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President's Message

**Some Thoughts About Curriculum Revision:
Preservice Teacher Education and the Doctoral Program**

John Penick, President

SOME PROBLEMS AND IDEAS

Our broad goals include preparing highly knowledgeable and skilled teachers. We design programs so that these teachers will be noted as exemplars of their craft because of their success with students as well as their understanding and communication of their subjects, including teaching, and learning. All should leave their programs not only with well-honed skills and knowledge, but also with a strong and exacting vision of what education and schooling can be and how to achieve this. In essence, they should have a rationale, preferably research-based, for teaching and the ability to implement this rationale. To do so, they must have opportunities to learn and experience in a visionary program with appropriate and exemplary settings and experiences. In considering what opportunities and experience might provide the desired level of vision and expertise, I look to five variables, which, if organized optimally, have the potential to provide us with such a model program. These variables are: socialization, intellectual demands, modeling, time on task, and opportunity for application of learning.

Socialization

A peer group provides powerful mechanisms for communicating and learning. We should take advantage of these positive aspects by exploiting a group setting more systematically, as do other professional programs such as medicine and law. Arranging our students into distinct cohort groups with overlapping common elements in their programs would easily create learning communities where the students know each other (usually better than the faculty knows them). Here, we can plan their experiences more systematically, designing them so the group provides support (and pressure to perform) for the individual members. With such support and pressure we can expect more of the students and provide them with greater learning. The SALISH studies of the late 90s indicated that students in cohort groups identified more with fellow members of their cohort than they did with their cooperating teachers from student teaching. This might help us move away from the apprenticeship model that has long

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plagued teacher education.

Time-On-Task

More time translates into more opportunities for interaction, reading, experience, thinking, application, and personal learning. Our students usually arrive with strongly held notions of what it means to teach and to be a teacher. As a result, our students see exemplary teaching (and themselves, of course) revolving around vague ideas of rapport with students and a focus on telling as teaching. They initially see their role as explaining and demonstrating (albeit better than their own teachers did). To move our future teachers beyond this to a realm where they can involve their own students in an inquiry-centered learning community requires much effort and, more importantly, extensive time. Few teacher education programs provide anywhere enough time. And, we see the results regularly in teacher's classroom behaviors and actions where inquiry and student-centered instruction are rare birds indeed.

Not only do we need more clock time to educate our teachers adequately, this time must be spaced such that the learning is both continuous and sufficient for the changes in attitude, and behavior (and dare I say, even personality), to take effect. The SALISH reports demonstrated that the most effective programs (in terms of self-perceived impact on preservice teachers) were those with the greatest time spread across the longest chronological period. Even in a time of teacher shortage, we need to make our programs more demanding in time and intelligence; as has been seen in other professions, a time of personnel shortage is not the time to weaken standards but, rather, a time to enhance them. We cannot prepare teachers with a few thirty-seven and a half hour classes followed by two months in a classroom over which we have little influence. We need more time to prepare our students if they are to become the professionals we desire.

Intellectual Demands

Many view teachers as those of lesser intellect and many teacher education programs probably do provide lower academic expectations than do other disciplines. Most of our programs attract many students of high ability and expect graduates to succeed with many difficult mathematics and science courses. Excellent students want excellent teacher education programs, programs they can be proud of as participants. More intellectually robust courses and experiences in our programs will attract even more excellent students, perhaps allowing us to raise our standards even in the face of teacher shortages. Our new teachers should be sought after nationally, known as more skilled, knowing, and capable than typical first year teachers. Increase the intellectual demands of our programs and we may well attract more intellectual students.

Modeling

Modeling has been demonstrated to be a powerful component in developing skills as well as intellectual patterns of behavior. But, modeling is a slow and often obscure process, one that is not always practiced and one that is not always made visible. Modeling must be developed, taught, and made conspicuous, not just demonstrated. To the unaware, the model is seen as no more than a smooth performance; while we, as teacher educators, want our student to see the details of individual moves that make up the performance. Such vision and insight into the process does not happen by accident but, rather, through a concerted program designed to provide the actual model along with tools of observation and knowledge to discuss the meaning of the model. Following this, we need to work with students to develop their own abilities to use these models in a purposeful way, knowing what they are doing as well as when and why.

Modeling takes time, lots of it. While we can tell students about a simple verbal strategy (such as open ended questions, wait time I, accepting responses, and using student ideas) in ten minutes, it takes many hours of experiencing this strategy as a student, followed by metacognition and discussion, to begin to conceptualize the power such a strategy has in a classroom. Even more hours are necessary to be able to exhibit the behaviors the strategy entails.

Application of Teaching Knowledge

Practicing teachers rate their student teaching experience as the most important component of their teacher education. Harking back to SALISH, one program where this was not the case was the one with multiple, cohort-oriented methods courses, each with extra time (20-25 class hours per semester hour credit), an independent and closely supervised practicum, consistent modeling by the faculty, and rigorous academic demands and expectations on the students. Most of these aspects involve application of knowledge in some fashion.

By having seminar courses with more time, students speak and discuss and explain more. While talking about teaching may not seem like experience, talking and explaining are powerful ways to develop conceptual understanding of the roles of teachers, students, and classroom goals and strategies. As students talk and understand, they develop confidence and an interest in trying these ideas. This is a form of application of knowledge.

But, talking is not enough. Our students also need opportunity to practice in varied settings across significant time spans. The literature of teacher education reveals that student teacher and cooperating teacher usually identify with each other, often against

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President's Message (cont.)

the supervising teacher from the university. If the student teacher is struggling, the cooperating teacher may feel that she or he is the one who is being evaluated, the one who is failing, or the one on the spot, leading to discomfort for the teacher. Providing settings where each student teacher works with more than one teacher may help alleviate these problems and concerns. For instance, three student teachers might work in one school with three teachers, with all six working together and no one student paired with a particular teacher. In such settings students win as well since they are exposed to more models and, even if one of the cooperating teachers is not as effective as we might hope, no one student is stuck with that teacher for the semester. The same works for teachers, as they will have more opportunity to work with a broad range of student teachers and not be burdened with a "problem child."

Some Possible Programmatic Solutions**Cohorts**

Admitting and tracking students as cohorts provides for group identity and cohesion, facilitating many of the objectives of a teacher education program. With cohorts, we can better sequence our learning activities, with less redundancy or gaps. Cohorts allow the students to know each other better than the faculty member does, consequently empowering the students. Cohorts increase the amount of common experience among the group members, encouraging communication, support, and longevity of relationships developed.

Program Components, Sequence and Program Length

While I feel that four semesters is probably an optimum minimal time for a preservice teacher education program, I see ways whereby we could do it in three, particularly if we used one summer for a required course. We might begin the sequence with a summer course or begin in the fall and have a summer course between the spring and fall semesters. By having a sequence such as Methods I, then Methods II (or even III) followed by Student teaching, we have a distinct starting point to form the cohort. Students would move together from course to course in the main sequence. The foundations courses could be taken in any order, although most would take them in a common sequence as well. Courses such as "Teaching with Technology" could be part of the invariant sequence or might be more flexible. By having a required summer course, we could still have four academic terms in a row without going out to a two-year program. And, a required summer course

would always "make," allowing for a salary opportunity for one or more persons.

If each course met more intensively than is traditional, then we would have the clock hours needed to effect change in our students. I would suggest a minimum of 60 hours for Methods I and 75 for Methods II, plus some practicum time. This would significantly increase the time available and allow for an expansion of our curriculum and increase the competence of our students.

Correlation of the Doctoral Program with the Preservice Program

Our doctoral students need more opportunities to work in exemplary settings. A more extensive and intensive teacher education program creates opportunities for our doctoral students to become involved. And, the most involved will probably get the most job offers as they will have more experience doing what a teacher educator does, will have more opportunities to demonstrate strength and knowledge of teacher education, and will probably have the most powerful letters of recommendation. When our graduates are interviewed for positions, we want them to stun their audiences with their eloquence, communication skills, experience with teacher education, and vision. Our new graduates could, as beginners, be viewed as excellent rather than merely as junior faculty. As we want our newly minted preservice teachers to be change agents; even more so we should want the same for our doctoral graduates as they have a multiplier effect, allowing us to affect large numbers of prospective teachers. JP

Serve on an AETS Committee!

A number of AETS Committee appointments expire in 2003. If you have an interest in serving, please contact Herb Brunkhorst. Herb will be starting a file of those interested. hkbrunh@csusb.edu

Committees with positions beginning in 2003:

Elections Committee
Awards Committee
Conference Coordination Committee
Communications Committee
Equity Committee
Membership and Participation Committee
Oversight Committee
Professional Development Committee
Publications Committee

AETS Membership **Announcements**

Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE)

will select from those papers presented at AETS 2003, a paper (and person) who will be awarded \$1000 plus a comp registration to SITE 2003, where they will present their paper (or another one). We want someone who is doing innovative work in teacher education using technology. The SITE presentation would get special recognition in the program.

SITE 2003
Albuquerque, New Mexico
March 24-30, 2003

A focus of the Catalyst grant funding these activities is on appropriate, content-specific technology integration in teacher education. Specifically, we are most interested in presentations about using technology in the following ways:

1. Technology should be introduced in the context of science content.
2. Technology should address worthwhile science with appropriate pedagogy.
3. Technology instruction in science should take advantage of the unique features of technology.
4. Technology should make scientific views more accessible.
5. Technology instruction should develop students' understanding of the relationship between technology and science.

The recipient will also be encouraged to submit his or her paper for review to the online journal *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* (www.CITEJournal.org).

Contact John Penick at john_penick@ncsu.EDU for more information