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ABSTRACT

A reform effort in the initial preparation of teachers has focused upon extended teacher education programs. Future teachers must know academic subject matter thoroughly, have a comprehensive understanding of the principles of human development and learning, and be able to apply their education and training effectively prior to becoming fully certified teachers. A teacher education program extending beyond four years has now been implemented at the University of South Carolina. The program includes expanded coverage of important content areas as well as more opportunities for students to acquire effective teaching strategies through directed field experience. This extended baccalaureate program includes certification tracks in early childhood, elementary, middle, and secondary education. While a core of coursework and corresponding practica experiences is common to all programs, highly specialized professional training characterizes the certification program. Beyond the new extended baccalaureate are two additional levels of professional development: the master's degree in selected teaching areas and a proposed specialist degree in teaching. Linked to the two levels of degree study, and to specific school district and teacher development needs, are various professional education/training courses and inservice education workshops and institutes. (JD)

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EDUCATING TEACHERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

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EDUCATING TEACHERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

National interest in improving public education has centered on the major challenge of redesigning and extending the education of teachers. Any vision of substantive improvement in education correctly identifies the teacher as the basis for such gains. The improvement of teachers must be linked to all facets of the educational design. The experiences future teachers encounter prior to their professional training influence the spectrum of development that can occur during the teacher preparation period. Further, the value period on the role teachers perform is influential in shaping teacher perceptions of what and how this role should be performed influences the initial and continuing education of professional educators (Swick, 1984).

The current focus on improving what happens within all levels of education is favorable to creating more productive situations for teacher education at all levels and improved situations for young people who may choose teaching as a profession. This combination of improved circumstances for teaching and educating future teachers should permeate our society and eventually increase the value placed on teaching as a profession. Essential to the creation of a productive cycle whereby teaching is viewed as a profession is a major effort to reform teacher education. This reformation should include a reconceptualization of teacher education into a three tier system which promotes a life span approach to the initial and continuing education/professional development of teachers. This paper deals with reforming and reconceptualizing the initial education of teachers (level one) and will conclude with an outline of subsequent stages.

Currently, the initial preparation of teachers is criticized as inadequate in terms of desired levels of eventual performance, ineffective in providing needed content of specialty areas of study, and lacking in a systematic approach to providing teachers with effective instructional strategies (Gideonse, 1982). While some teacher education programs have implemented projects to resolve training deficiencies, these efforts have been sporadic and limited to scope. Any serious reform effort must include the development of extended teacher education efforts -- a move toward a five year and possibly six year training cycle. The "extended" preparation concept allows for a broadening of content preparation as well as more in-depth, continuing professional training. Further, an extension of this idea to creating additional levels of professional practice can improve the likelihood of a life-span approach to teaching and teacher education/development (Goodlad, 1982).

Within the "extended teacher education" design there are six major reforms essential to an effective reconceptualization of the initial training of teachers.

- *Increase the content and academic preparation required of prospective teachers.
- *Implement more rigorous standards and requirements for students entering preservice education programs.
- *Increase the quality and quantity of field experiences required of future teachers, and require these experiences earlier in the preparation program.
- *Interrrelate the experiences gained in the professional education program to a greater degree with the coursework and experiences students gain in their academic and speciality areas.
- *Involve to a greater degree public school professionals in the planning and implementation of preservice teacher education programs; especially the field based components of the program.

*Insure that future teachers gain more experience in managing the classroom, teaching essential skills, understanding school law, dealing with the changing role of the family, and teaching children who possess a variety of special needs (Friedman, Brinlee, and Hayes, 1980):

These essentials of reform underscore three important dimensions of initial teacher preparation. First, future teachers must have an adequate content preparation and, therefore, know thoroughly the academic subject matter they are to teach. Second, they must have a comprehensive understanding of the principles of human development and learning the knowledge base about teaching and learning that has been accumulated. Third, prospective teachers must be able to apply their education and training to the job of teaching in an effective way prior to becoming fully certified teachers. These reform criteria also highlight the need for closer working relationships among teacher educators, other university faculty, and practicing professionals in the field of education. Further, the need for a career approach to the continuing education of teachers is obvious and the formation of professional development teams to implement needed changes is critical to the eventual integration of these changes into the educational system.

Reforming Teacher Education: A Case Study in Design

In an attempt to improve the education of teachers the University of South Carolina has developed a new program which extends beyond the four year degree concept. Ultimately, the design should facilitate a life-span approach to the education and development of teachers. The initial training component of this design uses the recommendations previously described as the basis for an "extended baccalaureate" in teacher education. The new program of studies requires a minimum of 138 semester hours in contrast to the previous 124 hour program. The program includes expanded coverage of important content areas as well as more opportunities for students to acquire effective teaching strategies through

directed field experiences.

Another "benchmark" of the "extended" program is that students can major in academic areas other than education and thus acquire a more in-depth understanding of their specialty fields. Further, this broadening of the teacher education curriculum assures more participation by all faculty in the university in the planning and implementation of the program. A university wide teacher education council has been established to facilitate total university support of the new program. This council will oversee the implementation of the program and assist faculty in refining the program as needed.

An additional professional planning council comprised of practicing professionals (teachers, principals, etc.) will provide continuous input on planning and refining all aspects of the teacher education program. For example, this council initially focused on improving the internship component of the program. Long range plans for use of the council include their involvement in planning graduate and in-service education components to the life-span teacher education design. Both the university council and the practicing professionals council have been influential in raising the admission criteria for entrance into the teacher education program.

Additional Components of the USC Model

The extended baccalaureate teacher education program at the University of South Carolina also represents a significant effort to provide prospective teachers the chance to relate their coursework to the experiences they gain from a carefully planned and sequenced set of practical field experiences. Within the context of a broad increase in the quantity and quality of practice field experiences, future teachers in the program will become participant observers in a variety of instructional situations beginning in the sophomore year and extending through their student teaching experience. Initially, as observers, students will witness the principles and skills described in their courses as applied to the events

activities of the public school classroom. In a sequential manner students will become increasingly more involved as participants in all aspects of the teaching process until, as student teachers, they will be allowed the opportunity to assume full teaching responsibilities, managing an entire classroom situation under the guidance of experienced practicing professionals and university faculty.

A hallmark of the program is that "core field experiences" and "core course content" are linked in a theory-practice system that assures monitoring of student development in all phases of teaching. For example, three emphases in the core courses are: (1) human development/learning; (2) effective teaching strategies; and (3) foundations of educational practice. Each of these areas of emphasis is directly linked to practical experiences in which students are expected to carry out the knowledge acquired in the practical situation. Thus the university classroom takes on a new dimension -- that of examining student questions related to application of ideas gained during course lectures and an extension of course content to include real teaching issues that emerge from student experiences in various classroom settings. The extended practical-field experiences also provide many opportunities for performance evaluation of students development in these initial instructional endeavors.

Throughout the new extended teacher preparation program the knowledge and skills prospective teachers must possess in order to be competent and effective professionals is emphasized. Regardless of certification category, students in the new program receive training in school law, classroom management, educational technology, the ability to deal effectively with parents, skills for designing learning settings where children of different cultures and learning styles can succeed as well as knowledge and experiences in meeting the needs of exceptional children.

The new extended program in teacher education at the University of South

Carolina includes certification tracks in early childhood, elementary, middle and secondary education. While a core of coursework and corresponding practica experiences is common to all programs, highly specialized professional training characterizes the certification program a future teacher chooses. For example, the Early Childhood Program includes focused study of language development, techniques of parent involvement/education and further emphasizes integrated curriculum approaches. Students in the Early Childhood Program not only study the techniques of parental involvement but apply them in home and school based practica settings. The Elementary Program treats specific curriculum areas like mathematics and language arts in depth offering specialized study of strategies for teaching basic skills areas. In each certification program the particular areas of emphasis are the focus of coursework and field experiences. Regardless of the certificate program area students choose, prospective teachers are given experiences with many age levels of children, as well as children who possess a variety of special needs or handicapping conditions. The ultimate goal of the extended program at the University of South Carolina is to produce a teacher who is liberally educated, who has a strong background in a subject matter area, and who has demonstrated the ability to apply all that he or she has learned to the critical task of educating our nation's youth.

Three features of the new extended baccalaureates in teacher education at the University of South Carolina that will permeate all reform movements in teacher preparation well into the next century are: (1) an expanded knowledge base for prospective teachers; (2) a focus on effective teaching strategies that emanate from the body of accumulated research; and (3) a broadened arena for training and continually refining the initial and continuing education of teachers. Future teachers will be required to have an expanded knowledge base of general educational constructs prior to admission to teacher preparation programs and more extensive

knowledge to teach in their specialty area.

Another mark of future teacher education programs will be the emphasis on teacher performance of effective instructional skills and behaviors as assessed by performance based evaluation programs. In contrast to the isolated methods courses taught in many teacher training institutions, teaching strategies will be acquired in integrated theory-to-practice field settings. Prospective teachers will have various opportunities to perform teaching skills and will be provided continuous feedback regarding the improvement of their effectiveness. An additional and critical focus of future teacher education program will be the broadening of the arena in which programs are planned, implemented, assessed and refined. The education of teachers is the responsibility of all members of the educational community. Total university involvement and extensive involvement of practicing professionals is essential for designing functional teacher preparation programs (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), and these are important features of the new extended program at the University of South Carolina.

Extending the Initial Training of Teachers

The most glaring deficiency in the education of teachers is the lack of a career-specific spiral of professional development experiences that sustain and improve the teachers' instructional skills over an extended career. Typically, career advancement is seen as a promotion to another educational position such as the principalship or even a change in career positions to another profession. The development of teachers beyond the initial training phase is a mixed arrangement and far too often is unrelated to the stages of development teachers experience in their professional growth (Swick and Hanley, 1983). The University of South Carolina's approach to teacher education extends the training and professional renewal of teachers over the life-span of these professionals.

Beyond the new "extended baccalaureate" in teacher education are two additional levels of professional development: the master's degree in selected teaching areas and a proposed specialist degree in teaching.* Linked to the two levels of degree study and to specific school district and teacher development needs are various professional education/training courses and in-service education workshops/institutes.

Graduate study at the master's level is designed to meet the "emerging professional's" needs for in-depth study of specific teaching areas and exploration of issues that have emerged during their initial teaching situation (typically a 2-5 year phase of development). Work beyond the master's degree is designed to further refine one's teaching skills through a specialist degree in teaching combined with existing and evolving professional development workshops. The addition of this third level of formal study (Ed.S. in teaching) will provide interested professionals with the needed legitimacy for remaining in teaching as a career goal and more importantly increase their functioning toward becoming "master teachers" in the schools and communities they serve.

The "professionalization" of teaching can be advanced by the development and use of teacher education designs that include: more rigorous admissions criteria; an increase in the preparation of teachers in their specialty teaching area, and more direct and extended involvement of future teachers in acquiring effective teaching strategies along with field experiences to practice and refine these skills. The creation of career teacher education designs where initial training is extended to allow for more content study and more extensive professional training, as well as the provision for continued teacher development via "planned" graduate study and productive in-service education designs, will provide the framework for lasting and substantive improvements in education.

*The new Specialist Degree in Teaching is in the proposal stage in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

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