



Identifying the Needs of Student Teachers

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Introduction

- Increased concern over preparing and assessing those learning to teach has lead many teacher preparation programs to make modifications to their existing programs. The knowledge, skills and dispositions that teachers need to demonstrate in order to succeed at teaching challenging content to a much more diverse group of learners can only be acquired by providing a quality teacher preparation program. When changes are made to a program it becomes necessary to assess the effectiveness of the current program and determine whether it is meeting the needs of student teachers.

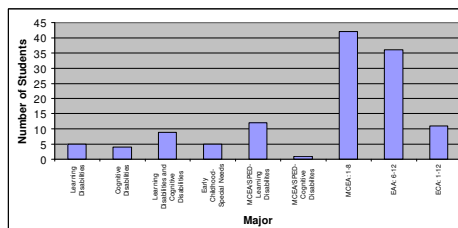
Methodology

- This investigation offered a programmatic perspective into how a particular group of K-12 student teachers identified to what extent their needs were met in course work and field experiences in their teacher preparation program. A Likert-scale survey using the 10 Wisconsin Teaching Standards as a framework was administered to all student teachers in January of 2007 with 100% return rate. Open-ended responses encouraged student teachers to explain why or why not they felt prepared in a variety of areas. In March a random sample of 10 participants across K-12 disciplines participated in a focus group concerning their needs and the UW-Eau Claire teacher preparation program. A quantitative and qualitative analysis provided insights into how areas of the program met their needs and provided insights into how the program may be further enhanced.

Key Questions

- What are the needs of student teachers prior to beginning their student teaching semester?
- In what areas do student teachers feel most prepared?
- What suggestions do student teachers have that might enhance the UW-Eau Claire teacher preparation program?

Who are our student teachers?



Acknowledgments: Funding Sources

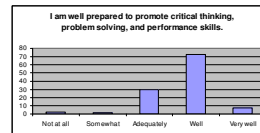
- College of Education and Human Sciences
- Department of Foundations of Education
- UW-Eau Claire Center of Excellence for Faculty and Undergraduate Student Research Collaboration

Wisconsin Teaching Standards

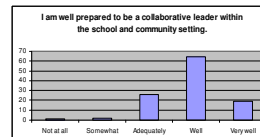
- Teachers know the subjects they are teaching.
- Teachers know how children grow.
- Teachers understand that children learn differently.
- Teachers know how to teach.
- Teachers know how to manage a classroom.
- Teachers communicate well.
- Teachers are able to plan different kinds of lessons.
- Teachers know how to test for student progress.
- Teachers are able to evaluate themselves.
- Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community.

Sample of Results

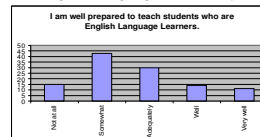
- Student teachers were well or very well prepared to promote critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills (83%).



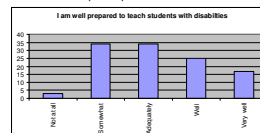
- Student teachers were well or very well prepared to be a collaborative leader within the school and community setting (74%). Preparing collaborative leaders is the conceptual framework for the UW-Eau Claire teacher preparation program.



- Student teachers were not at all or somewhat prepared to teach students who are English Language Learners (51%).



- Student teachers were somewhat or adequately prepared to teach students with disabilities (60%).



Comments from Focus Group

- "I do interest surveys right away so I can connect with students on a personal level."
- "We could take one of our weeks in block and spend some time with an ELL teacher."
- "The behavior modification class should be in the MCEA program as well."
- "There is lots of duplication in the reading classes for SPED/MCEA majors."

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Program

- Integrate English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies into the teacher preparation program for all students the semester prior to student teaching.
- Require another special education class for all students majoring in regular education.
- Create and require a classroom management course for all students majoring in regular education.
- Collaborate more across regular education and special education programs.
- Require a technology class/training for those students majoring in Early Adolescence – Adolescence and Early Childhood – Adolescence regular education.
- Find more diverse school settings to complete field experiences



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