip to Hood College from the local school is utilized to determine how many words the student will communicate, how many words he will be able to read, how many words he will be able to type into the computer, and how many questions he will be able to answer about the story. Preservice special educators also make note of other factors such as management issues, differing learning styles, etc. Results are corroborated with the classroom teacher. Charts are made to demonstrate progress toward goals and objectives set for students. Individualized five week programs are written for each student including present levels of performance, long term goals, short term behavioral objectives, and evaluation procedures. From these tools, instructional planning can begin.

Planning for Instruction

Westling, et.al. (1981) and MCDaniel(1988-89) report that clinical opportunities give preservice special education teachers experience conducting self-evaluation of instruction, preparing and organizing materials for implementation, directing the activities of a paraprofessional and consulting with other preservice teachers resulting in their becoming more effective teachers. Preservice special educators prepare plans based on student needs for their classes a week before teaching the lessons. Preservice speci

education students have the opportunity to receive feed-back prior to teaching a lesson from the professor and from their peers. Peer coaching and problem solving is strongly encouraged. In addition to determining quality of the written lesson, all lessons are practiced in the computer laboratory before implementation. Students revise plans before actually providing instruction based on the practice and feed-back. College students also plan for an opening, story time, snacks, and effective utilization of paraprofessionals in a collaborative manner.

Implementation of Instruction

In the area of implementation, preservice special educators provide their lessons in a computer laboratory with supervision provided by the teacher from the local school and the college professor. The two collaborate on appropriate practices. Each preservice educator is required to maintain a log of difficult situations encountered and the strategies implemented to solve the difficulty. Students are assisted by paraprofessionals for whom they are responsible.

Management

The college students have an opportunity to use management strategies and techniques in a safe atmosphere with the teacher and the professor there to intervene if the student has an explosive situation and cannot manage it. Preservice special education students can consult with the teacher, other college students, or the professor in determining how to solve a management problem. College students have the opportunity to utilize crisis prevention or intervention strategies in an environment that is supportive. This provides the college student with a variety of strategies and the ability to determine those strategies which they can implement with comfort and ease. As Greer (1992) states, detached concern cannot be taught in lecture, but it can be taught through experience.

Professionalism

In terms of professionalism, the preservice special educator not only observes professionalism from the teacher and professor but is able to take what is to some an abstract concept and determine for themselves the role professionalism plays in a classroom. College

students have the opportunity to refer to the CEC Code of Ethics not just as a document but as a tool for improving the quality of their professionalism.

The students from the local school have shown modest academic gains in the six week (one morning per week) sessions offered first semester of the last three years, but the teacher reports that the social skills they have developed as a result of their time at college have been rewarding. Parents of participating students have also seen social skill development and are enthusiastic about the program. The students who have taken part in the program in previous years help prepare the new students through the use of modeling and role-playing behavioral expectations for their trip to college and take great pride in their accomplishments at the computer laboratory.

For a small college special education program to set up a collaborative arrangement with a school, there must be a need for both parties that can be met as a result of this partnership. Skills taught and learned in the campus laboratory setting are then reinforced in the self-contained classroom setting. This is made possible by a networking of materials. Sandholtz and Merseth(1992) report that the program must provide adequate rewards to compensate for the already long list of demands on the public school teacher. Future program plans call for expansion into the area of mathematics to correspond with the second semester mathematics methods course.

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Mentorship: An Early Step in Teacher Preparation

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Collaboration among education professionals is in the forefront of education change. It is a process of shared decision-making in governance, planning, delivery and ervaluation of programs, and education. One way to make changes in the preparation of teachers is to listen and work with today's teachers in today's classrooms to learn what tomorrow's teachers should know. Through a mentorship program developed at West Chester University in Pennsylvania, a unique model of cooperation, collaboration and field experiences is beginning to establish a communication partnership among professionals and pre-professions for the purpose of information exchange, faculty development, and student involvement.

The field of special education can be characterized as a profession in transition and the changing role and function of special education teachers has not yet been clearly defined. Although various authorities argue for change in the training for pre-service professionals, there is no model which can be viewed as representative of the best practices in Special Education (Gable, Young & Hendrickson, 1987). However, collaboration among education professionals is in the forefront of educational change and is identified as one of the characteristics of successful schools (Pugach & Allen-Meares, 1985). Collaboration is a process of shared decision-making in governance, planning, delivery and evaluation of programs, and education. Yet, in the world of the college educator isolation from the field of teaching is the norm while team decision making, professional collaboration and joint planning with teachers in the public schools is the exception. At the present time, most programs for collaboration focus on teachers already in the public schools and preservice preparation in team training is not stressed (Golighly, 1987).

How can we train pre-service teachers in this process if we ourselves are not part of it? If the goal of teacher preparation programs is to provide experiences which guide preservice teachers to become effective

teachers (Blanton, 1992), it is necessary to structure the preservice program to provide instruction and experience in collaboration and team building.

One way to make changes in the preparation of teachers is to listen and work with today's teachers in today's classrooms to learn what tomorrow's teachers should know. Professors need to continually observe and study change in practice in the public schools and must understand the implications of these changes in order for the preservice coursework to reflect new directions. The education professor and the public school teacher must work on an equal basis to link theory and practice. Teachers in the field need to have input into the training of preservice teachers. College students must participate in this model of cooperation and collaboration as the cornerstone of new practice in education.

Through a mentorship program developed at West Chester University in Pennsylvania, a unique model of cooperation, collaboration and field experiences is beginning to address these issues. The project establishes a communication partnership among professionals and pre-professions for the purpose of information exchange, faculty development, and student involvement. Although mentorships to enhance the beginning teacher's knowledge and improve skills is an accepted way of learning, this proposal incorporating the university professor, the teacher in the field and the pre-service teacher is not typical. This relationship starts in the student's freshman year and formally ends at graduation.

The Department of Special Education serves as home for this project. Since it is a small department, all of the professors are involved in this cooperative process. The professors who teach the introductory courses in Special Education identify and recruit freshmen students to become involved in the project. The professors who supervise student teachers in the field identify public school teachers who wish to be involved in this collaboration. This model program has a time frame of three years since college students are identified during their introductory course in Special Education (this typically is in the second semester of their freshmen year) and will participate until their graduation.

In the freshman year, students in the introductory classes in special education volunteer or are recruited to be part of this project. Students are assigned to team with a teacher in the field. They are required to be in

phone contact on a monthly basis with the teacher and the professor. They are required to visit the public school classroom at least once a semester. Each will write a journal describing his/her observations in the field and experiences with this program.

Public school teachers also volunteer to be part of the project (there is a small stipend for their participation). They need to have at least 3 years of satisfactory service in the schools and want to share their knowledge, skills and experience with a college student and college faculty. The public school teacher initiates and maintains contact with the college student on at least a monthly basis. They are required to open their classroom to the college student and to the professor for at least one three hour time during the semester.

The college professor is the campus liaison and is required to visit the schools once during the semester and maintain a regular phone contact with all the participants.

Field based experiences are the laboratory of teacher education, but, in most small college programs there are a limited number of field sites, faculty and hours in the curriculum. Therefore, this program fills the additional role of providing another field experience which is ungraded and non-threatening.

All participants are required to attend a dinner at the faculty dining room once a semester. The purpose of this dinner is to provide a forum for interaction among the participants. During this dinner, there will be planned topics for discussion. Exact topics and format will be produced through informal meetings and contacts with the participants.

At the conclusion of each semester, the participants will write a critical evaluation of the experience. They will discuss in full the strengths and weaknesses of the project. The professor will specifically describe the impact of this experience on course work and educational development.

This collaboration among professionals benefits the participants in many ways. In this model, the professor's role will be both as teacher and student. On one hand, the professor will share knowledge of current theories and research and will be available for consultation and demonstration. On the other hand, the professor will observe and learn about the current practices in the field in order to effectively educate and train students in critical areas of need. So, under the umbrella of faculty

development, the professor is kept abreast of the field and can modify and adjust coursework and training to reflect changing needs. There is a link between theory and practice.

The public school teachers has the opportunity to have input into the curriculum of pre-service training. They will also serve as a role model for the students. They will be real partners in the process of education.

The college students will be introduced to the dynamic field of Special Education and will have a personalized field-based experience early in their college career. In addition, the college students will graduate with a working knowledge of public schools and the ever changing nature of education. Most important, they will have had the experiences of a cooperative relationship with other professionals.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The interaction resulting from this mentorship experience provides the opportunity for faculty members, college students and the public school teacher to broaden their knowledge and experience in this dynamic field of Special Education. The project facilitates the exchange of ideas, knowledge and attitudes among professionals.

The major goals of this project are:

1. To enhance and update faculty understanding concerning issues facing teachers in the field.

2. To improve faculty knowledge of the linkage between theory and practice.

3. To provide actual on-site observation with public school students in the field without the confines of specific course requirements.

4. To provide an opportunity for public school teachers to contribute to the education of future professionals.

5. To provide college students with a first hand relationship with professionals in the field.

Addendum

This project began in January, 1992. Fifteen special education public school teachers, both secondary and elementary volunteered from the freshman class. Initial visits were somewhat difficult to orchestrate, but by the end of April, all teams had connected and most site visits were made. The dinner meetings was a huge success. Eight teachers and thirteen students attended. There was a wonderful exchange of friendship and information. Some of the student's comments about their visits included: "incredible experience", "feel like a professional", "seeing what received new ideas from the students and were able to share their insights and experience with a 'teacher in process'. One person summed it up with "there is no pressure, no structured expectation", just an opportunity to collaborate and network with other professionals with similar interests and concerns. The college faculty felt they were on the front line of change and fall course work will reflect this new knowledge. We will continue this project for next year.

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THE FLAGLER COLLEGE EDUCATION PROGRAM: A FOCUS ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

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The Special Education program at Flagler College, a small private college in Florida, is described, with an emphasis on the uniqueness of both the physical setting and the orientation of the Education Department. For nearly twenty years a dual major in either hearing impairment, mental retardation, specific learning disabilities, exceptional child (generic), or Spanish-speaking children. Consequently, special education majors comprise the majority of education students, making the department primarily an exceptional student education department. The requirement was established to prepare teachers who can better serve handicapped students in part time placements.

The Special Education program at Flagler College exists within a distinctive, two-tiered context: the Education Department and the College itself. The purpose of this article is to describe the rather uncommon degree programs offered in elementary and special education, and the strong exceptional student orientation of the Education Department.

Flagler College is uniquely situated in the heart of historic Saint Augustine, the oldest European-established city in the United States. The campus is surrounded by the city's restored area, national monuments, museums, historic buildings, and is near state, public, and parochial schools. The centerpiece of what is today the Flagler College campus is the former grand resort Hotel Ponce de Leon. Built in 1888 by Henry Morrison Flagler, the man for whom the college is named, the former resort Hotel Ponce de Leon has been described as a masterpiece in American architecture and remains one of the best examples of the Spanish-Renaissance style in the world. For nearly eight decades the hotel received guests and visitors from across the nation and from abroad, including Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Warren G. Harding. The magnificent structure, now the focal point of the Flagler College campus, not only opened the modern era in the nation's oldest city but fulfilled the dream of

Henry Flagler (Flagler College Catalog, 1992).

Flagler College, a nonsectarian liberal arts institution with majors leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree, was chartered in 1963, and founded as a women's college in 1968. Three years later it was reorganized and became a coeducational institution (Flagler College Catalog, 1992).

Since graduating its first class in 1972, Flagler College's curriculum has expanded, programs of study have been added, and the student population has increased to over 1200, one quarter of which are Education majors. Originally, the College offered a program in elementary education modeled on Florida Standards for state-approved programs. During the 1973-74 academic year the College initiated study to design state-approved programs in specific learning disabilities and in education of the hearing impaired. The study committee decided it was essential for teacher education students in both proposed exceptional student areas to acquire knowledge and skills in elementary education in order to perform competently in teaching either learning disabled or hearing impaired students in exceptional student settings. Therefore, combination, dual certification programs were designed, and were implemented beginning with the 1974-75 academic year. In 1979 a dual program in elementary education--education of the mentally retarded received state-approval. Since that time, students who major in special education have also completed elementary education certification requirements.

Following the implementation of P.L. 94-142 Education Department faculty attention centered on the needs of exceptional students mainstreamed into regular classrooms for instruction. Particularly because exceptional students having mild handicaps generally spend more time in basic education classrooms than they do in exceptional student education placements, it became obvious that elementary education teachers needed to acquire competencies to become effective teachers of the exceptional students for whom they were responsible. To meet this need the Education Department of Flagler College developed the elementary education--exceptional (generic) student program. The effect of the program is to remove the arbitrary dichotomy which exists between 'regular' and 'exceptional' student educators by providing comprehensive, effective teacher education programs for them. This program provides eligibility for state certification in elementary education upon graduation;

however, because of the exceptional student concentration these graduates are better prepared to handle students with learning problems than entry-level teachers from typical elementary education programs.

Due to the heavy emphasis on special education the Education Department at Flagler College is rather unusual, and could be considered more as a Special Education Department, since the majority of programs are exceptional student education programs. The most heavily enrolled program is in education of the hearing impaired, which was purposely developed to draw students and to provide a unique distinction for the College (Williams, 1992). Five of the seven full time faculty members hold degrees and many years of experience in teaching students with hearing impairments, mental retardation, and specific learning disabilities. Most of the considerable number of adjunct instructors are also special education professionals.

Course requirements within each special education concentration are not unusual, compared to other state-approved programs. The College does not affiliate with NCATE; therefore, the only certifying body reviewing and approving teacher education programs is the State of Florida Department of Education. A strong emphasis of all the special Education programs is the combining of theory and classroom experience with practical field based experiences, to give future teachers opportunities to apply their learning while integrating theory with practical knowledge and problem-solving on an individual student and small group basis. To this end, each exceptional student education course in mental retardation and specific learning disabilities, and all instructional and methods courses in education of the hearing impaired, include a practicum/field experience requirement, sequenced to encompass graduated levels of responsibility. The last courses typically demand direct teaching of specific skills to small groups and individual students, with all the planning and data-based management necessary for effective instruction.

To become creative and effective problem solvers for special students' needs, knowledge must become deeply meaningful to the teacher, and expand beyond just knowing how to apply specific interventions. The teacher must also know when and why certain procedures are indicated and when to utilize them for optimum benefit to

the student (Blanton, 1992). Student teachers are expected to leave the Flagler College programs with the ability to "think on their feet," by having the theoretical and research knowledge, and sufficient practical experience to allow responsiveness to students' needs as they occur in the teaching/learning situation. Teachers must construct adaptive learning approaches that are tailored to the individual, and be reactive to the needs of the moment, while maintaining focus on short and long term goals. As pre-internship teachers gain increased experience in actively instructing students, they will be better prepared to deliver efficient, motivating, and appropriate methodologies and learning activities.

Four program objectives have been established to ensure the outcome that special education teachers graduated from Flagler College will be capable and effective. The first objective is to prepare future teachers to be competent and creative problem-solvers for special student needs through assessment of students in academic, preacademic, life skills, behavioral, social, and emotional areas, and through utilization of research-supported techniques and methods to implement instruction necessary for accomplishment of identified goals and objectives. Secondly, the program prepares future teachers who will be knowledgeable consumers of research as well as potential producers of research. A third objective is to train future teachers to be part of a team involving other educators, related services (medical, therapeutic, and support), parents, paraprofessionals, and administrators. Finally, compliance with the ethics and standards of practice established by the Council for Exceptional Children is supported and encouraged in future special education teachers.

All teachers will encounter students with varying types and degrees of learning difficulties in the classroom. It has been our experience that most elementary teachers are not prepared to teach such students effectively, and in fact, many do not want that responsibility. Often those students who never intend to teach exceptional children benefit from the specialized coursework, and also find their employment opportunities expanded, as they generally lack only one or two courses for certification in an exceptional child field. Frequently, graduates receive temporary certification immediately if they find themselves in an exceptional student education position. It is quite likely that these teachers who are products of the Flagler College education programs will be more adaptable to the

many recent and forthcoming changes in special education, particularly those involving the Regular Education Initiative, and collaboration and consultation with teachers of nonexceptional students. Although there are no specific data to support this contention, future follow-up of graduates will address issues of participation in exceptional student education, to help determine how both elementary and exceptional education teachers are handling special learners in their classes.

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The Challenges of Implementing a Master of Arts in Education Program Within the Context of a Small, Liberal Arts College

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Muskingum College, a private liberal arts institution located in rural southeastern Ohio recently established Master of Arts in Education program. The program, now successfully operating in its third year, serves over 200 area teachers. From its beginnings, the program has undergone tremendous change in response to conditions unforeseen during the planning stages. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the dynamic nature of the new program, the challenges created as reality overcame the original vision of the program, and the institution's response to these challenges which allowed for healthy growth and change. Also, recommendations are given to assist program developers in preventing and overcoming the challenges inherent in the initial stages of implementing a new graduate program in education.

Background

For over six years, Muskingum College faculty and administration studied and planned the implementation of a Masters of Arts in Education program which would promote and support teaching excellence in southeastern Ohio and provide needed additional income for the college. Course syllabi were created by faculty across the disciplines, visits were made to the Ohio Board of Regents, outside consultants were engaged, and administrative and financial needs were addressed. These activities culminated in a program proposal which was approved by the faculty, Board of Trustees, and the Ohio Board of Regents.

The Vision

The approved program proposal required 33 hours of coursework in three categories: Core courses including a final

research project (18 hrs), "strand" courses (9-12 hrs), and elective courses (3-6 hrs). The "strand" concept made the program unique in that it offered teachers an opportunity to complete a strand of three courses designed to increase their vertical knowledge base within a particular content area. Faculty from various departments of the college had committees themselves to the development and teaching of these strand courses within their disciplines. The program was to begin with two elementary and four secondary strands in the following areas: (a) elementary education, (b) reading endorsement, (c) science, (d) communication, (e) social studies, and (f) foreign language. Faculty planned to develop other strands as the market and interest developed.

The program was to be administered on a part-time basis by the appointed Director of Graduate Studies, who was also a teaching Chair of the Education Department. The Director and program was to be supported by a Graduate Advisory Committee representing all divisions of the college. It was anticipated that approximately 50 students would initially be admitted to the program and that those numbers would remain stable over a period of time. Most courses would be offered during summer school sessions, but some evening courses would also be offered during the academic year. To keep the program economically viable, it was planned that these courses would be taught by faculty on an overload basis.

The Reality

When the graduate program began in the summer of 1990, the curriculum of the program had not yet been fully developed. The

core courses were in place, but only three of the six strands had been developed and approved by faculty: (a) elementary education, (b) reading endorsement, and (c) communication. Eighty-seven degree-seeking students enrolled in the available courses with assurances that other strand and elective courses would soon be offered.

The program grew at a rapid pace. Within 15 months, 130 degree-seeking students had been admitted to the program and 22 were slated for graduation. At the beginning of the program's second year, the group of students who were secondary teachers had completed their core requirements and were quickly reaching a dead end in their coursework because their content strands had not yet been offered. In fact, most of the content courses had not yet been developed. Only a music strand and a learning disabilities strand had been approved and added to the curriculum.

The program now faced some difficult situations. Fewer secondary teachers had enrolled than had been expected, raising questions as to the viability of the program's strand concept. The original ad hoc graduate advisory committee had not yet become a formal part of the college governance structure and was in gridlock concerning future direction of the program. The research course had not adequately prepared students to complete the required research project resulting in burdensome research advising loads for graduate faculty. The research project had not yet been clearly defined and no guidelines for acceptable projects were in place for advisers or students. Additionally, the many policies and procedures needed to help the program run smoothly had not yet developed.

The demands of the growing program had become too much for one half-time administrator, who was overloaded with chairing the education department, teaching, and graduate program responsibilities of scheduling, registration, admissions, marketing, advising, etc. His health suffered from the pace, requiring him to step out of both his administrative roles.

The Challenge of Change

Since this author had taught in the graduate program from its beginning and had expertise in program development and evaluation, she was appointed Director of Graduate Studies with teaching responsibilities. The former director was appointed Assistant Director in charge of the admissions and marketing aspects of the program also with teaching responsibilities.

The new Director's primary goal for the program's second year was to establish control and structure within a framework which allowed for efficiency, growth, change, and creativity. Our program had many outstanding qualities and had gained an excellent reputation in spite of its rough first-year edges.

The first step was to establish a new graduate committee which would serve as part of the college committee and governance structure. The Director modified committee function and membership descriptions which were more supportive and less directive than those first established. The original ad hoc committee was dissolved. As a result of this process, the program underwent a spiritual change. Although the committee members still represented different disciplines across campus, they were united in vision and support of the program.

The Graduate Committee and Director immediately set about the task of modifying the graduate curriculum from its original state to meet the program's changing needs. After the Master of Arts in Education program had experienced a year and a half of growth, it was clear that the program's reality would be different from the original vision. About 4/5 (100) of our students were elementary teachers enrolled in curriculum and instruction and reading endorsement strands which had already been developed and successfully implemented. We'd had enough students to keep them going on a regular basis.

The remaining fifth of the enrollment was comprised of secondary and specialty teachers. Within this group about half were involved in either the learning disabilities or communication strands which had also been developed and implemented. These strands had enrollment of 10 and less and were offered once. The rest of the students, about 20, did not fall into groups with numbers high enough in any one content area to fiscally warrant, then or in the foreseeable future, the development of additional content strands.

As we worked on modifications, we tried to stay as close to our original program as possible to cause the least disruption. The number of semester hours (33) required for graduation remained constant. The elementary education and reading validation strands stayed the same. We developed a more generic area of concentration for secondary and specialty teachers, but kept 3 hours of independent study in their specialty area. We added art and music education because those departments developed coursework and

were willing to work with students regardless of the number enrolled in courses.

Another change to our curriculum was in the area of research. We had originally developed one research methods course to help prepare students to complete the required research project. After the program began, we found that the course was not adequate. Therefore, we restructured our original course and developed a second course which was piloted before it was added it to the structure. Also, a guide to the research project was developed to detail project requirements and provide a model for both students and research advisors.

We also changed the summer term schedule the second year from two 4-1/2 week sessions to one 6 week session. The maximum summer load was reduced from 12 to 9 semester hours. The Director of the program had found that, as a summer term professor in the program, a daily diet of coursework for 4-1/2 weeks, followed by additional courses for 4-1/2 more weeks was hard on her and her students. They did not have ample time to digest the material and make the best application of it. Our first set of graduates had moved through the program at a breakneck pace, completing their program in 14 months. The new program structure required enrollment for a minimum of 22 months.

Toward the end of the program's second year, high enrollment, faculty overload, and inadequate secretarial support became issues of concern and potential threats to program quality. Since the majority of all graduate courses were taught as overloads, faculty were beginning to burn out as they worked extra evenings and

summers. Also, most faculty teaching in the graduate program were beginning to struggle under the weight of increasing research advising loads. To solve these problems, an additional full-time faculty member was hired in the education department and a limitation of one faculty overload per academic year was established. A limitation was also set on the number of research advisees to be assigned to each research advisor. Additionally, a half-time secretary was hired to relieve the clerical load that until that time had been carried by the graduate director and education department secretary.

An Uncertain Future

After more than two years of hard work and many changes, our program is efficiently run and of the highest quality. That is not to say there aren't still plenty of bugs to be worked out of the system. Future plans include the addition of an early childhood certification component to meet the needs of teachers in our region. However, the program's future rests within a context over which we have little or no control. Externally we exist within the context of the local economy and a limited pool of applicants. Internally we function within a state of institutional flux and politics. Program costs continue to rise, driving tuition hikes and a need for increased marketing and recruitment efforts. Our challenge remains to be proactive, productive, and fiscally sound while promoting and supporting teaching excellence through the Master of Arts in Education program.

Recommendations for Program Developers

Based on our experience, we make the following recommendations to aid program developers not only in the design and implementation of new programs, but also in the evaluation of existing master's degree programs.

1. An experienced program developer or outside consultant should be hired to help design the program. The development and implementation of an effective program requires full-time efforts.

2. A market survey should be conducted to target potential program participants and help set the direction for program components and curriculum development.

3. Study other programs already in existence that resemble the type of program you wish to implement. Many important lessons can be learned from those who have been through the experience of getting a program up and running.

3. Clear goals based on assessed needs of program participants must be set for the program. The planning process should be ongoing, and student and faculty feedback should guide program content and activities.

4. Program goals should comfortably mesh with the institution's goals and philosophy. Ongoing institutional support is a critical factor in the success of a new program.

5. The program should not be implemented until all components, such as administrative roles, curriculum, policies, etc. are clearly defined and in place. Once the program is underway, there is little time for backtracking to original planning stages.

6. The program should have a flexible structure that promotes healthy growth and change.

Use of Telecommunications to Enhance Student Teaching Supervision in a Small College Special Education Program

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Limited resources within small college programs call for the use of innovative techniques to enhance the quality of supervision of practicum experiences in special education teacher training programs. This article describes the telecommunications network developed by Cincinati Bell and used by Northern Kentucky University to provide for daily communication in student teaching supervision. The guidelines for student journal entries into the network and the positive results of this innovation are indicated.

Small college special education programs may be characterized by few certification options, closer ties to regular education and a need to utilize community resources due to limited financial and physical assets (Wheatley, Shuster & Schlet, 1983). Among the difficulties in many small college programs are faculty time and travel money related to student teaching supervision. Also, in many programs, students may be placed in practicum settings close to their homes, but farther from the university.

According to Guthrie-Morse and Julian (1989), leaders at all institutions, in these days of limited resources, must seek technological applications that extend and enhance their primary resource, the faculty. Recently, attention has focused on integrating telecommunications in teacher training programs. Kearsley and Lynch (1992) discuss their experiences with this technology in teacher education and provide guidelines for implementation.

Casey (1992) describes the implementation of telecommunications with regular elementary student teachers during the student teaching experience and concludes that the project had multiple benefits. These student teachers reported increased opportunity to reflect on what they were learning; were enthusiastic about continuing computer use in their classrooms when they were employed; and enjoyed increased contact with their colleagues, peers and university supervisors. The university supervisors in this project appreciated the opportunity to be informed of assemblies or other late changes in activities that required adjustments in scheduled observations.

Krutilla and Safford (1990) cite the importance of providing student teachers with opportunities to "think as a teacher, to inquire actively rather than passively, and to connect general knowledge with specific cases" (p.217). They provided qualitative data to achieve this end from a limited sample of five special education student teachers and their supervising teachers who kept weekly journals reflecting on successive themes. More recently, Buck, Morsink, Griffin, Hines and Lenk (1992) cited journaling as a promising practice in field-based experiences to lead student teachers to develop decision-making skills through reflection on personal performance, student achievement, and research data. The authors note that special education has typically not included this practice. They also observed that in general education this component is often demonstrated by requiring the student teachers to maintain daily journals. They conclude by recommending that this practice be included in special education, and that feedback should be provided to include questions that lead the students to conceptualize and evaluate instructional decisions.

In an effort to utilize available community resources and provide for distance learning, Northern Kentucky University entered into an agreement with Cincinnati Bell's TriState Online (TSO). TSO is a free, open-access community telecomputing system (Cincinnati Bell Directory Inc., 1990).

During the Spring Semester of 1992, Northern Kentucky University and Cincinnati Bell Directory began work on a pilot project which gave six university classes closed user boards on Tristate Online (TSO). Through use of a system called Online Education (OLE), students were able to communicate at will with their classmates and instructors. The project was set up so that each student involved was given a Macintosh SE and a 2400 baud modem for use at home for the semester.

At the beginning of the semester the students received two training sessions, each one and a half hours, which taught them the minimum skills required to create, save, and upload a word processing file to the bulletin board. They were also taught how to use the basic functions available to them on the bulletin board, including personal e-mail, question and answer boards, and talk areas. Through e-mail, the students could send private messages to the instructor, as well as to each other or anyone else who has an ID on TSO. On talk areas, students could post messages which only members of their class could read. Through question and answer boards, the students could ask anonymous questions which were posted with the instructor's response. In addition to these options specifically related to their class needs, the students had full access to the other features of TSO, which include a wide variety of interest areas as well as teleporting options. The students were given manuals for Tristate Online use and had

access to a help board and telephone numbers through which they could reach TSO personnel.

At the end of the semester, interviews were conducted to assess student and instructor views of the success of this project. Both groups felt the added communication made available to them through OLE greatly enhanced their courses. This positive feedback led to the decision to continue the use of OLE with a limited number of classes each semester and to look for opportunities to try it in different formats and a variety of courses.

Some dual elementary and special education majors were in the initial courses utilizing TSO. Their interest and motivation in using the telecommunications network led to a request from special education faculty to use TSO to enhance student teaching supervision.

Student teachers at Northern Kentucky University who major in special education as well as regular education complete three teaching assignments: eight weeks in a regular education placement, seven weeks in one special education placement (learning disabilities, educable mentally disabled, emotionally disturbed or physically disabled), then a final three week assignment in a special education placement with youngsters at a different age and categorical identification than the middle placement. In each placement, the university supervisor visits the placement once for an introductory visit, then an additional three observations in the first two placements and an additional one observation in the final placement.

Since 1985, the special education student teaching experience at Northern Kentucky University has required maintaining a daily journal. In previous semesters, journals have been completed in written format and

turned in to the university supervisor as the student came to the weekly seminar for all student teachers. The university supervisor then read the log and gave written feedback for the student teacher to pick up when on campus the following week. This required students to keep two logs: one to turn in to the university supervisor, and one to maintain for the current week. The university supervisor's feedback was therefore given up to two weeks before being read by the student teacher.

Guidelines given to students for the Fall, 1992 semester, when telecommunications were used, asked for responses to the following questions:

1. What did I do? (activities, communications, management, interactions)

2. In what ways was my teaching effective/ineffective?

3. In what ways does my teaching reflect my experiences in elementary/high school/NKU, observations of effective teachers?

4. Reflect on why I chose to do what I did; alternatives considered; assumptions/beliefs/values my choices reflect; how I evaluated my choices; questions I ask myself; what I learned?

Besides daily entries, students are asked to summarize weekly (most successful and least successful teaching activities and why), and at the end of each of the three placements to summarize reflections on what has been learned, what the student would like to focus on next, and what they are most proud of accomplishing.

University feedback to student teachers has taken several forms including praise for successful experiences and progress toward goals, guidance and questioning to assist the student in deeper reflection or

problem solving, and personal/social comments to build and maintain positive relationships.

The experience of using telecommunications at NKU with special education and regular education student teachers has resulted in numerous benefits. Specifically, use of telecommunications has increased interactions between the university supervisor and students teacher at least fivefold (daily versus once a week). The increased interactions have allowed the student teachers to ask for advice and feedback before developing or implementing lesson plans. Since messages are read and responses given daily, student teachers have an opportunity to reflect and problem solve on their own for a few hours, but also receive assistance from their supervisor in a timely manner. The university supervisor is therefore able to have greater involvement in the student teaching experience. Student teachers also ask questions that they might not have been comfortable expressing in front of their cooperating teacher. Further, students have availed themselves of the opportunity to communicate with each other by networking over a telecommunication system where they share ideas. Finally, the use of telecommunications has enhanced the student teachers comfort level with technology. Because they have had more extensive hands-on experiences with technology than was provided in the one-hour credit course in computers in education early in their training program, it is predicted that the students will be more likely to have a positive approach to integrating computer use in teaching a generation that will have to be computer literate.

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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION: MODEL PROGRAMS FOR TRAINING SPECIAL EDUCATORS

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Teacher recruitment and retention are critical issues in education today, and are of particular concern given the current shortages in special education personnel. This article describes several innovative projects developed by faculty in a small department of special education. These projects are of particular interest because alternative service delivery options for teacher training were devised and implemented. Development of effective approaches for training special educators was even more challenging because the university program prepares teachers to work in rural schools.

The movement for substantive reform of public education has been underway for more than a decade. Despite all efforts, educational reform remains sporadic and fragmented with many issues unresolved (Doyle, 1992; Lewis, 1992). Among the critical topics facing education today, recruitment and retention of qualified teachers has been identified as a serious problem and continues to be a challenge to most school districts (Elam, 1990).

In addition, the majority of teachers have been trained to work in metropolitan areas. However, "rural schools comprise two-thirds of the nation's school systems and serve one-third of the students in the United States" (Helge, 1992, p. 3). Yet, the majority of teachers have not been trained to deal with the unique aspects of rural education. Matthes and Carlson (1987) assert that recruitment and retention of teachers is one of the most significant issues facing rural schools, second only to acquisition of sufficient funding.

Today, there is an urgent need for and growing shortage of qualified

special education teachers (Billingsley & Cross, 1991). An identified 29,774 special education teachers were needed to fill vacancies and replace unclassified personnel in the U.S. during 1987-1988 (Twelfth Annual Report to Congress..., 1990). In an interview focusing on rural special education, Judy Schrag, Director, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, indicated that "aggressive leadership [is needed] to reduce existing and pending personnel shortages in special education" (Berkeley & Lipinski, 1991, p. 19).

Louisiana, along with other southern states, is experiencing a critical shortage of qualified special educators, particularly in rural areas. Approximately 68 percent of Louisiana residents live outside of the urbanized areas of the state. This distribution presents problems for rural special educators who must deal with the unique aspects of the rural communities. The rural special education teacher shortage has also impacted Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), where recruitment and retention issues continue to challenge the teacher training program.

SLU's service area includes a large number of rural parish (county) residents. Of the 14 parishes served by the university, seven are designated as rural. Within this seven parish area recruitment and retention of qualified special educators has been identified as a critical need (Louisiana Department of Education, 1991). This difficulty can be attributed to low teacher salaries, higher tuition cos.s, the economic climate of the state, and unique community characteristics which have created demanding teaching situations. Furthermore, as is the case with many small universities, SLU's special education teacher training is provided by a small department with limited resources.

In an effort to meet local and state needs, the special education faculty at SLU developed and implemented several innovative programs. Over a five-year period, four projects were funded by federal or state education agencies. Project descriptions and concerns will be discussed. In addition, project benefits for participants, faculty members, the university, and local education agencies will be presented.

Description of Programs

Project Rural Return

Project Rural Return was a preservice training model designed to prepare personnel to meet the needs of students with disabilities who reside in rural areas. Project staff conducted a state-wide survey of special educators to ascertain rural training needs (Reiff & Anderson, 1989). Survey results were used to develop program competencies consistent with a generic pluralistic special education training program, and to revise the existing curricula to reflect these competencies. In order to provide a university training program emphasizing the unique aspects of rural special education service delivery, specialized courses were developed. These courses addressed multicultural issues in rural special education, rural special education administration and service delivery, and methods. The methods course was unique because area special education directors interacted with students and presented lectures on issues pertinent to special education in rural Louisiana. Course delivery for participants included a combination of video courses, Saturday courses, off-campus courses, and independent studies, as well as traditional courses. Individuals residing in rural areas were provided a stipend to complete certification and/or requirements for a Master's degree.

Telelearning

A consortium was formed between SLU and another state university with the goal of modifying and delivering courses to remote learning sites via Louisiana's Distance Learning Network. The project provided both universities with the potential to offer courses at 48 possible sites throughout the state. Teachers from rural areas were able to pursue academic requirements toward certification in areas of ciritical need utilizing a nontraditional course delivery format. Instructors and students communicated via computers, microphones, modems, and electronic writing tablets. Participating students were provided stipends which defrayed tuition costs.

Project SCSES

Project SCSES (Success and Certification for Special Education Starters) was a training model designed to increase the number of certified and qualified special education teachers, to provide incentives for improving professional training through tuition stipends, and to provide a support system to special educators who had less than three years teaching experience. Workshops were designed which focused on the development of specific interventions for immediate problems, as well as identification of long term training needs. These workshops promoted development of a teacher support system as a reult of interaction among the participants and department faculty. The project also included a component which provided direct on-site faculty assistance to beginning teachers through observation, feedback, and interactive problem-solving.

In addition, the model program attempted to meet the needs of participants by designing an alternative service delivery component.

Students were allowed to take two course leading toward teacher certification in a nontraditional format. Course requirements were designed specifically to meet identified deficits in the participant's competencies.

Project RFD: Rural Focus on the Development of Special Educators

Project RFD (Rural Focus on the Development of Special Educators) was designed to recruit and train rural special educators to fill a continuing critical personnel shortage, and to improve the quality of teacher training by developing additional competencies which reflected best practice in rural special education. An infusion approach was used to integrate rural content into an existing Exceptional Family course. A new course, Technological Applications in Special Education, was developed and offered to address training needs identified by project staff. Textbooks and additional materials for these courses reflect current issues for working with exceptional children and families in rural areas. Coursework was supplemented by materials from several sources including: the National Rural Development Institute, The American Council on Rural Special Education, and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Project staff developed a video library of actual classroom activities in diverse rural special education settings. Currently, these videotapes are used as controlled observational opportunities for all students throughout the special education curricula.

Now in its third year, Project RFD continues to recruit qualified individuals who reside in rural areas and seek special education certification and/or a Master's degree. The project supports these individuals financially through a tuition stipend. Competencies which

reflect best practice in rural special education have been identified and are included in the Exceptional Family and Technological Applications courses. Development of the video library is ongoing.

Discussion

As universities develop programs that are responsive to the unique needs of rural education, efforts to recruit and retain qualified rural special educators are likely to be more effective. During the last five years, the special education department at SLU has been actively involved in developing and implementing innovative model programs. These programs were initiated in response to critical special education teacher shortages and identified training needs (deFur, Evans, Carr, & Melville, 1990; Louisiana state Department of Education, 1991). An Advisory Council, comprised of faculty members and local directors of special education, provided input and support for each project. The model programs have been successful with advantages far outweighing any disadvantages.

Concerns

Specific concerns emerged as the programs described were implemented over this five-year period. Faculty members reported that excessive amounts of time were spent traveling to remote sites to observe students and to provide technical assistance. Faculty members also indicated that large amounts of time were needed to plan and engage in the follow-up activities necessitated by alternative service delivery approaches. With regard to students, the limited interaction among students due to nontraditional course delivery may have contributed to the isolation that many rural educators experience. There were fewer

opportunities to develop a network or peer support system when students received instruction within the rural community rather than traveling to the university. Finally, it was noted that students tended to depend on a faculty mentor to devise problem-solving plans, thus limiting the student's active involvement in this process.

Benefits

Numerous benefits have been reported as a result of the development and implementation of these projects. Participants' training needs were identified and were included in the development and modification of courses. Nontraditional course delivery, which reduced travel time from rural areas to SLU, was reported to be an advantage for many students. All students received tuition support, and some were provided with travel stipends. In addition, students reported that the development of a faculty support system was a benefit. More importantly, however, project participants obtained certification in special education.

Faculty members participating in the projects reported a growth in professionalism through greater involvement with the students in the workplace. They also experienced enriching activities and developed a greater understanding of rural special education issues. Faculty members participating in an Advisory Council became aware of special training needs identified by members who were local directors of special education. The establishment of the video library is an additional resource for many special education courses, and the acquisition of distance learning equipment is an asset to future plans.

The projects have increased recognition of Southeastern Louisiana University as a regional resource. Greater rapport with representatives of

the local education agencies (LEAs) provided additional opportunities for faculty research in local school systems. Increased enrollment of rural and minority students in SLU and the Department of Special Education was a direct result of the projects.

LEA representtives reported many benefits, for example, project incentives facilitated recruitment and retention of qualified personnel. Participation in a proactive Advisory Council supported collaborative efforts among SLU's special education faculty and parish personnel. The Department of Special Education was viewed more positively as a resource for professional development. Perhaps the most impressive benefit for all LEAs was the increase of certified and qualified special education teachers, thus reducing to a modest degree the critical growing shortage of special educators in local school districts.

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Resources

American Council on Rural Special Education
University of Utah
Department of Special Education
221 Milton Bennion Hall
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

National Rural Development Institute
Western Washington University
Miller Hall 359
Bellingham, WA 98225

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX 78701

Supervising Field-Based Experiences: Dealing With Limited Faculty, Time, and Money

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Regardless of a school's particular educational philosophy, the use of supervised field experiences is a dominant component in the preparation of teachers. Very little, however, is known about field-based experiences, particularly in the area of special education. The challenge to supervise field-based experiences is even greater since institutions of higher education have limited fiscal and faculty resources and are asked to serve a wide geographic area. Northwest Missouri State University has developed a response to these issues through the use of videotapes, structured activities, and alternate supervisors.

Throughout history there has been a general assumption that skills for almost any trade could be learned through an apprenticeship with a master level craftsman or teacher. The primary theme of this assumption is that individuals can, and do, "learn by doing" under expert supervision. This same belief was included in the first teacher training program originated in 1672 and was maintained throughout the development of the teacher training programs established in the United States (Johnson, 1967).

Today, professional education programs to train teachers utilize a variety of formats in an attempt to provide prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge base and skills to be successful classroom teachers. Despite the vast spectrum of teacher training programs one component has remained constant. Regardless of the school's particular educational philosophy, the use of supervised field experiences remains as a dominant component in the preparation of teachers.

Field-based experiences are viewed as such an important part of teacher training that they are included in every accredited preservice program in the United States (Buck, Morsink, Griffin, Hines & Lenk, 1992).

Yet, very little is known about field-based experiences, particularly in the area of special education. Published studies are scarce and the field has often had to rely on work done in the field of regular education.

Even more problematic is the lack of information concerning the supervision of field-based experiences for individuals in teacher preparation programs. The research that has been done has been inconsistent and has primarily focused on describing the roles and relationships of field service participants such as students, cooperating teachers, college supervisors, and school administrators (Koehler, 1986; Niemeyer & Moon, 1986; Shulman, 1987; Zeichner, 1985; McFall & Cooper, 1983). While this line of research has been beneficial to the field it has left a void in understanding supervision of field-based experiences.

Because of this informational void institutions of higher education have been forced to explore a variety of options to meet the supervision demands of their teacher training program. Additionally, the rising costs of educational programs have made it mandatory that limited fiscal and faculty resources not be wasted on ineffective techniques (Lillie, Lubker, Rhodes & Wyne, 1986).

The challenge to supervise field-based experiences becomes even greater if the institution of higher education is asked to serve a wide geographic area. Today, more than ever before, students are seeking ways to help reduce their educational cost. One often utilized option is to remain at home and commute to the chosen college/university. By staying in the home community, individuals are able to maintain jobs reducing the financial strain. Additionally, these students can find opportunities for field-based experiences by utilizing sites in the geographic area. The challenge to institutions of higher education, particularly those who are

small in size or have a limited number of available faculty, is to find new ways to provide adequate and effective supervision.

A Working Response to the Problem

Northwest Missouri State University (NWMSU), located in the corner of the state, has a primary service area that not only includes the northwest portion of Missouri but also southwest Iowa and southeast Nebraska. Four full-time faculty in special education are responsible for teaching classes and institutional responsibilities as well as the supervision of field-based practicums. All faculty members in special education are assigned graduate and/or undergraduate practicum students each semester.

The special education teacher preparation program at NWMSU is built upon a strong blend of theory, knowledge, and practical experience. All students are regularly involved in field-based experiences throughout the training program. This same philosophy is maintained in the Master of Education program. Students are encouraged to visit a variety of classrooms as well as complete a field-based experience requiring direct teaching.

Undergraduate field-based experiences are primarily conducted in the immediate geographic area of the university. This facilitates the time and travel requirements made of special education faculty. The issue of supervising graduate level field-based experiences is more complicated.

The majority of graduate-level students reside in a geographic area outside the immediate University locale. This area is best described as rural and has limited road systems to service the various communities. Travel time to field-base sites is often lengthy and requires a less than direct route.

The special education teacher training program was faced with trying to provide personalized supervision with field-based experiences while combating such issues as time and limited travel funds. To maintain program quality and provide direct service to students the faculty utilize video technology to enhance direct supervision.

Students enrolled in the graduate level practicums meet during a weekend at the beginning of the semester to review the requirements of the field-based experience. As well as assisting students in the completion of necessary enrollment forms, university supervisors review course assignments. These include the completion of a data collection system, diagnostic summary, and mock individualized education plan for a targeted student as well as written observations of other special education settings. Graduate students are also expected to be involved with the direct instruction of the targeted student for a specified number of clock hours.

Practicum students, upon completion of initial assignments are approved by supervisors to begin direct teaching with the targeted student. At approximately one third of the total required hours, the graduate student video tapes a lesson showing him/her teaching the targeted student. The student then completes a self-critique of the video utilizing the evaluation information sheet provided by the university as a guide. The video, a pre-observation form, lesson plan, and self-critique are sent to the university supervisor.

The supervisor reviews the submitted material and views the taped lesson. An evaluation is completed with clarifying notes and suggestions to the student. Supervisors strive to view the tape, complete the written evaluation within 48 hours of receiving the material, and return the video

with the evaluation. Often a follow-up telephone conference is held to review and discuss material in further detail.

As the graduate student approaches the mid-point of clocked hours of direct teaching, arrangements are made with the university supervisor for an on-site visit. This visit follows a traditional format with the graduate student providing pre-observation information for the supervisor as well as presenting a lesson with the targeted student. Supervisors conference with the graduate student following the lesson to review notes and discuss the progress of the practicum.

Students residing outside an area of an approximate radius of 75 miles from the University are required to utilize a supervisor from another source for the on-site visit to the field-based site. Alternate supervisors must meet the approval of the University and most commonly include educational consultants from the department of education of the state in which the student is completing the field-based experience. Alternate supervisors follow the above mentioned format for this supervisory visit and a copy of all materials is forwarded to the University supervisor. Telephone conferences are utilized when necessary to clarify points of confusion raised by the student or alternate supervisor as well as answer specific questions concerning the visit to the field-based site.

Upon completion of approximately two thirds of the direct teaching time the graduate student submits a second video lesson. Again this lesson features the graduate student involved in the direct teaching of a targeted child. As done during the handling of the first video tape, the graduate student submits a pre-observation information sheet, lesson plan, and self-critique. Procedures utilized for the evaluation of the first videotape are repeated.

At the end of the instructional semester all graduate students involved in special education field-based experiences return to the University for a meeting. As well as providing a time for students to confirm that all coursework related to the field-based experience is completed and received by the University supervisor, the time serves as an opportunity for closure of the practicum experience. University supervisors lead students through a set of exercises to explore and better understand the field-based experience. Students also have an opportunity to share teaching successes, strategies, and challenges. University supervisors direct students through a problem-solving strategy utilizing challenges raised by practicum participants. Because of the rural nature and size of most field-based settings utilized by the program at NWMSU, many of the students have had limited experience with collaborative problem solving, especially with peers in the special education field. The exercises completed during this portion of the practicum allow students the opportunity to develop initial skills and work briefly on a teacher assistance team.

Summary

Providing meaningful, effective field-based experiences is a challenge facing all who are in the field of teacher preparation. This challenge is further complicated by rising costs and demands on university personnel. Limited resources include more than just money. Time constraints and an ever-increasing geographic service area make personal, meaningful supervision more difficult. The organization of the graduate special education field-based experience at NWMSU is a response by that institution to continue to provide quality programs and address the problems associated with field supervision. Through videotapes and

alternate supervisors the University is able to address the rising cost and time associated with travel to supervise students. Students are able to complete the field-based experience in locations that provide excellent opportunities for learning but would, under traditional guidelines, be too distant from the university to be utilized. Requirements for video taped lessons assure that students complete self-evaluations. Information gathered after the completion of the field-based experience indicates that many students continue to use videos and the self evaluation procedure to evaluate their teaching performance. Alternate supervisors help reduce the need for university supervisors to be away from campus and provide students with an additional viewpoint in regards to their teaching.

Garland (1982) indicated that effective evaluation of field-based experiences needs to be continuous and requires adequate samples of the student's behavior. The learner must participate in the evaluation process and information must be shared. The graduate special education field-based program at NWMSU strives to exemplify those qualities as well as meet the specific needs of its students.

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Developing New Program Options Through a Distance Education Model

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Project NETWORC is described as a potential model for smaller special education teacher preparation programs needing to expand course offerings. This project developed a series of four courses to meet an emerging personnel preparation need in early childhood special education. The courses were designed for students in six rural communities, as well as those in on-campus classes. Course design combined videotapes, interaction with instructors through teleconferencing, and on-site experiential activities. Evaluation of the courses indicated high levels of student satisfaction with both the course content and the technical aspects of the course offerings.

Smaller teacher preparation programs are frequently called on to respond to emerging needs in the field of special education. Often these smaller programs do not have the personnel resources available to larger programs that would enable them to diversify course offerings or develop new programs. This may be particularly true in western or rural areas where access to qualified, part-time instructors is also limited. The University of Nevada, Reno, was faced with this situation as it attempted to develop a program in early childhood special education to provide high-quality preparation for teachers of young children with special needs in response to new state licensure requirements. In addition to the need for new course offerings and faculty with specific expertise in early childhood special education, we recognized that many of the teachers needing the preparation were situated in widely-scattered rural communities situated far from either of the state's two universities.

In response to these problems, we created Project NETWORC (Nevada Educational Television Working Out in Rural Communities), a collaborative

effort between the Nevada Department of Human Resources and the University of Nevada, Reno. NETWORC made use of unsophisticated distance education technology and the expertise of professionals from a variety of disciplines and agencies to provide a series of courses that enabled teachers to earn endorsement in early childhood special education.

The NETWORC Model

Project NETWORC was a three-year federally funded personnel preparation program designed to provide courses for students in Reno and in six targeted rural communities. The model consisted of a series of four courses that used a combination of prepared videotapes, distance technology through teleconferencing, on-sight activities, and the combined expertise of personnel from the Nevada Department of Human Resources and faculty from the College of Education, the College of Human and Community Sciences, and Instructional Media Services of the University of Nevada, Reno.

The four, three-credit courses we developed through NETWORC included both graduate and undergraduate components and covered the following topics: (a) an overview of early childhood special education, (b) assessment of young children with special needs, (c) curriculum and intervention strategies, and (d) working with families of young children with special needs. We designed the courses around fifteen class meetings of three hours each, offered either in a traditional semester format or in intense, three-week summer sessions. In order to provide the varied learning experiences needed for distance education, each class session consisted of three major components: a video segment, an interactive audio segment, and an on-site segment that incorporated active student involvement.

The thirty-minute video segment began each class session and consisted of commercially and locally produced videotapes. We provided copies of the tapes to each site to be viewed on video cassette players and television monitors. The videos provided much of the core instructional material for each course and allowed students to learn from professionals with national reputations in the field of early childhood special education.

The audio segment lasted approximately 45 minutes and consisted of lecture and discussion from the course instructor. The instructor answered questions about the videotape, extended the information presented in the

tape, or provided information on topics not covered in the video series. This segment of each course used audio transmission over existing telephone lines in a teleconferencing format. Students at the rural sites could hear the instructor through a convener box and speak to the instructor through microphones. During this segment, students could also interact with one another across the rural and the on-campus sites.

The experiential, on-site segment of each class lasted approximately 75 minutes and was led by a Training Facilitator (TF) at each site. The TF led students in a variety of hands-on activities designed to integrate theory and practical application. Activities included large and small group discussion, use of crafted case studies, role-playing, panel discussions of local professionals or parents, and guest speakers. Several times during each semester, we used the teleconferencing system at the end of the activities to discuss experiences across the various sites.

The TF in each rural site played a critical role in the effectiveness of the courses. They were available to handle the logistical duties that could not be managed easily by the on-campus instructor, including publicizing the courses, distributing course materials, proctoring examinations, and contacting local speakers. In addition, they took care of the technology needed to insure smooth class delivery by setting up the convener boxes, microphones, VCR and monitors, and use of the fax machine for last minute materials. Finally, the TFs handled many of the interpersonal duties usually taken care of by a course instructor. Each facilitator acted as a liaison between the university professor and the rural students. They relayed specific concerns and questions of students who were anxious about interacting directly with the professor. They were able to observe nonverbal cues from students indicating that a point or concept was not clear. They set the general tone of the class atmosphere and relieved anxieties faced by those students who previously had attended few university classes.

While all TFs did not have specific training in early childhood special education, all were working in supervisory capacities in related fields. Representative professions included a pediatric nurse practitioner, a director of special education, a community college instructor in early childhood education, and an early childhood special education teacher-consultant. To prepare for the role, we designed training sessions for the

TFs before classes began. The training was conducted at the university and in the rural locations where each of the NETWORC classes were offered.

Another factor critical to the implementation of Project NETWORC were curriculum guides or extended syllabi developed for each of the four courses. The guides were provided to each student and served to integrate the three course components by defining each session's objectives, summarizing information presented in the videos, highlighting key points of the instructor's lecture, and providing explanations of the on-site activities. In addition, each guide included a glossary of terms used throughout the course, provided supplementary readings, and contained an extensive list of suggested resources. Expanded versions of the guides were provided to each TF. These instructors' manuals included detailed instructions for organizing and leading the on-site activities and for using course equipment.

Project Evaluation

The students who enrolled in Project NETWORC courses were from six rural Nevada communities and the Reno metropolitan area. The courses were offered in two cycles, each targeting Reno and three different rural communities. In the first cycle, an average of 65 students enrolled in each of the four courses. The second cycle reached an average of 45 students per course. Most of the students were professionals and paraprofessionals working in the following fields: early childhood special education, preschool education, elementary education, special education, speech/ language pathology, educational administration, occupational therapy, counseling, and nursing.

Evaluation of both the technical components and course content indicates student satisfaction with the activities of the project. A four-point Lickert scale was used to obtain student ratings in the following technical areas: quality of audio reception, quality of videotapes, quality of curriculum guides and other course materials, and overall technical quality of the course. Course content was evaluated in the areas of: clarity of course objectives and requirements, quality content of the videotapes, quality of the university instructor, quality of the Training Facilitator, quality of on-site activities, and overall content of the course.

Overall, 91.5% of the students reported moderate to high satisfaction with the technical areas of the courses, and 89.4% reported moderate to

high satisfaction with the content of the courses. One exception was that 75.8% of the students were dissatisfied with the quality of audio reception during the first course of the series. This was corrected with the purchase of new microphones and additional training of project staff. Overall, 83.5% of the students were moderately to highly satisfied with the quality of sound reception throughout the project.

A total of 221 individuals enrolled in one or more of the four courses during the two cycles the courses were offered, with a total enrollment of 450 students over the period of the grant. Seventy-nine percent of the students were graduate students. The grade distribution did not reveal any differences between the Reno site, where the instructor was located, and the rural sites, where they listened to the instructor via teleconferencing.

Conclusion

As the field of special education expands and transforms, smaller teacher preparation programs need to be both responsive and pro-active. Limitations in personnel and resources necessitate the need for creative responses to these changes in the field. Project NETWORC demonstrates the effectiveness of "low tech" distance education methodology, commercially available video series and effective course design as a way of expanding program offerings by small special education programs. The format of NETWORC could be adapted to any personnel preparation need. The use of available videotape series and teleconferencing (even teleconference presentations by noted professionals in a given field) can supplement the expertise available among faculty within a small special education program. In addition, the relatively unsophisticated technology used in Project NETWORC illustrates that effective distance education can be developed by programs that may not have the availability of satellite or fixed video systems.