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ABSTRACT

This document discusses how many states are facing a shortage in teachers. Specifically, the document focuses on how the state department and colleges of education in Missouri have been actively working to maintain high levels of educational standards as well as recruiting more teachers. The document reports that some educational reform took place in the 1980s due to two major publications: A Nation At Risk and A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st century. Another influential publication was printed in 1996 titled What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future. These publications dealt with improving education by improving teachers. Based on these publications and some national initiatives, Missouri set out to improve their schools and quality of teaching. In order to accomplish this difficult task, Missouri decided to join forces with community colleges to create programs that will best prepare teachers. An example is Jefferson College, which developed a thorough plan for preparing teachers. Their program provides teachers with a liberal arts foundation as well as knowledge of appropriate pedagogy. The document concludes by stating that Missouri is only one successful example of how community colleges have begun working with states in order to address the problem of teacher shortages. (MZ)

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Community Colleges and Teacher Preparation: A Powerful Partnership

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Presentation Description:

Addressing the current teacher shortage while improving the quality of our teaching force presents a challenge to teacher educators. Community colleges can provide both access and high quality preparation to help meet this challenge when they partner with colleges of education. This presentation explores how one state approached this challenge.

Community Colleges and Teacher Preparation: A Powerful Partnership

Introduction

Reforming our education system nationally has received much attention, and improving the quality of teacher education has been a part of this discussion. Missouri has been active in these reform efforts, both at the state department and at colleges of education. Currently, the focus on teacher education has increased as our school systems face a potential shortage in available teachers. Addressing this shortage while maintaining the higher standards established as part of the reform efforts presents a challenge to teacher educators. It is now being recognized that community colleges can provide both access and high quality preparation to help meet this challenge.

This recognition was highlighted recently as Secretary of Education Roderick R. Paige urged community colleges to increase their programs in teacher education in one of his first addresses to a higher education group. Paige specifically mentioned that these two-year colleges could help alleviate the teacher shortage that public schools are facing (Evelyn, 2001).

The emphasis on the need for better teachers began in the mid 1980s as a component of the wave of school reforms inspired by the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Barker, 1996; Kelly, 1999; Gough, 1999). This publication delineated the findings of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). In 1981, Secretary of Education T. H. Bell appointed this commission to address the widespread public perception that something is seriously amiss in our educational system and charged them with assessing the quality of teaching and learning in our Nation's public and private schools, colleges, and universities (NCEE, 1983, p.1). After an eighteen-month study, the Commission's report painted a dismal picture of the educational system in the United States and stated that there existed a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people (p. 5). While the report found a wide range of causes for this mediocrity, one factor noted was the need to improve teaching and learning (p. 12).

Specifically regarding teacher education, the report lamented the fact that too few of the top students were pursuing the teaching profession, and that teacher education programs needed substantial improvement (NCEE, 1983, p. 22). Regarding this later finding, the commission identified the content of the teacher preparation programs as problematical. The report states, "The teacher preparation curriculum is weighted heavily with courses in educational methods at the expense of courses in subjects to be taught. A survey of 1,350 institutions training teachers indicated that 41 percent of the time of elementary school teacher candidates is spent in education courses, which reduces the amount of time available for subject matter courses" (p. 22).

The commission, to address this problem, recommended that teacher education students be required to meet high educational standards, to demonstrate an aptitude for teaching, and to demonstrate competence in an academic discipline, and that these programs should be judged by how well their graduates meet these criteria (p. 30). While there were numerous examples of legislation to address this report (Bell, 1993), one example which reflects these recommendations is Missouri's new MoSTEP approval process for teacher preparation programs, which uses student outcomes as a measure of program quality.

While *A Nation at Risk* was the one publication that received the most attention and

initiated the largest number of reforms, there were others, such as John I. Goodlad, TheodoreSizer, and the Education Commission of the States, who issued reports during this same time that corroborated the Commission's conclusion that teachers needed to be better educated (United States Department of Education [US DOE], 1984). Goodlad, specifically, spoke very directly to the need for improved teacher preparation. The publication in 1984 of *A Place Called School* by Goodlad led him to initiate a five-year study of teacher preparation in the United States and the subsequent publication of three more books, *Places Where Teachers are Taught* (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990b), *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching* (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990a), and *Teachers for our Nation's Schools* (Goodlad, 1990). This was followed in 1994 by *Educational Renewal* (Goodlad). All of these publications stress the link between good schools and good teachers and the need for both.

Two groups published reports in 1986 that specifically focused on improving teacher education: *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* was produced by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, and *Tomorrow's Teachers* was issued by The Holmes Group. Both reports asserted the need for increasing the educational requirements for teachers (Labaree, 1992).

One of the main recommendations of *A Nation Prepared* involved the creation of a national board to set standards of excellence for teachers. To address this recommendation, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was created in 1987 and established advanced standards to acknowledge experienced teachers. By the fall of 1997, more than 900 teachers had been certified under these standards (Darling-Hammond, 1999).

Another influential initiative addressing the need for national standards was produced by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), which was established in 1987 by the Council of Chief State School Officers. In 1992, this group published a set of performance-based licensing standards for new teachers (Ambach, 1996). The standards for new teachers delineated the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in MoSTEP are directly based on these INTASC standards (Missouri DESE, 1997).

Even with all of the publicity and the flurry of reforms, ten years after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, some believed that student achievement had not increased enough, so the Goals 2000: Educate America Act was signed into law in 1994 to address this continuing problem. This law provided money to fund reforms that supported the National Education Goals (better known as Goals 2000), which were produced at the 1989 Charlottesville Education Summit and, once again, improving teaching was identified as a part of the solution. In fact, Almost states used their first-year funds for local teacher preservice and inservice professional development activities, according to a report to Congress in 1996 (US DOE, 1996, pp. 17-18).

Then, in 1996, The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future published *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*. This report came after two years of research, which found a major flaws in teacher preparation, and provided a blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting excellent teachers in all of America's schools (p. vi). According to Linda Darling-Hammond, the Executive Director of the Commission, this blue-ribbon panel concluded that the reform of elementary and secondary education depends first and foremost on restructuring its foundation, the teaching profession (The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996, p. 193).

Darling-Hammond compares the report to the Flexner Report of 1910 that transformed the medical profession, as both reports examined practices in the United States and abroad to

discover effective models (Darling-Hammond, 1996). The report sets specific goals to be accomplished by 2006; in fact, the Commission recommends that schools of education that have not met the specified recommendations by this date should be closed. Included in these recommendations is an emphasis on the INTASC national standards and performance-based assessment as requirements for entrance into the profession. Also, when addressing the need to develop high-quality pathways into teaching, the Commission supports articulation agreements between community colleges and accredited teacher preparation programs (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

Two years later, the American Council on Education (ACE) appointed a task force with the specific goal of involving college and university presidents in the quest to improve teacher education. The resulting report, *To Touch the Future: Transforming the Way Teachers are Taught*, was published in 1999 and delineated an action plan to help these presidents lead the reform of teacher education. This report also relates the important role that community colleges play in educating teachers and asserts that carefully crafted articulation agreements can . . . improve the quality of teachers available to serve the nation's schools (ACE, 1999, p. 24).

An influential group in the effort to reform teacher education is the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which revised its accreditation standards twice since these reform efforts began. The first of these revisions, in 1987, emphasized a well-developed and articulated knowledge base. Recently, the new NCATE 2000 Unit Standards additionally emphasized candidate performance (NCATE, 2000). NCATE has been the major accrediting body for teacher education since 1954 and is a coalition of thirty-three professional groups which includes the two major teachers' unions (Basinger, 1998).

While much activity has taken place, there is, as might be expected, disagreement on how successful this activity has been in improving education in the United States. In 1998, a conference was sponsored by The Heritage Foundation, Empower America, the Center for Education Reform, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation to produce a follow-up report 15 years after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. The resulting report, *A Nation Still at Risk*, states that not much has changed (1998, p. 27). Again, improving teacher preparation is listed as a necessary strategy for improving the nation's schools.

More recently, the January 2000 issue of the *Kappan* revisits Goals 2000 and reaches some very negative conclusions about the initiatives it spawned (Ohanian, 2000). On the contrary, Barker argues that test scores have been misinterpreted and that a closer examination of the standardized test data from 1975 to 1990 actually shows that scores have risen (1996). Regardless of these judgments pertaining to the success or failure of past initiatives, improving teacher preparation is still a popular war cry on the national front, as discussed earlier.

Another Factor

While the reports discussed so far have dealt in a general way with improving education by improving teaching, one specific issue that has received attention recently is the need to increase the number of minority teachers in the kindergarten through twelfth-grade arenas. The increase in the number of minority students in elementary and secondary school is well-documented; according to the National Center for Education Statistics, from 1976 to 1996, minority enrollment in public schools has jumped from 24 percent to 36 percent (US DOE, 1999a). And the trend is expected to continue; it is estimated that by 2030, the number of white (non-Hispanic) high school students will fall to 50 percent (Hansen, 1998).

This change in the racial and ethnic make-up of the elementary and secondary students

may affect many practices in the schools, but it also speaks to the need for a teaching force that more closely mirrors the student population. This concept is substantiated in the report of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession:

Schools form children=s opinions about the larger society and their own futures. The race and background of their teachers tells them something about authority and power in contemporary America . . . influencing their attitudes toward school, their academic accomplishments, and their views of their own and others= intrinsic worth (1986, p. 79).

While the student population is becoming more diverse, the teaching profession is becoming more homogeneous. According to the *Digest of Educational Statistics 1998*, in 1971, 88.3 percent of public school teachers were white; in 1996, 90.7 percent were (US DOE, 1999b, p. 80). According to Futrell, one of the reasons for this movement is the cost of becoming a teacher, and she specifically targets community colleges as one solution to this problem as she states, AIt is incumbent upon departments of education at four-year colleges and universities to partner with community and junior colleges to encourage students to transfer to their institutions and to select teaching as a career@ (1999, p. 31). Granted, this may be only one of many strategies needed to overcome this problem, but it is not one that should be ignored.

Missouri Issues

The discussion so far has focused on national issues and initiatives, but Missouri has been actively involved on a statewide basis in addressing the issues of improving schools and improving teacher preparation based on these national initiatives. Foremost in this statewide movement was the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993, which included five initiatives: The Show-Me Standards, Curriculum Frameworks, a New Statewide Assessment, Professional Development for Educators, and Professional Standards for New Educators. The Act also provided funding to support these initiatives and to increase the availability of technology in schools. Components of the Act were supported by the Missouri School Improvement Program (Missouri DESE, 1996).

These initiatives came as a direct result of the national movement toward performance-based assessment. While the Show-Me Standards addressed what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school, the Professional Standards for New Teachers defined Awhat graduating preservice teachers should know and be able to do as certificated Missouri teachers@ (Missouri DESE, 1996, p. v). These guidelines were delineated in a set of 10 performance-based standards, which were modeled specifically on the INTASC standards established by the Council of Chief State School Officers, as referenced earlier (Missouri DESE, 1997).

These Professional Standards for New Educators eventually became imbedded within Standard 1 of the Missouri Standards for Teacher Education Programs (MoSTEP) which became effective in September 1999 (Missouri DESE, 1999). Until these new standards were effective, the approval process for teacher education programs was input-based; that is, it considered what the institution put into the program (e.g., courses taught, their content, faculty qualifications, and program budgets). While many of these issues are still felt to be important components of an effective program, the new process emphasizes the quality of the graduates to measure the quality of the program (Missouri DESE, 1997). In fall 1999, the first group of teacher education programs began their evaluations under the new standards.

Influenced by the national and statewide movement to improve teacher preparation, many programs in Missouri began to develop new curricula for their teacher education students, but

community colleges could not join this movement due to the restrictions placed by Missouri rule 5 CSR 80-805.015, which specified what courses and how many hours taught at community colleges could be accepted for purposes of teacher certification. An example of this discrepancy can be seen when the newly-revised curriculum at the University of Missouri at Columbia (UMC) Teacher Development Program is compared to the curriculum at Jefferson College (a Missouri community college) as prescribed by the board rule. The UMC Phase I, Inquiry into Learning is to be completed at the mid-preparation point and is comprised of Orientation, Inquiry into Learning 1, and Inquiry into Learning 2. During this same time, a student pursuing elementary education at Jefferson College would have taken Introduction to Teaching, Art for Children, Literature for Children, P. E. for Children, and Music for Children.

While this does not show courses other than strictly education courses, it does illuminate the totally different approach to a beginning curriculum. The UMC Phase I curriculum develops a base level of understanding of teaching and learning, or, in constructivist terms, it offers a spiraling curriculum where new knowledge builds on prior knowledge. Courses such as learning theory, child/adolescent development, classroom management and assessment are integrated and then spiraled across semesters. Topics are introduced more than once and developing teachers apply their knowledge as they acquire it through a variety of clinical experiences (University of Missouri-Columbia 2000).

The State-mandated approach at Jefferson College involved specific methods courses; the subject matter was presented once in these courses which were not part of a sequenced program, but were simply stand-alone courses. Such courses did not allow for an integrated or a spiraled curriculum. Also, secondary education students had a limited introduction to professional education courses, as the State only allowed a beginning field experience course and adolescent psychology to transfer into their teacher certification requirements.

These differences cost transferring students credit hours, as they were required to complete the Phase I courses before they could begin their junior year at the University of Missouri. More importantly, this curriculum did not facilitate student learning as effectively as the new approach.

The need to address the problems faced by transferring students was identified during the development of MoSTEP, and Standard 4.2.3 specifically requires a mutually agreed upon articulation with Missouri Community Colleges (Missouri DESE, 1999, p. 5). Dr. Mike Lucas, Director of Teacher Education at DESE, established the Statewide Teacher Education Articulation Project (STEAP) in 1998 to deal with this issue.

As part of this project, representatives of all Missouri teacher education programs, both two- and four-year, were invited to participate in a series of meetings in 1998 and 1999. During these meetings, participants developed areas of program emphasis partnered with cross-program themes to guide the design of curriculum for the first two years of a four-year program in teacher education, whether this program was at a two- or four-year institution. These guidelines would assure the senior institutions that transfer students would possess knowledge and skills comparable to their native students. Also, drafts of rubrics were developed that could be used to assess teacher education students at this mid-preparation point.

These concepts were supported by resolutions discussed at the Spring 1999 STEAP meeting, along with proposed wording for a new State Board of Education Rule which would allow community college more latitude in developing appropriate teacher education programs. It was assumed that with the guidelines developed by STEAP and with this rule change,

community colleges would be better able to prepare students for entrance into a quality teacher education program. The concept of better-prepared teacher education students who can smoothly articulate from a community college to a college of education without losing time or coursework was seen as beneficial on many fronts, and the new rule went into effect in 2001.

Jefferson College Perspectives

Taking advantage of this new rule change, Jefferson College began the process of improving its teacher education curriculum. The first step in developing this curriculum involved a literature review regarding teacher preparation and regarding community colleges to discover the best practices for this particular setting. Next, relevant documents (i.e., the Missouri Standards for Teacher Education Programs, the STEAP guidelines, *Credit Transfer: Guidelines for Student Transfer and Articulation Among Missouri Colleges and Universities*) were carefully analyzed. Finally, the findings of these document analyses were synthesized with the conclusions from the review of literature regarding best practices, and the teacher education faculty developed a conceptual framework upon which to base the new program.

As the faculty designed the new curriculum, they worked with the Teacher Education Program Advisory Committee which includes 33 members who represent the local K-12 schools, other area teacher preparation programs, and students. Also, a group of teacher education faculty from two- and four-year institutions of higher education from the area met occasionally to discuss issues about transfer and articulation.

This process produced a curriculum that culminates in an Associate of Arts degree comprised of 42 credit hours in general education, 14 credit hours in the teacher education core, and a minimum of 8 credit hours of electives. The certification level the student is pursuing will determine these electives. It offers students a solid foundation in liberal arts and a beginning knowledge of appropriate pedagogy. The curriculum prepares the preservice teacher for more in-depth study at the senior institution as it lays the groundwork for effective teaching. It introduces students to technology as part of the teaching/learning process and exposes students to an understanding and appreciation of diversity.

To assure the quality of graduates, students are required to pass all sections of the College Basic Academic Skills Exam and to complete a portfolio addressing all of the mid-preparation benchmarks established by STEAP. To clearly communicate to receiving institutions, a transcript will specify @Teacher Education Program Complete@ if the student has successfully completed the Associate of Arts degree and all Teacher Education Program requirements.

Conclusion

This is just one example of how a state and a specific community college have addressed the challenge of providing both access and high quality preparation to future teachers. Many other states have also taken steps to meet this challenge. In Arizona, Rio Salado College (part of the Maricopa Community College District) began offering an online-based teacher-certification program in August 2001 (Carlson, 2001). In Maryland, students can transfer all credits earned in a new state-approved associate of arts in teaching degree to any college in the state, private or public (Levinson, 2001). As the teacher shortage worsens, the challenge to maintain quality and access will become even greater, and the ability of community colleges to help meet this challenge will become more evident.

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