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The Perceived Importance of Selected Teaching Competencies by Student Teachers and Practitioners in Regular and Special Education

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THE PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED TEACHING

COMPETENCIES BY STUDENT TEACHERS AND PRACTITIONERS

IN REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Supervisory Committee

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April 27, 1982
Date

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INTRODUCTION

The process of becoming an educator involves acquiring a combination of skills and knowledge to help students learn. In today's social climate of "back to the basics" and increased calls for teacher accountability, it is inevitable that there would be an emphasis on improved teacher preparation. Teacher educators have responded, in part, with an increasing focus on specifying the competencies a student in teacher education is expected to possess by the completion of the training sequence (Engstrom & Schwaab, 1984).

The teacher education literature alludes to cognitive, technical, and affective behaviors effective teachers demonstrate (Ryans, 1960; Rosenshine and Furst, 1971; Joyce, Weil, and Wald, 1972; Bloom, 1976).

There are also teaching skills that occur with high frequency in special education teacher research. These competencies stress the ability to individualize instruction, analyze training tasks, and use behavior modification techniques (Sontag, Burke, & York, 1973; Garguilo & Pigge, 1979; Fredericks, Anderson, & Baldwin, 1979).

The increased calls for the integration of regular and special education (Stainback & Stainback, 1984) will mean more coordination and sharing of important skills in both fields to teach all learners.

It is important to identify salient competencies, and assess if there is a congruence between the perceived importance of these competencies by preservice (student) teachers and practitioners in the "real world" of teaching. Teacher training institutions could use this information to evaluate their program objective for student teachers.

It would be useful to determine if there are significant differences between the perceptions of regular and special educators, and to identify possible areas of collaboration in teacher training and service delivery.

Prospective teachers and practitioners, in both regular and special education, need skills in planning, instruction, classroom management, and interpersonal relations to become "competent".

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to answer these questions.

1. Will there be significant differences in the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies by student teachers, university supervisors, and classroom teachers in regular and special education programs?

2. Will there be significant differences between the perceptions of regular and special educators concerning selected teaching competencies?

3. Will there be significant differences in the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies within the separate groups of regular and special education?

Hypotheses to be Tested

1. There is no significant difference in the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies by student teachers, university supervisors, and classroom teachers in regular and special education programs.

2. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of regular and special educators concerning selected teaching competencies.

3. There is no significant difference in the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies within the separate groups of regular and special education.

Significance of the Problem

The information in this study will provide a source of data for student teacher supervisors and classroom teachers to help determine competencies that are perceived as most important for effective teaching. Differences between student teacher perceptions and the training program objectives can provide a source of information to be considered in the modification of program goals (Engstrom et al., 1984). Clinical supervision and evaluation would be enhanced using information about student teacher perceptions to assist preservice teachers in developing needed competencies.

It would be important to determine if there are significant differences between the perceptions of regular and special educations concerning selected teaching

competencies. This would affirm or refute the contention that regular and special education programs have "dichotomous agendas" (Martin, 1986).

Finally, it would be useful to examine perceptions within groups. For example, regular education classroom teachers may view the ability to maintain order more important than do university supervisors. This would have implications for teacher training and clinical supervision of student teachers.

Limitations

There were three limitations related to this study.

Limitation 1. The sample size used may be relatively small to make generalizations of the conclusions reached (N = 60).

Limitation 2. Only student teachers, classroom teachers, and university supervisors from the Omaha, Nebraska area participated, and the findings of this study may not be representative of other locations.

Limitation 3. A short (18) item survey instrument may not adequately assess all the competencies needed in educating students in regular and special education settings.

Assumptions

There are two assumptions related to this study.

Assumption 1. The skills and competencies delineated in the survey are representative of the research on

effective teaching proficiencies in regular and special education.

Assumption 2. The participants in the study have had experiences observing and identifying the selected competencies.

Methodology Employed

Population: The 60 participants included randomly selected university supervisors in regular education ($\underline{N}$=5) and special education university supervisors ($\underline{N}$=5) of student teachers at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). Ten regular education classroom teachers and 10 special education classroom teachers from the Omaha area were randomly selected to participate. Fifteen student teachers at UNO majoring in regular education and 15 student teachers in special education were also randomly selected to take part in the study.

Procedure: A survey instrument was constructed of teaching competencies selected from reviewing the literature about salient teaching skills in regular and special education. A panel of experts determined the clarity of each stated competency. Suggested changes were incorporated into the survey instrument. The survey was administered to the six groups of student teachers and practitioners. The participants were asked to assign a level of perceived importance (from no importance to highest importance) to each of the 18 competencies, using a five-point Likert scale.

Using the data obtained, mean scores for each competency were computed for each of the six groups. A comparison of the levels of perceived importance by student teachers and practitioners in regular and special education was made. A comparison of the levels of perceived importance between regular and special educators was done. Comparisons within the separate groups of regular and special education were conducted. The levels of significant difference for each comparison were evaluated. A measure of central tendency was found and mean scores for all respondents were ranked in order of the perceived importance of the 18 competencies.

Definition of Terms

Student teacher. A preservice teacher in education who is engaged in practice teaching or field experience in the classroom under the direction of a cooperating teacher and the university supervisor.

University supervisor. An instructor, generally in teacher education or related education areas, who assists the student teacher and cooperating teacher in planning the student teaching experiences, and assessing the progress of the student teacher.

Regular education. The training and teaching of students who exhibit academic achievement within normal limits for their chronological age.

Special Education. The training and teaching of students with physical and/or mental handicaps that prevent or restrict normal achievements. Some examples are blindness, specific learning disabilities, behavioral impairments, mental retardation, etc.

Competencies. Skills, abilities, or proficiencies. In this study, competencies were viewed as cognitive, technical, and affective behaviors related to teaching.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized in the following manner:

1. Chapter I is an introduction to the field project. It presents background information, a statement of the problem, hypotheses to be tested, the significance of the problem, and major procedural steps of the study.

2. Chapter II is a review of the related literature about this problem.

3. Chapter III explains the methodology used in this study.

4. Chapter IV contains the the presentation and analysis of data.

5. Chapter V includes the summary of the study, and the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Over the past 30 years, considerable effort has been spent studying teacher behavior. Much has been done in attempts to identify competencies of effective teachers. Competencies include cognitive, technical, and affective behaviors related to teaching (Bloom, 1976).

Ryan's (1960) massive study of 5,000 teachers in the United States identified 25 general areas of teacher characteristics, including "alert, appears enthusiastic", "disciplines in...a positive manner", and "anticipates individual needs." (p.82).

Rosenshine and Furst (1971) identified 11 variables in teacher behavior which were related to student performance. The areas identified were:

1. Clarity of presentation

2. Variety of materials and method of presentation

3. Enthusiasm

4. Business-like behavior

5. Providing opportunities for students to learn criterion materials

6. Use of student ideas

7. Criticism and control

8. Use of structuring comments

9. Use of various types of questions

10. Educational programming

11. Level of difficulty of instruction

Joyce, Weil, and Wald (1972) delineated three basic teaching skills that affect the intellectual activity, social relations, and content of the learning environment. The skills were:

1. Structuring. To what extent do students and teachers control the organization of the learning ability?

2. Modulating the cognitive activity. Establishing a certain type of intellectual activity and changing it when appropriate.

3. Focusing. The teacher establishes, maintains, or shifts the students' attention in the environment. The skills can be widely interpreted into many competency areas. For example, "structuring" can be thought of as "maintain disciple" and also "using ideas generated by students."

In his theory of mastery learning, Bloom (1976) identified skills teachers need to help students achieve mastery, such as "altering a learning task to make it appropriate in terms of the entry behavior" (p. 105). This mastery approach can be applied in many learning situations, regardless of the ability of the learner.

The training of teachers in special education is a relatively new endeavor. With the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, public schools began to assume the responsibility for the educational programming of more severely handicapped students. Teacher training institutions found it was no

longer sufficient to prepare teachers with methods to teach
reading, writing, and arithmetic. Prospective teachers of
the handicapped needed skills to teach disabled students
survival from the moment they woke up in the morning until
they went to bed at night. The rise of the "behavioral
objective" and "task analysis" approach for both students
and teachers began to provide a framework for identifying
competencies of effective teachers in regular and special
classrooms.

The theories of both Joyce and Bloom are quite
congruent with the task analysis and individualization of
instruction skills determined to be appropriate for special
educators (Sontag et al., 1973; Fredericks et al., 1979;
Garguilo et al., 1979). Special educators are also seen as
needing competencies in working as a member of a team to
help students and parents (Stainback et al., 1984).

The student teaching manuals of three area universities
reflect competencies for student teachers similar to that
extracted from the teacher education literature. The
manuals also indicate the need for the student teacher to
understand the role of professional teacher organizations
and to understand legislation about schools (Creighton
University, 1986; The University of Nebraska at Lincoln,
1986; The University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1986). The
manuals specify that the competencies will be used as part
of the preservice teacher's evaluation sequence during the
student teaching experience.

There are many "generic" teaching competencies identified in the research that are applicable to both regular and special education settings. The competency requirements for the two disciplines may be more similar than previously held (Stainback et al., 1984).

<u>Summary</u>

From the literature, there appears to be a consensus of skills viewed as highly significant for those in training to be educators in both the regular and special classroom settings. The skills may be divided into general categories of teaching performance and classroom management, professional qualities, and personal characteristics. (There may be overlap between skills, and these areas should be seen as nonspecific, general guidelines). The frequency of occurrence of the selected teaching competencies in the teacher education literature are displayed in matrix form in Appendix A. The performance indicators mentioned most frequently include:

<u>Teaching Performance and Classroom Management</u>

1. Ability to maintain order

2. Ability to individualize instruction

3. Uses various types of questions

4. Uses ideas generated by students

5. Keeps necessary records

6. Uses positive feedback

7. Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented

8. Ability to interpret standardized test scores

9. Provides for evaluation based on objectives

10. Ability to construct behavioral objectives

11. Ability to utilize audio-visual equipment

Professional Qualities

1. Mastery of subject matter taught

2. Participates in continuing education

3. Participates in school activities

4. Works with the staff as a team member

5. Interacts effectively with parents

Personal Characteristics

1. Projecting enthusiasm

2. Emotional stability and self-control

Prospective educators and practitioners in both regular and special education settings need skills in planning, instruction, and classroom management, as well as professional and personal competencies.

Chapter III

PROCEDURES

This study was conducted to determine if there were any significant differences between the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies by student teachers, university supervisors, and classroom teachers in regular and special education programs.

Procedure

A review of the literature about teaching competencies was conducted to identify competencies most frequently mentioned as important teaching skills. Student teaching manuals from three Omaha-area universities (the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and Creighton University) were reviewed to determine teaching competencies identified as important for student teachers. A matrix (Appendix A) was constructed to determine the frequency of occurrence of the competencies in the main literature sources.

The most frequently (over one-half of the time) occurring competencies were assembled in a 20-item survey instrument (Appendix B). A team of experts was asked to determine the clarity of each of the statements by yes or no responses and comments. The team consisted of six people, representing each of the six groups to be sampled.

Based on the consensus of the team, 18 of the original 20 items were included in the final survey.

Two items ("Understands legislation about schools" and "The ability to understand the role of the teacher in professional organizations") were judged by four of the six team members to be unclear, and the items were not included in the final survey to reflect that concern.

An 18-item survey instrument was designed (Appendix C). Respondents were asked to judge the importance of each stated teaching competency along a five-point continuum (Likert scale) from no importance to highest importance. In addition, respondents could add comments in writing at the end of the survey.

The survey was distributed to a total of 60 people. They represented the following six groups:

	N
University Supervisors in Regular Education	5
Classroom Teachers in Regular Education	15
Student Teachers in Regular Education	10
University Supervisors in Special Education	5
Classroom Teachers in Special Education	15
Student Teachers in Special Education	10
	60

All university supervisors and student teachers were randomly selected from lists provided by the University of Nebraska at Omaha Department of Teacher Education. The University places over one-half of its student teaching practicum students in the Omaha Public Schools, so it was

considered valid to examine the perceptions of the classroom teachers in the Omaha Public School system. Classroom teachers in regular and special education programs were randomly selected from lists provided by the Omaha Public Schools. The selection included elementary and secondary teachers. The average years of teaching experience for the regular education teachers were 10.9 years. The special educators had an average of 10.5 years of experience.

Respondents were contacted in person (58%) and by mail (42%). They were asked to complete the survey and return it by mail, using an enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. The rate of return was 100%.

The survey responses were entered on machine-scanned general purpose answer sheets. A data file was established on the VAX 11/780 computer at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Computing Center. An analysis of the data was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 10th Edition (S.P.S.S.-X).

The following is a summary of the programs of S.P.S.S.-X used in this study:

1. Subprogram Frequencies yielded descriptive statistics related to the frequency distribution of each competency, for each of the six groups. Measures obtained included mean, standard deviation, range, minimum and maximum.

2. Subprogram T-Test was employed to obtain statistical comparison of mean differences on each of the

survey items for each of the six groups. The Bonferroni t-test adjustment procedure was used due to the number of tests performed (144). The critical alpha was determined to be .000347.

3. <u>Central Tendency</u>. An overall mean score with regard to each competency was computed for the entire population. Analysis resulted in 18 mean scores corresponding to the 18 competency statements.

4. <u>Ranked Mean Scores</u>. The 18 mean scores were ranked, with rank of one being assigned to that competency statement with the highest mean score. Thus, a rank of one indicates the competency was perceived as most important by the six groups considered as a whole

The results of the study and discussion of the findings follow.

Chapter IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

To test the first hypothesis that there is no
significant difference in the perceived importance of
selected teaching competencies by student teachers,
university supervisors, and classroom teachers in regular
and special education, the mean of each response for each
group of student teachers and practitioners was calculated
(Table 1) and tested for significant differences. The level
of significance was determined to be less than .000347. No
significant differences were found in the paired
comparisons, and the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

This finding may indicate a more "reality based"
training for preservice teachers that reflects the true
nature of the practitioners in the classroom. It may also
reflect the influence of the teacher education program at
UNO that delineates specific competencies to be mastered for
student teachers in regular and special education.

To test the second hypothesis that there is no
significant difference between the perceptions of regular
and special educators concerning the selected teaching
competencies, the group means for regular and special
education were calculated and tested for significant
differences (Table 2). The second null hypothesis was
rejected on the following data. Significant mean
differences at the .01 level were found on "Individualizes

Table 1

Selected Teaching Competencies:

Means and Standard deviations for all groups

Groups: 1 = University Supervisors in Regular Education
         2 = Classroom Teachers in Regular Education
         3 = Student Teachers in Regular Education
         4 = University Supervisors in Special Education
         5 = Classroom Teachers in Special Education
         6 = Student Teachers in Special Education

Competency	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Maintains discipline and student involvement	1	5	4.6000	.5477
	2	15	4.8667	.3519
	3	10	4.8000	.4216
	4	5	5.0000	.0000
	5	15	4.8000	.4140
	6	10	4.8000	.4216
2. Individualizes instruction	1	5	4.8000	.4472
	2	15	3.8667	.7432
	3	10	4.0000	.4714
	4	5	4.8000	.4472
	5	15	4.2667	.7988
	6	10	4.7000	.4830
3. Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	1	5	4.6000	.5477
	2	15	4.7333	.4577
	3	10	4.7000	.4830
	4	5	4.6000	.5477
	5	15	4.4667	.5164
	6	10	4.5000	.5270

Table 1 (continued)

Groups: 1 = University Supervisors in Regular Education
2 = Classroom Teachers in Regular Education
3 = Student Teachers in Regular Education
4 = University Supervisors in Special Education
5 = Classroom Teachers in Special Education
6 = Student Teachers in Special Education

Competency	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
4. Uses various types of questioning techniques	1	5	4.0000	1.4142
	2	15	4.4667	.7432
	3	10	4.3000	.6749
	4	5	4.6000	.5477
	5	15	3.6000	1.0556
	6	10	4.0000	.9428
5. Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	1	5	4.4000	.8944
	2	15	4.8000	.4140
	3	10	4.4000	.6992
	4	5	4.6000	.5477
	5	15	3.6000	1.0556
	6	10	4.0000	.9428
6. Uses ideas generated by the students	1	5	4.0000	1.0000
	2	15	3.8000	.5606
	3	10	3.9000	.5676
	4	5	4.6000	.5477
	5	15	3.0667	1.1629
	6	10	3.9000	.3162

Table 1 (continued)

Groups: 1 = University Supervisors in Regular Education
2 = Classroom Teachers in Regular Education
3 = Student Teachers in Regular Education
4 = University Supervisors in Special Education
5 = Classroom Teachers in Special Education
6 = Student Teachers in Special Education

Competency	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
7. Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	1	5	4.6000	.5477
	2	15	4.5333	.6399
	3	10	4.0000	.4714
	4	5	5.0000	.0000
	5	15	4.2000	.6761
	6	10	4.4000	.5164
8. Uses positive feedback	1	5	4.6000	.5477
	2	15	4.6000	.5071
	3	10	4.7000	.4830
	4	5	5.0000	.0000
	5	15	4.7333	.4577
	6	10	5.0000	.0000
9. Participates in continuing education activities	1	5	4.0000	1.4142
	2	15	3.9333	.7037
	3	10	4.0000	.4714
	4	5	4.8000	.4472
	5	15	3.5333	.5164
	6	10	4.0000	.6667

Table 1 (continued)

Groups: 1 = University Supervisors in Regular Education
2 = Classroom Teachers in Regular Education
3 = Student Teachers in Regular Education
4 = University Supervisors in Special Education
5 = Classroom Teachers in Special Education
6 = Student Teachers in Special Education

Competency	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
10. Works with the staff as a contributing team member	1	5	4.2000	1.0954
	2	15	4.2000	.6761
	3	10	4.1000	.3162
	4	5	4.8000	.4472
	5	15	4.2000	.6761
	6	10	4.5000	.5270
11. Interacts and uses standardized test data for student programming	1	5	3.4000	.5477
	2	15	3.9333	.7037
	3	10	3.5000	.7071
	4	5	4.2000	.8367
	5	15	3.4000	.9103
	6	10	3.7000	.4830
12. Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	1	5	4.4000	.8944
	2	15	4.7333	.4577
	3	10	4.8000	.4216
	4	5	4.8000	.4472
	5	15	4.2667	.7988
	6	10	4.9000	.3162

Table 1 (continued)

Groups: 1 = University Supervisors in Regular Education
2 = Classroom Teachers in Regular Education
3 = Student Teachers in Regular Education
4 = University Supervisors in Special Education
5 = Classroom Teachers in Special Education
6 = Student Teachers in Special Education

Competency	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
13. Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	1	5	4.2000	1.0954
	2	15	4.9333	.2582
	3	10	4.6000	.5164
	4	5	4.4000	.5477
	5	15	4.4000	.6325
	6	10	4.4000	.5164
14. Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	1	5	3.0000	1.2247
	2	15	3.5333	.7432
	3	10	3.8000	.4216
	4	5	4.2000	.8367
	5	15	3.2000	.7746
	6	10	3.5000	.7071
15. Keeps necessary records	1	5	4.4000	.8944
	2	15	4.6667	.6399
	3	10	4.5000	.5270
	4	5	4.8000	.4472
	5	15	3.9333	.7037
	6	10	4.4000	.5164

Table 1 (continued)

Groups: 1 = University Supervisors in Regular Education
2 = Classroom Teachers in Regular Education
3 = Student Teachers in Regular Education
4 = University Supervisors in Special Education
5 = Classroom Teachers in Special Education
6 = Student Teachers in Special Education

Competency	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
16. Interacts effectively with parents	1	5	4.4000	.8944
	2	15	4.3333	.6172
	3	10	4.2000	.4216
	4	5	4.8000	.4472
	5	15	4.4667	.6399
	6	10	4.6000	.5164
17. Participates in school activities	1	5	3.8000	1.3038
	2	15	4.1333	.7432
	3	10	3.6000	.5164
	4	5	4.6000	.5477
	5	15	3.3333	.8997
	6	10	3.8000	.6325
18. Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	1	5	4.6000	.8944
	2	15	4.2667	.7037
	3	9*	4.0000	.7071
	4	5	4.6000	.5477
	5	15	4.2667	.7037
	6	10	4.2000	.7888

* Unanswered by one respondent

Table 2

Results of t-test of Mean Differences Comparing Regular and

Special Educators' Perceived Importance of Selected Teaching

Competencies

Competency	Group	$\underline{N}$	Mean	S.D.	t	Probability
1. Maintains discipline and student involvement	Regular Special	30 30	4.8000 4.8333	0.407 0.379	0.33	N.S.
2. Individualizes instruction	Regular Special	30 30	4.0667 4.5000	0.691 0.682	2.44	.009
3. Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	Regular Special	30 30	4.7000 4.5000	0.466 0.509	-1.59	N.S.
4. Uses various types of questions techniques	Regular Special	30 30	4.3333 3.9000	0.844 0.995	-1.82	N.S.
5. Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	Regular Special	30 30	4.6000 4.4667	0.621 0.571	-0.87	N.S.
6. Uses ideas generated by the students	Regular Special	30 30	3.8667 3.6000	0.629 1.037	-1.20	N.S.
7. Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	Regular Special	30 30	4.3667 4.4000	0.615 0.621	0.21	N.S.
8. Uses positive feedback	Regular Special	30 30	4.6333 4.8667	0.490 0.346	2.13	N.S.
9. Participates in continuing education	Regular Special	30 30	3.9667 3.9000	0.765 0.712	-0.35	N.S.
10. Works with the staff as a contributing team member	Regular Special	30 30	4.1667 4.4000	0.648 0.621	1.42	N.S.
11. Interprets and uses standard-ized test data for student programming	Regular Special	30 30	3.7000 3.6333	0.702 0.809	-0.34	N.S.
12. Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	Regular Special	30 30	4.7000 4.5667	0.535 0.679	-0.84	N.S.

Table 2 (continued)

Competency	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Probability
13. Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	Regular	30	4.7000	0.596	-2.00	.050
	Special	30	4.4000	0.563		
14. Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	Regular	30	3.5333	0.776	-0.32	N.S.
	Special	30	3.4667	0.819		
15. Keeps necessary records	Regular	30	4.4667	0.629	-1.38	N.S.
	Special	30	4.4333	0.679		
16. Interacts effectively with parents	Regular	30	4.3000	0.596	1.77	.041
	Special	30	4.5667	0.568		
17. Participates in school activities	Regular	30	3.9000	0.803	-0.92	N.S.
	Special	30	3.7000	0.877		
18. Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	Regular	29	4.2414	0.739	0.31	N.S.
	Special	30	4.3000	0.702		

instruction," competency #2. Competency #16, "Interacts effectively with parents," was significant at the .05 level. Mean score values of the special educators were higher on both these items. Regular educators rated competency #13, "Mastery of subject matter" significantly higher (at the .05 level).

Discussion

This finding supports the special education teacher literature that individualization of instruction is what makes special education "special" (Sontag et al., 1973; Fredericks et al., 1979; Gaiguilo et al., 1979). Working closely with parents is also considered to be a very important skill (Stainback et al., 1984).

Subject matter mastery may be viewed as more significant by regular educators who teach more difficult academic content (Ryans, 1960; Bloom, 1976). However, there is much congruence across regular and special education perceptions of the competencies.

To test the third hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies within the separate groups of regular and special education, the means of each response for each group was tested for significant differences. It was found that university supervisors in special education rated competency #9, "Participates in continuing education activities" as significantly ($p < .00025$) higher than classroom teachers in special education (Table 3). The third null hypothesis was rejected on the basis of this data.

Table 3

The Perceptions of Special Education University Supervisors
and Classroom Teachers Concerning Participation in
Continuing Education

Competency	Group	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value
Participates in Continuing Education	Univ. Supervisors	5	4.800	.447	
					*4.89
	Classroom Teachers	10	3.533	.516	

* <.00025, one-tailed

Discussion

This significant difference may reflect the culture of the respondents - university supervisors would probably have internalized the value of higher education. Gage (1972) stated that no one knows whether what is taught in teacher education is consonant with the teacher's needs. The needs of classroom teachers in special education may be unmet by university offerings or are possibly being met in areas other than formal coursework, such as workshops, professional readings, and inservices. This is an area that deserves further research.

Finally, a rank ordering of the group means for each competency was conducted to determine an overall consensus of the perceived importance of the 18 selected competences. Table 4 shows this ranking. The groups rated the competencies fairly high, with mean scores ranging from 3.500 (moderately important) to 4.817 (highest importance). All the groups ranked maintaining discipline, use of positive feedback, projecting enthusiasm, and emotional stability high. It is interesting to note "Maintains discipline and student involvement" was ranked highest. The area of discipline was referred to in every pertinent source (Appendix A), and appears to be a "prerequisite" for teaching effectiveness (Ryans, 1960; Rosenshine and Furst, 1971; Fredericks, 1979).

Appendices D through I show the rank ordering of the perceived importance of the teaching competencies by each of the six groups surveyed.

Table 4

Rank Ordering of the Perceived Importance of Selected

Teaching Competencies (All Groups) $\underline{N}$ = 60

Rank	Competency	Mean Score
1	1. Maintains discipline and student involvement	4.817
2	8. Uses positive feedback	4.750
3	12. Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	4.633
4	3. Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	4.600
5	13. Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	4.550
6	5. Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	4.533
7	16. Interacts effectively with parents	4.433
8	7. Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	4.383
9	15. Keeps necessary records	4.350
10.5	2. Individualizes instruction	4.283
10.5	10. Works with the staff as a contributing team member	4.283
12	18. Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	4.271
13	4. Uses various types of questioning techniques	4.117
14	9. Participates in continuing education activities	3.933

Table 4 (cont'd)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
15	17.	Participates in school activities	3.800
16	6.	Uses ideas generated by the students	3.733
17	11.	Interprets and uses standard-ized test data for student programming	3.667
18	14.	Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	3.500

$X = 4.253$

$S.D. = .380$

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to attempt to answer the questions:

1. Will there be significant differences in the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies by student teachers, university supervisors, and classroom teachers in regular and special education programs?

2. Will there be significant differences between the perception of regular and special educators concerning selected teaching competencies?

3. Will there be significant differences in the perceived importance of selected teaching competencies within the separate groups of regular and special education?

The procedures used to obtain this information were as follows:

1. A search of the pertinent literature was conducted to identify teaching competencies most frequently mentioned as important teaching skills.

2. A preliminary survey instrument was constructed using 20 of the most frequently occurring competencies.

3. A team of six experts representing student teachers, university supervisors, and classroom teachers in regular and special education evaluated the clarity of each of the survey statements.

4. Based on the expert consensus, 18 items were included in the final survey instrument.

5. The survey was given to randomly selected student teachers and university supervisors in regular and special education programs at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and to classroom teachers in regular and special education programs in the Omaha Public schools. Respondents were asked to determine the importance of each competency along a five-point continuum (Likert scale) from no importance to highest importance.

6. A statistical analysis was conducted to determine the levels of perceived importance for the survey items for each of the six groups.

Significant differences between groups were calculated. The means were also ranked for the entire group to determine the order of importance of the selected teaching competencies.

An analysis of the data revealed no significant differences between the student teachers and the practitioners in their perceptions of the selected teaching competencies. Student teachers appear to be judging competencies in congruence with university supervisors and classroom teachers. This may reflect a trend toward teacher training that is more competency-based and pragmatic (Stainback et al., 1984).

The results of the study indicated significant differences between the perceptions of regular and special educators concerning three selected teaching competencies.

Individualization of instruction and interacting effectively with parents were rated higher by special educators. Regular educators rated mastery of the subject matter higher. These findings may reflect the nature of the disciplines (Martin, 1986) of special and regular education. It is important to note there were 15 areas of agreement between the groups about teaching competencies.

Within the groups, the only significant difference found was in the perceived importance of participating in continuing education by special education classroom teachers and university supervisors in special education. The supervisors rated continuing education significantly higher. This may suggest variations on traditional continuing education is required to meet the needs of special education teachers.

The groups rated the competencies fairly high (from moderate to highest importance), and this may be another sign of "cooperative assimilation" across the regular and special education fields. Maintaining student discipline, use of positive feedback, and projecting enthusiasm were found to be highly rated competencies by all six groups.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study and the readings in the related literature, the following recommendations are presented:

1. The study could be expanded to evaluate the perceived mastery level of these skills by student teachers and their supervisors.

2. Inservice needs of special educators should be identified and addressed by training institutions.

3. The futures of regular and special education appear to be closely linked. Calls for a less dichotomized educational system are being heard (Stainback et al., 1984). There needs to be more investigation of the similarities of the disciplines and areas of cooperation in training and service delivery.

The generally high consensus about important teaching competencies between the student teachers and practitioners is a positive sign. Integration of academic training and practical experience will help prepare the competent educators of tomorrow.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Matrix

The Frequency of Occurrence of Selected Teaching Competencies
in the Teacher Education Literature

Selected Competencies:	Rosenshine & Furst (1971)	Ryans (1960)	Bloom (1976)	Garguilo & Pigge (1979)	Fredericks & Anderson (1979)	Freq.
1. Ability to maintain order	X	X	X	X	X	5/5
2. Ability to individualize instruction	X	X	X	X	X	5/5
3. Projects enthusiasm	X	X	X	X	X	5/5
4. Uses various types of questions	X		X			2/5
5. Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	X	X	X	X	X	5/5
6. Uses ideas generated by students	X		X			2/5
7. Provides for evaluation based on objectives	X		X	X	X	4/5
8. Uses positive feedback	X	X	X	X	X	5/5
9. Participates in continuing education activities			X	X		2/5
10. Works with staff as a team member				X	X	2/5
11. Ability to interpret standardized test scores				X		1/5

Matrix (continued)

The Frequency of Occurrence of Selected Teaching Competencies
in the Teacher Education Literature

Selected Competencies:	Rosenshine & Furst (1971)	Ryans (1960)	Bloom (1976)	Garguilo & Pigge (1979)	Fredericks & Anderson (1979)	Freq.
12. Exhibits emotional stability and self-control		X				1/5
13. Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter		X	X			2/5
14. Ability to use audio-visual equipment	X		X	X		3/5
15. Keeps necessary records	X	X	X	X		4/5
16. Interacts with parents		X				1/5
17. Participates in school activities		X				1/5
18. Understands legislation about schools						*0/5
19. Ability to construct behavioral objectives	X		X			2/5
20. Ability to understand the role of the teacher in professional organizations						*0/5

* indicates competencies only
  identified in the student
  teaching manuals

Appendix B

Survey

Selected Teaching Competencies

Purpose: To determine if the teaching competencies are stated clearly.

Your Present Teaching Position (circle one):

      University Supervisor   Classroom Teacher   Student Teacher

Area of Teaching (circle one):   Regular Education   Special Education

Instructions: Read each statement and determine if the teaching competency is clearly stated. Circle "Yes" or No". Please feel free to comment on the items. Thank you for your participation.

---

1. The teacher is able to maintain order.

   Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

   Comments:

2. The teacher is able to individualize instruction.

   Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

   Comments:

3. The teacher projects enthusiasm.

   Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

   Comments:

4. The teacher uses various types of questioning techniques.

   Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

   Comments:

5. The teacher is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented.

Is the competency stated clearly? Yes No

Comments:

6. The teacher uses ideas generated by the students.

Is the competency stated clearly? Yes No

Comments:

7. The teacher provides for evaluation based on objectives.

Is the competency stated clearly? Yes No

Comments:

8. The teacher uses positive feedback.

Is the competency stated clearly? Yes No

Comments:

9. The teacher participates in continuing education activities.

Is the competency stated clearly? Yes No

Comments:

10. The teacher works with the staff as a team member.

Is the competency stated clearly? Yes No

Comments:

11. The teacher demonstrates the ability to interpret standardized test scores.

Is the competency stated clearly? Yes No

Comments:

12. The teacher exhibits emotional stability and self-control.

    Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

    Comments:

13. The teacher demonstrates mastery of the subject matter.

    Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

    Comments:

14. The teacher is able to utilize audio-visual equipment in teaching.

    Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

    Comments:

15. The teacher keeps necessary records.

    Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

    Comments:

16. The teacher interacts effectively with parents.

    Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

    Comments:

17. The teacher participates in school activities.

    Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

    Comments:

18. The teacher understands legislation about schools.

    Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

    Comments:

19. The teacher is able to construct behavioral objectives.

   Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

   Comments:

20. The teacher understands the role of professional teacher organizations.

   Is the competency stated clearly?   Yes   No

   Comments:

   Any additional comments or suggestions?

Appendix C

Survey

Selected Teaching Competencies

<u>Purpose</u>: To determine the level of importance of selected teaching competencies.

<u>Your Present Teaching Position</u> (circle one):

University Supervisor   Classroom Teacher   Student Teacher

<u>Area of Teaching</u> (circle one):   Regular Education   Special Education

<u>Instructions</u>: Read each statement and select the level of <u>importance</u> you attach to this competency. Circle the number of your response.

<u>Levels of Importance</u>:

1. No importance or does not apply

2. Little importance

3. Moderate importance

4. Considerable importance

5. Highest importance

---

1. The teacher is able to maintain discipline and student involvement.

                                        Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

2. The teacher is able to individualize instruction.

                                        Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

3. The teacher projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job.

                                        Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

4. The teacher uses various types of higher order, recall, and clarifying

   questioning techniques.

                                        Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

5. The teacher is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented.

                                        Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

6. The teacher uses ideas generated by the students.

                                        Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

7. The teacher provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

8. The teacher uses positive feedback.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

9. The teacher participates in continuing education activities.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

10. The teacher works with the staff as a contributing team member.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

11. The teacher demonstrates the ability to interpret and use standardized test data for student programming.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

12. The teacher exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving interpersonal and instructional problems.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

13. The teacher demonstrates mastery of the subject matter.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

14. The teacher is able to use audio-visual equipment in teaching.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

15. The teacher keeps necessary records.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

16. The teacher interacts effectively with parents.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

17. The teacher participates in school activities.

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

18. The teacher is able to construct behavioral objectives based upon student goals

Importance: 1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS:

Appendix D

Appendix D

Rank Ordering of the Perceived Importance of

Selected Teaching Competencies by University Supervisors

in Regular Education ($\underline{N}$ = 5)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
1	2.	Individualizes instruction	4.800
4	1.	Maintains discipline and student involvement	4.600
4	3.	Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	4.600
4	7.	Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	4.600 4.600
4	8.	Uses positive feedback	4.600
4	18.	Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	4.600
7.5	5.	Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	4.400
7.5	14.	Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	4.400
9.5	15.	Keeps necessary records	4.400
9.5	16.	Interacts effectively with parents	4.400
11.5	10.	Works with the staff as a contributing team member	4.200
11.5	12.	Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	4.200
14	4.	Uses various types of questioning techniques	4.000
14	6.	Uses ideas generated by the students	4.000

Appendix D (continued)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
14	9.	Participates in continuing education activities	4.000
16.5	17.	Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	3.400
16.5	11.	Interprets and uses standard- ized test data for student pro- gramming	3.400
18	13.	Demonstrates the mastery of subject matter	3.000

X = 4.22

S.D. = .845

Appendix E

Appendix E

Rank Ordering of the Perceived Importance of Selected

Teaching Competencies by Classroom Teachers

in Regular Education ($\underline{N}$ = 15)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
1	13.	Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	4.933
2	1.	Maintains discipline and student involvement	4.867
3	5.	Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	4.800
4.5	3.	Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	4.733
4.5	12.	Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	4.733
6	8.	Uses positive feedback	4.600
7	7.	Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	4.537
8.5	4.	Uses various types of questioning techniques	4.467
8.5	15.	keeps necessary records	4.467
10	16.	Interacts effectively with parents	4.333
11	18.	Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	4.267
12	10.	Works with the staff as a contributing team member	4.200
13	17.	Participates in school activities	4.133
14.5	9.	Participates in continuing education activities	3.933

Appendix E (continued)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
14.5	11.	Interprets and uses standard-ized test data for student programming	3.933
16	2.	Individualizes instruction	3.867
17	6.	Uses ideas generated by the students	3.800
18	14.	Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	3.533

$X = 4.341$

$S.D. = .282$

Appendix F

Appendix F

Rank Ordering of the Perceived Importance of

Selected Teaching Competencies by Student Teachers

in Regular Education ($\underline{N}$ = 10)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
1.5	1.	Maintains discipline and student involvement	4.800
1.5	12.	Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	4.800
3.5	3.	Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	4.700
3.5	8.	Uses positive feedback	4.700
5	13.	Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	4.600
6	15.	Keeps necessary records	4.500
7	5.	Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	4.400
8	4.	Uses various types of questioning techniques	4.300
9	16.	Interacts effectively with parents	4.200
10	10.	Works with the staff as a contributing team member	4.100
12.5	2.	Individualizes instruction	4.000
12.5	7.	Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	4.000
12.5	9.	Participation in continuing education activities	4.000
12.5	18.	Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	4.000

Appendix F (continued)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
15	6.	Uses ideas generated by students	3.900
16	14.	Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	3.800
17	17.	Participates in school activities	3.600
18	11.	Interprets and uses standardized test data for student programming	3.500

X = 4.185

S.D. = .067

Appendix G

Appendix G

Rank Ordering of the Perceived Importance of Selected

Teaching Competencies by University Supervisors

in Special Education ($\underline{N}$ = 5)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
2	1.	Maintains discipline and student involvement	5.000
2	7.	Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	5.000
2	8.	Uses positive feedback	5.000
6.5	2.	Individualizes instruction	4.800
6.5	9.	Participates in continuing education activities	4.800
6.5	10.	Works with the staff as a contributing team member	4.800
6.5	12.	Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	4.800
6.5	15.	Keeps necessary records	4.800
6.5	16.	Interacts effectively with parents	4.800
12.5	3.	Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	4.600
12.5	4.	Uses various types of questioning techniques	4.600
12.5	5.	Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	4.600
12.5	6.	Uses ideas generated by the students	4.600
12.5	17.	Participates in school activities	4.600
12.5	18.	Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	4.600

Appendix G (continued)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
16	13.	Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	4.400
17.5	11.	Interprets and uses standard-ized test data for student programming	4.200
17.5	14.	Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	4.200

$X = 4.678$

$S.D. = .268$

Appendix H

Appendix H

Rank Ordering of the Perceived Importance of Selected
Teaching Competencies by Classroom Teachers
in Special Education ($\underline{N}$ = 15)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
1	1.	Maintains discipline and student involvement	4.800
2	8.	Uses positive feedback	4.733
3.5	3.	Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	4.467
3.5	16.	Interacts effectively with parents	4.467
5.5	5.	Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	4.467
5.5	13.	Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	4.467
8	2.	Individualizes instruction	4.267
8	12.	Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	4.267
8	18.	Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	4.267
10.5	7.	Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	4.200
10.5	10.	Works with staff as a contributing team member	4.200
12	15.	Keeps necessary records	3.933
13	4.	Uses various types of questioning techniques	3.600
14	9.	Participates in continuing education activities	3.533

Appendix H (continued)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
15	11.	Interprets and uses standard-ized test data for student programming	3.400
16	17.	Participates in school activities	3.333
17	14.	Uses audio-visual equipment in teaching	3.200
18	6.	Uses ideas generated by the students	3.067

$X = 4.030$

$S.D. = .336$

Appendix I

Appendix I

Rank Ordering of the Perceived Importance of Selected

Teaching Competencies by Student Teachers

in Special Education ($\underline{N}$ = 10)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
1	8.	Uses positive feedback	5.000
2	12.	Exhibits emotional stability and self-control while solving problems	4.900
3	1.	Maintains discipline and student involvement	4.800
4	2.	Individualizes instruction	4.700
5	16.	Interacts effectively with parents	4.600
7	3.	Projects enthusiasm and commitment on the job	4.500
7	5.	Is organized, systematic, and goal-oriented	4.500
7	10.	Works with staff as a contributing team member	4.500
10	7.	Provides for evaluation of student performance based on clearly stated objectives	4.400
10	13.	Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter	4.400
10	15.	Keeps necessary records	4.400
12	18.	Constructs behavioral objectives based upon student goals	4.200
13.5	4.	Uses various types of questioning techniques	4.000
13.5	9.	Participates in continuing education activities	4.000

Appendix I (continued)

Rank		Competency	Mean Score
15	6.	Uses ideas generated by the students	3.900
16	17.	Participates in school activities	3.800
17	11.	Interprets and uses standard- ized test data for student programming	3.700
18	14.	Uses various audio-visual equipment in teaching	3.500

X = 4.322

S.D. .196