

2017 Spring MACTE Conference
One Profession: Reclaiming Outcomes for
Teacher Education in Missouri
Wednesday, March 29
9:30-10:20 General Session 8
Show Me



Collaborative Partnerships and Alternate Paths to Certification Conversations on Options

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Northwest Missouri State University



Our Home!



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Goals for this session

- ▶ Share our collaboration and how it led to a new alternative certification cohort
- ▶ Gain collective insight on directions for alternate paths to certification to fill hard to place positions

A little background on our Alternative Certification Program

- ▶ The basic requirements for the program are:
- ▶ B.S. or B.A. in the subject area or closely related field (special education may differ)
- Be under contract as the teacher of record with a Missouri school district
- ▶ Have a minimum overall GPA of 2.75 with a 3.00 in the content area and 3.00 in education courses

Question

- ▶ What are your thoughts on alternative paths toward certification?
- ▶ Does your institution facilitate alternative paths toward certification?

How the collaborations led to our 2016-17 cohort

- ▶ Communications with HR directors and Special Education directors
- ▶ Sixteen students
- ▶ Content areas

Paused 2015-16 to reconsider

- ▶ Decided to proceed with more emphasis on special education

Our Fall 2016 coursework and observation processes

- ▶ Teacher education courses in the fall (actually began late summer)
- ▶ Wong & Lemov
- ▶ Deficiency courses
- ▶ Special education courses
- ▶ Tag-team observations
- ▶ MoPTA practice assignments

Survey of the Special Education Candidates

- ▶ Gather perceptions from the first year students in our Special Education Alternative Certification Program.
- ▶ Comments and perceptions were also gathered from the course website.
- ▶ This study focused on: (a) the reasons they chose an alternative certification program, (b) perceptions of their first semester's experience and challenges, and (c) their attitudes and satisfaction toward their choice to enter teaching.

Eleven first-year alternatively certified special education teachers were surveyed

- ▶ Demographics of participants
- ▶ Reasons chose an alternative certification program
- ▶ Perceptions of first semester's experiences and challenges
- ▶ Attitudes and satisfaction toward their choice to enter teaching.
- ▶ Content of the Bachelor's Degree
- ▶ Prior employment before working with special needs students
- ▶ Reason for deciding to become a teacher
- ▶ Reason for selecting Northwest's alt. cert. program
- ▶ Expectation of being a special education teacher
- ▶ Stresses of the position
- ▶ Satisfaction with the position

Demographics

- ▶ Seven females
- ▶ Ages 26-45

Content area of bachelor's degree

- ▶ Physical Education/Health
- ▶ Elementary Education
- ▶ Criminal Justice
- ▶ Criminal justice- emphasis areas are: Administration, juvenile delinquency, correction, law enforcement.
Minors in: legal studies and childhood studies
- ▶ Special Education K-12
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology

The *reasons* they chose an alternative certification program

- ▶ Why did you choose to become a teacher?
- ▶ Why did you select an alternative route to teacher certification?
- ▶ Why did you enter Northwest's Alternative Certification program?
- ▶ What was your expectation of being a special education teacher before you entered the alternative certification program?

Please describe your prior employment working with special needs students

- ▶ Six Para-professionals and one who worked with juveniles ages 12-17 within the Division of Youth Services and Juvenile Department.

Why did you choose to become a teacher?

- ▶ I wanted to be a stabilizing factor for kiddos who might live in chaotic or traumatic homes.
- ▶ I have always knew I would teach
- ▶ I enjoyed working as a para
- ▶ I enjoyed being a para-educator and wanted to have the opportunity to be more influential

Why did you select an alternative route to teacher certification?

- ▶ Able to work and go to school at the same time
- ▶ The best fit for my situation
- ▶ Quicker route than starting over
- ▶ I had been out of school for one year. I was not ready to take the traditional role of student again.
- ▶ I chose to become a teacher later in life, so this was the route that I had to take.
- ▶ I decided I wanted to teach and secured a job.
- ▶ Able to work and earn a salary while finishing the necessary schooling

Why did you enter Northwest's Alternative Certification program?

- ▶ NW worked with me and accepted me
- ▶ I liked the philosophy behind the program
- ▶ Close to me that I could do primarily online
- ▶ They were very helpful whenever I talked with them
- ▶ This is the program that my principals recommended
- ▶ I earned my bachelor's degree from Northwest
- ▶ Northwest partnered with the district

Question

- ▶ Do you think their reasons to enter through an alternative path are all that different than candidates who enter a traditional path?

Perceptions of their first semester's experience and challenges

- ▶ What challenges did you face during your first semester as a teacher?
- ▶ What did you feel prepared for during your first semester as a teacher?
- ▶ What did you feel unprepared for during your first semester as a teacher?
- ▶ How would you describe your overall perceptions of your first semester as a teacher?

What was your expectation of being a special education teacher before you entered the alternative certification program?

- ▶ Teaching students with special needs
- ▶ Not as much paper work as their actually is
- ▶ Very time consuming
- ▶ Teach students with varying disabilities
- ▶ Busy and have a reasonable amount of paperwork
- ▶ I expected to have a small number of students that I would work with
- ▶ I expected this program to be a very intense program
- ▶ Writing IEP's, Teaching kids at their level, Working with parents and teachers
- ▶ I was hoping to have my own classroom, and design lessons, or work with a curriculum designed for autism or functional skills students

What did you feel prepared for during your first semester as a teacher?

- ▶ Teaching the content
- ▶ Classroom management
- ▶ My organizational skills
- ▶ working with the students
- ▶ The possibility that it would be difficult

What did you feel unprepared for during your first semester as a teacher?

- ▶ The special education paperwork
- ▶ Amount of paper work
- ▶ Parent contact
- ▶ Curriculum/lesson plans
- ▶ How to properly assess my students

What challenges did you face during your first semester as a teacher?

- ▶ Learning the paper work involved in Special Education.
- ▶ Balancing time between all of the expectations

How would you describe your overall perceptions of your first semester as a teacher?

- ▶ Started out rough, but came to a steady pace
- ▶ I am lucky to have prior experiences
- ▶ Overwhelming
- ▶ Intense
- ▶ Rough time finding time to complete all of my requirements.
- ▶ It takes time to grow into greatness

Question

- ▶ Do you think there would be any way to better prepare these candidates for what they are about to face?

What has caused you the most stress during your first semester as a teacher?

- ▶ Paperwork
- ▶ Finding a balance
- ▶ The lack of support from my fellow coworkers
- ▶ Time to get everything done
- ▶ Having an overwhelming amount of work to learn
- ▶ So much homework
- ▶ getting answers to questions from my process coordinators, and mentor

Question

- ▶ Do you think there would be any way to better prepare these candidates for the stresses of being a special education teacher?
- ▶ Do you think there would be any way to better prepare these candidates for the stresses of special education paperwork?

Attitudes and *satisfaction* toward their choice to enter teaching.

- ▶ What gave you the greatest sense of satisfaction during your first semester as a teacher?
- ▶ What has caused you the most stress during your first semester as a teacher?
- ▶ Knowing what you know now, would you do it again? Why or why not?
- ▶ What advice would you give a person considering entering teaching?
- ▶ What do you expect to be doing five years from now?

What gave you the greatest sense of satisfaction during your first semester as a teacher?

- ▶ Seeing my students learn and grow
- ▶ Feedback from my observations
- ▶ Getting to know the kids and building positive relationships
- ▶ Listening to my student that came to me unable to count to 10 by herself actually count out loud to 100 by herself.
- ▶ Wonderful support system both at home and at school
- ▶ Building relationships with the students
- ▶ Students trust me and what I am teaching them

Knowing what you know now, would you do it again? Why or why not?

- ▶ Yes
- ▶ Yes, I would do it again
- ▶ Yes
- ▶ Honestly, I probably would
- ▶ I'm not sure if this makes sense, but yes I would do it again
- ▶ No.
- ▶ I'm not sure, being a para was much less stressful

What advice would you give a person considering entering teaching?

- ▶ Stay calm
- ▶ ASK FOR HELP
- ▶ It's going to be hard and its going to be stressful
- ▶ Research DESE
- ▶ This is the most rewarding, exhausting career anyone can ever have.
- ▶ Don't come into this if you are not fully committed to the students.
- ▶ Find a support system and lean on them when you need help.
- ▶ Be prepared to do nothing but work, sun up to sun down.
- ▶ If you don't absolutely love students and have a passion for working with the most difficult students- this may not be for you.

What do you expect to be doing five years from now?

- ▶ Hopefully teaching, maybe in Physical Ed or Health.
- ▶ Still be teaching special education.
- ▶ In my same position at the middle school or possibly the high school level.
- ▶ I am not sure, I will still be teaching. Possible with a masters in sped if I am lucky.
- ▶ I expect/hope to still be teaching special education, but I hope to be teaching in early childhood special education.
- ▶ I honestly have no clue at this point- my heart was so set on working with kids and teaching and that has just kind of been ruined for me.
- ▶ I hope I am teaching my own CBSS or Life Skills classroom.

Question

- ▶ Do you think you would receive similar responses after asking any first year special education teacher after their first semester of teaching?

Overall Questions and Thoughts?

- ▶ What suggestions do you have for us?

Contact Information

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