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Table of Contents— Fall 1989

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Comments from the Guest Editors . . .

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Not since the January, 1984 issue of *Exceptional Children* has an entire journal been dedicated to rural special education. We are excited to present this special issue of *Educational Considerations*. Those of us who are dedicated to rural education are often frustrated by the lack of consideration of rural issues by the field in general; however, it is gratifying to note a new sense of purpose in rural special education (DeYoung, 1987). These papers are examples of that fresh sense of purpose. Each article builds on the positive aspects of rural education and presents fresh strategies and suggestions for providing quality education for rural students with special needs. The authors are actively advocating for rural special education in their respective schools, universities, and service agencies. Each brings a special perspective and expertise to our collection. Together, the content of this issue of *Educational Considerations* is a gold mine full of riches discovered by some in the special education field. This wealth of information must be carefully mined and made available to all educators, because, as Judy Smith-Davis states, rural and small schools are inventing and using gold nuggets that can help solve some of the problems of general education. ACRES (American Council on Rural Special Education), and its journal, *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, are an excellent resource for information on rural special education. The wealth is there and we challenge you to dig!

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DeYoung, A.J. (1987). The status of American rural education research: An integrated review and commentary. **Review of Educational Research, 57**, (2)1, 123–148.

It's time to share the rural gold mine. It's time to recognize the wisdom and strength that good rural teachers and small schools can give to *all* schools.

The Rural Education Gold Mine

by Judy Smith-Davis
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Many school reform issues raised in the 1980s suggest that small, rural, and remote schools may have a "gold mine" of solutions to share with the nation. According to Barker (1987), "Americans are rediscovering the small school. Education has proclaimed that 'bigger is better' for so long that many have become believers in a doctrine which they have not truly examined. . . . The restructuring of schools to smaller entities may remedy some of the problems facing today's educators" (p. 5).

Rural schools have a history of building strength from adversity. Among the constraints they experience are multigrade classrooms, multiple preparations for teachers, lack of support services, limited information resources and supplies, expanded duties, low budgets, limited staff development, lower salaries, combined schools, cultural differences, geographic isolation, and communication difficulties (Miller, 1988).

At the same time, these constraints can also represent such advantages as enhanced possibilities for student-centered education; a greater sense of teacher autonomy; fewer bureaucratic layers and more flexibility in decision-making; lower pupil-teacher ratios; more individualization of instruction; closer relationships among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community; greater collegiality and networking among teachers; enhanced experiences for students in self-directed learning and the development of initiative (Barker, 1987; Chronister, 1981; Scott, 1984).

Further, in response to some of the characteristics of rural schools, many teachers and principals have become " 'competent generalists' with skills in individualizing instruction for all students, in planning instruction according to individual learning styles, in grouping children for instruction, in managing multiple activities, and in using creativity and ingenuity in working with children and using local resources" (Scott, 1984, p. 4). Particularly in multigrade schools, "veteran teachers . . . become experts at organizing peer tutoring and managing cross-age and cross-grade activities. They know how to use whole-group sessions to develop inquiry and thinking skills in students. The situation in which they work enables them to grasp the relationships within curricular components" (Scott, 1984, p. 4).

The strengths, challenges, and requirements of small schools (prominently schools with multi-grade classrooms) are largely the strengths that are sought for educating students with disabilities in the mainstream—and for educating the increasing numbers of other students who are at risk of school failure. Across the nation, a striking percentage of the school population is not succeeding. The lack of solutions is demonstrated in America's high dropout rate (Office of Planning and Evaluation Services, 1989).

Although various "innovative" programs for reaching and teaching at-risk students are advanced, perhaps many answers lie not in innovation but tradition. Perhaps many rural and remote schools have had answers all along. Good teaching is what every school, everywhere, needs now. Good teaching benefits all students—disabled, at risk, and "normal." The small school can be a genuine laboratory for the development and dissemination of good teaching, and there is no better instructor than the seasoned rural teacher who has mastered this environment.

While rural education does indeed have a gold mine of experience and solutions to offer to America's schools, it also shares with all schools the problems of recruiting and retaining personnel (Charmichael, 1982; Condon, Simmons, and Simmons, 1986; Smith-Davis, Burke, and Noel, 1984). This problem is magnified today by the national shortage of teachers and other personnel in many educational disciplines (National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, 1988). By capitalizing on its strengths, and by demonstrating that small schools can produce master teachers, rural education may translate some of its characteristics into effective strategies for attracting and keeping qualified educators.

The purpose of this article is to encourage teachers, principals, therapists, and others in rural education to recognize and share the gold mine of solutions and successes they can offer to American education, and to begin by developing networks through which they can share their practices and solutions (gold nuggets) with one another, within schools, districts, regions, states, and the nation. The only place to start to improve education is with individual schools and teachers. The key to effective schools "lies in the people who populate particular schools at particular times and their interactions with these organizations. The search for excellence in schools is the search for excellence in people" (Clark, Lotto, and Astuto, 1984, p. 50).

Gold Nuggets in Cooperative Learning and Peer Tutoring

As the numbers of students who experience difficulty in school increases, a central cause may be that education in America's urban centers has focused largely on the single-ability classroom, where reading ability is the major measure of students' overall abilities. According to Lynch (1982), this status generalization creates an imbalance in the learning opportunities available to "smart" students (good readers) and "dull" students (poor readers). The reverse of this situation is the multi-ability classroom (Lynch, 1982), where many dimensions of competence are assumed, where students are encouraged to help one another in reading or other tasks, and where the teacher structures learning tasks so that students can see that many different skills are necessary to complete them.

Further, the competitive nature of American education has long been seen as a deterrent to the learning styles of some children, most prominently those from other cultures

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(Kagan and Madsen, 1971). Multi-ability instruction, on the other hand, lends itself to unit teaching (involving the whole class in a common instructional focus) and cooperative learning (in which the classroom is structured to engender student cooperation in the service of common goals). It has most often been rural schools that have fostered these approaches.

Cooperative learning enables diverse students to work together in ability-appropriate and age-appropriate ways, and it has been shown to help students to master the social skills needed for collaborative work, such as leadership, communication, and conflict management (Anderson, Nelson, Fox, and Gruber, 1988; Johnson and Johnson, 1987). The three basic formats (Schniedewind and Salend, 1987) are common to the multi-grade or multi-ability classroom:

- The group project format enables students to share information and skills to complete an assignment or project (such as a bulletin board). Each student contributes in his or her own way within the group, while the teacher monitors and consults.
- In jigsaw, the teacher plans assignments so that each student must complete an individual task (e.g., some aspect of recreating an historical period), based on strengths and learning needs, in order for the group to reach its goal.
- Peer teaching involves arranging for one student to assist another in learning a skill

Peer tutoring is particularly effective as an instructional resource for students with disabilities or other learning problems. For example, a volunteer group of secondary students at a Texas high school were trained to participate with all levels and ages of children with disabilities in one of the district's special programs. These volunteers became proficient in sign language skills; acquired basic skills as assistants in academic and non-academic settings; learned appropriate methods and terminology for assisting in related services; became able to carry out prescribed home programs for children with disabilities; and became competent to provide respite care and babysitting services for parents of children with disabilities (Harris, 1988). Clearly, these high school students also learned much that will be of lasting value to them.

Similarly, in Arizona, "when teachers at the Dysart Unified Schools' 1986 Migrant Summer School needed assistance in tutoring students in oral language skills, they called for a LIRT (Language Instant Relief for Teachers)" (Ausberger, 1987). LIRTS were district work-study students who received classroom instruction and hands-on training with students who had communication disorders. During the first summer of this program, the LIRTS worked one-to-one with 50 students on oral language skills.

Research has shown that peer tutoring is effective and that the achievement gains of tutors are often as great or greater than the gains of the students who are tutored (Jenkins and Jenkins, 1981; Slavin, 1986). In some schools, therefore, older low achievers tutor younger students, thereby gaining higher status, responsible roles, and an opportunity to review basic material in a situation that is not perceived as "baby work" (Slavin, 1986). The Missisquoi Valley Union High School in Vermont serves as an example, as reported by Roach, Paolucci-Whitcomb, Meyers, and Duncan (1983). A consulting teacher and University of Vermont professors joined in a year-long investigation of the effectiveness of having remedial and special education students tutor other low-achieving students in their regular secondary math classes. The results showed that well designed peer tutoring can have positive effects on the standardized test achievement of students with mild disabilities and lead to stronger achievement gains than result from usual interactions, working alone within class instruction, or working in pairs.

In a larger and longer effort, researchers at Utah State University, Brigham Young University, and Purdue University (Osguthorpe, Top, Eiserman, and Scruggs, 1988) have trained hundreds of students with a variety of disabilities to be tutors to their non-disabled peers. The outcomes of this series of studies have shown that students with mild to severe disabilities can definitely learn to be competent tutors, to demonstrate, monitor, and give feedback to their schoolmates, if they receive preparation and supervision. In so doing, they can significantly strengthen their own skills.

Gold Nuggets in Secondary Education

Rural high schools experience difficulties in providing a full array of curricular and extracurricular options, ensuring vocational education opportunities, bringing students into contact with the larger world, integrating instruction for students with special needs, and in other ways. Many of the creative strategies that rural high schools use to overcome these obstacles would be helpful in urban districts as well.

For example, in 1979, Missouri's Rural Student Employability Project (Hobbs, 1981) initiated a Contract Vocational Program in which people from local businesses contracted with the school and family to provide specific occupational training to students at the business site. The training was based on the school's predetermination of competency-based performance criteria for each student, and the business person was paid as an instructor (rather than the student being compensated as a trainee). In North Dakota, the Mott School District #6 cooperated with six other districts to provide a mobile vocational program to students in isolated areas (Barker and Muse, 1985). Mobile vocational classrooms (fully equipped trailers with traveling instructors) moved each semester to a different district and offered instruction in several vocational areas.

Vocational student organizations can also strengthen rural schools by including many community members in chapter activities of such associations as the Distributive Education Clubs of America, Future Business Leaders of America, American Industrial Arts Student Association, Future Homemakers of America, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America and many others. According to Sarkees (1983), chapter activities can include "school-community projects, competitive events, social events, field trips, employer-employee activities, bake sales, car washes, dances, student recognition, club scrapbooks, public relations activities, guest speakers, scholarships, special sports events, bulletin boards, exhibits, window displays, and beautification projects" (p. 62). Of particular interest is a network called "Breaking New Ground," at the Department of Agricultural Engineering at Purdue University, which provides information on methods and equipment used by farmers and ranchers who have disabilities.

In prevocational education, special education students in Hobbs, New Mexico, create and paint ceramic jalapeno peppers that are sold throughout the state as Christmas tree ornaments and craft items. These students also feed and groom horses at the local stable, oil and clean saddles, and collect materials for recycling. Proceeds are used to pay for their extracurricular programs and field trips (Dunaway, 1989).

In White Plains, North Carolina, students with mental retardation (trainable) produce tin-punched Christmas ornaments for sale as an extension of their daily prevocational activities. Ornaments travel across North Carolina and to

other states; over a three-year period, more than 2,000 were sold and 300 were given as special gifts. Motivated by their success, the students have expanded their efforts to include Valentine's and Easter projects (Hollar, 1987).

Other students with trainable mental retardation in New Jersey registered for a county farm and horse show to exhibit rabbits they planned to raise themselves. The process included building cages, feeders, and other equipment, and becoming members of the local 4-H Club to receive instruction from local experts. One of the students won "Best in Show" for her rabbit, and the group intends to keep the project going for years (Foundation for Exceptional Children, 1988b).

Students with mild disabilities (and students with other learning problems) are often at a disadvantage "in social studies and science classes where they have difficulty reading and comprehending textbooks and relating to the traditional lecture method" (Frith and Edwards, 1981, p. 22). In Gordon County, Georgia, learning packets have been an effective means of supporting participation by such students. A learning packet is an individually designed blueprint that organizes learning for the student by showing what is to be learned, incorporating a variety of resources, and including a means of evaluation. Typically, a learning packet simplifies printed materials, lowers the reading level, incorporates selected activities from the text, and makes use of as many senses as possible (through the use of taped cassettes, colorful displays, tactile materials, hands-on activities, large print when necessary, and other adaptations). Packets may be used by students individually or in teams for purposes of enrichment, remediation, or supplementation. Within a school building, the sharing of packets among teachers can create as library of ideas and creative materials across many subjects and skills (Frith and Edwards, 1981).

The secondary school in the Littlefork-Great Falls district in Koochiching County, Minnesota, is practicing the concept of self-directed instruction in a learning center environment, managed by a learning facilitator. The center provides expanded curricular offerings to average, gifted, disabled, and disadvantaged (Title I) students in grades 7 through 12. Students' individualized programs are based on learning objectives achieved, rather than on diagnostic classification. Among the many instructional vehicles available to these students are video learning, computer-based learning, correspondence instruction, independent projects, and learning via audiovisual media (Clay, 1985).

Gold Nuggets in the Community

The school is often the center of rural community activities. In a study of one-teacher schools (Muse, Smith, and Barker, 1987), it was found that nearly half of the schools were also the site of community functions, including "parties, Bible study, various programs, plays, church services, dances, films ... libraries for children, meetings of all kinds, adult and continuing education classes, voting, television watching, weddings, and receptions" (p. 21). The blending of school and community not only extends the resources available to the school and builds community support, but also helps to make education "more of a concept and less of a place" (Ishler, 1988).

A rich array of interactions has been developed in Hampton Township, New Jersey, where local government agencies, health services, businesses, recreation groups, township citizens, parents, and educators have joined in partnerships to encourage community participation with education, and to promote student awareness of the role that civic and community groups play in their lives (Lick, 1985). In a rural Iowa community, a partnership between two businesses and the schools gave students education and experiences in the computer field (Warden, 1986), and, in southern Georgia, the Marvin Pittman Laboratory School helps local districts to develop new teaching approaches (Warden, 1986). The Habitat for Humanity, headquartered in Americus, Georgia, helps local groups build housing with volunteer labor, donated materials, and contributions. This opens new doors for vocational opportunities and school–community interaction, and Habitat for Humanity is always searching for volunteers of all skill levels, rural and urban (SpecialNet, 1985b).

The Mount Ayr Community Schools in Iowa developed a report card by which parents report their views of teacher and school performance and any problems they perceive (Barker and Muse, 1985). Greater involvement was stimulated when the Macomb Intermediate District in Mt. Clemens, Michigan, created a marketing plan, which is a goal-oriented process that ensures community involvement. The Macomb Marketing Plan has generated better commitment to the schools and a community-endorsed plan, developed with educators, for school improvement (Banach, 1986).

Rural communities can also provide instructional resources, as is true in the Iditarod Area School District in Alaska, which developed a resource handbook for rural Alaskan teachers called *Village Science*. The mini-units in the book demonstrate seven basic science concepts as they relate to village life. Concepts such as friction, surface area, inertia, action/reaction, centrifugal force, and center of gravity are taught through activities involving boats, snow machines, cutting fish, sledding, use of hand tools, and other common elements of village life (SpecialNet, 1985d). "Education Through Historic Preservation" is a program in Luling, Louisiana, in which students adopt a community landmark each year. The landmark is documented and interpreted through art and creative writing, and students discover the roots of the past and the feelings and lifestyles of today through architectural research, oral history interviews, and role playing. (This program received an Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States because of its multi-level, multi-curricular approach) (SpecialNet, 1985a).

Volunteers and aides are another important resource in rural communities. With training, these personnel can extend the teacher's capacity to individualize instruction, provide one-to-one attention, and respond to diversity of instructional needs. The Multi-Aide Program developed in Clarkston, Washington, is a system whereby special education teachers and administrators train aides to work with students with disabilities, and train teachers to manage several aides. The instructional program functions through multiple aides managed by a single teacher (SpecialNet, 1984b).

Paraprofessional home visitors in Billings, Montana, implement the Sunrise Model for early education of children with disabilities. Aides complete training and work under the supervision of an early childhood education specialist, who makes periodic home visits with the aides to check children's progress. Each participating family has its own written Family Education Plan (Casto, Frakes, Hutinger, Tolfa, and Walker, 1981).

Parents act as listeners in speech classes in the Jefferson County School District in Tracy, California, filling out cards on student speakers and "always beginning with praise and then presenting suggestions for improvement" (American Association of School Administrators, 1981, p. 63). In Winona, Minnesota, the school district has cooperated with the local seminary whose trainees work with

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young children and thus have increased the ratio of instructors to students in the early childhood and family education programs (Minnesota Department of Education, 1986). The Lubbock (Texas) Developmental Education Birth Through Two (DEBT) Outreach Program trained volunteers as home teachers for young children with disabilities. The volunteers included retired teachers, nurses, social workers, parents, foster parents, and grandparents (Hutinger and Smith-Dickson, 1981).

Senior citizens are becoming increasingly valuable assets for schools. Organizations such as the ACTION programs for older adults and Foster Grandparents are encouraging senior citizens' involvement with children (Buffer, 1980), and many rural schools have been including them for a long time. In Augusta, Wisconsin, an unused portion of the high school building was turned into a community center for senior citizens, including a meeting place, use of the gymnasium, and a small park (American Association of School Administrators, 1981). Continental District #39, in Amado, Arizona, (in a community of 12,000 retired people) collected names of many who were willing to share their time, wisdom, and experiences with children. The superintendent points out that "this is good public relations . . . because the retired community pays the major share of school taxes" (American Association of School Administrators, 1981, p. 63).

Gold Nuggets in Sharing, Networking, and Collegiality

The school reform literature is showing that teachers in successful schools are "true colleagues who work together, . . . talk to each other frequently about teaching, work together to plan and develop, and teach each other" (Mahaffy, 1988, pp. 4–5). In rural education, it is desirable to stimulate networking and sharing, not only within schools, but among educators across districts and distances.

At the district level, a teacher in Medicine Lake, Montana, set up a small empty house on her property as a studio where she and other teachers develop learning materials for their classes and share an enjoyable social experience at the same time (Discover American Educators, 1988). In Michigan, Madonna College has reached out to rural teachers in its area through its "Improve Your School Program and Earn Credits" initiative. "Applicants select their own course title, formulate objectives and propose an outline to be approved by college faculty. The course can include committee work, individualized programs, and on-the-job research or activity. Consultation with experts is available through telephone conferences or on-site visitations from college staff" (Pelton, 1983, p. 16).

Parents and families also cooperate and share. In Cumberland County, New Jersey, with rural isolation and relatively few resources, families of children with disabilities and United Cerebral Palsy put on a program of films about various aspects of handicapping conditions at a major motel that was centrally located. In this manner, families across a rural area were able to come together, share information, and gain new resources (Foundation for Exceptional Children, 1988a).

Teacher exchanges have been promoted through Nebraska's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development in various districts of the state, and efforts to establish a national teacher exchange program have been undertaken by a Montana enterprise (Information Processing, 1983). Student exchanges can also give isolated rural students an experience with different environments, which has occurred in the Jefferson County/Boone County (Kentucky) exchange program for gifted students (American Association of School Administrators, 1981). In their four-day exchange trip to the rural district, urban students toured farms, watched sorghum being made and tobacco stripped, and sampled the food, music, and lifestyles of their hosts. On their visit to the urban district, rural students attended a pantomime performance, went to a disco-rock session and a museum, toured a housing rehabilitation project and a teaching hospital.

Rural and urban schools can also share by becoming "brother" and "sister" schools. The Southwest Minnesota Rural Education Center (undated) suggests the introduction of a partner school through a videotape or slide show, followed by setting up a school bulletin board where updates are posted on rural-to-urban and urban-to-rural school and community happenings. Activities can also include a pen-pal program and inclusion of weekly announcements from each school in the all-school oral announcements.

To connect educators with resources in its area, Southwest Texas State University established a locator service, or file of persons with all kinds of competencies across a wide range of activities (Kurtz, 1985). District and regional personnel, and others, call about a specific need and the service puts them in contact with the person(s) who can fill that need.

The Eastern Kentucky Teachers Network is a project of Elliott Wigginton's Foxfire Fund. Including 40 elementary and secondary teachers, the network focuses on engaging students in projects that are "experiential, community-based, and oriented to reading and writing" (Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1988b, p. 3). Teachers and students create a booklet, book, report, periodical, record album, videotape, radio series, exhibition, or other product whose format they determine themselves. The Kentucky network is part of the larger Foxfire effort that includes networks in northeast Georgia, in Atlanta, and in the Finger Lakes region of New York; each network functions as a support group for the teachers within it (Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1988a).

In South Dakota, six neighboring schools, South Dakota State University, and the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory worked together to involve the entire staffs of the schools in making better use of small class size to meet individual needs and respond to varying learning styles. The six schools also began to share teachers and create mutual programs (Nachtigal, 1982). Similarly, the Rural-Based Teacher Development Project sponsored by Oregon State College assisted rural teachers by providing development opportunities through the networking of resources. Through this network, teachers were able to meet certification requirements through individualized on-site course work; regional programs and teaching models were shared as resources; teachers had opportunities to visit and observe other teachers and programs; groups of teachers were organized within a subject area or grade level, across districts, to share resources and engage in curriculum development; schools and teacher groups were assisted in jointly sponsoring professional development activities; academic programs were enriched for rural pupils who also had opportunities for academic interaction among schools; and linkage was created between higher education resources and rural schools in the region (Slater, 1984).

A network of ten Teacher Centers in North Dakota serves all 279 districts in the state, most of which enroll fewer than 200 students. Although the average annual Center budget is only $24,500, these centers "do a lot with a little!". In 1988, "the ten Centers checked out 25,097 teaching materials, responded to 12,904 telephone or mail requests, and were visited 18,900 times by persons who came to look at materials" (Harris and Landry, 1989, pp. 12–13). Consider-

ing that there are only about 7,000 teachers in North Dakota, the importance of their connection with these centers is clear.

It's time to see what rural schools can really offer to the nation. It's time to recognize the wisdom and strength that good rural teachers and small schools can give to *all* schools. It's time to share the rural gold mine, and it's up to every person working in American rural education to join in the sharing, networking, cooperation, and dissemination that will give students and teachers a better chance, in rural schools and in schools everywhere.

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Inservice education is a process of growth and development aimed at producing change in the individual teacher. A comprehensive inservice model designed to address the specific needs of the isolated rural special education teacher must be devised.

A Comprehensive Inservice Model for Rural Special Education

by Sandra Silver
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The isolation of special education teachers in rural areas restricts the delivery of effective inservice programs. For special education teachers to remain abreast of current developments, alternative types of inservice education must be explored. This paper will: (1) discuss the importance of inservice education; (2) explore the difficulties associated with inservice education in rural areas; and, (3) present a comprehensive inservice education model based on the theories of adult development and planned change.

Because inservice education has been in existence since the 1800s, a vast body of literature exists regarding this topic. However, as Wood and Kleine (1988) discovered, there is a lack of data specifically devoted to inservice education in rural areas. The majority of the existing works review the literature, give opinions, or describe existing programs. What research does exist is usually done locally, lacks external validity, and is rarely disseminated (Hutson, 1981).

Hutson (1981) views the current state of inservice practice as deplorable. The term itself and the meager body of hard research present major obstacles in providing effective inservice education. The lack of hard research may result from the complex nature of inservice education.

A broad scheme and clear concept of inservice education with appropriate policies, commitment and fixed responsibility has never existed (Dillon-Peterson, 1981). Without a clear concept of the nature and function of inservice education, it is not surprising that inservice education is viewed negatively by many educators. If inservice is to be effective, a coherent theory and systematic framework are essential. Thus, an overview of the basic principles and assumptions underlying inservice education will be delineated. Planned change and androgogy, two theories that relate to quality inservice education, will also be described.

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Basic Principles Underlying Inservice Education

Inservice education is an integral part of teacher education. Inservice enables professional growth by providing teachers with quality training that: creates an awareness of new knowledge, techniques, and technology; develops skills; and, provides a means for teachers to exchange ideas (Peters, 1975). Inservice also provides a means for remediating the skills of teachers who either lack adequate preservice training or who have been away from formalized training for an extended period of time (Rubin, 1971).

Sher (1978) believes that in rural areas the need to revialize and upgrade the skills of teachers is intensified due to the difficulty obtaining qualified staff and the vast difference between the theory taught in teacher training programs and the application of these theories to the rural classroom. For special educators, inservice training is critical as over one-third of the teachers serving handicapped students in rural areas have no special education training and lack proper certification (Rehmann and Latini, 1979).

Assumptions

Inservice education is based on a variety of assumptions. The following assumptions are essential for an effective inservice program.

- All personnel to stay current and effective must be involved in inservice education.
- Staff can and will grow beyond the minimum competencies expected of initial employees.
- People learn best the things perceived as meaningful, purposeful, and satisfying.
- Adults learn best when they feel they have control over the situation and a supportive emotional climate free from fear of failure is provided.
- Learning experiences are viewed as appropriate or not based on the individual's internal frame of reference.
- Educators differ in their competencies, readiness and approach to learning.
- People can and will learn on the job. However, feedback is necessary to aid in using the learning effectively.
- Intrinsic satisfaction will help teachers grow.
- Learning does not satisfy all needs.
- People must learn for long term survival but can cope, resist or endure in the short run.
- People work individually or as members of a group on problems they view as significant.
- Change in educational practice is the result of systematic, long range, staff development.
- Professional growth requires commitment.
- Schools need to provide resources and leadership for inservice education.
- Inservice education should be based on research, theory and best practices models.

Inservice education is essential if our schools and educational personnel are to remain effective in a changing society. Teachers differ in many ways including initial training, developmental level, frame of reference, and learning style. To effectively meet the needs of all rural special educators, a range of inservice opportunities must be provided.

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Theories Related to Inservice Education

The need for a conceptual and theoretical framework for inservice education is apparent. Two theories, planned change and androgogy, emerge as relevant to the inservice endeavor.

Planned change. Patel (1968) asserts that inservice education is a change process based on the assumptions that: education is a life-long process; preservice education is inadequate for a lifelong teaching career; inservice improves the quality of education; and, change is imperative to improve teacher competencies. As Harris and Bessent (1969) believe, the intent of inservice education is to change instructional practices by changing people. Because inservice education is an instrument for organizational change, if the principles of planned change were used, inservice education would become part of a districts' standard operating procedures.

Planned change is a process by which change is created, implemented, evaluated, maintained, and resisted. Planned change may be defined as a "conscious, deliberate and collaborative effort to improve the operations of a human system" (Bennis, Benne, Chin, and Corey, 1976, p. 4). For the change process to "produce a maximum effect . . . the client system must feel it, rather than a change agent, has taken responsibility for the first step" (Lippitt, Watson, and Westley, 1958, p. 75). This is important because "people resist change even of a king they basically agree with, if they are not significantly involved in the planning" (Bennis et. al., p. 227).

Bennis et. al. (1976) delineate five steps in the planned change process: establishing a defined set of goals; delineating alternatives for attaining the goals; evaluating each plan of action; selecting the alternative that most nearly optimizes the set of goals; and assessing the action after it has been implemented. The process of learning and changing should be: experimental; collaborative; oriented toward situational requirements; educational for all involved; respectful of personal and group uniqueness; self evaluative; self correcting; and self-renewing. Inservice education is therefore a voluntary, cooperative, relevant, well-planned, developmental process whose effectiveness is evaluated to ensure that the desired change occurs.

Androgogy. Knowles (1973) developed a theory of adult education based on the principles of adult development. Knowles believes that as a person matures his/her self-concept moves from dependency to self-direction. The person gains a reservoir of experiences to which new experiences are related. At this stage, adults are motivated to learn as they experience the "need." Adult education must be an experience-based, self-directing process that accounts for individual differences and allows the person to apply tomorrow what he/she has learned today.

The androgogical model provides procedures to help learners acquire information and skills. Knowles (1973, p. 104) provides seven elements that are relevant for inservice education. These are: "1.) establishing a climate that is conducive to learning; 2.) creating a mechanism for mutual planning; 3.) diagnosing the needs for learning; 4.) formulating program objectives . . . which will satisfy these needs; 5.) designing a pattern of learning experiences; 6.) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and 7.) evaluating the learning outcome and rediagnosing the need."

The theories of planned change and androgogy complement each other. Change arises out of a need perceived by the teacher. Teacher involvement, a supportive environment and program evaluation are crucial components of the change/learning process. This is a cyclical process with the evaluation component serving as the catalyst for re-examining needs and re-initiating the change/learning process. Together these theories lay the foundation on which to build a conceptual and theoretical framework for inservice education.

Difficulties Providing Inservice Education in Rural Areas

The literature reveals several major difficulties associated with providing inservice education in rural areas. Funding continues to be a major problem. With declining enrollments and the faith in the public educational system waning, school district budgets are under close scrutiny and severe constraints. In the allocation of resources, inservice expenditures appear disproportionately large and there is great pressure to justify expenditures (King, 1988). Moreover, inservice programs are often more expensive in rural areas due to the low number of teachers and the expense of bringing experts to remote areas (Burdin and Poliakoff, 1973).

Inservice programs are often not seen as relevant to educators' needs. This occurs because these programs are often devised with little or no input from the teachers they are designed to serve. Furthermore, rural teachers tend to be individualistic and consider their problems unique. They tend to view change as a personal rather than a group experience. They prefer to work alone or seek help from their fellow teachers rather than from experts. Given these parameters, rural teachers often see current inservice programs as ineffective. (King, 1988).

The main incentive for participation in inservice programs is certification renewal credit. College credit which is usually necessary for pay increases is generally offered only when the program is sponsored by a university. However, rural educators are usually isolated from a university and do not pursue extensive graduate study. Even when college credit is available, the cost may be prohibitive.

Scheduling is a major difficulty in providing inservice programs. Burdin and Poliakoff (1973) assert that teachers are most receptive to new ideas during the school day. This requires release time for teachers. Schools may be unwilling to provide this release time because of the need to hire substitute teachers which adds to the cost and may decrease the quality of the education that the students obtain in the teachers' absence.

Distance, road and weather conditions compound the scheduling problems. With a single special education teacher in a district, bringing the programs to the teachers may be difficult. Providing travel reimbursement, car pool routes, and refreshments could help alleviate these difficulties.

Because of the problems mentioned above, teachers are often not motivated to attend inservice programs. It is therefore essential to base programs on teachers' perceived needs and provide incentives for participation. It is also essential to eliminate feelings of threat that may be experienced by participants who feel that their job may be threatened should they disagree with ideas presented or be unable to implement these ideas in their classrooms.

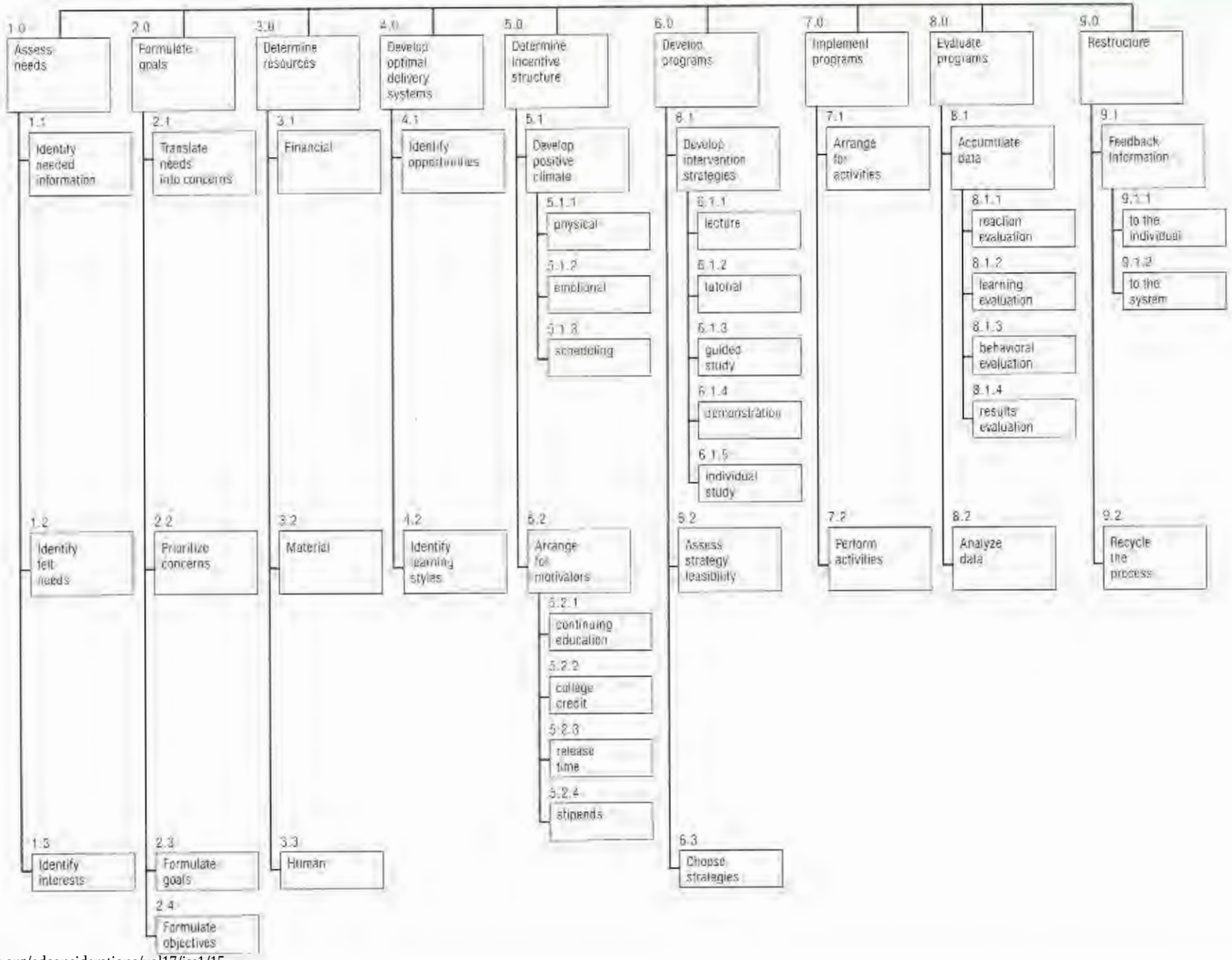
Finally, follow-up would allow inservice presenters and participants to evaluate the program's effectiveness and applicability. This information would then aid in the planning of future inservice endeavors.

A Comprehensive Inservice Model

Inservice education is part of a learning continuum. It is a process of growth and development aimed at producing change in the individual teacher so that his/her effectiveness in the classroom will be increased. Because a single

Figure 1

A COMPREHENSIVE INSERVICE MODEL



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inservice offering is unable to meet the needs of all teachers, a comprehensive inservice model designed to address the specific needs of the isolated rural special education teacher has been devised (see Figure 1). In their review of the literature, Wood and Kleine (1988) reveal a set of effective practices that can be used to design rural staff development. These include: the development of participant ownership; staff development and training programs based on careful systematic needs assessments; guided practice and experiential learning; the use of peer instructors with expertise as staff development leaders; follow-up assistance when participants return to their classrooms and begin to implement what they have learned during training programs to promote implementation and transfer of learning; and the ability for inservice participants to control part of what or how they learn. Thus, for inservice to be effective, a variety of offerings using different techniques must continually be made available to all educators.

The model has nine major components. These are:

- assess needs by identifying needed information, felt needs and interests;
- formulate goals by translating needs into concerns, prioritizing the concerns, and formulating goals and objectives;
- determine financial, material and human resources;
- develop optimal delivery systems by identifying opportunities and learning styles;
- determine incentives by developing a positive physical and emotional climate and arranging for motivators such as college credit, release time and stipends;
- develop programs including intervention strategies and timetables;
- implement the program;
- evaluate the program by collecting and analyzing formative and summative data; and
- restructure by feeding information back to individuals and the system and recyling the process.

The model is both circular and cyclical. It remains flexible to meet the diverse needs of all rural special educators. This model provides a framework with the specifics delineated according to situational demands. Each component is necessary for the development of a comprehensive inservice model. Needs assessment allows individuals to be involved in the planning process. It assures that learner needs will be met. Formulating goals provides the necessary direction for the inservice programs. Determining resources insures the programs designed will be provided. Developing optimal delivery systems allows the integration of available resources and learner needs into inservice programs that will meet the needs of the proposed teachers. Incentive structures build interest and motivation.

After the above components have been addressed, it is time to develop the program. Once the program has been developed and the timetable set, the program is implemented. Once the program is enacted, data collection begins. The data can measure learner reactions to both material and presentation, material learned, behavior changes resulting from the program, and the results of the inservice program. Once the data has been collected it must be analyzed. The information must then be disseminated to program participants as well as the system. At this point, the process is recycled.

The circular and cyclical nature of the model allows the restructuring components to move back to any of the earlier stages. It may not be necessary to start with a needs assessment. There may be additional concerns that were identified that can be addressed at this point. Perhaps originally identified resources that were not used can be incorporated into the restructuring process. Adequate incentive structures may have been designated and this stage can be omitted during the restructuring phase. However, any program developed and implemented during the restructuring phase must be evaluated and the restructuring component must complete all subsequent inservice endeavors. Omitting even one of the designated components during the initial implementation cycle will diminish the effectiveness of the ensuing inservice program. The implementation of this model in its entirety will create relevant, effective inservice programs that meet the needs of all rural special education personnel.

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In order to meet the needs of rural exceptional students who come from ethnically and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, university training programs must move beyond monocultural approaches.

Curricular Revision in Rural Special Education: A Multicultural Approach

by Peggy L. Anderson, Henry B. Reiff, and Audrey D. McCray
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One of the greatest challenges in preparing rural special educators is providing training which realistically addresses teaching exceptional students who come from ethnically and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (Baca, 1980; Harber, 1980; Poplin and Wright, 1983; Cunningham, Cunningham, and O'Connell, 1986). In Helge's (1981) survey of 200 rural special educators, 97 percent reported that they had not been specifically trained to work with rural handicapped children. Perhaps one reason that 30 to 50 percent of rural special education teachers leave the profession (Helge, 1983) may be the unpreparedness to work with culturally diverse exceptional students.

Both the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) and the National College Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) have acknowledged the significance of multicultural education and have prescribed standards which promote multicultural teacher training (AACTE, 1973; NCATE, 1979). Nevertheless, in the field of special education, a considerable discrepancy exists between the acceptance of these tenets and actual practice. Beyond modifying curricula to address nondiscriminatory assessment of exceptional students, few university training programs have systematically tackled and integrated other multicultural factors such as recognition of different cognitive styles of learning or modification of the curriculum to meet the needs of culturally diverse groups (Rodriguez, 1982). Marrs (1984) contended that the development of new training curricula to be used in the preparation of rural special education teachers would alleviate the high attrition rate as well as enhance the personal and professional success of the rural handicapped population.

New training curricula designed to provide pluralistic preparation of special education teachers are necessary to enable them to serve the needs of culturally diverse handicapped students in rural locations. The premise follows that well-prepared teachers who are effective at meeting the needs of their students will be more likely to remain in the profession. The purpose of this article is to illustrate the steps by which university teacher training programs can revise curricula to include a multicultural perspective. Project AIME (Achievement in Multicultural Education), a demonstration project for the Department of Special Education at Southeastern Louisiana University, delineates a step by step example of how such revision was accomplished in a teacher training program.

Evaluation of Existing Training Program

The first step in curricular revision focuses on evaluating the existing program. Evaluation should include a broad programmatic needs assessment as well as specific evaluation of each course for multicultural content. In Project AIME, a comprehensive needs assessment tool evaluating multicultural training competencies was sent to special education professionals throughout the state. The 52 responses determined high priorities for several competencies. For example, "Methods course work with concentration focused on individual traits, learning styles, perceptual styles and cognitive styles" was deemed the most important preparation for multicultural competency. Glimps (1985) contended that teachers must understand that cultural and linguistic differences in children affect learning and necessitate flexible approaches to teaching. The special educators in this survey cited cognizance of linguistic and communicative behaviors as essential to effective teaching. Certainly, teachers need to distinguish a legitimate language deficit from a cultural linguistic difference. Based on these and similar recommendations, revision of the training program reflected concerns of practitioners who deal daily with handicapped students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Project AIME utilized an evaluation process developed by Rodriguez (1982) to analyze multicultural content of courses in the special education teacher training program. An evaluation grid was used to assess whether texts, readings, lectures, and other learning activities addressed pertinent multicultural issues such as limited English proficiency, cultural values, disproportionate numbers of minorities in special education, etc. On the basis of the grid, each course was ranked in terms of four levels of multicultural content ranging from an absence of multicultural content (Level 1) to indepth multicultural challenges and synthesis of issues (Level 4). The mean ranking of all courses offered by the department was 2.67. Thus, although courses overall addressed multicultural issues, room for improvement was clearly evident.

Another feature of Rodriguez's (1982) approach is the collection of qualitative data to offer individual insights into how multicultural information is presented in various courses. To accomplish this component, the two project coordinators interviewed all Department faculty members with respect to each course they taught. During the struc-

These authors developed the AIME program at Southeastern Louisiana University. Dr. Anderson is now at Metro College in Denver, Dr. Reiff is an assistant professor at Western Maryland College and is the coordinator of graduate programs in special education, and McCray is the coordinator of project PROMOTE, at Southeastern Louisiana University.

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tured one hour interview, each member responded to six questions concerning the extent to which multicultural content was integrated in each course. Interestingly, in complying with mandates for NCATE accreditation, the Department had embraced multicultural objectives as part of the overall pedagogical mission. Through the interview, each faculty member expressed a personal interest in fulfilling the commitment which the faculty as a group had made.

Developing the Framework for Program Revision

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) provides curriculum guidelines (1987) to promote the inclusion of multicultural content. Of the different approaches recommended, the Project AIME staff selected the unit and infusion approaches to professional training. In the unit approach, each course in the curriculum includes one or more units which focus on information pertaining to multicultural populations. Based in part on the data collected through the needs assessment, the multicultural unit took the form of a one hour lecture and demonstration presented by the two project coordinators. The infusion approach emphasizes the integration of multicultural content throughout the entire course especially in regard to texts, lectures, and other learning activities. The curriculum analysis has provided the foundation for Project AIME to integrate multicultural content. The evaluation of texts, lectures, syllabi, and learning activities delineated specific strengths and weaknesses. Faculty member are now in the process of meeting the mandates of these evaluations.

Integration of Multicultural Objectives and Content

The multicultural unit was presented to every class offered by the department during the first year and to all introductory classes during the present school year. In this way, every student who is matriculating in the special education program has participated in the multicultural unit. In order for the unit to be effective, the project coordinators made the presentation more attractive and interesting through a multi-media format encompassing lecture, overheads, video, and class discussion.

Five components comprise the multicultural unit: pretest, foundations lecture, video of demonstration project, discussion of rural multicultural considerations, and posttest. The pretest assesses students' knowledge of multicultural issues which are addressed in the unit. A Likert-scale was used to facilitate quantitative statistical comparisons with the posttest. The foundations lecture addresses multicultural issues deemed important through the needs assessment as well as concerns voiced in the faculty interviews. Focusing on assessment, instructional programming, linguistic considerations, and demographic trends, the foundations lecture utilizes overheads to present research ranging from Mercer's (1973) revelations of the overrepresentation of minorities in special education classes to Taylor's (1986) examination of communication disorders in culturally diverse populations. A 20-minute video, "What's the Difference Being Different?" (Research Press, 1979) follows. This documentary describes a multicultural demonstration project which was developed and implemented through a partnership of teachers, teacher educators, and community members. Discussion of rural multicultural issues was facilitated by an overhead illustrating the factors of rural poverty, ethnicity, geographical impact, and religious influence in teaching exceptional students in rural southeastern Louisiana. Finally, as a posttest measure, the students answered the same questions asked on the pretest.

Discussion

The need is growing for university special education training programs in rural areas to offer a more pluralistic approach to teacher preparation. Effective training will incorporate issues such as learning styles, communication variations, behavioral characteristics, value differences, parental participation, and poverty. With an appropriate background from knowledge-based curricula, preservice teachers will be able to grow and profit from experiential training (i.e., practica and student teaching) where multicultural issues come to life.

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Editors' Note: The Collegiate Instructional Discrimination Index has been recently developed by James B. Boyer, Ph.D., of Kansas State University. This self-check instrument lists multi-ethnic, multilingual, cross-racial, and nonsexist criteria for examining course syllabi and instructional delivery at the college level. This instrument may be obtained from Dr. James B. Boyer, Bluemont Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506.

Too often, urban models for transition programming have been recommended for use in rural settings. What we need are rural transition services that are "Golden Gate" in quality and one-lane bridge in operation.

A Bridge in the Country: Transition Services for the Mildly Handicapped in Rural Areas

by Donald P. Link
University of Utah

The most popular analogy used when referring to the transition of handicapped students from school to work is that of a bridge. Professionals, parents, and students alike can grasp the essential concept of transition—of linking a student's school experience with adult life—by envisioning various kinds of bridges, from simple, shaky rope and wood structures to heavily riveted suspension bridges. These represent the many variations in range and quality of transition services experienced by the handicapped. It is only natural, when using this analogy, to imagine the best, most complete services as resembling a "transitional Golden Gate," a grand and beautiful structure built to move handicapped students safely and predictably from beneficial school programs to meaningful employment and personal/social adjustment. But remember where the real Golden Gate is located. Now think for a moment of a rural setting you are familiar with. Take the Golden Gate Bridge and imagine it placed in this rural setting. This beautiful, functional structure suddenly seems totally out of place.

Herein lies the dilemma of providing transition services to mildly handicapped students in rural areas. Too often, urban service delivery models have been recommended for use in rural settings with students who are learning disabled, behaviorally disordered, or mildly retarded (Helge, 1987). These models, although useful in many respects, are not necessarily reconceptualized in keeping with the unique advantages and disadvantages of providing education to handicapped students in rural areas. These areas of strength and weakness have been well documented (e.g., Halpern, 1982; Helge, 1984, 1987; Kirmer, Lockwood, Hickler, and Sweeney, 1984). Among the greatest disadvantages: transportation problems caused by long distances between programs; difficulties recruiting and maintaining qualified staff; irregular availability of specialists; and unstable local economies. Among the greatest advantages: community participation in school life; informal communication among educators, students, and parents; and ability to provide individualized help due to smaller enrollments. These factors have positive and negative effects on all rural school programs including transition programs, and must be considered when implementing any program model. The intention is to have rural transitional services that are "Golden Gate" in quality but one-lane bridge in operation.

Don Link is currently the Director of Developmental Disabilities, Inc., in Salt Lake City. He was project director of the Rural Transition Project at the University of Utah, Department of Special Education.

Laying the Foundation

A widely-used generic model for facilitating school-to-work transition has been provided by Wehman (1984). It provides a useful starting point for planning service delivery and can be adapted to fit within a rural context. Wehman's model illustrates movement through three stages, including a) school instruction, b) planning for the transitional process, and c) placement into meaningful employment. In this model, the secondary education program becomes the foundation on which the bridge of transition is built. Wehman suggests three critical characteristics of an appropriate school program: a) a functional curriculum, b) integration with non-handicapped peers, and c) community-based service delivery.

A curriculum can be considered functional if it is designed to prepare students for opportunities that are available in their community. One impact of the economic realities in many rural communities is that there may be few employment alternatives. Rural economies have been strained by fluctuations and failures in farming, fishing, mining, and forestry (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). Design of a functional school curriculum might be heavily influenced by the nature of work done in a rural community's single predominant industry or by small businesses that have survived amidst the economic downturn. Personnel who work with the mildly handicapped must assess suitable employment options and the specific skills needed to succeed in these jobs in order to make the curriculum appropriate to these needs. For example, a teacher in a transition program for mildly handicapped students in rural Utah used an "employee behavior checklist," given to a variety of local employers, to determine the various academic and social skills that were required to perform entry level jobs. A skill that was mentioned by nearly all the employers in her particular community was use of the telephone. Many beginning employees were required to take messages and seek information over the phone. Since the majority of students in her program also attended mainstream classes, the transition teacher's first action was to attempt to locate classes which included this skill in their curricula. Despite the measured importance of this skill to employers in the community, instruction of phone skills was not found in the curriculum guides of regular courses. There was a similar absence of curricular emphasis on skills such as following directions and form completion. Using these data from her own community, it became this teacher's task to create new curricular priorities that include the interpersonal skills, job-related academic skills, and specific vocational skills necessary for transition education (Okolo and Sitlington, 1986).

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Once a more functional curriculum has been identified, instruction should take place that integrates handicapped students with non-handicapped peers. This is easily accomplished with mildly handicapped students since most attend many mainstream classes. In rural schools, many of the students have grown up together and have been naturally integrated because of their proximity to one another. A greater concern is the appropriateness of the methods and outcomes in mainstream classes. It is important that the instructional techniques used are beneficial for students who have long histories of academic failure. Instructional methods and desired student outcomes should be modulated in keeping with the unique educational needs of handicapped learners. The role of the special education teacher, relevant to transition, is to collaborate with regular educators to encourage and facilitate the use of effective instructional techniques in mainstream classes. In urban schools, formal communication and collaboration systems are usually suggested or required to accommodate this role. Teachers in rural schools may have an advantage because of the lower number of personnel who need to interact and because more personal communication networks can be established.

The third characteristic of an appropriate secondary transition program is that it be community-based. In a rural context, this goal is difficult to reach for a number of reasons: remoteness of job sites; lack of transportation; and close-minded, conservative attitudes towards serving the handicapped by some members of the community. Again, rural special educators need to take advantage of the more casual, personal atmosphere that exists in most small communities. Forming car pools, finding volunteer drivers, or personally transporting students becomes somewhat easier to arrange through an informal communication network when working with fewer students. Teachers who have problems accommodating a community-based program because of their own scheduling conflicts and multitude of duties, can look to regional centers or cooperatives for personnel who possibly can work with students away from the school setting.

Building the Bridge

For handicapped students, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) serves as the centerpiece for planning and delivering special services designed to meet unique individual needs. One of the barriers to providing transition services has been the failure to develop and use IEP's which include transition objectives and activities for mildly handicapped students (Sarkees and Veir, 1988). Representatives of the community and adult service agencies should be involved, as much as is practical, in program planning. The *Transition Guide* (1987) lists a number of resources and agencies that could be utilized, including:

- Rehabilitation services
- Job Service
- Vocational-technical centers
- Private Industry Councils
- Mental Health Centers
- Regional social service agencies

In rural areas, it is often possible to maintain more direct contact with adult service providers and to get services quickly. Since communication and monitoring can be frequent and direct there is less chance that students will get lost in the system.

The key to increasing community involvement seems to be having adequate current information. Several procedures are suggested to enhance information exchange:

1. Establish and maintain a community resource directory for school personnel.
2. Establish and maintain a school services directory for agency personnel.
3. Develop a parents' guide book to school and community services.
4. Provide annual training for school personnel in the processes for effective coordination of community resources.

The focus of program planning should not be solely on school and agency personnel. Students and their parents must play an active role accessing needed resources both in school and in the community. Rural lifestyles often result in closer family bonds and better networks of families, friends, and church members than in urban areas. A strong advocacy role on the part of the family can be the greatest advantage a student will have in making a smooth and rewarding transition from school to work. Such an advocacy role cannot be expected without orientation and training, however, and it is suggested that educators train students and their parents alike in such advocacy skills as self-appraisal, goal-setting, participation on planning meetings, negotiation, assertiveness, and understanding educational and social service programs.

The Other Side of the Bridge

The last stage of Wehman's model is the employment outcome. This is where the bridge is supposed to lead. Successful transition cannot happen without employment alternatives. For the mildly handicapped, this means competitive employment rather than work in enclaves or with a job coach. It is assumed that this population will receive some support, possibly involving post-secondary training, but that it will be of brief duration. Rural special educators can exercise control over this stage in several ways:

- Using local media, the Chamber of Commerce, and informal networks to develop job placement possibilities.
- Communicating the benefits of hiring people with disabilities to employers in the community.
- Teaching students to be skilled users of such job acquisition resources as Job Service, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Vocational Rehabilitation and local newspapers.
- Assisting students in finding paid work experiences.

A student's early work experience is a valuable asset and, if managed effectively, can enrich school-based learning (Tindall, 1988; William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). Research conducted by Hasazi, Gordon, and Roe (1985) showed that students who had held paid part-time or summer jobs prior to graduation increased their chances of being employed following high school. Even the more mundane, robotic jobs such as many found in the fast-food industry can be useful for promoting good work habits and some basic occupational skills. In addition, students in a work environment often show increased motivation to learn. It is often the lack of such motivation in the school setting that has been the main contributor to their poor performance.

Summary

Just as it is inaccurate to assume that all large cities are just alike, so it is equally inaccurate to draw the same conclusion about rural communities. It is easy to make sweeping generalizations about the economic state, population mix, and prevailing attitudes in rural America but the fact is that rural subcultures vary a great deal and no single

perspective captures this diversity. Regardless of their differences, all rural school districts share the challenge of providing special education services that facilitate the school-to-work transition of students with handicaps. These services begin with a secondary program of studies that provides curricula appropriate to the transition goals of each student and that utilize instructional methods that are effective with students who have unique educational needs. This foundation training leads to utilization of school, community, and social service resources to contribute cooperatively to program planning and linkages with employment and/or post-secondary training. Finally, entry-level work opportunities should be available and of a nature to establish the experience base upon which a successful career can be built.

Rural educators are faced with unique barriers to fulfilling the transition mission but also enjoy unique advantages that can, if taken advantage of, be used to build solid bridges to the future.

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Rural teachers and administrators need to move beyond "special" education and address the entire range of student diversity in rural schools through a more comprehensive educational approach.

Student Diversity in Rural Schools: Beyond "Special" Education

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Without question, P.L. 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) increased services for rural students with special needs (Helge, 1984) and heralded greater numbers of qualified personnel and more service delivery options, related services, and educational materials for rural school districts. For rural students who previously had been placed in regional institutions or relegated to home-bound placements, P.L. 94-142, which provided the ticket for their public school entrance, indeed constituted a major rural educational accomplishment. However, the outcomes of special education practices across the nation have recently been scrutinized by advocates and policy makers (Gartner and Lipsky, 1987). Research on federal policies to achieve educational equity, including P.L. 94-142 (Sleeter and Grant, 1987) has shown that these policies have created a fragmented, separate, and unequal education system (Gartner and Lipsky, 1987). Persons in the field of rural special education cannot afford to hide from or defer the attacks upon the resulting separate system of service delivery. To avoid the "buckshot mentality" in meeting student needs (Sarason and Klaber, 1985), and to address the outcomes of special education services, rural teachers and administrators need to move beyond "special" education and address the entire range of student diversity in rural schools through a more comprehensive educational approach.

While urban schools receive much of the attention regarding student diversity, student diversity in rural schools is no less significant. The increasingly diverse student population in terms of minorities, students from disadvantaged families (Hodgkinson, 1988), and mainstreamed students with disabilities all challenge the struggling rural education system. The possibilities of pooling resources in rural schools from general education and equity programs, or merging general and special education (Lilly, 1988; Reynolds, Wang, and Walberg, 1987; Stainback and Stainback, 1984; Will, 1986) may assist rural school districts in providing a quality education for all students. With the cost of special education averaging 2.3 times more than general education programs, and the cost of segregated special education placements averaging over 31 percent higher than costs in less restrictive environments like resource rooms (Decisions Resources Corporation, 1988), rural administrators cannot ignore the option of restructuring general and special education in their rural districts to enhance student learning for all students.

Descriptions of exemplary rural programs have provided examples of how rural special educators are attempting to meet the needs of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Helge, 1986; McKenzie, Hill, Sousie, Yorki, and Baker, 1977; Singer, 1984).

However, rural school administrators and teachers need a broader framework in which to make decisions to impact upon all students within the entire educational program.

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Specific Focus

Capper (1989a) proposed a conceptual and practical framework for rural school administrators to serve students with severe intellectual disabilities in the general education program. This article proposes an alternative conceptual framework that can address not only students with severe disabilities in rural schools, but can also include a broad range of learning needs in the general education classroom. In addition, the conceptual framework and the suggestions for practice are appropriate for rural special and general education teachers as well as for rural school administrators.

First the article examines a conceptual framework for meeting student needs beyond traditional special education categorical services. Second, the article proposes practical applications of the framework for rural administrators and teachers which include (a) shaping the school/classroom climate, (b) coordinating the instructional program, and (c) considering the mediation of rural language, history, and culture. Finally, the use of resources to support administrators and teachers who are fully, but not solely responsible for all students in the local rural community will be described.

Conceptual Framework

One conceptual framework of principal instructional management behavior emanates from a synthesis of systems theories and is based on the research of effective schools and effective school leaders (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee, 1982). Seen as an interactive relationship rather than unidirectional, the framework depicts how the leader can influence the school climate and shape the instructional organization to impact positively on student learning.

Using the same instructional management framework, Capper (1989b) explored the reciprocal exchange between poor, rural communities, school leader behavior, and early childhood services for children with special needs. Capper suggested that the principal and teachers need to consider the language, history, and culture of the rural community and of the students, as mediating points between school climate and instructional organization (see Figure 1). This consideration is necessary to meet the needs of poor, rural students with disabilities. By including service delivery for rural students with disabilities within a general education

Figure 1. Student diversity and an instructional management framework.

framework, school administrators and teachers can apply this framework to the entire sphere of student diversity in their schools. The framework and its application can extend beyond the need to create more separate, special services, and "pull out" programs for the variety of students in rural schools.

Applications for Administrators and Teachers

Shaping the school/classroom climate. The rural school/classroom climate (e.g., the norms and expectations for students) can be supportive of all students. The school/classroom climate can encourage both supportive relationships as well as academic expectations for students to maximize their potential, regardless of learning needs (Sarason and Doris, 1979). Rural special education delivery models have supported removing students with variant learning needs from the general education classroom and serving them through pullout programs in the school or by transporting students to out of district placements. Students and teachers cannot practice supportive relationships in the classroom if some members of the school community are absent, namely those with disabilities.

Administrators and teachers can apply the rural value system which emphasizes the importance of "community" to their schools and classrooms, and establish norms and expectations supportive of all students. However, for students with disabilities, merely being present in the classroom is not enough. Isolation and inequalities can persist even when the student is no longer physically separated from his/her peers. Active participation and interaction can be expected of all students. The research and literature on social interaction among students with and without disabilities can inform this student interaction (Bednersh and Peck, 1986; Cole, Meyer, Vandercook, and McQuarter, 1987).

Coordinating the instructional organization. Coordinating the instructional organization in the rural school/classroom for students with special needs will require a consideration of both the process and the content of instruction for students. The IEP process supports input from a variety of persons concerning instructional strategies to meet student objectives. However, traditional rural special educational delivery models (e.g., resource room, self-contained rooms) expected the special education teacher to be primarily responsible for both content and process decisions. Current research and literature suggest strategies for general curriculum integration for students from the continuum of diverse learning needs—from the more severely intellectually disabled student to students with mild learning difficulties (Duffy, 1988; Falvey, 1989; Wang, 1989). Administrators and teachers can integrate this curricular content with cooperative instructional practices. Thus the curricular content and instructional process become inextricably linked.

Considering language, history, and culture. The language, history, and culture of rural students can link the climate and instruction surrounding student learning. These mediating variables between school climate and instruction can target both the rural context of the school as well as the concept of disability. Considering both rural context and disability in this part of the conceptual framework can be tools for addressing the range of diversity in rural schools.

The school/classroom climate can be supportive of the diversity of rural values in the community which are embedded in the community history and culture. Therefore, it is important that school personnel and students understand their rural history and culture. Similarly, the academic instruction can also reflect and support the language, history, and rural culture of the students and of the community. Wigginton (1985) and others (Giroux and McLaren, 1986) have advocated the primacy of student experience to inform classroom pedagogy, and have provided examples of this in practice. Rural history and information on local and state history can make inroads into the traditional "urbancentric" curriculum of rural schools.

It is also important that rural school personnel know the history of handicapism and the institutional apartheid of persons with disabilities in their rural community. It is also necessary to know the individual student's educational and social background, and discern how to sensitively share that information with the school community.

The importance of language as a mediating variable depends on the degree of cultural differences embodied in the rural community. Rural Hispanic, rural Appalachian, and rural Native American settings exemplify the importance of supporting the diversity of language in the school climate and academic milieu. Rural midwestern farming areas may have less obvious language differences than affluent urban settings, however the importance of local vocabulary is no less significant.

For rural students with disabilities which severely limit their verbal expression, the body of knowledge developed by researchers and scholars in the area of language development for persons with special needs (Dunst, 1985; Schiefelbusch, 1979; Siegel-Causey and Guess, 1989) can be tapped to support these students in the rural school. Rural school leaders and teachers can be receptive and open to communicative intent which goes beyond verbal articulation, and for students with profound intellectual disabilities, extends beyond a formal augmentative system. An eye gaze, head turn, facial expression, body position, and vocal utterance have meaning, and for the rural student with severe intellectual disabilities, all constitute their language.

Fully but not solely responsible. One of the biggest inhibitors for rural teachers and administrators to serve students in the general education program is the feeling that one teacher could not possibly meet all student needs in the general education classroom, or that the local rural school could not meet the needs of all students in the local community (Capper, 1989c), particularly those students with more severe disabilities. In addition, persons in the field of special education become unsure of their roles when students are educated in the general education classroom. While rural administrators and teachers can be fully responsible for students in rural communities, they need not be solely responsible for meeting the diverse range of learning needs.

First, rural administrators and teachers cannot overlook the fact that first and foremost, all students are more

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importantly human, and their common humanity exists before the disability. Capper (in press) found that rural districts scrambled to implement P.L. 94-142 by emulating urban service delivery models. Often rural administrators developed an entirely new transportation system and set aside separate space to group students with similar learning needs. In attempting to provide special equipment and services for students with intensive learning needs, these rural administrators neglected to furnish the students with the materials and services available to all other students in the community. Adequate materials, qualified teachers, access to information about the school for parents, and opportunities to interact with other students represented just a few of the components of a rural non-disabled student's school experience which were not available for the students with special needs. Administrators did not consider what educational opportunities were currently available for all students in their districts and did not ensure that, as a beginning, students with disabilities were provided these same opportunities. Rural teachers and administrators can feel confident about their ability to enhance the lives of students. And by considering their students with special needs first, as students, they can move away from the notion that they are not "experts," and only highly specialized knowledge can meet student needs (Skrtic, 1988).

Second, although under the proposed conceptual framework, rural teachers and administrators are fully responsible for all students in the school and community regardless of student needs, school personnel are not solely responsible for all students. Rural special education is indeed a "gold mine" and can provide the network of support necessary for administrators and teachers. Rural education and special education strategies have also historically included utilizing community resources in the school, including volunteers and business partnerships. Resources at the school, community, region, state, and national levels can be tapped to provide the information needed to meet special student needs in the general education program. More typical classroom support services such as related services personnel (speech, guidance, physical therapy) can share their expertise within alternative programming models such as transdisciplinary teaming (Campbell, 1987; Lyon and Lyon, 1980).

Summary and Conclusion

Rural administrators and teachers cannot deny the demographic realities in rural schools today. Societal and familial complexities are no less significant in rural than in urban schools. Creating a separate program or practice for each area of student diversity only perpetuates a fragmented system of service delivery. This article proposed the utilization of special education knowledge within a general education framework, to move beyond "special" education in rural settings, and to address the range of learning needs within the general education program in each child's local community.

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Teacher trainers cannot afford to ignore the need for a specialized set of competencies in preparing teachers for rural settings.

Expanded Competencies: Acknowledging a Context for Rural Teaching Skills

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Introduction

In any community when a young person commits suicide the reverberations are widespread. In an Eskimo community of 550 along the Yukon River when eight young villagers commit suicide over an eighteen month period everyone is affected—the family, the teachers, the health workers, EVERYONE! In 1988 the *Anchorage Daily News* published a Pulitzer prize-winning series entitled "A People in Peril." The series chronicled the personal tales of pain and loss in rural settings as it described the relationship of alcohol to other social and health problems including fetal alcohol syndrome, bootlegging, poverty, suicide, accidental deaths, homicide, cultural disruption and movements toward sobriety. As Managing Editor, Howard Weaver, pointed out in an editorial, "Our series is focused on misery. It is not a balanced account, contrasting reports of damage with the rich cultural heritage of Alaska Natives. It does not deal over much with the happiness of many close-knit Native families, or the enduring grace of their traditions." (*Anchorage Daily News*, 1988, p. A-12). Weaver makes it clear that the newspaper series was not intended as criticism so much as a warning to us all.

Teacher trainers cannot afford to ignore the need for a specialized set of competencies which goes beyond a knowledge base framed in pedagogical terms in preparing teachers for rural settings. Kleinfeld (1988) describes the perspective of Donald Schon (1983) who observes that "professionals often practice in situations which demand more than the application of technical knowledge to concrete problems. Professionals typically work in situations of complexity and ambiguity and disorder where it is not clear what goals are desirable or where desirable goals may conflict. The professional's task is not simply to solve particular problems through the application of technical knowledge. The task is also to figure out just what the problems are. Preparation for professional practice should include preparation in spotting issues and framing problems, in thinking through the consequences and results of different courses of action, and in staying sensitive to the particulars of concrete situations." (p.iii)

The rural and remote situations experienced in Alaska are mere exaggerations of issues that professionals must address in other parts of the country. Increased isolation, distance and cultural diversity perhaps contribute to the higher statistics in Alaska but similar problems exist in many parts of the United States, particularly in regions with large American Indian populations including reservation areas in the West.

The assumptions, content and competencies described in this article are part of a pilot program to train Rural Specialists—a group of professionals who choose to reside in rural, culturally diverse settings and who recognize the need for more information to cope with the everchanging context of their professional practice. These people may be teachers—regular or special education, social workers, nurses, alcohol counselors or others. The program is designed to enable them to feel more successful (competent and confident) so that they can remain in the settings they chose. McDiarmid, Kleinfeld, and Parrett (1988) state, "In every environment the local context—social, economic, political, historical, linguistic and so on—influences teaching and learning." (p. 1) The distance-delivered master's degree program from the University of Alaska Anchorage offers the opportunity to draw from the local context and link together content from various academic disciplines. While a variety of professions are in the program, only the relationship to teacher education is addressed in this article.

Training Program Assumptions

A number of assumptions underline the development of the content and competencies of the Rural Specialist

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program. A wide variety of rural professions were invited into the program and individual degree plans were developed to accommodate preexisting competence. An advanced degree and not additional certificates, endorsements or licenses is the objective. These assumptions are the basis upon which the program was developed:

- For some time to come we are going to be faced with the necessity for non-Native/non-indigenous professionals to fill the roles of teachers, nurses, counselors and others in rural and remote settings. In order to work successfully with students/clients, families and communities, contextual information must be a part of training. "Context" here refers to setting variables including language, culture, social and health issues as well as community profiles and priorities.
- The development of qualities of mind and person including such intangibles as sensitivity, curiosity, flexibility, judgment, character and integrity must be coupled with the application of general concepts and knowledge in order to develop successful interventions in rural and remote settings.
- Rural professionals need career ladder and staff development opportunities to help offset the discouragement and isolation that contribute to the high rate of turnover and burnout in rural and remote settings. Distance education models and expanded contextual competencies offer greater opportunities for rural professionals to achieve professional growth.
- Professionals who already reside in rural and remote settings and have a desire to remain there, bring to the graduate program contextual information that can be incorporated and shared in issues seminars and student initiated research and development activities.
- Educators and schools have an ongoing participation in rural and remote settings. While other agencies and professionals may come and go based on factors such as funding or current emphasis, school personnel remain pivotal components in rural community actions.
- Many of the learners in rural and remote settings, particularly those in culturally and linguistically diverse areas, are at-risk of school failure because of the high incidence of poverty, substance abuse and concomitant social and health issues. They frequently experience a lack of vocational opportunities and are caught in rapid cultural change. For these reasons, much of the instructional content and methodology of special education is appropriate for a larger proportion of the population than would normally be assumed.
- Collaborative interactions between human service providers (including teachers) in small communities are the basis for the holistic development of appropriate interventions for special learners and their families as well as for the at-risk population.

Content

Four primary areas comprise the course work in the Rural Specialist program. The content highlights that follow do not necessarily constitute individual academic courses. The forty semester-credit degree can be completed via on-site distance education and summer campus programs.

Special Education
- General Knowledge of Handicapping Conditions
- Classroom Organization and Behavior Management
- Legal Entitlement
- Collaborative Consultation
- Rural Special Education Service Delivery

Counseling
- Individual and Group Counseling Skills
- Working with Families
- Working with Handicapped Children and Youth

Rural Health and Social Issues
- Substance Abuse
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Effect (FAS and FAE)
- Teen Pregnancy
- Physical and Sexual Abuse
- Suicide Prevention
- Health Education
- Career and Vocational Planning
- Cultures in Transition

Research and Development
- Qualitative and Quantitative Research Skills
- Community and School-Based Research
- Action Plans and Products for Rural Settings

Special Education and Rural Competencies

Special education teachers need a variety of competencies to meet today's instructional demands. Professional organizations including the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (1986) and the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (1987) spent considerable time in recent years developing lists of desirable teacher behaviors. In considering competencies needed for successful teaching in rural and remote schools, the first concern is competency for teaching in any setting.

Hudson (1987, p. 232–34) formulated a list of sixteen major competencies summarized below. With little exception these competencies are desirable for the regular teacher, and certainly for the rural teacher who must cope with many situations and problems that could be referred to other professionals and specialists in an urban or populous setting.

General/Social Knowledge
- Normal Child Development
- How Children Learn

Planning and Evaluation
- Remediation
- Diagnostic and Prescriptive Teaching
- Materials
- Sequence/Task Analysis
- Ongoing Evaluation

Curriculum Content
- Special Programs
- Affective Curricula
- Study Skills

Clinical Strategies
- Learning Styles
- Direct Instruction
- Active Learning
- Problems Solving
- Behavior Management
- Systems to Increase Desired Behaviors
- Systems to Prevent Behavior Problems

Specific rural special education competencies were described by Helge (1983) and the National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth (1983). They included a basic understanding of the differences between urban and rural schools, a knowledge base for dealing with a broad range of handicapping conditions with limited as-

https://newprairiepress.org/edconsiderations/vol17/iss1/15
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sistance (including low incidence areas), and collaborative skills for working with other professional and community resources.

Expanded Competencies for a Rural Context

The realities of the role of the teacher in a small village or community in Alaska require appropriate responses to student needs beyond basic curriculum offerings and instructional techniques.

Special education teachers are comfortable with multigrade grouping and their assessment and evaluation skills are basic to creating an effective learning environment. Every classroom, at every level, contains a variety of potential problems engendered by bilingual and cultural variances, as well as varied learning styles, ability levels, and learning disabilities. Transiency and fragmented previous evaluation systems contribute greatly to the problem. Consequently, the teacher must have skills to assess each student initially and on an ongoing basis to identify learning styles and the presence or absence of learning disabilities, severe emotional problems and other problems. Related services in evaluation are commonly scarce and fragmented, resulting in greater demands on the teachers' skills.

Counseling. All teachers are "counselors" in their roles as teachers from time to time. However, at present and for the near future the teacher in rural Alaska is called on continuously to be a counselor among students who are living in a time and place of uncertainty and confusion. The teacher needs the skills to know when s/he is in fact counseling, to know the limits and depths of counseling that can be implemented effectively, and to be facile in a variety of counseling techniques so as to have options in selecting a counseling format suited to a student (or group) and the demonstrated need. In a time and place of turmoil, having enough skill to know the limits of the competency and the point at which the services of the professional counselor must be acquired is reason enough to have basic counseling competencies!

Career guidance is a complicated responsibility at this time of great confusion and controversy regarding the future of young Alaska Natives. Issues of land rights, cultural integration, and economy play into the dilemma of career choices, as teenager youngsters and their families struggle with education and training issues in preparation for adult life. A sensitive and well equipped career counselor/teacher is highly challenged in this area. School dropout relates closely to this topic—an additional challenge to teachers and communities.

Health and Social Problems. Health problems and/or related social concerns abound in rural Alaska; local access to medical information and treatment is limited to the skills and responsibility of the village health aide (a paraprofessional position). The teacher is frequently the key person who hears health complaints (excuses for absence) and observes visible health problems, as well as those manifested through behavior change. The knowledge needed to read "red flags" and to know where to make referrals or seek assistance is basic. Additionally the teacher may be the logical person to assist in follow up treatment and routine after illness and/or medical intervention. Hopefully the teacher will be supported by basic visits and assistance from an itinerant Public Health Nurse. Not only can the teacher assist, given basic training, knowledge and information, but the teacher generally enjoys a trust level and predictable daily involvement with the students, and hopefully, the trust and confidence of the parents.

Consultation and Collaboration. The rural teacher must have extensive competency in collaborative consultation. The teacher must perceive him/herself as a facilitator—a consumer of many and varied services needed by the students, but available only on schedule or request. As a facilitator the teacher will respond to the need for current and accurate files of human resources and educational services available to the students and families, including contact persons, demographic data, and personal familiarity with key sources. This role as facilitator applies to educational needs, and to areas of concern such as attempted suicide, unplanned pregnancies, mental and emotional disturbance and illness, and physical and sexual abuse. The rural teacher must be able to "team" with others, pooling resources, and joining together with other disciplines to further the welfare of the students.

Health Education. The rural teacher at either elementary or secondary level needs to be able to assume responsibility for health education, that is, to provide accurate information (on an age appropriate basis) to students regarding preventive and holistic health care and maintenance. As a well trained professional this teacher can provide health education in the context of the social environment involving decision making and student awareness of choices and options.

Community Involvement. Information and knowledge are the basis of advocacy. The effective rural teacher is an advocate not only for the students, but for the community. The rural teacher must be well informed about the culture of the community, and have good listening and information gathering skills. It is a true competency to be able to subjugate one's own cultural background and understand that the teacher's role is not to teach people new cultural ways, but to be the educator in the cultural environment of the community. Serious study and course work is usually required of a teacher to begin to master the cultural mores, philosophy and natural ways of a culture with which a teacher has had no experience.

Conclusions

Sixty percent of the school districts in the United States are rural as defined by community size and delivery model. A considerable percentage of teachers in training will eventually end up in small schools in rural and remote areas teaching children in multigrade groups, assuming wide curricular responsibilities and "mainstreaming" handicapped children because that is the only alternative available (Johnson, M.K., Amundsen, C., and Parrett, W., 1983). These teachers will be rewarded by the advantages of rural teaching including smaller class size, the opportunity to know children and families very well, living far away from hectic urban life and being close to the countryside and natural surroundings (Baker, 1986). Depending upon the size and location of the communities, the teachers may be challenged additionally by working in a cultural and social context very different from their own background, in communities where poverty, substance abuse and related health and social issues affect most of the children and will most definitely affect the teacher as well!

Professionals make a positive choice when they go to rural and remote villages in Alaska, reservations settlements in Arizona or ranching communities in Montana. They hope to be competent teachers, nurses, counselors or other practitioners and to perceive themselves as effective. Feeling capable, confident and competent will help prevent burnout and positively affect the high turnover rate. Expanding competencies to address primary issues of coping and survival in rural America will begin to make a difference.

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As the nation's schools are moving toward integration of mild-to-moderate handicapped students within general education classrooms, teachers must gain additional skills and expertise in both diagnosis and remediation.

Identification, Intervention and Collaboration: The Keys To Working Successfully With Mildly Handicapped Students In Rural Areas

by Dean K. McIntosh and Gail I. Raymond
University of South Carolina

Introduction

Providing appropriate services to mildly handicapped students in rural areas has, and will continue to be a serious problem. For a number of years there has been a critical shortage of trained educational evaluators and psychologists to do the testing necessary for the identification of those referred by teachers, administrators and parents. Rural school districts, because of their geographical isolation and widely scattered pockets of population have an extremely difficult time in providing specialized services such as psychological services. School psychologists are often both unaffordable and unavailable for rural schools (Helge, 1985). The limited number of special educators available in rural areas have restricted both the quantity and quality of the services that are available to handicapped children and youth. Helge (1984) pointed out that the majority of the unserved and underserved children are located in rural areas in America, and the overall prevalence of at-risk students in rural areas is very high. As a result, *Identification* and *Intervention* are two activities that are particularly difficult to implement.

Although PL 94-142 has done much to assure that services will be guaranteed to the handicapped, such services are provided only to those students who have been appropriately identified and labelled. Students suspected of having learning and behavioral problems often don't receive the proper help that should be given to them if they don't qualify under this law. In some rural areas little effort is even made to identify this population. School administrators are well aware that once the student is "labelled" the district is then legally responsible for services being provided on an on-going basis. What happens as a result of the above circumstances is that there is general overall dissatisfaction by all persons involved in the educational process. Regular classroom teachers are frustrated because they don't have the support services needed. They know that keeping these students in classes without receiving proper help hinders providing the proper education to the non-handicapped students in the class. Parents are concerned that their children may not be receiving the proper education. Administrators worry about the legal and moral ramifications of such a policy. And, those students with the problem and those who are functioning normally are prevented from reaching their full educational potential.

Needs in Rural Areas

School administrators need to adopt a policy that is not going to require a large influx of new personnel in order to provide services to handicapped students. Additional teachers and psychologists are probably just not available. As a result there is a need for regular classroom teachers to develop skills necessary to diagnose and remediate mild-to-moderately handicapped students. Obviously, the easiest approach on the part of administrators is to require regular classroom teachers to return to colleges or universities and take formal course work in these areas. Another more successful approach would be to designate one or two teachers in each school throughout the district or consortium who will receive such training through the colleges or universities. This training will be provided in a convenient location for a number of rural teachers, and a system will be developed and implemented to provide on-going support once the course work is completed. These teachers will become the in-house consultants to other teachers while maintaining the vast majority of students in regular classes. A third approach is for the special educators employed within the system to assist regular educators in gaining additional skills, utilizing a consultation model. Probably a combination of the second and third alternative is the most expedient and palatable to classroom teachers.

What is basically needed in rural and sparsely populated areas is a procedure that makes optimal use of all appropriate personnel within the school system in both assessment and intervention. Special educators need to be able to work more closely with regular educators and vice versa. Both must be able to utilize the information provided by ancillary personnel such as psychologists, speech therapists and guidance counselors. It will require collaboration

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on the part of both the regular and special educator. This is, in essence, what the regular/special education initiative as discussed by Will (1986) is really all about. How to implement it is much more difficult than discussing it philosophically.

Assessment in Rural Areas

Hargrove and Poteet (1984) have defined assessment as a process whereby appropriate information is gathered by using appropriate tests, instruments and techniques. According to Witt, Elliott, Gresham, and Kramer (1988) "Assessment should be viewed as an array of materials, techniques, and tests across a variety of time periods and situations" (p. 4). They have further stated that teachers, psychologists, speech clinicians, counselors, parents, and even the children themselves should be involved in the assessment process. Helge (1988) also suggested that the assessment should be interdisciplinary and include not only the teachers but also the school nurse, counselor, administrator and parents when possible.

Luftig (1989) has stated that assessment has two components. These include *measurement* and *evaluation*. Measurement is the gathering of the information through administration and scoring of tests, and evaluation is the interpretation of the test results. Swanson and Watson (1989) have pointed out that assessment, in contrast to testing, is the process whereby individual characteristics are discerned that are the important aspects of developing a specific program meeting the student's unique educational needs.

Assessment serves a variety of purposes. At the basic, or initial level, it is the *screening* of the individual to determine: 1) if there is truly a problem, and 2) if any additional evaluation is necessary. Most often this is conducted by classroom teachers, utilizing information readily available. Normally this includes formal assessment data that is gathered through school or district testing and any informal assessment that has been performed by the teacher, along with any substantiating data available from classroom performance.

One way of eliminating some of the confusion in the screening phase is for it to become a cooperative effort of both the special and regular educator. Together they can determine the depth and severity of the problem and possibly work out some pre-screening remedial programs that may work with the student without having to make a referral for further evaluation. Even if further evaluation is needed, the information gained by intervention at the screening level will be of assistance to those who are charged with the formal evaluation process.

Should there be evidence of a possible problem, the student would normally be referred to the school psychologist or evaluator, to determine if it is severe enough to require labelling and the providing of specialized services. This second level of assessment is often referred to as *determining eligiblity*. Most of this evaluation is formal in nature, such as IQ testing, achievement tests, and even possibly projectives. This evaluation is normally performed for the purpose of meeting PL 94-142 criteria so services can be provided through federal funding. Most states have very specific guidelines and regulations regarding the types of tests and the time frame they are to be administered.

The third level of assessment, and by far the most important to classroom teachers, is that of assessment for *program planning*. This is often where the process begins to break down, especially in rural areas with limited resources and ancillary personnel. After the student has been screened, received a formal evaluation, and has been determined eligible for services, it is then the responsibility of the regular and special education teachers to provide the actual remediation. Rarely do the psychological reports contain specific information regarding remediation. Too often the classroom teacher feels the special educator is responsible for remediation while the special educator perceives the regular educator as responsible for on-going and long-term remediation within the regular classroom. Program planning becomes piece-meal and consists of the IEP which is written by the special educator with little, or no input from the regular classroom teacher. Because the assessment process is incomplete little indepth program planning takes place, thus remediation is on shaky ground from its inception.

Even more critical is the fact that a certain number of students who are referred are found to be ineligible for special education services. When this happens, they are returned to the classroom teacher as her/his total responsibility. Normally, no program planning takes place and therefore the assessment process, while reviewed as complete by the "system," is certainly incomplete in the eyes of the classroom teacher. Little help, if any, is available to the teacher and the student.

All of the above infer there should be a strong involvement by both the regular and special educator if assessment is to be performed properly. If both are not involved it is highly possible that few remedial services can, and will be, provided by either. What results is that the regular educator sees that he/she does not have the time or skills to provide the remediation needed, and the special educator has been given no responsibility for the student, because the student did not meet the identification criteria. In more urban areas, there may be other services available to the regular classroom teacher in the form of remedial reading programs, counseling, or extra tutorial help. In rural areas, these services are rarely available, especially within the school itself. Students must be transported many miles to receive specialized services.

One of the major pitfalls of identification and labelling in rural school districts is too often it divides up responsibilities for the education of the student. The regular classroom teacher and the special educator each take a "piece of the action" rather than providing a cohesive workable remedial program in which both teachers are equally involved. Ideally what is needed is a procedure where both work together to determine the extent and depth of the academic problems of the student, and then continue working collaboratively in programming. This would include the use of a variety of instruments such as informal and formal techniques and criterion referenced and curriculum based assessment. Many of the students would receive proper remediation utilizing such a procedure.

Intervention

While identification is an important aspect of the total remedial process, intervention is the real key to the remediation of handicapped students. Unless identification is translated into effective intervention strategies, little will be gained from an elaborate diagnostic process. In rural areas, this intervention must be both practical and sound. According to McIntosh and Raymond (1989), it must be practical because often the special education teacher is not within the school or within reasonable driving distance and the regular classroom teacher must carry out the intervention. It must be sound, because if the regular educator is to provide all, or even part of the remediation, it needs to have a pedagogical base that will allow implementation to take place and be integrated into the classroom setting.

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Many authors in the field are presently writing about intervention that can be carried out to a great extent within the regular classroom setting (Meyen, Vergason, Whelan, 1988; Gearheart, Weishahn, Gearheart, 1988; Stephens, Blackhurst, Magliocca, 1988; and Bauer and Shea, 1989). Most recent textbooks on the topic of instruction of handicapped students include within their titles inferences to the regular classroom, mainstreaming, etc. With the regular/special education initiative discussed previously, emphasis is now being placed on keeping mild-to-moderately handicapped students in the regular classroom as many hours a day as possible. This means that more teachers have responsibility for a larger number of handicapped students each year.

Rural school districts will be part of the national movement toward integration. Integration eliminates the long travel time to a central school that provides special education services and allows the students to remain in their own home schools. It does place a great burden upon the teacher, however, with even more diversity found in the classroom. It also means that there must be a consultative relationship established between regular and special educators whenever possible, so that each can support the other in the maintenance of students in the program.

Berliner (1988) has reported that before teachers can begin providing effective instructional strategies for exceptional learners that decisions regarding *preinstructional factors* such as content time allocation, pacing, grouping, and activity structures must be determined. Each decision affects both teacher and student attitudes and behaviors, and student achievement. He considers *during-instructional factors* to be time students are engaged in activities, time management that is the responsibility of the teacher, monitoring of the success rate, amount of academic learning time that is utilized, monitoring of the learning experience, and structuring and questioning that must be included in the instructional period. All of these must be taken into consideration if a teacher is to be successful with exceptional learners.

Teachers often face serious problems when remediation is attempted with this group of children. Skill deficiencies at lower grade levels are very different from upper grades. However many students, although administratively assigned to the upper grades, will have skills deficits that place them in the lower elementary level. This is why diagnosis is so important, for it helps the teacher pin-point the deficit level in preparation for intervention.

Lower level reading programs emphasize initial phonics, writing letter formations, and literal translations. However, at the middle grades of 4-6, the emphasis is placed on inferential reading, on the subject matter being taught, and written language moves to the expressive mode. Oral aspects become very important and teachers are concerned with not only length but complexity of oral expression. Obviously, reading has become comprehension, and no longer is greatly involved with decoding. With math, no longer are facts as important as the utilizing of these facts in word problems and translation of math to subject matter areas.

A teacher of a fourth grader who has first and second grade skills has no alternative but to teach those basic skills. The teacher finds that the curriculum within the classroom begins to extend far below the fourth grade level. This may begin to appear as an insurmountable problem, because appropriate remediation can only take place with the teacher providing basic skills intervention.

It is at this point that either the special trained regular educator and the special educator becomes an integral part of the remediation process. The remediation, to be effective, must be based upon the curriculum and unique characteristics of the particular school. This requires a great amount of adaptation of existing methods and materials. The special trained teachers in the school will be able to provide the teacher with assistance in this adaptation. While the teacher is learning how to adapt, other students with similar problems will benefit from these newly developed skills. In turn, those teachers in the school with special education training become more proficient at the skill of consultation. In such a model, everyone gains. The regular classroom teacher becomes more adept at curriculum modification and coping with diversity in the classroom. The special teacher gains additional skills in consultation and working with regular educators. Students, both those who are targeted for the remediation and others in the class, benefit from the teachers newly developed skills. In essence, *specific learning strategies for the student's instructional level are the keys to success at the intervention level.*

Summary

Teachers in rural areas are often faced with very difficult academic problems. They have students who are obviously not succeeding, but they often have few resources available to assist them in determining the extent of the problem or to develop proper remediation. As the nation's schools are moving toward integration of mild-to-moderate handicapped students within the regular classrooms, teachers must gain additional skills and expertise in both diagnosis and remediation. This need not be done in a vacuum. The school district needs to adopt a model that allows the utilizing of all teachers and ancillary personnel to work together in these processes. All will benefit, including teachers and students. Each school needs to have a teacher(s) who has gained additional skills in working with handicapped students, but not every teacher in the school must have obtained formal training. If even one teacher in the school has expertise in this area, it can be shared with all others in both diagnosis and remediation. Rural teachers having to depend upon experts coming to their school, or getting information from the central office will never be as effective as those having an expert in their own schools in the form of a consultant-collaborator.

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The development of a community network to improve services for children with chronic health conditions and their families takes planning, commitment, enthusiasm and interest.

Meeting Needs with Scarce Resources: Community Network Building for Low-Incidence Conditions

by Judith A. Kahn and Georgianna Larson
Pathfinder
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Introduction

It is estimated that at least 10 to 15 percent of all children and youth have a chronic illness or disability. Of this group, about 10 percent—or 1 to 2 percent of all children—have a condition severe enough to affect daily activities (Hobbs, et al., 1985). These children and their families have a special set of needs which require the involvement of many agencies and programs in their community. Families must cope with challenges in obtaining appropriate and available services, adequate financing of care, emotional adjustment and changing family dynamics as well as a definition of their place in the community. Such challenges often require the assistance of outside agencies as well as a community planning effort for these special services and needs.

In October 1983, Pathfinder was awarded a competitive grant from the Division (Bureau) of Maternal and Child Health, Department of Health and Human Services under the category of Special Projects of Regional and National Significance (SPRANS). The grant was awarded to Pathfinder for the development of a community network model for children with chronic health conditions and their families. The demonstration projects were located in the Minnesota communities of Albert Lea and Austin and in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Specific activities included task force development, community needs assessment implementation, development of an action plan, and evaluation of the local network.

Judith A. Kahn and Georgianna Larson work with Pathfinder which was established in 1983 as a cooperative effort of Gillette Children's Hospital, the Minneapolis Children's Medical Center, and several other health-related agencies in Michigan. Pathfinder's purpose is to improve systems of care for children with chronic health conditions.

This article presents a model of community service planning and delivery that can be applied to the particular set of problems faced by children with special health care needs and their families in rural communities. While the model is presented in the context of health concerns, the principles of the model are generic and can be applied within any context and for any set of problems.

Problem

Children with special health care needs and their families present a unique set of challenges to the standard health care delivery system. These challenges cannot be effectively addressed by a health care system geared to children with routine, acute or even fatal illnesses. The complexity of their needs requires them to obtain services from different agencies including the child's primary health care provider, medical specialist, school, county social services, advocacy organizations and other community groups.

Services for these children, especially in smaller communities and those communities with low-incidence conditions, can be fragmented and incomplete. Agencies tend to plan services for these children according to the disability and the current population (Perrin, J. M., 1985). Coordination and integration seem to be lacking; long range planning and systems change rarely occur. In this situation, children too often receive poorly coordinated or inadequate service—and families are caught in the middle.

Solution: A Community Network

What is a network? Networks or networking have been called by different names: interagency collaboration, coordination or team building. A network is the integration of existing resources which may include people, organizations, information or institutions working toward a common goal. The process involves collaboration and coordination in order to overcome turf guarding and competition. Another way to put it is, networking is whatever works: it can be informal or formal, overt or covert, ongoing or ad hoc.

Anyone can initiate a community support network. Networking/interagency collaboration/team building are not new concepts; they have been utilized to plan and deliver services in the health, education, social service and voluntary sectors. Pathfinder took this familiar concept and developed a unique model for a specific population: children with chronic illness or disability.

Pathfinder Community Network

This model is based on four key assumptions:

- *Children with chronic health conditions and their families face a common set of problems, regardless of the specific condition or disability.* Pathfinder believes that community service planning and delivery for children with chronic health conditions can occur if this population is perceived to have a common set of concerns, regardless of the specific condition or disability. Those concerns could include: public education, day care, school health services, transportation, parent support, information networks or respite care.
- *Services for these children and their families can be improved by enhancing cooperation among existing health, school and community programs, rather than creating new programs.* The population, which if identified by disability, seems very small. Seeing the children in larger groups makes the planning effort seem more workable. The community can then enhance the current service system to accommodate these special needs.
- *Community network building can be best facilitated if the network is begun at the community level.* Path-

finder was, and still is, committed to the belief that any community-based service works best if initiated and maintained informally at the community level. The "formal informality" of the local structure is a positive for long range efficacy of the model.

- *Community network building for these children and their families will be most effective if parents are involved in network planning and service development.* Parents are the key to the Pathfinder community network model. Although it was often difficult to solicit and maintain parent participation, their input was essential in both needs identification and systems planning.

The community network model is firmly based on the belief that flexibility is essential and that each community will develop a unique system to network services. The key is the development of a common commitment to the population and a willingness to try something new.

Phase One: Formulation Of The Local Task Force

Development of a community network is a structured, consecutive process. Working relationships must be developed among the parties involved and these relationships must be based on mutual respect and understanding. Ultimately, the formation of the local task force is catalyzed by the perception of common problems and a shared need to find solutions to those problems. Although network development may be supported by many agencies and individuals, a lead agency should be identified during phase one. The agency will provide accountability and structure for the work to continue.

An initial meeting should be called to bring key participants together. The purpose of this meeting is to help key participants become acquainted and familiarize themselves with other programs and services, to introduce the concept of community network development and to identify common problems. The key points to consider in planning this initial meeting are: Who should be invited? By whom should the invitation be extended? How and where should the meeting be conducted?

Next, begin the formation of the network by inviting service providers and parents to take part in meetings to identify unmet needs, resources and strategies for change. This begins the networking process and creates interest in both the identified problems and their solutions.

The role of leadership in this process is critical. The main function of leadership in a community network task force is to ensure that the tasks necessary to plan and carry out the group's goals are accomplished. This leadership responsibility may be undertaken by one individual or shared by several members.

Team members usually become more involved and committed to the work of the group when leadership functions are shared by the leader with group members. An Executive Committee, composed of the task force chairperson(s) and subcommittee chairpersons, can function as a governing board for the Task Force.

In setting up a new network, communities may want to consider bringing in a consultant. Pathfinder structured the development of the community networks around an outside facilitator. An outside facilitator can be a valuable asset in providing important feedback to the group and objectively critiquing activities and ideas. This person can be instrumental in bringing the initial group together, coordinating the needs assessment and structuring the action plan. Communities and the outside facilitator, however, must work at building leadership within the community so that the network can be maintained at the community level.

Phase Two: Community Needs Assessment

In order to determine the needs and resources for children with chronic health conditions and their families, the task force must agree on the target population and the geographic area (community).

Definition of Community

A "community" can be defined in many ways. Each professional organization has different geographical boundaries in which it delivers services. Education might have a city-wide school district, public health and social services, a county-wide population, and a voluntary organization, a multi-county constituency. Each local task force must agree upon a common area for its functioning. In its demonstration projects, Pathfinder defines the community as the geographic area in which FAMILIES receive services, i.e., their health care provider, school, shopping and employment. This allows flexible boundaries which cross traditional catchment areas and reduces turf-guarding among the professionals involved.

Target Population

A definition of the target population also needs to be mutually agreed upon by task force participants. Pathfinder developed the following definition for use in the local demonstration projects in Minnesota and Wisconsin:

A chronic health condition is defined as an illness or disability which necessitates that a child, aged 0-21 years, receive individually planned services for an extended time.

Assessment of Needs and Resources

Once the target population and the community have been defined, the first activity of the task force should be to conduct a community assessment of current resources and needs. The format which was used by Pathfinder and developed with the assistance of evaluation consultants is a *key informant approach* which uses a questionnaire to assess current perceptions of resource availability, resource quality and prioritization of needed changes.

The questionnaire used by Pathfinder was adapted from *Community Workbook for Collaborative Services to Preschool Handicapped Children* (Magrab, P., Kuzak, E., and Green, L., 1981) by the American Association of University Affiliated Programs.

Phase Three: Development and Implementation of the Action Plan

The community needs assessment will provide the Task Force with a list of needs and resources. The Task Force can then set goals and priorities for action. Planning strategies to accomplish these goals is the next step. Tasks for carrying out the strategies should be clearly defined and assigned to subcommittees composed of persons who have a particular interest or expertise in an issue.

Network Development Strategies

The following are examples of various strategies used by the Pathfinder demonstration projects in Minnesota and Wisconsin. These strategies include:

- **Interagency Collaboration**

Working relationships based on understanding and mutual respect are the basis of a successful network. Issues of territoriality, responsibility, competition and costs are very real and need to be addressed. Pathfinder demonstration project interagency collaboration was based on informal linkages between persons/positions rather than agencies. Cooperative agreements were not developed; this allowed Pathfinder network activities to be viewed as an in-

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formal structure which did not add a new agency to the local mix.

Example:

In one of the southern Minnesota communities, public health nurses (supplying school nurse activities for local school district), the district special education coordinator, and interested parents worked together to design a school nurse schedule, a clarification of the school nurse role, and a protocol for management of the student with diabetes.

• Parent Group Development

A parent support group or parent advocacy group may be part of a community network effort. It may be one solution to an area where parents are seeking mutual support or are advocating for services.

Example:

Parents of children with diabetes and the social services director at the local hospital formed a support group in one of the Pathfinder demonstration projects. The addition of the health professional to the group increased their ability to network with other support groups, provided free meeting space and access to hospital resources, and increased the group's ability to recruit new members.

• Educational Programs

A workshop geared toward health professionals, school personnel, community agency staff and parents is a useful networking tool. Workshops bring people together to share information and ideas. For these reasons, a workshop is also a good way to initiate a network. It can provide an atmosphere for collaboration toward a common goal and a forum to carry it out.

Example:

Each of the demonstration communities sponsored educational workshops for professionals and parents on issues for families of children with chronic health conditions and the professionals that serve them. The workshops brought together those who were participating in the network demonstration project with other parents and professionals in the region. It also proved to be an effective way to solidify and advertise Pathfinder Task Force activities.

• Resource Development

Collaborative efforts between agencies can produce valuable resources for children with chronic health conditions, their families and the professionals that serve them. The specific resource(s) will depend on the identified need and the resources of the cooperating agencies. With in-kind contributions from individuals/agencies working on the development of the resource, a quality product can be developed with limited funding.

Example:

Members of the Minnesota Pathfinder project developed a two-county parent resource brochure. The brochure featured health, education, social service, voluntary agency and parent resources in an easy-to-read format. Funding to print the manual was contributed by a local service organization.

Phase Four: Evaluation of the Network

An evaluation of the community network process is essential to obtain information on how well the local network functions and whether the group activities have made any impact on children with chronic health conditions. Pathfinder contracted with an outside consultant to independently evaluate community network model development in each of the demonstration projects. Whatever method you choose, focus on three features:

- The *process* of developing and implementing the model. Look at the cooperative energy of the participants, task force leadership and the role of the facilitator.
- The *results*, focusing on what has been accomplished by the task force; and
- The *impact* of the network model on the population of children with chronic health conditions, their families and the community.

The evaluation demonstrated that the local Pathfinder task force had become a "presence" in each community. Task force members felt that Pathfinder activities had been a valuable addition to the community. More importantly, each local group made the decision to continue beyond the funding period of the Pathfinder grant. Each had become a self-sustaining entity in their community structure.

Conclusions

The development of a community network to improve services for children with chronic health conditions and their families takes planning, commitment, enthusiasm and interest. The key ingredients for the development of a successful network are:

- cooperative working relationships between individuals and agencies;
- a formal needs identification process;
- leadership development in the task force and its subcommittees;
- realistic funding for projects to meet the identified needs; and
- clear and open communication.

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Rural administrators put a great deal of time and ingenuity into the effort to recruit and retain qualified personnel. Their strategies range from "Home Growing" to telethons.

Recruiting and Retaining Special Educators in Rural Areas: Strategies from the Field

by Judy Smith-Davis
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Rural and remote districts have long reported difficulties in recruiting special education teachers and other personnel. In addition to experiencing the national shortage of teachers in some disciplines, rural districts are often hampered by their distances from population centers, their sparse populations (which reduce the numbers of local people in the reserve pool), potential applicants' lack of knowledge about or desire to move to rural areas, lower salary levels (in some cases), and other factors (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Handicaps, 1983). Turnover is also high in rural areas. Helge (1984) estimated a 30-50 percent attrition rate in rural areas, and Ludlow (1985) reported 90 percent turnover rate every three years in the Appalachia school districts he studied. "Teachers in remote schools typically follow one of two patterns. Some stay for many years or for a lifelong career; others stay for one or two years and then depart" (Scott, 1984, p. 3).

Rural superintendents and other administrators put a great deal of time and ingenuity into the effort to find and keep good teachers. Some of their ideas are described here, as reported through the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education (Cohen, Barnett, and Jessee, 1989) and other sources.

In Kansas, the High Plains Educational Cooperative combines human-interest recruitment efforts with opportunities for training to attract people who will thrive in rural Kansas. These efforts are focused particularly on recruitment of special educators and feature "Home-Grown Training," by local teacher trainers to develop a "Home Grown Product" (certified local personnel with local relationships). Joining High Plains in this program are the Southwest Kansas Area Cooperative, Liberal Public Schools, Garden City Public Schools, Fort Hays State University, and Panhandle University. Advanced degree course work is provided at rural sites, with practicum experiences in local summer programs. Skills acquired during training are supported by the unique background knowledge of the rural setting possessed by the "Home-Grown Specialist." These training opportunities, the realities of rural special education, and human values are emphasized in the High Plains recruitment literature (Cohen, Barnett, and Jessee, 1989).

The Pinal County (Arizona) Special Education School retains good personnel by stressing an attitude of liberating them to function at their best and most autonomous levels, providing needed resources, and offering opportunities for professional development and advancement. The school's reputation for high quality programming and success with students who have moderate to severe disabilities also contributes to its low turnover rate and success in recruiting outstanding educators. In addition to a $4,000 per year recruitment advertising budget, the school sends its teachers to the Council for Exceptional Children's Convention each year, where they act as recruiters (Cohen, Barnett, and Jessee, 1989).

Maine's Collegial Support Network for Rural Special Educators was organized in 1986 to reduce the rate of attrition among special educators. Nine regional support groups have been formed, each with its own coordinator, and regional teacher academies and peer support and problem-solving meetings are in progress. Sponsored by the Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services, this network should lead to reduced feelings of isolation among rural special educators, as well as mutual support, exchange of information, and sharing of teaching strategies (American Council on Rural Special Education, 1988).

North Carolina's statewide recruitment efforts center on 341 outstanding teachers (one from each high school in the state, urban and rural), who are appointed to serve as teacher recruiters for their schools and districts, with stipends of $300. In addition, eight regional Teachers of the Year are given release time to serve as Regional Teacher Recruiters for one year, working directly with the Teacher Recruitment Office of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. These regional leaders assist recruiters in their regions, identify good candidates for teaching careers, disseminate information on financial aid, visit junior high and middle schools to encourage students to consider teaching careers, work with business and civic groups on ways to make teaching more rewarding, and work with higher education institutions to enhance their recruitment efforts. North Carolina also has a state scholarship program and has developed a comprehensive campaign for marketing teaching careers (Cohen, Barnett, and Jessee, 1989).

In New England, the Northeast Common Market Project serves as an example of cooperation that might be achieved by other contiguous groups of states. Participants are Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont, and these states are exploring ways to increase the supply of educational personnel and considering the establishment of regional certification (Cohen, Barnett, and Jessee, 1989).

Career ladders for aides are extremely useful, because they tend to develop local people who will remain in the rural area. A number of programs have emerged to give paraprofessionals the training necessary to become teachers.

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among them the cooperative program between the State University College at Buffalo and local schools. The Buffalo program is particularly concerned with enrolling aides from ethnic minority groups, because of the alarming decline in minority representation in the teaching force. The program is designed to meet the non-traditional needs of aides who are seeking the development that will lead them into professional positions (Cohen, Barnett, and Jessee, 1989).

Among all efforts to recruit and retain qualified personnel, two stand out:

- Induction or mentorship programs for new teachers (as a retention practice); and
- The assignment, training, and nurturing of peer tutors, with encouragement and stimulation to consider teaching when they prepare for careers.

A striking percentage of personnel already in special education report that early positive experiences with individuals who have handicaps was an influence on their career choices (Smith-Davis and Cohen, 1988). Extended efforts to provide such experiences to young people is one way to increase their interest in preparing for special education careers. Peer tutoring not only gives students positive experiences, but it also multiplies instructional resources available to students with special needs. The peer tutoring experience is enriched if training, incentives, and collegial encouragement are provided, as has been demonstrated in Oregon, where the University of Oregon sponsored a conference for high school peer tutors in conjunction with a statewide special education conference. This 1985 conference was attended by 140 students representing 21 high schools in Oregon, with support from the Oregon Department of Education. "The purposes were to develop the roles, skills, and attitudes of non-disabled tutors, relative to their roles as friends, trainers, and advocates; to develop a system of reinforcers to help teachers recruit and maintain high-quality tutors; and to provide career and professional development opportunities to tutors" (Cohen, Barnett, and Jessee, 1989).

Because a disproportionate number of teachers leave the field within the first five years of their careers (Bogenschild, Lauritzen, and Metzke, 1988) the support offered by induction programs is thought to be a substantial measure for retaining personnel. Typically, induction programs provide first-year teachers with advice and consultation by experienced mentors in their school buildings and usually include continued training and periodic evaluation of performance, with assistance where improvement is necessary; in some cases, higher education faculty members cooperate with the school to provide mentorship and supervision (Smith-Davis and Cohen, 1988). Induction or mentorship programs are frequently operated at the district level, although states such as Utah and New Mexico are initiating statewide teacher induction initiatives.

Finally, among other useful recruitment and retention ideas being implemented in various states and districts are the following (Smith-Davis and Cohen, 1988):

- Telethons are used in some communities to recruit teachers and volunteers. In addition to informational segments, call-ins are encouraged from interested viewers.
- Through Future Teachers of America and Student CEC organizations, it is possible to identify and encourage capable students early in high school and to provide them with encouragement, incentives, and career information.
- Multi-district recruitment fairs can feature interviews, videos, displays, performances, and printed information on open positions, benefits, and community factors.
- Many teachers who leave the profession eventually return. The educational access and public access channels of local cable television systems are untapped resources for displaying career information and job openings to this reserve pool in the community.
- In some areas, the schools, higher education, local businesses, and citizens have formed alliances to address teacher recruitment and retention. The incentive package may include discounts and free services or products from local businesses; recognition programs with bonus awards contributed locally; professional development opportunities; mentorships; adjunct faculty status; and other elements that increase the reward value and status of teaching in the community.
- There are growing numbers of state-sponsored tuition grants, student loans, stipends, and scholarships for persons entering training in high-demand teaching fields.
- Sometimes supplemental salary increments are added for intensive or extra duty by teachers. Such increments might be supported by a local educational foundation, such as has been established in some communities, or by a corporate endowment. Salary supplements may be useful, not only for attracting personnel, but also for stimulating existing personnel to retrain for shortage areas.
- Community groups and organizations can do much to make teachers feel appreciated, through recognition programs, awards, volunteer activities, and other forms of participation with teachers in the schools.
- The printed recruitment materials from some state offices (notably North Carolina's) feature brochures that describe the minority population in the state, the careers of minority individuals in education, and the opportunities and needs for persons from minority backgrounds in education. These materials value the minority individual and show that the state is a place where persons from minority groups will feel a sense of belonging.
- Some districts have a planned program whereby teachers may rotate among specialties. For example, after teaching for two to three years in behavior disorders, a teacher might have the option of spending a year in the general education classroom or electing some other position in the public schools for a year, before returning to special education. This practice not only expands the insights of teachers but is also thought to reduce burnout.
- In dealing with personnel shortages, districts may use extended day, extended week, or extended year programs to serve more students with existing personnel. Increased deployment of paraprofessionals helps extended programs succeed.
- Some districts use retired teachers as part-time volunteers or paid staff members to engage in team teaching or perform other duties.
- Some higher education institutions send student teachers to rural and remote areas to serve as paraprofessionals and substitutes. In these roles, trainees are given responsibilities that tend to integrate them into the community and school system. This practice appears to work particularly well if student teachers serve in pairs or teams in the same rural area.

Conclusion

Rural and remote districts deal daily with the intertwined issues of quality (of instruction, programs, curricula) and quantity (of resources and personnel). These issues often make it difficult to commit to move beyond the compliance level and invest in enhancing the quality of education at the building level. Once a rural district decides to go for quality, however, it usually finds that its recruitment needs are greater than they were before. By the same token, once a rural district or school becomes locally, regionally, or nationally *famous* for the quality of its educational programs, recruitment becomes easier. Good teachers like to be associated with good schools and school systems.

Good rural and remote schools could become laboratories for the preparation of master teachers (which, in a very limited and local sense, they are now). The skills of the successful multi-grade teacher could be examples in the training of all teachers. The small rural school could become the formative experience in many teachers' lives—a proving ground and a springboard. Thus, the small rural school could become excellent in ways that would resolve its recruitment difficulties, while improving education for students and teachers alike.

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A consulting teacher approach to educational programs for gifted students can offer enrichment opportunities to a broad range of the student population even as it provides the alternative learning environments very able students need in order to develop their potential.

An Integrative Model for Educating Very Able Students In Rural School Districts

by Peggy Dettmer
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Appropriate, effective education for very able students has been commanding increased public interest and legislative action during the past two decades. However, not enough information has been made available to guide educators in rural, isolated, and small school districts in serving the learning needs of their highly capable students. This is unfortunate, because two-thirds of our nation's school districts have fewer than 2,500 students enrolled (Spicker, Southern, and Davis, 1987) and can be expected to identify no more than 125 students for gifted programs. Furthermore, each and every state has a number of rural school districts and could benefit from practical, realistic approaches to serving their students who have high learning potential.

Very able students are present in economically disadvantaged as well as advantaged communities. They do exist across all cultural and ethnic groups, and in both rural and urban areas. Their numbers include both male and female students and occasional handicapping conditions such as physical impairment, learning disability, or emotional disturbance. It is virtually certain that any school with a heterogeneous student population of even a few dozen students will contain some who are capable of performing well beyond the limits imposed upon them by their school's conventional programs.

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Educational Needs of Very Able Students

Students who need educational services beyond the basic curriculum and grade-level grouping are portrayed by a variety of labels, including gifted, intellectually superior, academically talented, high-performance students, and other descriptive terms. Regardless of the label selected, such students often perform at two to four, and sometimes as many as eight, grade levels beyond their age peers in school-based tasks. They have the ability to learn rapidly and easily. They know much about things which their age peers and sometimes the adults around them do not know. They tend to prefer difficult, complex subjects and thrive on intellectual challenge. Most are involved in a wide array of interests and activities.

These characteristics signify learning needs which have profound implications for school curriculum. It might be more honest and realistic to describe the very able in school as curriculum-disabled students who are at risk within the normal structure of a conventional school system (Dettmer, 1988). Some describe them as children-in-conflict (Davis and Bull, 1988) when penalized by typical school practices of age-grading, lock-step curriculum, and ordinary levels of intellectual activity.

Risk, disability, and conflict do occur for students when their learning potential cannot be nurtured in challenging school environments. The general classroom programs that are designed for the mainstream student population are not likely to provide *acceleration* of content and grade level placement that challenges them to greater heights of performance, *enrichment* of subject matter that allows them to delve, inquire, and produce, or the *personalized learning* options that allow them to demonstrate and develop their potential. Such students are in their own way as deprived as the most bitterly impoverished child of the ghetto (Fincher, 1976).

Effects of Current Educational Trends Upon High-Ability Students

Many of the current educational movements do not bode well for very able students. Minimum competency goals, mastery learning models, behavioral objectives procedures, and even cooperative learning strategies that are not adjusted for wide ranges of student differences, limit the more capable learners. Because of these concerns, some schools strive to create more appropriate learning environments for students who can be accelerated, enriched, and guided beyond minimum essentials of the curriculum. Schools' motives for doing so many be pragmatic, if not outright self-serving—for example, aiming to avoid student flight to private schools and a subsequent loss of enrollment and funding. Other motives focus upon the future, toward development of outstanding student abilities that can be expected to help society and advance civilization.

All in all, the most promising concept of an enhanced learning program for the very able is that which creates school-wide learning environments of accelerated movement through material, enrichment of curriculum, and personalized instruction for any and all who can succeed with them. Good programs for very able students cannot exist

very long in subpar schools (Renzulli, 1987), and by the same token, schools which fail to challenge their more competent students are not likely to rise above mediocrity in serving any of their students.

Implementing school programs and curricula that meet the needs of all students is a monumental task for any school district, whether urban or rural, large or small, advantaged or poor. However, rural, isolated, and small school districts face particular challenges in providing appropriate learning environments for high-ability students. The most educationally disadvantaged youth in American schools may well be gifted students in rural communities (Milne, 1976).

Problems and Possibilities in Rural School Districts

Several characteristics of rural areas become problematic when learning programs for very able students are addressed. Wide expanses of geographic space result in too much distance between learning centers. Too few students are available for many kinds of grouping arrangements. Excessive time is required for students to reach resource sites or for teachers to travel among schools. Not enough teachers are available for offering all the courses that are needed to serve student interests and talents. Often a very limited teaching staff must perform multiple teaching assignments. Furthermore, communities tend to be conservative, close-knit, and resistant to singling out any student for special programs. In poor rural areas, cultural values and outlooks may compete with academic expectations of school staff (Howley, Pendarvis, and Howley, 1988), and some parents have strong traditional values that conflict with the goals of the school program (Howley and Howley, 1988).

Helge and colleagues (1984) have identified several problems facing special services personnel in rural areas. These problems include: funding inadequacies, need for staff development in special education, attitudes of communities and school personnel toward special education, factors of geographic terrain and weather, and limited facilities and resources.

On the other, more positive hand, rural areas abound in opportunities and commitments which can be integral in nurturing excellent education. Class sizes usually are much smaller, producing more opportunity for interaction among teachers and students. More students participate in a greater number and variety of curricular and extracurricular activities. Parents usually are more accessible, and more involved in school life. School administrators, teachers, students, and parents know and interact with each other more frequently and productively. Also, students in rural areas tend to be open to a range of experiences and free from pseudo-sophistication, with inclinations toward creativity and resourcefulness (Samples, 1987).

Because programming for the very able in rural and isolated schools must focus on smaller numbers of students and usually must overcome paucity of staff, it is vital that regular classroom teachers become involved in differentiating curriculum and providing learning options and alternatives for their students. Many strategies can be employed that not only will enhance curriculum for the gifted few, but will have a positive ripple effect upon the total school program for all students.

Consulting Teacher Role within an Integrative Approach

In order for classroom teachers and special services teachers to provide effective learning environments for very able students, there must be a concerted effort to coordinate regular and special school programs. The coordination process requires communication and cooperation by teachers, administrators, and support staff, with respect for uniqueness among students, teachers, and the educational settings. A consulting teacher approach to programming for students with special needs is an effective catalyst for collaborative efforts among teachers, administrators, parents, and other community members.

Consultation teachers share information and ideas, orchestrate efforts of all who are involved, and develop courses of action for meeting student needs. The consulting teacher approach is capturing the interest of many educators as an instrument for providing qualitatively differentiated education not only to highly able students, but to a wide range of the student population that would benefit from acceleration, enrichment, and personalized curriculum planning.

The gifted program teacher who functions in a collaborative consultation role will work with a team of teachers, principals, counselors, media specialists, parents, mentors, and community leaders to plan, implement, and monitor arrangements that challenge very able students. A concomitant goal should be to insure that the special program will create a multiplier effect for all students throughout the school system.

EXPRO, An Integrated Model for Very Able Rural Students

A consulting teacher approach is used by the Dayton School District in the state of Washington to serve the educational needs of highly capable students while increasing learning opportunities for all students. The consulting teacher is responsible for lesson planning and organization, and community volunteers are an integral part of the program. A parent support group provides new avenues for funding and serves as a vehicle for educating the community about the importance of individualized instruction for highly capable students. By utilizing the unique characteristics of the community, the program provides challenging activities for up to twenty percent of the school population and delivers enriching activities to the entire student body of the district's schools.

Description of the EXPRO Program Community

Dayton, a community of three thousand residents, is the heart of small, sparsely populated Columbia County in southeastern Washington. Its fully accredited elementary school, junior high school, and high school serve about 700 students. The student/teacher ratio in the Dayton district is 25 to 1. About 25 percent of the school population is eligible for the free lunch program. An encouraging 99 percent of students graduate from eighth grade, and 94 percent graduate from high school. Approximately 75 percent of the graduate pursue some form of higher education.

Several colleges and universities are within reasonable driving distance and encourage enrollment by very able students, but arranging the transportation for a 30–130 mile drive to a campus is not practical. Although Walla Walla Community College offers courses for college credit to high school students, the 45-minute trip to and from campus would cause participants to miss four high school class periods while attending only two college courses.

One of Dayton's biggest assets is its preponderance of talented people. Many of the young, college-educated workers and retired professionals are willing to serve as mentors for gifted children. They constitute an invaluable resource for the program.

Development of the EXPRO Program

Washington state's education law allows school districts to establish and operate programs for highly capable

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students, but funding for the programs is based on one percent of the student population of a district. Thus, for a rural school district the size of Dayton, the state would provide funding for only seven students at an approximate rate of $350, or a total of $2,450 for the entire program. Yearly application must be made for the money, and districts receiving funds are subject to audit by the Superintendent of Public Instruction office.

The limited state funding makes it advantageous for rural districts to work cooperatively in providing programs for their highly capable students. Dayton initially used this method of service, pooling funding with several other small districts and affiliating with the local Educational Service District (ESD). The ESD hired a specialist in education of the gifted, and began to develop a program for participating rural districts. The plan developed by the specialist provided for identification of gifted students in each school and bimonthly meetings with them in a pull-out model.

After two years of participation in the ESD program model, and with urging from local parents, the Dayton school district withdrew its state funds for the gifted program for the ESD for several reasons. Identification of eligible participants had taken four to five months. Also, students had met with the visiting instructor for a maximum of only two times every nine weeks, and had not had time to establish rapport with the visiting instructor.

The district, at the continued urging of interested parents, hired a specialist with state and local monies. The limited funding allowed for only 2/7 teacher time (three afternoons per week) for the entire K-12 program. This restricted time frame encouraged the instructor, parents, and school district to work cooperatively and creatively toward a goal of having a successful program for gifted students that also could provide enrichment for the entire school. The program was named EXPRO, from the Latin motto "*Ex portu proficisci* audeamus," or "We dare to set out from the harbor."

EXPRO Program Design

Two keys to the program design were recognized as vital for success. First, possibilities had to be explored without regard for program size or cost, and second, activities must reach the entire student body rather than focus upon a select group of students. These guidelines molded the base for the program and led to its acceptance in the district and community.

Parents, teachers, and administrators met with the specialist to work cooperatively in identifying the needs of highly capable students. This group believed that a program should be initiated for students especially gifted in a specific subject area such as art, mathematics, or language arts, as well as for students identified as gifted in many academic subjects. To meet this variety of needs, the group developed a volunteer instructor program using talented community members to help provide challenging activities for talented students.

The volunteer instructors donated one to three hours per week for carrying out lessons developed by the district specialist for highly capable students. These volunteer instructors represented a variety of backgrounds and shared a love for helping interested students master challenging material. Their dedication was demonstrated by careful preparation for class, consistent attendance, and willingness to find substitute volunteers to teach if needed.

Volunteers were found by having the original planning group brainstorm for names of people in the area with special talents ranging from oil painting to public speaking. The identified individuals then were contacted by the specialist to determine their interest in working with talented youngsters. The overwhelmingly positive response led to specific curriculum development and a matching of student needs with volunteer talents.

The following courses were developed for grades 3-8: Problem-solving, reading inquiry, science wizards, art, advanced junior high and high school English, and overall achievement. These classes use a pull-out model and meet for one to three hours weekly. Course content is developed according to student need and volunteer talent. A learning contract signed by the participating student, volunteer, instructor, classroom teacher, and parents outlines the responsibilities of each participant in EXPRO. The contract stipulates that attendance for a particular number of class meetings is required before the student can leave, or be asked to leave, the class. This alleviates possible problems experienced by either students or volunteers in adjusting to a new situation.

The second key to success of the EXPRO program is that of reaching the entire student body with challenging and interesting activities. Volunteers are instrumental in finding solutions to this need. Three types of programs that have been developed are academic competitions, cultural enrichment performances, and student peer-teaching.

Two academic competitions were expanded and managed by community volunteers under the guidance of the school administration and the EXPRO specialist—a written spelling bee and a declamation contest. Other rural schools are invited to both of these competitions, with all interested students encouraged to participate. EXPRO volunteers pronounce words and help develop spelling lists for the spelling bee. Many community members assist students as coaches in the declamation contest, which is judged by local college speech students and their professor.

EXPRO students are encouraged to meet students from other schools who have similar interests by attending the Mid-Columbia and Eastern Washington University Young Writer's conferences. Students who participate in the EXPRO art classes display their works in local stores and regional art show competitions.

A science discovery van from the Pacific Science Center and performers from music and literary fields further enhance the academic program of all students in the district. Funding for the events comes from local donations, the Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO), and grant monies. Organization of each performance is handled by EXPRO volunteers.

Peer-teaching by students involved in the overall EXPRO program has been very popular with both teachers and students. EXPRO students attend the Science Champions Program sponsored by the Pacific Science Center. The participants have a variety of hands-on science experiences and receive materials to take back for sharing with other students. The Dayton Science Champions write lesson plans in their pull-out special classes, develop oral speaking skills, and organize materials to demonstrate science experiments in all classrooms within their schools. The program has become so popular that the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) invited the Dayton Science Champions team to demonstrate at the recent NSTA convention in Seattle.

The EXPRO program has flourished during its first three years. Classes now included Advanced Placement English for high school juniors and seniors, and whole-group lessons in math and science for grades K-2. As it enters its fourth year, the EXPRO program will manage a new computer lab for the elementary school and is expanding into a double-size room that will be called the EXPRO Opportunity

Center. The specialist position has been expanded to half-time, with a part-time assistant, but unpaid volunteers remain an essential part of the program as it develops to meet the needs of the rural district.

Volunteers often comment that they receive more benefits from the program than the students do. Without question, both groups find excitement and reward in working with each other to master difficult activities and to develop a thirst for information that they will continue to nourish through the EXPRO program.

Conclusion

Effective education that nurtures the potential of very able learners must surmount many difficulties in rural, isolated, and small school districts. The hurdles include budget restrictions, too few students, wide expanses of space, distance from resource people and places, conservative attitudes, small staff size that limits course offerings and burdens teachers with multiple assignments, and resistance of students toward standing out in achievement or performance.

On the other hand, such schools offer many benefits and it is upon these strengths that excellent education can be built. Smaller class sizes, greater involvement by families in school activities, as well as students who are in tune with the natural environment will encourage high levels of interest and productivity.

A school-wide approach to accelerated content, enrichment activities, and personalized instruction can create positive ripple effects within the learning environment for many students. Approaches utilizing the consulting teacher model, such as the EXPRO program in Dayton, Washington, have been developed to provide a solid, locally-based program of curriculum differentiation for very able students in rural and small school districts. These approaches serve the particular learning needs of very able students and, while doing so, also provide important benefits to a wide range of the student population throughout the school district.

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The unique characteristics of rural schools and teachers create advantages as well as barriers to the indirect service delivery model of consulting.

Rural Special Education Teachers as Consultants: Roles and Responsibilities

by Linda P. Thurston and Ilene Kimsey
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Most special educators provide consulting services to general educators, administrators, and parents as part of their roles. This is in addition to their roles as direct service providers for children with special needs. West and Brown (1987) reported that 26 of the 35 states who responded to a survey sent to each state Department of Education specified that consulting was part of the special educator's role. Twenty reported the use of an indirect service model, with consultation being provided to the classroom teacher to assist with mainstreaming. States that listed specific competencies in consulting were Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, and Vermont.

The Consulting Model

The consulting role is described by the triadic service delivery model (Tharp and Wetzel, 1969) and is represented by a set of interactions between a special educator and a peer consultee (teacher, administrator, parent), through which a student indirectly benefits. Their interactions are collaborative, that is, equal levels of expertise are brought into the interaction. In this paper, consultation is defined as a:

> ". . . process based upon an equal relationship characterized by mutual trust and open communication, joint approaches to problem identification, the pooling of personal resources to identify and select strategies that will have some probability of solving the problem that has been identified, and shared responsibility in the implementation and evaluation of the program or strategy that has been initiated" (Brown, Wyne, Blackburn, and Powell, 1979, p.8).

The consultant model of service delivery to mildly-handicapped students is becoming increasingly popular because of advantages such as: it is cost effective; it provides more services to more children; it facilitates provision of instruction based on needs rather than categories, and; it facilitates appropriate and beneficial liaisons with other community agencies and with parents (Heron and Harris, 1987; Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, and Nevin, 1986). These issues make the consulting model extremely appropriate for rural areas. Common issues in rural special education such as cost of bussing children, use of multicategorical classrooms, paucity of special education professionals, and importance of community involvement also indicate the consulting model may be an effective approach to serving rural handicapped children. In addition, the consulting role in rural areas may be enhanced by such rural characteristics as informal communication systems and community involvement in schools.

Research on consulting, although far from unequivocal, has preliminarily demonstrated effectiveness in promoting mainstreaming and in providing instruction for exceptional children. Research on consulting also provides guidelines for effective training and practice of consulting skills, and for policy development in the area of service delivery. However, all too often, research and training in education omits reference to rural aspects, and it is vital that the current interest in special education consulting be sensitive to rural issues. A recent perusal of ERIC entries notes 387 entries in the area of consulting. Although one third of all children are educated in rural schools, only ten of these entries seemed to deal directly with rural issues in consulting. Investigation of urban/rural differences in the consulting role and in consulting practice must be prerequisite of reaping the benefits of consulting for rural handicapped students.

The consulting literature defines several factors which facilitate or inhibit the practice of consulting by special educators (Johnson, Pagach, and Hammitte, 1988). Lack of time to consult and insufficient support for consultants to develop consulting skills are two often-listed inhibiting factors. According to Idol-Maestas and Ritter (1985), time is the single most important barrier to consulting. West (1988) reviewed the literature and listed time, administrative support, teacher attitudes and resistance, promoting consultation, and consulting skills as the major barriers to effective consulting. If, as Sylvia Rosenfield (1988) points out, there is a relationship between consultation practice and the culture of the schools, knowledge about the culture or attributes of rural schools seems to indicate that consulting will be different for rural special educators than for their urban and suburban counterparts.

Rural Strengths and Barriers

Certainly rural and metropolitan schools have similarities and shared problems; however, rural schools and teachers have unique characteristics. Nachtigal (1982) suggests a variety of factors which he presents as continua which differentiate between rural and urban educational settings. For example, at the rural end of one continuum is "smaller/less density" while at the urban end is "larger/greater density." Several of Nachtigal's factors directly relate to consulting: "self-sufficiency" for rural as opposed to "leave problem to experts" in urban areas; "who said it" in rural areas compared to "what's said" in urban areas, "verbal, informal communication" in rural as opposed to "written

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memos" in urban settings; "nonbureaucratic" compared to "bureaucratic"; "generalists" compared to "specialists," and; "personal, tightly linked" communities as compared to the "impersonal, loosely coupled" communities of urban settings.

Helge (1983) lists issues which differentially affect rural and urban schools as they deliver services to handicapped children. Again, many of these are directly related to consulting. She suggests that in rural areas, cooperation is inherent as compared to "turfdom" problems in urban areas. There is also a personalized environment in rural areas compared to a depersonalized environment in urban areas, and community spirit is part of rural communities. Communication is person to person in rural areas compared to written communication in larger, more dense areas.

Each of these factors suggests the compatability of consulting as a service delivery model for exceptional children in rural areas. In addition, these characteristics of rural communities suggest specific consulting skills, roles, and responsibilities for rural special education teachers which may be different from those of their urban counterparts.

According to DeYoung (1987), rural teachers differ from their urban and suburban peers in a number of ways, including their perceptions of their teaching situations and the types of occupational incentives that keep them on the job. Teachers in rural areas are highly visible and thus may be more vulnerable to community pressure and criticism. Rural teachers are left much to themselves to look for solutions to problems and for ways of acquiring skills and training (Killian and Byrd, 1988), and personal and professional isolation is the most frequently cited disadvantage of rural schools (Massey and Crosby, 1983).

These unique characteristics of rural schools and teachers create advantages and barriers to the indirect service delivery model of consulting. Judging from the characteristics described by Nachtigal (1982), Helge (1983), and others, it might be assumed that advantages for special education consultants in rural areas would be: readily developed cohesion and identity; small staffs which facilitate setting common goals and reaching consensus; less hierarchial systems; increased teachers' awareness of community needs and resources, as well as teachers' demonstrations of self-reliance and ingenuity. Barriers to successful consulting might be: less professional interaction because of population sparsity and geographical distance; long travel distance and poor roads; more lesson preparations and extracurricular duties; and lack of acceptance of the handicapped.

In order to investigate the perceptions and experiences of rural special educators regarding their roles and responsibilities as consultants, 172 special education teachers in Kansas were involved in reporting their consulting activities and perceptions. Both urban and rural teachers were involved. For purposes of this study, the definition for rural of the National Rural Project (Helge, 1984) was used: less than 150 people per square mile or counties with less than 60 percent or more of the population living in communities no larger than 5,000. The standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) for urban as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau was the definition for urban.

Survey of Urban/Rural Consulting Roles and Responsibilities

Eighty-three special educators in Kansas recorded their consulting activities on formatted log sheets. Each teacher recorded at least one consulting episode per week for three months. Seventeen percent of these teachers were classified as urban and 42 percent as rural. In total, 600 consulting episodes were analyzed to assess rural/urban differences in: (1) focus of the request for help; (2) problem or issue discussed; (3) intervention planned or action of the consultant; and (4) the skills the consultants thought would have helped them be more effective consultants in each interaction. Table 1 lists the differences found in the logs. Similarities were noted in the locus of the request, or who requested the consulting, although the rural teachers had more requests from other teachers (consultee), principals, and others (mostly parents). The most common problems/issues discussed by rural consultants were child behavior, other (e.g., parents, resources, questions about special education), and mainstreaming. For urban teachers, the most common problems were child behavior, other, and Individual Education Plans (IEP's). The most prevalent interventions for rural teachers were developing a behavioral plan, exchanging information about the child/program, mutual problem solving, and listening to the consultee. The most common interventions in the urban logs were information exchange, behavioral plans, problem solving, and placement. Most of the rural teachers felt they needed no other consulting skills for the interactions they logged or they wanted better communication skills. Urban teachers rated communication skills first, and no skills second, with problem solving skills as third.

Table 1
Analysis of Urban and Rural Consulting Episodes
(N = 600)

	Rural		Urban
Locus of request			
1. Teachers	69%		60%
2. Self	15%		17%
3. Other	7%		4%
4. Principal	5%		1%
Problem/Issue			
1. Child Behavior	44%		50%
2. Other	21%		18%
3. Mainstreaming	20%		IEP–12%
Intervention/Action			
1. Behavior Plan	30%	Info Exchange	28%
2. Info Exchange	27%	Behavior Plan	24%
3. Problem Solving	10%	Problem Solving	7%
4. Listening	6%	Placement	7%
Skills Needed			
1. None	31%	Communication	28%
2. Communication	29%	None	19%
3. Working w/parent	5%	Problem Solving	12%
4. Assertiveness	4%		

Note: Percentages do not represent 100% because they represent the most prevalent responses in each area.

These data are based on self-report and also on self-selection of the consulting episodes to be logged, so they may be considered the best and most successful examples of consulting by both rural and urban special educators. These teachers showed similarity in locus of request, intervention planned, and skills needed, with some differences in problem addressed.

In addition to the analysis of the consulting logs, 98 Kansas special educators were surveyed about their consulting roles and responsibilities and an additional 90 were asked about the major barriers they faced as special education consultants. Of the 40 responses to 98 surveys which were mailed to teachers who had been part of a con-

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sulting training program at Kansas State University or the University of Kansas, 21 were rural, 12 were urban, and 7 were "small city." Data from the last category of respondents are not reported here.

Of the rural teachers, 76 percent were employed by a cooperative and 24 percent by a school district. Ten percent of the urban teachers worked for a cooperative and 90 percent for a school district. Only 44 percent of the rural teachers indicated their role as consultant was officially recognized by administration while 83 percent of the urban teachers reported their consultant role was formally recognized.

To discover who was receiving consulting services, the teachers were asked to describe a typical week of consulting. Both categories of teachers served individual teachers most frequently. The urban teachers also consulted frequently with support staff and the rural teachers had more student interaction and more consulting with principals about specific students than did the urban teachers.

When asked to list successful consulting practices, the activities they listed, according to frequency, were:

Rural	Urban
Active listening	Problem solving
Utilizing teachers as resources to one another	Team teacher meetings
Informal teacher meetings	Follow-up after consulting
Working as partner with general educator	Working as partner with general educator
Follow-up after consulting	Parent communication
Parent communication	Pre-assessment meetings
	Modification of IEP's

These teachers were also asked to list barriers to being a successful consultant and both urban and rural teachers ranked "too many other responsibilities" as the number one barrier. Table 2 lists the teachers' responses to the questions of barriers. Another group of 80 rural special educators responded to a questionnaire about persistent barriers to effective consultation. They also listed "too many other responsibilities" and "lack of time." The other three most frequent responses were "parents' and teachers' attitudes," "inadequate facilities," and the "lack of understanding of others about the special education role."

Table 2
Barriers to Effective Consulting

Rural	
Too many other responsibilities	60%
No time	35%
Lack of administration support	35%
Travel hardships	30%
Too much paperwork	25%
Urban	
Too many other responsibilities	82%
Too much paperwork	64%
Parents not interested	27%

When asked to indicate the advantages and disadvantages of serving as a special education consultant in their setting, all of the teachers noted the same advantage, "great/caring staff" and all noted the same disadvantage, "lack of time." Rural teachers added "open communication," "consulting skills," "being seen as a resource," and "teachers as resources to one another" as advantages of their role in rural settings. Urban teachers listed "seeing the gains students make," "supportive parents," and "good resources and resource materials" as their advantages. Rural disadvantages were travel time, scheduling problems, small town grapevine and working with so many teachers and administrators (because teachers served as itinerates). Urban teachers listed these disadvantages: teacher attitudes, scheduling problems, being a public relations person, and uninvolved parents. Thus the teachers listed one common advantage and two common disadvantages in their roles as consultants.

Finally, the teachers were asked to respond to a self-assessment instrument which listed 29 consulting competencies adapted from consulting studies (e.g., Friend, 1984; Idol and West, 1987). Of these 29 skills, the urban teachers rated themselves high on 14 of the skills and low on four skills, whereas, rural teachers rated themselves high on four of the skills and low on five skills. The urban teachers seemed to have more confidence in their skills and abilities than did the rural teachers.

Discussion

In summarizing these responses to questions about their roles and responsibilities as consultants, both urban and rural teachers conducted similar consulting activities, although rural teachers have less formal recognition of their consulting role. Although major barriers, advantages, and disadvantages were similar, rural teachers listed more and different barriers and disadvantages in their rural setting than those perceived by urban teachers. All these teachers' perceptions to some extent matched the barriers discussed in the consulting literature, and rural teachers' perceptions are congruent with the rural education literature discussed earlier. Finally, rural teachers seemed less confident in their skills as consultants than did their urban counterparts.

Much more investigation is needed to delineate urban/rural differences in consulting in special education settings. The teacher perceptions reported here seem to indicate that there are some aspects in which the consulting role of the special educator is different in rural settings as compared to urban settings. There seem to be some specific challenges rural teachers face as they consult with their peers, such as confidence in their own skills, acquisition of new skills, travel time, administrative support, attitudes of colleagues and parents, and promotion of the consulting role.

Although a thorough understanding of what works for consultants in rural schools is limited, we have a body of knowledge derived from the literature on rural schools, rural special education, and consulting which suggest that the consulting model is appropriate for providing services for handicapped children in rural areas. The literature also suggests that rural teachers, although they face a variety of challenges in this role, have many advantages in carrying out the consulting role. Rural teachers are autonomous and powerful agents in school change (Killian and Byrd, 1988). They seem to be creative and innovative problem solvers and they make the most of the "make do" mentality of rural schools (DeYoung, 1987). To maximize the effect of special education consulting in rural areas, the strengths of rural schools and rural teachers must be recognized and extended.

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There are many ways in which children and youth can become at-risk. This article presents a taxonomy of conditions that may contribute to students being "at risk" in rural areas.

At Risk in Rural America: Strategies for Educators

by Kay Sather Bull and Marta Garrett
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In many rural areas the concept of at-risk is not well defined or well developed. Among the reasons for this are: (1) lack of money, (2) few common victims, everyone is low-incidence, (3) some insularity, (4) less opportunity to acquire literature on the subject, and (5) multiple roles for the children (Barker and Gump, 1964), as well as, time absorbing roles for the adults.

In this article we will define the term at-risk, discuss how these conditions can affect education in rural schools, provide strategies (when these are available) to help these children and keep them in school, and propose a minimum general response that a rural school should make to its at-risk student population.

Defining At-Risk

Children and youth are at-risk when they are in danger of physical, psychological, emotional or educational damage, or when they are unlikely to develop appropriately because of preexisting conditions or the actions of others or themselves. This in the broadest sense, is the meaning of at-risk. Children can be placed at-risk at various times, by various persons and by various agencies. Therefore we will define at-risk as a generic term which relates to: (1) pre-existing conditions which hinder children's growth; (2) actions of others or themselves that adversely affect children and youth, or (3) conditions which develop as children and youth grow and mature which impede their development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and educational) and alter their legal status.

Pre-existing Conditions. Pre-existing conditions which affect children and put them at-risk include genetic problems (Down's syndrome); prenatal conditions caused by alcohol and/or drug addiction of the mother; prebirth and birth trauma (lack of oxygen during birth); post birth conditions in the first few weeks of life (PKU); conditions that relate to the environment into which the child is born (isolation from medical care); and some educational conditions. Some of these conditions are listed in Table 1. Most of these conditions are equally distributed across rural and urban populations.

Table 1 Pre-existing Conditions

Environmental
1. Parental addiction to drugs and/or alcohol
2. Economically disadvantaged
3. Birth order
4. Parental separation
5. Lack of prenatal care

Congenital Impairments
1. Down's syndrome
2. Blindness
3. Anencephaly
4. Convulsions

Prebirth/Birth Trauma
1. Anoxia
2. Brain damage

Educational
1. Acalculia
2. Alexia
3. Agnosia
4. Agraphia

Adverse Actions of Others. Events in this category include most of the adverse interventions in the natural development of the child which cause developmental, educational, psychological or physical harm. These events can be categorized into two areas—practices of omission and commission. Family members, parents, teachers, health and social service providers, judicial personnel, peers and others adults can be perpetuators of these practices. A partial listing is included in Table 2. Some examples of these events that are more likely to happen in rural areas include: (1) Physical abuse in the name of discipline. In many small communities it is still considered appropriate to beat a rebellious or undisciplined child or youth to obtain compliance to parental or teacher directions. (2) Discrimination

Table 2 Adverse Actions to Children by Others

Commission
1. Abuse—physical, emotional and sexual
2. Psychological maltreatment—rejection, isolation, terrorizing, etc.
3. Educational—refusal to allow attendance, lack of programs
4. Abuses attributed to religious beliefs
5. Discrimination—sex, religion, age, race
6. Victim of crimes

Omission
1. Abuse—neglect of physical, emotional, and educational needs
2. Lack of exposure to educational activities
3. Lack of appropriate education
4. Non-acceptance of education by parents or culture
5. Nutritional deficiencies

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against minorities or females (in some cultures) is more likely to be institutionalized in rural areas where there have been few confrontations which would raise community consciousness. (3) Educational neglect may be fostered by keeping children and youth out of school for long periods of time to help with work on farms or in seasonal industries. (4) Schools because of their small size and the diversity of the student body may fail to provide adequate educational opportunities for either gifted or educationally handicapped students. This is particularly true where the trained teacher who deals with the exceptionality is itinerant. These are a few of the problems of omission and commission in rural areas.

Conditions that Develop Among Children and Youth. Conditions that develop among children and youth which attract at-risk labels typically include diseases, some educational problems (e.g., dyslexia), changes in environment including physical, emotional and social (divorce of parents), physical changes (handicapping conditions, paraplegia), and psychological problems seemingly not related to self or others. A listing of some of these conditions is provided in Table 3. Some of these conditions which are more likely to happen in rural areas include: (1) seasonal employment for parents, which involves migratory work, causes sufficient disruption of the home to warrant an at-risk label; (2) judicial custody, for a rural child this usually means being far away from friends and family. Although the acts committed are similar and express the same problems as would be found with urban youth, the rural youth is removed from the rural milieu and placed, usually, in a more urban facility in which is essentially another culture. (3) Although diseases contracted by urban and rural youth are similar, access to treatment differs. There are fewer medical services available and they are farther away for most rural children and youth. (4) Young children in rural-remote areas are typically less educationally ready than their urban counter parts due to lack of exposure to school related activities and the availability of preschool. These are some of the developing conditions that can place a child at-risk.

Table 3 Development Conditions

Environmental Changes
1. Parental unemployment
2. Divorce/marital discord
3. Custody by the legal system
4. Trauma

Diseases
1. Veneral/AIDS
2. Allergies
3. Asthma
4. Diabetes
5. CNS disorders

Psychological Problems
1. Phobias
2. Psychosis
3. Depression
4. Attention deficit disorders

Educational Conditions
1. Developmentally slow
2. Not educationally ready

Socially Withdrawn/Unpopular

Self Problems of Children and Youth. This category includes both problems of commission and omission. It considers problems of participation in substance abuse and problems of avoidance related to the treatment of the problem. These problems can affect all areas of development (physical, educational, intellectual, emotional, social). A number of typical problems are listed in Table 4. This set of problems seems to distribute across both rural and urban populations equally.

Table 4 Self-Problems

Sexuality
1. Sexual identity
2. Promiscuity

Substance Abuse
1. Drugs
2. Alcohol
3. Inhalants

Eating Disorders
1. Bulimia
2. Anorexia Nervosa
3. Obesity
4. Nutritional deficiencies

Psychological Problems
1. Stress and anxiety
2. Fear of success
3. School phobia
4. Aggressive behavior

Self-destructive Behavior
1. Self-mutilation
2. Suicide

Educational Implications of Being At-Risk

Most of the categories of at-risk include educational risks for the child. For example students may become emotionally disturbed through abuse. They may be developmentally delayed due to lack of exposure to educationally related materials. They may not develop intellectual ability due to nutritional problems, drugs, birth trauma and so forth. They may drop out of school because of crime, drugs, pregnancy, frustration, or boredom. They may drop out because they feel unwanted, or because the chances for suc-

Table 5 Services Often Unavailable in Rural Communities

Medical
1. Adequate and accessible
2. Specialized for various handicaps
3. School nurses

Counseling
1. Psychological
2. Pregnancy—educational and medical
3. Parent groups
4. Support groups
5. In school

Educational
1. Special education—OT/PT, gifted
2. Programs in substance abuse, disease prevention, values clarification
3. Child find programs—early intervention

Social
1. Welfare case workers
2. Hotline—suicide, child abuse, substance abuse
3. Foster care

cess appear bleak. All of these conditions and more contribute to students at-risk.

Most of the forms of at-risk described are no more prevalent in rural areas than they are in urban areas. However, services for at-risk children and youth are often less available. This can adversely impact education. Some of the areas where community support/intervention services may be lacking are listed in Table 5. In each community educators should determine the availability of these services and assess the educational impact that their unavailability will have on the school population.

Strategies to Keep Youth in School

From an educational viewpoint, the examination of children at-risk deals with providing services to them which are appropriate so that they develop to their optimal level (Helge, 1988). To do this, children must remain in school. Therefore, what strategies should be employed to insure school attendance? Some strategies are provided in Table 6. These strategies are not meant to be all inclusive but rather to suggest some ways in which school districts have dealt with at-risk problems. All of the research cited is from rural districts but we believe that some strategies from urban districts are also applicable.

Table 6 Strategies to Keep Youth in School

Provide Counseling

1. Child abuse
2. Substance abuse
3. Family

Provide Educational Programs

1. Individualized instruction to meet differential needs
2. Positive self-concept development
3. Transition programs for handicapped high school students
4. Breakfast, lunch and snack programs
5. Home visit programs by teachers for at-risk students
6. Child final programs utilizing community volunteers
7. Sex/AIDS educational utilizing moral leaders (ministers, priests, rabbis, etc. . .)

For abused children family therapy is usually recommended, if the child remains in the home, or individual counseling if the child is removed from the home. Schools usually become involved only if the child is disturbed to the point of needing special education. Implementation of group counseling in the schools may help older children and youth realize that they have "community" with others in the school. This community helps the student to feel that school is a valuable place and frequently reduces the likelihood of dropping out. Specific rural programs are reported by Holmes (1987) and Morris and Kirkpatrick (1987).

The educationally different typically want to leave school because their needs are not being met. Slow learners or handicapped students whose problems are not recognized or not dealt with by general classroom teachers are frustrated by continued failure. These students predict no success for their school career and therefore opt to drop out. The bright child is bored in the undifferentiated classroom. S/he daydreams or makes trouble just to have something to do or slavishly conforms to the routine imposed by the teacher. Dropping out of school may be perceived as a viable solution to some gifted students. If challenging educational activities were provided, the lure of dropping out would fade. Until this occurs, gifted students will be at risk. Specific programs for working with rural students and teachers are reported by Bull and Land (1989), Landolt (1988) and Peters (1987).

The educationally underprivileged or handicapped need to be identified early. In rural areas this is best done through the use of local volunteers who meet with parents of young children and explain symptoms and available interventions. We need to find those who need help early so that interventions can start when the clients are very young. In remote rural areas it is unlikely that outsiders would be able to solicit nearly as much information about the development of young children as would known community members who could be trained to recognize potential at-risk factors. Specific programs to find children in rural areas are presented by Nelson and Rogers (1987) and Schlaht (1986).

Poor nutrition causes a variety of early problems in the development of children. Schools usually do not get involved with this unless they are also providing preschool services. Once children are in school their eating habits become important to teachers. Some of the problems with inattention in rural schools may be attributed to a long bus ride followed by three or more hours of instruction prior to lunch. Schools should, when possible, provide both breakfast and lunch programs for children regardless of their parents' income level. At the very least, snacks of peanut butter and crackers should be available in the morning. This may help many students to function better and may reduce their risk of failure and concomitantly the probability of their dropping out of school. A nutrition training and provision program for rural schools is discussed by Ford and Harris (1988).

When situations change at home children and youth become uncertain and fearful. In rural communities teachers should be able to be in contact with parents, to a greater degree than their urban counterparts. This will allow the teacher(s) to be aware of home problems that could affect the student. Teachers who know of problems can refer students to a counselor if necessary. Many rural districts form cooperatives when special service providers, such as counselors, are not available. In this way a school can have access to a counselor for one or two days per week for the payment of a partial salary. An application of this kind of program in a rural area is reported by Carlson (1987).

Rural communities, traditionally, are conservative and in many there are religiously based reactions to sex education and education about sexually transmitted diseases. Yet pregnancy, promiscuity, veneral disease and AIDs are all apparent in rural communities. Should the schools try to teach the children about these things? Of course, but it must be done in such a way that is acceptable to the community. Carter (1988) used rural churches as the vehicle for teaching about sexually transmitted diseases. Blaisdell (1988) also presents a similar innovative approach to dealing with sex education in rural schools. One strategy is to work with whichever groups believe that they have (or should have) control over morality in the community and make sure that they have the correct information to share.

Another area in which rural schools can work is the area of self-concept development. Children and youth who do not feel good about themselves are more likely to engage in self-destructive behavior which would place them at risk, e.g., withdrawal, substance abuse, delinquency, suicide and so forth. A variety of programs have been implemented to foster self-concept development in rural schools (e.g., Dawson, 1988). There are also specific programs to deal with psychological problems such as depression (Reynolds and Stark, 1987), the socially withdrawn/unpopular child

(Gresham and Evans, 1987), substance abuse (Forman and Neal, 1987; Nazario, 1988a), and delinquency (Kurtz and Lindsey, 1987; Nazario, 1988b). Many of these programs involve peer counseling and class activities which foster the redevelopment of positive self-concept.

A final strategy deals with handicapped students. Many of these students see little opportunity for or use in academic development as it is traditionally presented in high schools. A more effective strategy is to emphasize life skills development and to focus on strategies for job acquisitions. The more meaningful the experiences that are provided for the students, the more likely they are to stay in school and take advantage of these programs. In remote rural areas apprentice programs are the most likely approach; in less remote areas a transitional approach like the one described in Bull (1987) may also be appropriate.

Conclusion

There are many ways in which children and youth can become at-risk. They may be at-risk because of things that are done to them, or not done to them; or, because of things that they have done to themselves, because of conditions that develop, or because of pre-existing conditions. All of these varieties of at-risk have educational implications which imply that services different from those available to non-affected students must be provided.

Many areas within the at-risk definition are adequately dealt with by schools which are in compliance with PL 94-142. Therefore these areas have not been specifically addressed. Other areas such as prenatal care and eating disorders are not traditionally seen as school responsibilities even though they impact children.

The strategies which are provided (see Table 6) have been tested and found effective in rural schools. It is recommended therefore that schools employ these strategies to deal with their at-risk children and youth. Not all of these strategies will fit in all rural settings but many will be appropriate. Almost all are low cost in the sense that large investments in personnel and equipment are not required. Implementation of these strategies will keep many children in school and save their lives.

Addressing the needs of at-risk youth is the responsibility of the educational system. Addressing those needs in the rural setting will challenge the creativity and resourcefulness of rural educators. However the future demands our best effort.

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