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ABSTRACT

The preservice program at University of Southern Alabama's College of Education is specifically designed to include early field experiences that: (1) incorporate university faculty and cooperating teacher supervision; (2) provide opportunities for observing and teaching mildly handicapped mainstreamed children in local school districts; (3) assess preservice teachers based on their teaching competencies at each phase; and (4) can be implemented without major additional financial, personnel, or material costs. Field experience is concurrent with theory and methods courses and is divided into four sequences, each lasting one semester. The introductory sequence provides students with a realistic basis for making a decision about their future role in education. Sequence II includes courses geared for education specialties and planning, implementing, and evaluating language arts and reading activities. At the end of this sequence, students are expected to become actively involved in appropriate classroom activities, conduct formal peer evaluation, and teach lessons in science, social studies, and mathematics under the supervision of cooperating teachers. Students in Sequence IV strengthen and refine their skills and ultimately do one week of solo teaching. An evaluation model matrix for each of the four sequences is appended, indicating student behaviors which relate directly to the objectives of the program. (FG)

TEAM APPROACH TO FIELD BASED PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

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Early field experiences, mainstreaming, and competency based education are key components of the pre-service teacher preparation program of the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education at the University of South Alabama. The components are given differential emphasis in contemporary literature on teaching and learning yet there is growing concern for implementing these approaches in a coherent integrated teacher preparation curriculum. The program at the University of South Alabama reflects these concerns and implements key features discussed in the literature which will be briefly reviewed.

The growing interest among teacher education programs in developing early field experiences prior to student teaching is reflective of general recognition of the importance of learning by doing. Moreover, such early field experiences are responsive to the need to supplement the traditional culminating field experience which is not sufficient to adequately prepare graduates to assume full time solo teaching responsibilities. A survey of one hundred twenty institutions by Overbeck and Quisenberry (1976) focussing upon rationale and extent of involvement in early field experiences, resulted in specification of two major rationale for such experiences:

1) some degree of transitional experience during which a synthesis of theory and practice can occur at a more natural pace;

2) some experience to provide practical information to students and to aid them in career planning particularly determining the age level and content students are most suited to teach.

Other benefits of early field experiences identified by teacher educators include: 1) the provision of opportunities for expanded contact between the university and area schools; 2) opportunities for training by university supervisors and methods instructors through discussions, demonstration teaching, projects and ideas brought into the classroom by early field experience participants; and 3) much needed feedback for the campus component of teacher education as a result of exposure to schools on a regular basis.

Overbeck and Quisenberry (1976) also determined that areas of assessment of preservice teachers usually include appearance, mobility, gestures, voice, speech, personality traits, and attitudes. A few of the programs surveyed also identified as important the ability to diagnose problems, the ability to evaluate oneself, and the ability to modify teaching strategy when appropriate.

The movement of mildly handicapped children from self-contained special education classrooms into regular classrooms, called mainstreaming, is based on the principle that the potential for academic and social growth of handicapped children might best be met in the least restrictuve classroom environment. In the report "Mainstreaming: Assessment of Teacher Needs," (1975) the majority of preservice and inservice teachers felt they were not prepared to meet the

needs of the handicapped child in the classroom and/or expressed mixed feelings concerning mainstreaming.

The preservice teacher preparation program described below is specifically designed to include early field experiences that incorporates University faculty supervision, to provide opportunities for observing and teaching mildly handicapped children that are mainstreamed, and to assess preservice teachers based on their teaching competencies at each phase. A final significant advantage of the phase approach is that it can be implemented without major additional financial, personnel or material costs.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Sequence Program of the Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Curriculum at the University of South Alabama can be viewed as analogous to the extensive training required during an internship. The Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education has developed a highly sophisticated and specialized teacher preparation program which provides a balance between theory and practical application. The program also develops competencies for teaching children with special needs in the regular classroom.

The unique aspect of the elementary program is that it incorporates the study of theory and methods with concurrent field experiences. Students are provided with a gradual, cumulative exposure to actual classroom teaching. All field experience is in the surrounding school systems under the direction of certified teachers and university faculty.

The undergraduate teacher education program is designed to develop a basic foundation of understanding and competence in facilitating learning. The program is divided into four sequences that cover a period of four semesters. Sequence I, the introductory phase, includes the courses, Introduction to Education, Foundations of Reading Instruction, and an initial field observation experience. During this sequence, students decide whether or not they wish to make formal application to the teacher education program.

Prior to the Sequence II experience, students are screened to determine reading, writing, speech, and spelling abilities and to gain insight into their commitment to teaching as a profession. At this time, individuals are identified who need special training in reading or writing skills or treatment of speech impairment. When indicated, students may be advised to reconsider their choice of the teaching profession before proceeding with the program. Screening and evaluation continue throughout the other three sequences.

In Sequence II, students take methods courses in children's literature, language arts, reading, and physical education, and are involved two full days per week in field experience on an one-to-one and small group basis. In Sequence III, students participate in social studies, science, mathematics, and curriculum methods courses while working two full days per week in the classroom putting theory into practice. Sequence IV involves student teaching five days a week for ten weeks. While gradually assuming full responsibility for all classroom activities, the students partici-

pate in weekly seminars. These seminars help the students to solidify their educational philosophy while acting as a forum for theoretical and practical discussions. Throughout Sequences II-IV, the students' work is evaluated by both university faculty and the cooperating teachers.

Throughout all sequences, students are prepared to work in the regular classroom with mainstreamed special education pupils. Provisions have been made in field experiences for students to observe and to teach children with special needs (mainstreamed) in the regular classroom. These teaching activities are interrelated with modules/competencies developed in the courses on social studies, science, reading, language arts, mathematics experiences.

The paramount objective of the sequence program is to increase each student's effectiveness in the professional role and to acquaint him/her with the resources available for personal and professional fulfillment. The combination of a competency-based curriculum with a wide range of experiences in different classroom settings gives the student an excellent balance getween theoretical and practical experience.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Sequence I

Purpose: This introductory sequence is designed to provide undergraduate students with an opportunity through coursework to explore the education profession and to provide opportunities for participation in field experiences, before making a final career

decision. The courses included in this sequence are Foundations of Reading Instruction and Introduction to Education.

Function of Cooperating Teachers: Cooperating teachers provide for observation and interpretation of school situations and supervise the students while making provisions for: student observation; facilitation of one-to-one tutoring; small group instruction sessions; opportunities to meet school personnel; visits to other classroom; and learning about school resources.

Expectation of the Sequence I Student: Students are expected to observe the following in school situations: physical facilities; types of school supplies; texts and instructional resources; teaching-learning situations and methods; roles of school personnel; pupil behavior; and philosophy of the school.

Students tutor children in one-to-one situations and in small groups when the cooperating teacher feels they have the necessary instructional skills.

Evaluation Procedures: Students complete observation forms and write logs of classroom observations. They also take tests and write papers as part of the university experience.

Final Student Competencies: The students become familiar with concepts such as: learning centers, criterion-referenced tests, team teaching, media in the classroom, and open and traditional classrooms. The students, while in tutoring sessions, demonstrate their awareness regarding the range of children's abilities, interests, and needs.

The most important result of Sequence I is that students will have a more realistic basis for making a decision about their future role in education. With their knowledge of classroom resources, classroom teacher role, school personnel role, and children and the learning process, they are in a better position to make a career decision in favor of or against education. If students decide to pursue a teaching career, they may apply for admission to the College of Education.

Screening Procedures: In addition to the formal application and acceptance into the College of Education, the Elementary and Early Childhood Education Department (EECE) has developed screening procedures to determine the students' abilities in non-academic areas which are considered essential to success in teaching. These competencies are not necessarily reflected in the students' grade point average. The EECE faculty has identified the following areas to be evaluated: (1) interpersonal skills, (2) commitment to teaching, (3) speech models, (4) speech, (5) hearing, (6) reading, (7) writing, and (8) spelling.

Interpersonal skills and commitment to the teaching profession are evaluated in an interview of each student by two faculty members, as is the appropriateness of each student's speech. Students with problems in these areas are referred to the university speech or counseling clinic. Students whose commitment to teaching is questionable undergo a second interview at the conclusion of Sequence II. During this second interview, students without a clear commitment to teaching are counseled into other career

choices.

Speech and hearing tests are administered by trained university personnel. A standardized reading test, such as the Nelson-Denney Reading Tests, is used to measure vocabulary, comprehension and rate. Students with serious deficits in any of these areas are advised to complete a reading skills course for college students.

The Cooperative English Test measures students' abilities to communicate in written form and to spell. When students lack competence in communicating in written form, they are advised to complete an additional course designed to improve their writing competencies. This course is offered through the Elementary and Early Childhood Education Department. It is entitled, Developing Reading, Language and Study Skills.

SEQUENCE II

Purpose: Since the students may have had little teaching experience in elementary or middle schools, they need many opportunities to interact with pupils in one-to-one or small-group teaching situations. Courses for elementary education majors included in Sequence II are: Reading Instruction in the Elementary School, Childrens' Literature, Language Arts, and Physical Education in the Elementary School. While early childhood education majors complete courses entitled: Developing Language Skills in Young Children, Problems in Early Childhood Education, Reading Instruction in the Primary Grades, and Childrens' Literature. Specific competencies for working with mainstreamed children in the regular classroom

are included in these courses. The students are provided with field opportunities to plan activities in the areas of language arts and reading to carry out their plans, and to evaluate the outcomes.

Functions of the Cooperating Teacher: The cooperating teacher provides undergraduates with opportunities to participate directly in elementary or middle school classrooms. Students have identified the following practices as most helpful to them: (1) opportunities to confer with the cooperating teacher about the scheduling of those planned activities that are required by university instructors; (2) opportunities to be actively involved with pupils of varying abilities through tutoring, teaching small groups, or teaching the entire class when indications of good teaching techniques have been well established; (3) opportunities to discuss teaching techniques and philosophies; opportunities to meet other school personnel and to learn about school facilities; (4) opportunities for cooperating teacher and student to jointly evaluate lessons taught and (5) opportunities for cooperating teacher-student planning for subsequent instructions.

Expectations of the University-based Faculty: Sequence II students are visited at least once by each faculty member of the faculty team during the semester. Additional visits are made by Graduate Assistants assigned to the Sequence II team. During the visit, students will be observed while they teach a small group of pupils. Following the observation, both the Sequence II student and the university observer will discuss strengths and weaknesses

displayed during the student's demonstration. Alternative approaches may be recommended.

Cooperating Teacher Evaluation: Both informal and written evaluation instruments are used by the cooperating teachers and submitted to the University.

Final Student Competencies: The major demonstrable competencies that students will have at the end of Sequence II include: knowledge of availability and use of literary materials; the ability to select, develop and/or use appropriate materials in language arts and reading; knowledge of how to use diagnostic prescriptive teaching in reading and language arts; ability to organize and manage a classroom environment to meet the needs of regular and mainstreamed children; an understanding of developmental patterns of early childhood or elementary school children; and the ability to write and implement lesson plans.

SEQUENCE III

Purpose: Sequence III is designed to provide students with early teaching experience in which they may apply skills gained from the methods courses. The courses required in Sequence III for elementary education majors are: Teaching Arithmetic in the Elementary School, Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School, and Elementary School Program. Early childhood education majors complete Arithmetic in Early Childhood Education, Teaching Social Studies in Early Childhood Education, Teaching Science in Early Childhood Education, and Teaching the Young Child. Instructional

modules are used to demonstrate how to teach the normal range of children as well as the mainstreamed handicapped child by utilization of an individualized diagnostic-prescriptive system. Students are encouraged to interact with pupils in large groups as well as in small-group teaching situations. They are given opportunities to plan activities in the areas for mathematics, social studies, and science to implement their lessons and to assess the results.

Function of the Cooperating Teacher: The cooperating teacher provides undergraduate students opportunities to become actively involved in an elementary or middle school classroom. With the supervision of the classroom teacher, students are to plan, teach, and evaluate activities for large or small groups.

Expectations of the Sequence III Students: Students observe in the classroom and carry out prescribed requirements related to the methods courses while in these classrooms. In addition to teaching lessons in science, social studies, and mathematics, students are expected to become actively involved in any classroom activity that is considered appropriate and of value for their professional development. Sequence III students are required to engage in formal peer evaluation at frequent intervals. For this reason, it is necessary for a minimum of two students to be placed in each school. As the quarter progresses, growth in behavior that is associated with effective planning and teaching of science, social studies, and mathematics should be demonstrated.

Expectations of University-based Faculty: Faculty members from the EECE Department coordinate the field experiences and teach the courses in science, social studies, and mathematics. Two graduate assistants are also members of the Sequence III staff.

Each Sequence III staff member visits each student at least once. During each visit, the student is observed while teaching a 20-30 minute planned lesson to a large or small group of children. Immediately following the lesson, a 15 minute conference between the student and the staff member is held. Together they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson that has been taught. Also, the observer completes a formal evaluation form for each visit and discusses the notations with the student. Alternative activities for the lesson may be recommended. The Sequence III staff observes at least one lesson demonstrating skills or instructional strategies acquired from each of the three methods courses. In addition to the field experience evaluation, the faculty members assess the acquisitions of the cognitive materials in each of the methods courses.

Cooperating Teacher Evaluation: The students are provided both formal and informal feedback on their classroom performance by the classroom teacher. The cooperating teacher provides a minimum of three written evaluations, one in each subject area of specific lessons taught by the student and a final evaluation of the student's performance in the classroom. The cooperating teachers are encouraged to discuss the evaluations with the student prior to submissions of these evaluations to the Sequence III staff.

Final Student Competencies: The primary aim of the Sequence III program is for students to develop, refine, and practice skills and competencies in the areas of reading, social studies, and science. The Sequence III participants are expected to integrate and apply in the elementary or middle schools the theory and strategies presented in the methods courses.

SEQUENCE IV

Purpose: The Sequence IV program is designed to provide student teachers with the opportunity to apply acquired information and coordinate specific teaching techniques in daily situations. It provides continuity for the student in on-going action-response settings. Sequence IV provides the students with further experiences in strengthening and refining their skills for planning activities, initiating their plans and evaluating outcomes in the areas of language arts, mathematics, reading, science, social studies, and the other areas of the school curriculum.

Expectation of the Sequence IV Student: During the field experience student teachers are expected to engage in activities which are designed to acquaint them with a total school program in order to develop necessary competencies for teaching. To obtain a comprehensive program of experiences, student teachers are expected to participate in school day routines, to be involved in planning lessons and activities, to become familiar with recording data, to utilize instructional equipment, to become knowledgeable of school policies and procedures, to attend professional activi-

ties, and to become aware of special school facilities through observation. The student teacher gradually assumes responsibility for the total class and ultimately does one week of solo teaching.

Expectation of University-based Faculty: A university coordinator is assigned to each student teacher. The coordinator is responsible for maintaining communication between the College of Education, the student teacher and the supervising teacher. He/she visits each school early in the semester to observe the developing relationship between the student and the teacher to assist them in their working relationship. Throughout, the coordinators remain in close contact with the students and the supervising teachers. Evaluation of the student teacher involves classroom visits and checklists and evaluation forms completed by the supervisors. The university coordinators also conduct weekly seminars with student teachers.

Supervising Teacher Evaluation: The supervising teacher makes three formal reports and several informal reports on the student's progress throughout the student teaching semester.

Final Student Competencies: The student teacher will develop, refine, and expand skills and competencies in the areas of language arts, mathematics, reading, science, social studies, and the other areas in the school curriculum. The student will function as an effective facilitator of learning. The student will relate to the pupils in the classroom in a positive manner. The student will display a professional attitude toward teaching as a career, toward the pupil in the classroom, and toward other educators.

The Sequence program, as described here, is a program of continuous learning. The balance between theory and practice enables the students to develop their teaching skills gradually and concurrently with their studies in methodology. Continuous feedback is available to the students from cooperating teachers, peers, and university faculty. Consequently, weaknesses can be strengthened while the student is still in the beginning stages.

The Sequence program is a team effort between the school community and the university. Individual needs of students can be met because each student is placed with a teacher who will make his/her training suit specific needs. The program's adaptability lies in its flexibility: the student can get special attention where required, the university can adjust its schedule to meet his requirement, and the local schools can provide the appropriate setting for his particular need in field study. Other teacher preparation programs can use this system of student-university-local school cooperation because all the requirements for initiat- this program are available in all local communities where a teacher preparation program is based. It has been the University of South Alabama's experience that cooperating school districts are eager to assist in training students to meet the community's educational needs.

EVALUATION DESIGN

EVALUATION MODEL MATRIX

Dimension Factors

	Input	Process	Output	Evaluation
Exploratory Goals				
Specific Goals				
Implementation				
Evaluation				
Analysis & Recycle				

This model is inherently flexible in that both courses (and within course modules) and the program can be evaluated.

Definitions of Terms

Prior to providing examples of the evaluation design application an operational definition of terms is required.

Dimension Factors:

1. Input refers to both competencies and experiences expected of students entering in a course or program.

2. Process refers to the activities the student is involved in during a course of program.

3. Output refers to the competencies and experiences obtained by students at the end of a course or program.

Operation Factors:

1. Exploratory Goals refer to those non-measurable goals that are felt to be necessary parts of a process (class, program). Such activities as field trips, observations, etc., would be illustrative examples.

2. Specific Goals refer to those goals that are thought to be measurable and necessary in a class or program. Such things as stated behavioral objectives which have direct measurable aspects, GPA, test on content, etc., are examples.

3. Implementation refers to a module, class or program that has been developed based on the explanatory and specific goals.

4. Evaluation refers to the evaluation that would be conducted after the explanatory and specific goals have been implemented.

5. Analysis and Recycle refers to the interpretation of the evaluated data relative to the validity, reliability and applicability. The results would then be recycled for improvement of explanatory and/or specific goals and/or implementation procedures for improvement of an instructional process (module, course, program).

Evaluation Process

The following matrices for Sequence I-IV are designed as an in-depth evaluation model of the student's on-going classroom and field performance. The behaviors indicated are related directly to the objectives of the teacher preparation program.

SEQUENCE I

	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	EVALUATION
Exploratory Goals	"Do I want to be a teacher?"	Observation	Motivation to decide to major in teacher education	Check enrollment figures, self-evaluation
Specific Goals	Learn functions of school personnel, gain experiences with children	Field experiences	Ability to define roles of school personnel	Post-Test
Implementation	Readings: textbook, journals, monographs	Courses in Introduction to Education and Foundations to Reading Instruction	Completion of Sequence I	Do the activities enable students to successfully complete Sequence I?
Evaluation	Pre-Test	Evaluation by professor and cooperating teacher	Can students successfully participate in Sequence I?	(No Pre-Test) Are the Pre-tests, Post-tests, and surveys valid and reliable?
Analysis and Recycle	Do students possess the specific goals?	Do the field experiences, modules, checklists, and courses enable students to develop the desired outputs?	Do students possess the desired output?	Do students as prospective teachers understand mainstreaming concepts?

SEQUENCE II

	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	EVALUATION
Exploratory Goals	Motivation to become an elementary teacher	Observation of regular children and children with special needs. Positive Behavior Checklist.	Understanding the need for mainstreaming children with special needs	Attitude survey
Specific Goals	Knowledge of and ability to teach language arts and math skills	Administer diagnostic instruments. Field experiences	Prescriptive teaching of language arts/math. Educational planning for children with special needs	Post-Test
Implementation	Modules on teaching language arts and math	Modules on diagnosis in language arts/reading. Field experiences	Completion of Phase II. (language arts/reading courses)	Do the activities enable students to successfully complete Sequence II?
Evaluation	Pre-Test	Evaluation by cooperating teachers and professors during field experiences	Can students successfully participate in Sequence II?	Are the pre-tests, post-tests, and surveys valid and reliable?
Analysis and Recycle	Do students possess the specific goals?	Do the field experiences, modules, checklists and courses enable students to develop the desired outputs?	Do students possess the desired outputs?	Are students as teachers able to mainstream children?

SEQUENCE III

	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	EVALUATION
Exploratory Goals	Desire to expand skills for children	Observation of regular children and children with special needs. Positive Behavior Checklist	Understanding the need for mainstreaming children with special needs	Attitude survey
Specific Goals	Knowledge of Reading/Social Studies/ Science	Field Experiences Administer Diagnostic Instruments	Prescriptive teaching of Reading/Social Studies/Science Educational Planning for children with special needs.	Post-test
Implementation	Modules on Teaching Reading/Social Studies/Science/Learning Packets. Learning Centers	Field experiences, courses in Mathematics/Social Studies/ Science/Curriculum	Completion of Sequence III (Math/ Social Studies/ Science/Curriculum)	Do the activities enable students to successfully complete Sequence III?
Evaluation	Pre test	Evaluation by cooperating teachers and professors during field experiences	Can students successfully participate in Sequence IV?	Are the pre-tests, post-tests, and surveys valid and reliable?
Analysis and Recycle	Do students possess the specific goals?	Do the field experiences modules, centers, packets, and courses enable students to develop desired outputs?	Do students possess the desired outputs?	Are students as teachers able to mainstream children?

SEQUENCE IV

	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	EVALUATION
Exploratory Goals	Desire and ability to teach without the structure of universi ; courses	Observation of regular children and children with special needs. Positive Behavior Checklist.	Responsible for mainstreaming children with special needs.	Survey
Specific Goals	Knowledge of and ability to teach Reading/Social Studies/Math/Language Arts/Children's Literature	Field experiences, lesson plans, curriculum development	Prescriptive teaching in all areas. Educational Planning.	Evaluation of skills displayed doing field experiences
Implementation	Field experiences	Field experiences	Completion of Sequence IV	Classroom Teachers
Evaluation	Application for Student Teaching, Interview and Observation	Evaluation by cooperating teachers and professors during field experiences	Can students successfully demonstrate teaching skills in all areas?	Are the field experiences and seminars effective?
Analysis and Recycle	Do students possess the specific goals?	Do the field experiences and phases enable students to develop competencies for teaching?	Do students possess the desired outputs?	Are students as teachers able to mainstream children?

SUMMARY

The Sequence program, as described here, is a program of continuous learning with particular attention paid to the mainstreamed student. The balance between theory and practice enables the students to develop their teaching skills gradually and concurrently with their studies in methodology. Continuous feedback is available to the students from cooperating teachers, peers, and university faculty. Consequently, weaknesses can be strengthened while the student is still in the beginning stages.

The Sequence program is a team effort between the school community and the university. Individual needs of students can be met because each student is placed with a teacher who will make his/her training suit specific needs. The program's adaptability lies in its flexibility: the student can get special attention where required, the university can adjust its schedule to meet his requirement, and the local schools can provide the appropriate setting for his particular need in field study. Other teacher preparation programs can use this system of student-university-local school cooperation because all the requirements for initiating this program are available in all local communities where a teacher preparation program is based. It has been the University of South Alabama's experience that cooperating school districts are eager to assist in training students to meet the community's educational needs.

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