# PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF THE MENTALLY IMPAIRED: CANDIDATES' PERCEPTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SPECIFIC TEACHING COMPETENCIES

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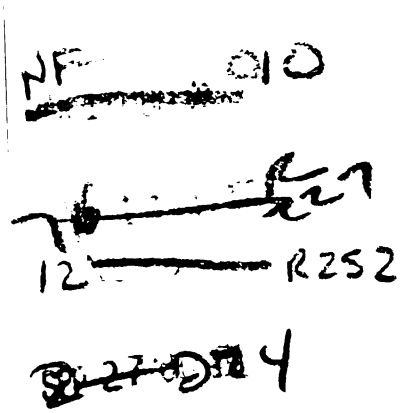

## ABSTRACT

PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF THE MENTALLY IMPAIRED: CANDIDATES' PERCEPTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SPECIFIC TEACHING COMPETENCIES

By

Sister Gabrielle Kowalski

In this research groups of students preparing to be teachers of the mentally impaired at Michigan State University were surveyed. Groups were constituted on the basis of amount of field experience. They ranged from Group I who had no field experience to Group V, student teachers.

The study determined the importance of the areas of teaching competency as perceived by the students and compared these perceptions to those previously obtained from teachers in the field. Students were also asked to rate themselves on the achievement of these teaching competencies; then these ratings were compared across student groups and with ratings of cooperating teachers. Further, the relationship between independent variables other than amount of field experience and student self-ratings of achievement were examined.

## Major Findings

1. As amount of field experience increased there were no significant differences among groups of teacher candidates or between teacher candidates and experienced teachers in their perceptions of the importance of specific teaching competencies.
2. Teacher candidates' self-ratings of achievement of teaching competency rose across levels of field experience with the exception of student teachers. Student teachers' self-ratings were lower than those of the group with the next highest amount of field experience.
3. Similarity of self-ratings within groups of teacher candidates increased across levels of field experience when students with no field experience were compared to those with increasing amounts of field experience. However, the student teachers again were the exception; their self-ratings were the least homogeneous of any group.
4. Cooperating teachers considered teacher candidates more competent as amount of field experience increased.
5. When mean deviation scores of paired teacher candidates and cooperating teachers were examined it was found that teacher candidates' perceptions of their achievement of teaching competency did not

become significantly more like those of their cooperating teachers as amount of field work increased.

6. Teacher candidates' self-ratings in all areas of teaching competency were related at a low but statistically significant level only to hours of volunteer work during college and to special education courses taken.

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By

Sister Gabrielle Kowalski

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Education today faces a need to evaluate practices that have been adopted and accepted on the basis of theoretical constructs or folk wisdom. Teacher education, including the preparation of teachers for children with special needs, has, for example, moved recently toward an emphasis on the acquisition of specified teaching competencies by candidates. Undergraduate teacher preparation programs are designed, supposedly, to foster such competencies.

Statements regarding the competencies expected of teachers of the mentally impaired have been developed and some research has been done to validate these competencies (Hoeksema, 1975). However, research on changes in teacher candidates as a result of participation in undergraduate preparation programs is limited. Investigation of changes in candidates' perceptions about and achievement of specific teaching competencies could provide data for describing, evaluating and strengthening preparation programs.

In this study such data were obtained regarding acquisition of perceptions about the relative importance of specific teaching competencies and achievement of these competencies by pre-service teachers of the mentally impaired. Candidates' perception of the importance of the competencies were compared with those of teachers in the field. Acquisition of specific competencies was rated both by the candidates themselves and, where possible, by those teachers who supervised them in field experience placements.

## Purpose of the Study

This research study was designed to investigate the perceptions of students preparing to be teachers of the mentally impaired regarding the relative importance of specific teaching competencies and to compare these perceptions with those of teachers in the field. The subjects were at various stages in the teacher preparation sequence and were grouped according to the level of field experience or practicum in which they were enrolled. Intergroup differences in the ratings of specific teaching competencies' importance were examined in order to identify the pattern of change in subjects' perceptions as they gained actual classroom experience. The practicing teachers of the mentally impaired who had been surveyed by Hoeksema (1975) served as a criterion group.

A second purpose of this study was to examine teacher candidates' self-ratings on the achievement of specific teaching competencies. Again it was hypothesized that self-ratings would change as a function of the length of time spent in the teacher preparation program as reflected by the level of field experience in which the teacher candidates were enrolled.

Variation was also studied in terms of the relationship between teacher candidates' self-ratings and other independent variables of interest: kind and amount of other contact with the mentally impaired; number of special education courses taken; and grade point average.

For those subjects who were participating in field experiences with the mentally impaired at the time data were collected, ratings of the achievement of specific teaching competencies were also obtained from those teachers who supervised them, referred to as their cooperating teachers. A progression in the demonstration of specific teaching competencies was expected. However, the pattern of this achievement was also of interest to the investigator.

Finally, the self-ratings of the candidates were compared to the ratings of their cooperating teachers in an effort to determine whether the ratings became more similar at more advanced levels of field experience.

## Importance of the Study

Teacher education programs have changed over the years. In the past they consisted of course work which focused on cognitive knowledge about teaching. This course work was coupled with minimal practical application in the form of a terminal practice teaching experience.

Today teacher education programs generally combine course work with several field experiences extended over the students' total preparation period (Cooper and Sadker, 1972). This combination of course work and practicum is designed to enable students to demonstrate, at the termination of the program, those competencies which will make them employable as teachers.

This change in teacher education programs has come about with little reliance on empirical validity. The positive influence of additional field experience or practicum and of the emphasis on achievement of specific teaching competencies has been accepted as a given.

This study did not set out to question the value of field experience but rather to examine its relationship, as well as that of the other variables identified, to perceptions about teaching competencies. Did candidates, in fact, gradually become more like teachers in attitudes toward the importance of specific teaching competencies, as preparation programs assume? Did candidates gradually become more confident and homogeneous in their

self-perceptions. If so, what variables accounted for these changes? The answers to these questions can be employed in both the design and the evaluation of teacher education programs, specifically those which train teachers of the mentally impaired.

With increasing frequency students charge "that teacher education programs lack relevancy" (Schalock, 1972, p. 2). This study, by investigating the perceptions of students during various phases of their preparation as teachers of the mentally impaired, served indirectly as a measure of consumer satisfaction. If students felt more and more competent as they proceeded through their training, it could be inferred that they were satisfied with it. If, on the other hand, students did not exhibit a sense of achievement it may be inferred that they were dissatisfied. Such results may indicate the need for revisions in the teacher education curriculum.

This research has relevance in several areas. The first of these is recruitment of teacher candidates. More individuals are applying for admission to teacher education programs than can be admitted or can realistically expect to be employed given present population trends and economic conditions (Kemble and McKenna, 1975). From the data gathered in this study it is possible to examine variables related to self-perception of achievement of specific

teaching competencies. Such variables could be useful in the selection of teacher trainees.

The second area of application is that of teacher education curriculum. Patterns of change in perceptions about the relative importance of specific teaching competencies and rates of achievement of these competencies found in the data serve to indicate possible strengths and weaknesses within components or phases of the preparation program for teachers of the mentally impaired. Results of this study, therefore, suggest where emphasis should be placed by the training institution.

Finally, school districts will find the research important in planning in-service training for newly hired or relatively inexperienced teachers of the mentally impaired. It was assumed that even those subjects in the study who most closely approximated experienced teachers in their perceptions of teaching competencies still differed from them to some degree (Bruce and Miller, 1976). The nature and magnitude of such differences as well as the rate and pattern of achievement of specific teaching competencies may indicate priorities for in-service training.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

Since the primary purpose of this study was to examine differences in perceptions about the importance and achievement of specific teaching competencies by groups

of students preparing to be teachers of the mentally impaired, the following research questions were addressed.

1. Do perceptions of students preparing to be teachers of the mentally impaired regarding the relative importance of specific teaching competencies become more like those of experienced teachers as amount of field experience increases?
2. Do teacher candidates consider themselves more competent as amount of field experience increases?
3. Do teacher candidates become more homogeneous in their perceptions of their achievement of specific teaching competencies as amount of field experience increases?
4. Do cooperating teachers consider teacher candidates more competent as amount of field experience increases?
5. Do teacher candidates' perceptions of their competency become more like those of their cooperating teachers as amount of field experience increases?
6. Do specific independent variables other than amount of field experience account for variations among teacher candidates in their perceptions of their achievement of specific teaching competencies?

From these research questions the following hypotheses regarding students preparing to be teachers of the mentally impaired were drawn.

1. Teacher candidates' ratings of specific teaching competencies by their importance will become more like the ratings of teachers in the field so that:
   a. student teachers' ratings will most closely approximate those of experienced teachers;
   b. incoming students' ratings will least approximate those of experienced teachers;
   c. the ratings of other student groups will fall between those of student teachers and incoming students.

   $H_1$: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \neq \mu_3 \neq \mu_4 \neq \mu_5 \neq \mu_6$ ($\alpha = .05$)

   $H_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_5 = \mu_6$ ($\alpha = .05$)

2. Teacher candidates' self-ratings in the achievement of specific teaching competencies will increase so that:
   a. student teachers will rate themselves highest in achievement;
   b. incoming students will rate themselves lowest in achievement;
   c. other student groups' self-ratings will fall between those of student teachers and incoming students.

   $H_2$: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \neq \mu_3 \neq \mu_4 \neq \mu_5$ ($\alpha = .05$)

   $H_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_5$ ($\alpha = .05$)

3. Within-group variance in self-ratings of the achievement of specific teaching competencies will decrease so that:
   a. within-group variance will be greatest for incoming students;
   b. within-group variance will be least for student teachers;
   c. within-group variance for other student groups will fall between that for in-coming students and that for student teachers.

$H_3$: $\sigma_1 \neq \sigma_2 \neq \sigma_3 \neq \sigma_4 \neq \sigma_5$ ($\alpha = .05$)

$H_0$: $\sigma_1 = \sigma_2 = \sigma_3 = \sigma_4 = \sigma_5$ ($\alpha = .05$)

4. Cooperating teachers will rate teacher candidates higher in the achievement of specific teaching competencies so that:
   a. student teachers will be rated highest in achievement by their cooperating teachers;
   b. students in initial field experiences will be rated lowest by their cooperating teachers;
   c. ratings of other students will fall between those of students in initial field experiences and those of student teachers.

$H_4$: $\mu_{2(t)} < \mu_{4(t)} < \mu_{5(t)}$ ($\alpha = .05$)

$H_0$: $\mu_{2(t)} = \mu_{4(t)} = \mu_{5(t)}$ ($\alpha = .05$)

5. Teacher candidates' self-ratings in the achievement of specific teaching competencies will become more like those of their cooperating teachers so that:
   a. student teachers' self-ratings will be most like those of their cooperating teachers;
   b. self-ratings of students in initial field experiences will be least like those of their cooperating teachers;
   c. the relationship between self-ratings and cooperating teacher ratings for other students will be greater than for students in initial field experiences and less than that for student teachers.

$H_5$: $(\mu_{2(t)} - \mu_2) \neq (\mu_{4(t)} - \mu_4) \neq (\mu_{5(t)} - \mu_5)$
$(\alpha = .05)$

$H_0$: $(\mu_{2(t)} - \mu_2) = (\mu_{4(t)} - \mu_4) = (\mu_{5(t)} - \mu_5)$
$(\alpha = .05)$

6. Independent variables other than amount of field experience will not be related significantly to teacher candidates' perceptions of their achievement of specific teaching competencies so that:
   a. contact with the mentally impaired prior to choice of major field;
   b. volunteer work with the mentally impaired;
   c. special education courses taken;

d. grade point average

will not affect teacher candidates' ratings of their achievement of specific teaching competencies.

$H_6$: $r \neq 0$ ($\alpha = .05$)

$H_0$: $r = 0$ ($\alpha = .05$)

## Definition of Terms

Terms used in the research questions and hypotheses are defined below:

1. In-coming students - students who have identified themselves as special education majors intending to be certified as teachers of the mentally impaired but who have no field experience (Group I).
2. Field experience - placement in a special education class under the supervision of an experienced teacher; earns course credit.
3. Student teaching - placement in a class for the mentally impaired under the supervision of an experienced teacher on a full-time basis (Group V).
4. Cooperating teachers - experienced special education teachers who supervise field work placements.
5. Specific teaching competencies - sixty-three selected functions which may be performed by

teachers of the mentally impaired (Hoeksema, 1975, p. 37; see Appendix A).

## Summary

The purpose and relevance of the present study have been discussed, research questions and hypotheses delineated and terminology defined. In the succeeding chapter this research will be placed in a context provided by the professional literature concerning specific teaching competencies, field experience and other variables affecting teacher candidates. The research methodology used will be outlined in Chapter III while Chapter IV will report the results of the analyses of the data obtained. Lastly, Chapter V will contain a summary of the findings, the conclusions reached, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## Introduction

Literature relevant to the preparation of teachers of the mentally impaired, in particular that which relates to changes in candidates' perceptions and achievement of specific teaching competencies, will be reviewed in this chapter. Emphasis will be placed on changes associated with participation in field experiences and other selected personal and program variables. This literature is part of a broad body of theory and research dealing more generally with teacher candidates' socialization into the teacher role (Lortie, 1975; Dreeben, 1970). This review will focus only on those facets of that wider topic which relate to the present study.

## Program Evaluation

Much recent literature in teacher education has emphasized a demand for program evaluation. This emphasis, in turn, has arisen from the accountability movement in both general and special education. Kelley (1974) summarized the trend:

> . . . general agreement developed that our schools must become better. And both critics and advocates of the schools agreed that better schools require better teachers. Thus, demands for reform in education led to demands for improved teacher preparation (p. 7).

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) in its standards for accreditation of preparation programs recommended student participation in program evaluation and the use of evaluation results to improve basic programs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1971). The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in its most recent statement on the preparation and training of personnel in special education proposed the following guidelines (Council for Exceptional Children, 1976):

> 2.6.1 Preparation programs for special education personnel should be evaluated systematically and continuously. Such evaluation should involve representatives of all constituencies affected by the preparation programs including students in the program (p. 38).
>
> 2.6.2 Preparation programs should assess and document the competencies of all trainees (p. 39).

The call for the assessment and documentation of competencies was echoed in the position statement on teacher preparation and certification of the National Association for Retarded Citizens (1973).

Under the impetus of the accountability movement, models of educational evaluation were developed. For example, Stake (1967) conceptualized evaluation as being descriptive as well as judgmental while Cronbach (1963)

saw the components of evaluation as the study of process, the use of both proficiency and attitude measures, and follow-up.

The adoption of a discrepancy evaluation model was spurred by the demands of the United States Office of Education for cost-benefit analysis in programs funded by federal monies (Evaluation Training Consortium Workshop, 1975). One component of this model is the collection of performance information; that is "a measure of the discrepancy between desired outcomes and things as they are" (Grotelueschen and Gooler, 1972, p. 9). Similarly Provus (1969) discussed evaluation as the comparison of performance against standards.

The literature appears to support the contention that evaluation has become a necessary component of any educational program at any level. Such evaluation requires specificity of program outcomes. In teacher education these outcomes have come to be known as specific teaching competencies.

## Specific Teaching Competencies

When Provus' definition of educational evaluation given above is applied to teacher education the questions which immediately follow are: against what standard are teacher candidates to be judged? how is good teaching defined (Deneen, 1975)? The attempt to answer these

questions for purposes of program evaluation has led to efforts to delineate specific teaching competencies.

## Identification

Joyce, Soltis and West (1974) proposed five major options for identifying competencies. They are: a model of the school; a general model; a particular educational approach; a practitioner model and a traditional teacher education model. Turner (1975) suggested three ways of identifying teaching skills: the utilization of statements drawn from psychological, developmental and pedagogical theory; analysis of observed teacher practice; and the use of teachers' reports concerning what they believe to be important teaching skills.

The practitioner model, equivalent to Turner's third suggestion, "involves asking practitioners which competencies they believe are important . . . . Developing the model of the teacher from real working teachers has the advantage of real-world relevance" (Joyce et al., 1974, p. 9). The use of the practicing teacher in identifying specific teaching competencies is in keeping with systems approaches to instructional design in which an analysis of performance within the referrent situation provides the objectives for the system (Davis, Alexander and Yelon, 1974). The literature seems to indicate agreement that the concepts and skills which are to be translated into

competency statements may be identified by conducting inquiries of master teachers.

Validation

Several variations of the practitioner model have been used to validate specific teaching competencies educed from educational premises. Thomas and Kay (1974) attempted to arrive at priorities among defined teacher competencies by asking classroom teachers and supervisors to rate statements of competencies on a five-point Likert scale.

Using a similar method Hoeksema (1975) found that teachers of the mentally retarded ranked the competencies of promoting children's independence, individualizing instruction, helping children accept themselves, handling unacceptable behavior and making learning tasks clear to children as most important. Conducting large group activities, operating audio-visual equipment, writing behaviorally stated objectives, preparing written lesson plans and administering commercially prepared tests were ranked as least important.

According to a survey of 365 Colorado teachers and aides (Owens, 1973) the most needed competencies for teaching the trainable mentally retarded were ability to recognize growth and development patterns, to measure, interpret and evaluate intellectual, social, emotional, and physical performance and to select and plan instructional activities. Dykes (1975) surveyed teachers of

crippled and other health-impaired children. She obtained a ranking of those competencies which 75 percent or more of the teachers reported they used in their current positions. A study by Bullock, Dykes and Kelly (1974) concerned itself with competencies relevant to the education of behaviorally disordered children.

The studies cited are difficult to evaluate because each investigation used a separate and unique list of competencies. Where a specific competency appeared in more than one study, it might be defined differently by each investigator. Nevertheless, such studies seem to be a necessary first step in constituting a catalog of specific teaching competencies.

Measurement

Assuming that specific teaching competencies are validated by such studies of teachers in the field, Joyce et al. (1974) pointed out that: "Good teachers might turn out to be highly ideosyncratic artists whose qualities are not amenable to training on any basis" (p. 9). The question which faces teacher educators, then is: Are competencies trainable? To raise it in a more classic form--is teaching an art or a skill? In order to answer this question it is necessary to ask whether competency levels change during teacher training and if so whether such changes are measurable. Turner (1972) suggested that three conditions must be present for the measurement of teaching competencies:

the teacher training program must provide evidence of teacher growth in specified competencies; the school system must provide evidence of pupil progress; and the relationship between the two sets of measures must be studied. In other words, the ultimate measure of a teacher's competence is pupil achievement.

Because of the complexities involved in obtaining measures of pupil progress within school systems few studies relating such measures to teacher trainee competence are reported in the literature. At Indiana University two groups of teacher trainees, beginning students and student teachers, were compared on ability to produce achievement in mentally retarded pupils (Garrett, 1973). One variable considered was student perception of the teacher role. The results of the study as reported were not readily interpretable.

Teacher educators, then, have concentrated their efforts, for practical reasons, on meeting the first of Turner's conditions--providing evidence of teacher growth in specified competencies. Such evidence has typically been gathered by objective measurement, subjective measurement or a combination of the two.

An example of the use of objective measurement is a University of Nebraska study of juniors and seniors enrolled in a program for secondary teachers (Kelley, 1974). They participated in field experiences where required

performances were demonstrated. A proctor judged whether the performances met specified criteria. Approximately 20 percent of the students did not meet required levels of competency each semester. Of these, half discontinued teacher preparation.

Subjective measurement or self-assessment of the attainment of teaching competencies is by far the most common method of providing evidence of teacher growth. Shearron and Johnson (1973) described the teacher education program at the University of Georgia. Though assessment criteria were given, no data were presented. It was reported that "self-assessment is given top priority" (p. 189). Newell (1976) discussed the development and use of a Self-Assessment Scale at Auburn University. Comparison of mean scores on the revised instrument showed that over a two-quarter interval students gained significantly in total score and in three of the five categories of the scale. In the remaining two categories changes were in the positive direction but not significant. She concluded that self-evaluation or how one perceives his ability to do something is important and tends to "motivate students toward higher achievement" (p. 54).

Edgar and Neel (1976) compared self-assessments, supervisor ratings and university advisor ratings of eleven masters level students on fifteen competencies deemed necessary for teachers of the emotionally disturbed and

learning disabled. They ascribed discrepancies to the use of differing criteria. In a study of graduates of preparation programs for teachers of the emotionally impaired in the state of Michigan Wood (1976) examined competency self-ratings. She also asked advisors to predict the areas in which their graduates would rate themselves most highly.

Hoover et al. (1965) studied 187 students at Arizona State University. They were asked to compare their feelings of competence in twenty-five teaching techniques before and after student teaching. The results showed significantly greater perceived competence in five areas and significantly lesser perceived competence in four areas. However, since the students were asked to rank the teaching techniques it may be an artifact of the research design that in four areas they expressed feelings of decreased competence after student teaching.

Graduates of the teacher education program at Weber State College reported feeling effective in applying what they had learned. Their judgments were confirmed by cooperating teachers, school principals, and school district supervisory personnel (Parker, 1974). On the other hand, in a study by Groff (1962) no attempt was made to corroborate student teachers' self-estimates of their ability to teach elementary school subject areas with evaluations by supervisors and/or methods class teachers.

Another approach to self-appraisal is found in studies of changes in teacher candidates' self-concept (Sellin, 1967). Minkoff and Sellin (1973) found significant correlation between competency ratings by an experienced observer and teacher trainees' self-reports of self-concept of ability as a teacher. These studies assume that "a teacher candidate's self-concept may be viewed as an important, even powerful predictor of teaching behavior" (Freeman and Davis, 1975, p. 214). However, Freeman and Davis (1975) did not find such a relationship between scores of the Self-Report Inventory and lessons coded for eleven specific teaching behaviors.

Even though pupil achievement is acknowledged as the best measure of attainment of teaching competencies, it can be seen that the research studies have, for the most part, used measures which are easier to obtain. These measures are both objective, that is assessment by a mentor, and subjective, that is self-assessment. In summary, literature on the area of specific teaching competencies reports attempts to identify, validate and measure attainment of such competencies in teacher trainees.

## Field Experience

The teaching competencies identified, validated and measured in the studies cited above may be attained in various ways. But the most universal mode of such attainment seems to be field experience or practicum. Literature

related to field experience in teacher education, therefore, will be reviewed.

Justification for the inclusion of field experience in teacher education was undertaken by such writers as Fantini (1973), Meyen (1973) and Reitman (1973). The constructs on which their justifications are based were found within socialization theory (Moore, 1969; Rosencranz and Biddle, 1964).

The AACTE's accreditation standards recommended that curricula include laboratory and clinical experience in conjunction with teaching and learning theory and culminate with practicum (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1971). State departments of public instruction are also recommending that "the professional sequence require, beginning early and continued throughout that sequence, field experiences for pre-service education students" (The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d., p. 3). The importance of practical experience for special educators has been expressed over the years from Goddard (1923) to the Council for Exceptional Children (1976).

## Student Teaching

Of all possible field placements or practicum experiences that of student teaching has received the greatest emphasis in the literature for reasons such as those expressed by Eddy (1969): ". . . it seems clear that

important learnings about the role of teacher do occur during student teaching and that this time may be particularly useful for the transmission of written and oral traditions about teaching from one generation of teachers to the next" (p. 14). According to Wright and Tuska (1968) not all the outcomes of student teaching may be positive ones. "Student teachers play at their roles rather than live them. It is easy for them to mistake the adult responsibilities of teaching for an opportunity to enjoy being a child" (p. 258).

Research on the effects of student teaching on teacher candidates has focused, as was the case with research on the attainment of teaching competencies, on self-appraisal as measured by formal and informal instruments (Walberg, 1968). Nagle (1959) found significant improvement in attitudes toward pupils, teaching, teachers and school-community relationships following student teaching. Smith (1975) reported that significant shifts toward self-actualization occurred over an eight-month period in students exposed to simulation experience and student teaching. Shifts of similar magnitude did not occur in students exposed to simulation experience without student teaching.

The Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI) has been used in several studies to ascertain changes in attitude as a concomitant of student teaching. Campbell

(1967), Day (1959) and Dutton (1962) reported negative shifts in attitude while Scott and Brinkley (1960) found significant improvement in the attitudes of student teachers whose supervising teachers held attitudes superior to their own. However, Yee and Fruchter (1971) pointed out that "MTAI scores have been found to be unstable in the interval between pre-service teacher candidacy and regular classroom teaching" (p. 119).

On three scales of attitude to education Butcher (1965) found significant differences between experienced teachers and students in training at three different institutions with the teachers generally scoring lower than the students. When the students were retested eight months after initial testing it was found that those in two of the training programs had made significant gains in scores, making them even less like the experienced teachers.

If anxiety can be construed as the result of feeling incompetent then studies of anxiety among student teachers are of interest. Petrusich (1967) administered parallel forms of an anxiety scale for eight consecutive weeks. She found that anxiety peaked during the sixth week of student teaching and then declined. Thompson (1963) found that his subjects, 125 student teachers, reported feeling more anxious prior to student teaching than during the experience itself. Sorenson and Halpert (1968) reported that approximately 70 percent of the 248

student teachers they studied experienced stress at the beginning of their assignment. Twenty percent continued to experience stress at the end. On the other hand, Travers et al. (1952) found relative absence of change in anxiety during the student teaching period as revealed by a sentence completion test. Triplett (1967) approached changes in anxiety level differently. He asked forty elementary and fifty-five secondary student teachers to rank their needs for preparation and guidance before and after student teaching. The elementary student teachers expressed less concern for four and more concern for three of the twenty-three items. The remaining sixteen items did not fluctuate more than three points in rank. Secondary teachers were less concerned in two areas and more concerned in two.

Newsome et al. (1965) found that the student teaching experience affects trainees in a way other than that of changes in attitude and anxiety level. Scores on a test of logical consistency of ideas about education tended to spread out and to be lower at the end of student teaching when compared with scores obtained on the same subjects before student teaching.

## Pre-Student Teaching Field Experience

Despite research results which show the outcomes of student teaching to be mixed an effort is being made to

extend field work experiences downward in teacher education programs. Meyen (1969) suggested that there is a hierarchy of practicum experiences which parallels that of course work. The trend reported by Lantz (1966) is toward working with individual pupils prior to assuming the group teaching responsibilities of student teaching. Barnett (1975) cautioned that, despite the advantages of early field experience, "some young people may not be emotionally mature enough to gain from such experience and it therefore may be undesirable" (p. 45). Clarke (1971) summarized programs of what he calls "graduated conceptualization/ practice" in Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Toledo and Pittsburgh and at Michigan State University, the Northwest Regional Laboratory, Syracuse University and Columbia Teachers' College.

Houston and Jones (1974), studying field experiences provided students at the University of Houston, found that as a result of the initial experience 10 percent of the students decide not to teach and another 10 percent change major areas. Anderson (1974) reported "greater professionalism and commitment by those student teachers whose training brings them into early association with professional educators" (p. 80). Repicky and Marty (1975) described evaluation elements included in field experience for sophomore level prospective science teachers. These elements include pre and post tests on a Nature of Science

Survey, a questionnaire designed to assess the students' concept of the teaching profession and the preparation of science teachers, and a semantic differential instrument employed to determine attitudes toward cooperating teachers, course requirements, the field-based experience and the children with whom they worked. No data were presented however.

Brim (1966) studied 250 undergraduate teacher education majors who were at various points in their training. The MTAI was given and then repeated ten weeks later. Significant positive changes occurred across all subject groups. However the greatest changes took place among those who were in the earlier phases of the program. Interviews were conducted with thirty-two students who showed the greatest differences in pre and post test scores. Brim reported that the "most characteristic reasons for changing attitudes were based on laboratory experiences" (p. 443). One hundred percent of the interviewed students substantiated Brim's statement.

In a study which employed experimental and control groups Sandefur (1970) found "behavioral changes in prospective teachers . . . more readily effected by programs of professional education that stress direct involvement . . . in the teaching-learning process through meaningful laboratory experiences made relevant to content and theory" (p. 395). Measures used in comparing the two groups

included the Classroom Observation Record, Interaction Analysis, grades in student teaching, and scores on the National Teacher Examination.

Many reports in the special education literature describe models of pre-student teaching field experience programs (Olson and Hahn, 1964) and programs already in existence (Anderson, 1967; Larson, 1972; Reid et al., 1976; Shane, 1970). For example, sophomore students in the Department of Special Education at Utah State University are required during field experience to identify, develop and present a learning sequence to a specific child (Fifield, 1972). Investigators such as Deines (1973) and Kelley (1974) provided informal reports of the positive effects of pre-student teaching field experience.

It can be seen that the emphases on field work and on specific teaching competencies are related in that both make use of the assets of classroom teachers as described by Gaudia (1975): "daily contact with children, parents, and the reality of teaching" (p. 284).

## Correlates of Teaching Competence

Evidence supporting the value of field experience is increasing but still remains limited. Other correlates of specific teaching competence have, therefore, been examined in the literature. Experience with the handicapped has been suggested as a necessary prerequisite for enrollment in special education teacher training programs

(Carr, 1972). Effects of such previous exposure have been studied by Minkoff and Sellin (1973) and Blackwell (1972). Both found no relationship between prior contact with exceptional children and teacher candidates' effectiveness or self-concept.

The relationship between course work completion, scholastic achievement and teaching competence have also been considered (Nagle, 1959; Sellin, 1967). Errington (1970) and Meisgeier (1965) found a positive relationship between scholastic achievement and successful student teaching. Results of a study of social studies education students by Emanuel et al. (1975), on the other hand, indicated that quality of work in education courses was not significantly related to how well or how poorly these students performed in their student teaching. Johnson and Radebaugh (1969) held that "undergraduate grade point average appears to be of little value as an indicator of teaching excellence" (p. 155).

However, using program completion rather than success in student teaching as the criterion variable Belcastro (1975) found cumulative grade point average at the end of the sophomore year a predictor variable which contributed significantly to discrimination between students who completed a secondary teacher preparation program and those who had not. Wilk and Cook (1973), in studying University of Minnesota students who persisted in teacher

education programs as compared with those who did not, also found academic variables the most effective in describing differences between the two groups: "Academic performance was the most effective indication of whether students would continue in teacher education" (p. 154).

## Summary

This review of literature relevant to the present study has presented a logical progression from demands for educational evaluation and accountability to the delineation, validation and measurement of specific teaching competencies as a vehicle for such evaluation. It was seen that delineation and validation were most often accomplished with the assistance of practitioners in the field. Attainment of teaching competencies is ideally measured in terms of pupil progress. But when applied to teacher trainees, the practical problems involved in measuring student achievement required the use of other methods, usually self-reports of some kind. The literature also reported the increasing use of field experiences as a means for developing specific teaching competencies. Studies of other correlates of teaching competence were also examined briefly. The present study continues the progression delineated in the literature. It attempts to stimulate program evaluation by measuring perceived importance and achievement of specific teaching competencies as these perceptions are related to participation in field experiences and other variables.

# CHAPTER III

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

This chapter identified the research design and methodology used in this descriptive study. The population of the study, the instrumentation, data collection and data analysis procedures will be discussed.

## Population

The population under investigation was comprised of Michigan State University undergraduates majoring in mental retardation in the Department of Elementary and Special Education. Subjects included:

a. sophomores, juniors and seniors enrolled for field experiences in special education during the fall or winter terms of the 1976-1977 school year;

b. freshmen who, as of the fall term, had declared a mental retardation major but had not as yet taken any field experience in special education.

Data were also gathered from cooperating teachers of those students participating in a field experience with the mentally impaired during the period of the study.

Data collected on students' perceptions of the relative importance of specific teaching competencies were compared with data from practicing teachers of the mentally impaired. The population from which these data were obtained was described by Hoeksema (1975).

## Instrumentation

The instrument (see Appendix A) to which students responded consisted of two parts.

Part I. Personal Data.--This portion of the instrument obtained information regarding the respondents' sex, age, amount of contact with the mentally impaired prior to choice of major field, amount of volunteer work with the mentally impaired, amount of field experience, number of special education courses taken and grade point average. With the exception of descriptive information regarding sex and age, the data obtained were used as measures of independent variables in the statistical analysis of the responses.

Part II. Selected Competencies for Teachers of the Mentally Impaired.--This portion of the instrument contained the sixty-three specific teaching competencies identified by Hoeksema (1975). Respondents were asked to score each of the competency statements in two ways.

A. Respondents were asked, first, to rate each competency as to its importance for a teacher of the

mentally impaired. A five-point scale from "1" or "least important" to "5" or "most important" was used. The ratings indicated the perceptions of the respondents regarding the importance of the teaching competencies specified.

B. Secondly, they were asked to indicate their perceptions of their acquisition of each competency by rating each statement on the following scale:
   1. I have not developed this competency at this time.
   2. I am beginning to develop this competency; I need a good deal of direction.
   3. I am about as competent as a teacher aide; I need some direction.
   4. I am about as competent as a beginning teacher; I can function independently.
   5. I am about as competent as an experienced teacher.

The purpose of these ratings was to identify rate and pattern of acquisition of specific teaching competencies as perceived by teacher trainees.

The instrument to which cooperating teachers responded contained the same sixty-three specific teaching competencies (see Appendix B). The teachers were asked to rate the competencies of the students they were supervising using a five-point scale which corresponded to that

used by the students. Each teacher was also asked to identify the field experience in which the student was enrolled for purposes of data analysis. These ratings identified rate and pattern of acquisition of specific teaching competencies as perceived by cooperating teachers. The self-ratings of trainees were then compared with ratings of cooperating teachers by groups constituted by amount of field experience.

## Data Collection

Data were collected for the following groups of students during the fall or winter terms of 1976-1977.

Group I: freshmen with no field experience with the mentally impaired: N = 33; of these 25 or 75.76 percent returned instruments.

Group II: sophomores enrolled for initial field experience with the mentally impaired; N = 22; of these 20 or 90.91 percent returned instruments.

Group III: juniors enrolled in the "core" program field experience with the handicapped other than the mentally impaired: N = 32; of these 30 or 93.75 percent returned instruments.

Group IV: juniors or seniors enrolled in the "mental retardation block" field experience with the mentally impaired: N = 27; of these 26 or 96.3 percent returned instruments.

Group V: seniors enrolled in student teaching with the mentally impaired: N = 24; of these 12 or 50 percent returned instruments.

Group VI was comprised of teachers of the mentally impaired for whom data were already available: N = 99.

An effort was made to provide that Groups I through V be mutually exclusive; that as far as possible respondents be surveyed at the time they are enrolled in their most advanced field experience and that each group be of maximum size. It was assumed, based on previous enrollment figures for the various field experiences, that these conditions would be met for Groups I, III and IV during the fall term and for Groups II and V during the winter term. Therefore, data were gathered from Groups I, III and IV beginning in November, 1976, and from Groups II and V beginning in February, 1977.

Students listed as mental retardation majors in the Department of Elementary and Special Education were assigned to appropriate subject groups based on their registration in field experience courses. The investigator explained and distributed the instrument in special education classes to those students in Groups III and IV. Students in Groups I, II and V were contacted by mail. A copy of the instrument was sent to them with a letter of explanation (see Appendix C) and a stamped, addressed envelope for return of the instrument. Each student was

asked to sign his name on a form detachable from the instrument. As each instrument was received it was given an identifying code number and the signature form was removed to preserve the respondent's anonymity. Follow-up telephone calls were made to students who did not return surveys within three weeks. Letters were written to those individuals who could not be reached by telephone (see Appendix E). It was necessary to send several respondents a second copy of the survey since the original had been lost.

A list of teachers supervising students in field experiences in classes for the mentally impaired was obtained from the Student Teaching Office at Michigan State University. Teachers were sent a copy of the instrument, an explanatory letter (see Appendix D) and a stamped, addressed envelope for return of the instrument. Each teacher was asked to sign his name so that instruments could be assigned for analysis according to students' field experience. As each teacher's response was received it was assigned an identifying code number corresponding to that of the student being supervised. The signature was then detached to preserve the anonymity of both the student and the cooperating teacher.

Follow-up letters were sent to nonrespondents (see Appendix E). In several instances teachers reported that they had not received the original copy of the instrument.

Therefore, second copies were sent to all nonrespondents. The twenty-two students in Group II received fifteen evaluations for a response rate of 68.18 percent. Of the twenty-seven students in Group IV, twenty-five or 92.26 percent received evaluations. Twenty-four student teachers (Group V) received nineteen evaluations for a response rate of 79.17 percent.

The number of cooperating teachers in a given group did not always equal the number of students in that group because one teacher sometimes supervised several students. In some cases where students were assigned to "team teaching" classes more than one teacher's evaluation was received for the same student.

## Data Analysis

Procedures of data analysis used are presented for each research question.

1. Do perceptions of students preparing to be teachers of the mentally impaired regarding the relative importance of specific teaching competencies become more like those of experienced teachers as amount of field experience increases?

Obtaining groups of maximum size necessitated that some groups be surveyed during the fall term and others during the winter term. This could have been a source of invalidity. However, data were analyzed concurrently for all groups since it was not anticipated that the

approximately ten-week difference would significantly affect subjects' responses.

For purposes of statistical analysis the sixty-three specific teaching competencies given in Part IIA of the instrument were grouped into the following categories:

A. Planning Instruction (PI): competencies 1-14
B. Assessing and Evaluating Behavior (AE): competencies 15-20
C. Conducting Instruction (CI): competencies 21-29
D. Classroom Management (CM): competencies 30-35
E. Facilitating Social-Emotional Maturity (FS): competencies 36-44
F. Dealing With and Relating to Other Professionals (DR): competencies 45-54
G. Working With Parents (WP): competencies 55-63

The mean importance rating for each of the resulting seven sub-scales was computed for each group of respondents. Group VI was used as a criterion group. Results are shown in tabular form in Chapter IV.

Groups I, II, III, IV and V were compared using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance in which the five levels of field experience comprised the independent variable and the mean importance scores in each of the seven major competency areas were the dependent variables (Kerlinger, 1973). Difference scores were obtained between the means of Groups I through V and Group VI.

These deviation scores were then tested for statistical significance. Post hoc analysis allowed for identification of the group(s) significantly different from the criterion group, and the category or categories of competencies which contributed to significant differences.

2. Do teacher candidates consider themselves more competent as amount of field work increases?
3. Do teacher candidates become more homogeneous in their perceptions of their achievement of specific teaching competencies as amount of field experience increases?

Responses to Part IIB of the survey instrument were grouped in the same way as was described under research question 1. Within each group the mean rating and the standard deviation for each of the seven sub-scales of specific teaching competencies were computed. The results are presented in tabular form in Chapter IV.

For purposes of statistical analysis the mean ratings in each of these areas for Groups I, II, III, IV, and V were compared using one-way multivariate analysis of variance. No data from a criterion group (VI) of experienced teachers were available. This analysis also indicated the degree and significance of within-group variance in self-ratings. Appropriate post hoc analysis was done subsequent to findings of significant differences.

4. Do cooperating teachers consider teacher candidates more competent as amount of field experience increases?

Cooperating teachers of students in Groups II, IV and V described above were asked to rate the competencies of the students they supervised. Group III was omitted from consideration in this research question because the cooperating teachers supervising "core" students are not teachers of the mentally impaired. Group I, of course, had no cooperating teachers.

Responses, grouped by the amount of field experience of the students supervised, yielded a mean rating for each specific teaching competency. These ratings are reported in tabular form in Chapter IV.

Analysis of variance yielded the significance of the differences between the mean ratings by the three cooperating teacher groups of their students in the seven major competency areas. Appropriate post hoc analysis was done.

5. Do teacher candidates' perceptions of their competency become more like those of their cooperating teachers as amount of field experience increases?

The self-ratings of students in Groups II, IV, and V were compared with their ratings by their cooperating teachers. Difference scores were computed. Mean difference

scores and standard deviations for each group are reported in tabular form in Chapter IV.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was performed to determine whether there is a significant difference among the mean difference scores for the three groups on the seven sub-scales of teaching competency. Appropriate post hoc analysis was done.

6. Do specific independent variables other than amount of field experience account for variations among teacher candidates in their perception of their achievement of specific teaching competencies?

Descriptive information regarding the demographic variables of sex and age obtained from Part I of the survey instrument were summarized. Tables report the distribution of the respondents' responses to items 3a to 3e in Part I of the survey instrument. Continuous variables such as the amount of volunteer or paid work done with the mentally retarded, the number of special education courses taken, and grade point averages were correlated with subjects' self-ratings. Pearson product-moment correlations are reported in Chapter IV.

Statistical analyses of the data were done via the Michigan State University CDC 6500 computer.

# CHAPTER IV

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings obtained from the analysis of the data are presented. In the first section statistics descriptive of the population are reported. In section two the results of the statistical analyses applied to the data for each research question are reported. In the discussion section an attempt is made to interpret the results presented and to draw conclusions from the data. In the final section the research results in terms of the acceptance or rejection of each research hypothesis are summarized.

## Descriptive Statistics

One hundred thirteen students responded to the Student Survey Instrument. Of these 106 or 93.8 percent were females and 7 or 6.2 percent were males.

The ages of the respondents ranged from eighteen to forty with a mean of 20.8 and a standard deviation of 3.682.

## Perceived Relative Importance of Specific Teaching Competencies

The perceptions of students preparing to be teachers of the mentally impaired regarding the relative importance of certain teaching competencies are reported in Table 1. The sixty-three specific teaching competencies which respondents rated by importance in Part IIA of the survey instrument were categorized to create the following seven sub-scales: planning instruction (PI), assessing and evaluating behavior (AE), conducting instruction (CI), classroom management (CM), facilitating social-emotional maturity (FS), dealing with and relating to other professionals (DR), and working with parents (WP).

The respondents were grouped according to the level of field experience in which they were enrolled. Group I had no field experience; Group II were participating in their initial field experience; Groups III and IV were enrolled in more advanced field experiences appropriate to their respective academic levels and programs; Group V were student teachers. Group VI, teacher in the field, served as a criterion group.

Table 1 shows the mean importance rating and the standard deviation for each competency sub-scale for each group of subjects. Figure 1 presents the mean importance scores in graphic form.

Table 1.--Perceived importance of teaching competencies.

| Competency Sub-scale | Group I N=25 | | Group II N=20 | | Group III N=30 | | Group IV N=26 | | Group V N=12 | | Group VI N=99 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD |
| 1. PI | 4.056 | .549 | 4.04 | .633 | 4.103 | .465 | 4.196 | .47 | 4.208 | .57 | 4.081 | .407 |
| 2. AE | 3.544 | .808 | 3.61 | .89 | 3.69 | .52 | 4.01 | .525 | 3.6 | .743 | 3.833 | .614 |
| 3. CI | 4.092 | .732 | 4.185 | .665 | 4.1 | .353 | 4.23 | .383 | 4.1 | .583 | 4.168 | .384 |
| 4. CM | 4.284 | .72 | 4.53 | .71 | 4.51 | .362 | 4.558 | .458 | 4.467 | .535 | 4.559 | .424 |
| 5. FS | 4.472 | .58 | 4.585 | .877 | 4.66 | .327 | 4.677 | .365 | 4.575 | .405 | 4.58 | .392 |
| 6. DR | 4.224 | .676 | 4.29 | .718 | 4.263 | .375 | 4.192 | .496 | 4.292 | .656 | 4.034 | .504 |
| 7. WP | 4.48 | .712 | 4.475 | .876 | 4.697 | .266 | 4.654 | .405 | 4.6 | .51 | 4.352 | .525 |

Group I: no field experience

Group II: initial field experience

Group III: "core" program field experience

Group IV: "mental retardation block" field experience

Group V: student teaching

Group VI: teachers of the mentally impaired

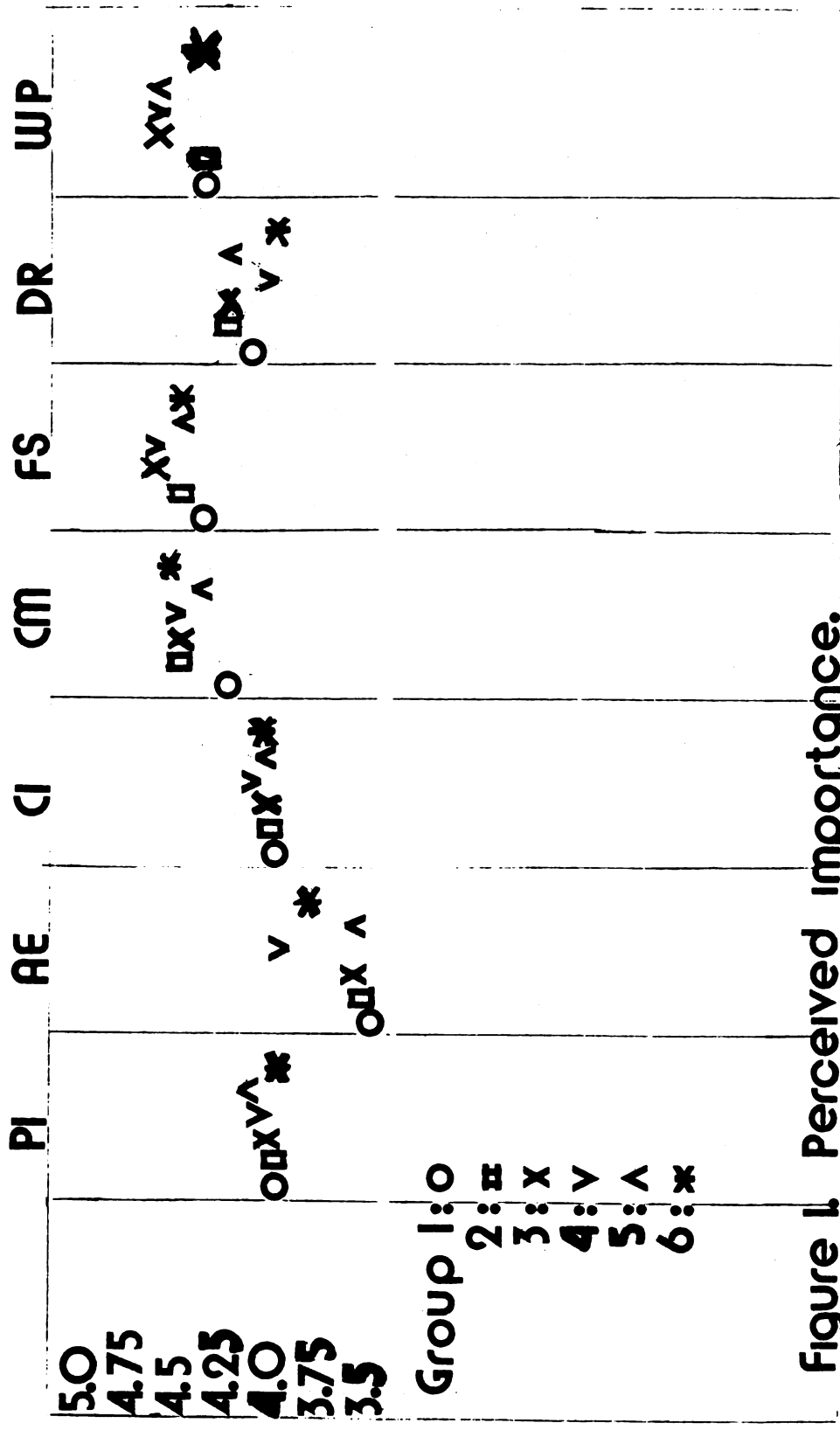


Figure 1. Perceived importance.

The mean importance scores for Groups I, II, III, IV and V were compared using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance in which the five levels of field experience comprised the independent variable. Table 2 shows that there were no significant differences among the five student groups; further analysis would have shown no significant differences between sub-scales of teaching competencies.

Table 2.--Multivariate analysis of variance of mean importance ratings.

| Source of variance | df | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of field experience) | (28, 369.188) | 1.161 | .266 |

The five student group means were then converted into difference scores by subtracting the experienced teacher group mean from the student means for each of the seven sub-scales of teaching competencies. The mean deviation scores and standard deviations are reported in Table 3.

It is clear from the information given in Table 3 that the five student groups deviated somewhat from the criterion group of experienced teachers in their ratings of the importance of specific teaching competencies. Group I, the students with no field experience, differed most from the criterion group. This finding is in keeping

Table 3.--Student mean competency importance rating minus experienced teacher mean competency importance rating.

| Competency Sub-scale | Group I | | Group II | | Group III | | Group IV | | Group V | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD |
| 1. PI | -.044 | .549 | -.06 | .633 | .003 | .465 | .096 | .47 | .108 | .57 |
| 2. AE | -.256 | .808 | -.19 | .891 | -.107 | .52 | .216 | .525 | .2 | .943 |
| 3. CI | -.108 | .732 | -.015 | .665 | .1 | .353 | .031 | .383 | .1 | .583 |
| 4. CM | -.316 | .720 | -.07 | .709 | -.09 | .362 | .042 | .458 | .133 | .535 |
| 5. FS | -.128 | .58 | -.015 | .877 | .06 | .327 | .077 | .365 | -.025 | .405 |
| 6. DR | .224 | .676 | .29 | .718 | .263 | .375 | .192 | .496 | .292 | .656 |
| 7. WP | .08 | .712 | .075 | .876 | .297 | .266 | .254 | .405 | .2 | .51 |

with the hypothesis presented in research question one. However, the group which most closely approximated the criterion group was not Group V, the student teachers, as was hypothesized, but rather Group II. To determine whether the five student groups differed significantly from each other a multivariate analysis of variance of the deviation scores was done. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.--Multivariate analysis of variance of mean importance deviation scores.

| Source of variance | df | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of field experience) | (28, 369.188) | 1.161 | .266 |

This test was not significant at the .05 level of confidence; therefore no further analyses were done. It was concluded that the null hypothesis ($H_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_5 = \mu_6$) could not be rejected.

## Self-Rating of Achievement of Teaching Competencies

In Table 5 mean self-ratings and standard deviations for the five groups of teacher candidates in each of the seven categories of teaching competency are reported. It can be seen that the self-ratings of the five groups differed across the seven sub-scales of teaching competency as was hypothesized. Only for sub-scale one, planning instruction, however, was the pattern of self-ratings in

Table 5.--Teacher candidates' mean self-ratings of achievement of teaching competencies.

| Competency Sub-scale | Group I N=25 | | Group II N=20 | | Group III N=30 | | Group IV N=26 | | Group V N=12 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD |
| 1. PI | 1.696 | 1.163 | 2.525 | .757 | 2.94 | .894 | 3.596 | .462 | 3.792 | 1.292 |
| 2. AE | 1.432 | 1.068 | 1.615 | .739 | 2.83 | .925 | 3.296 | .657 | 2.758 | 1.622 |
| 3. CI | 2.068 | 1.296 | 2.74 | .959 | 3.227 | .624 | 3.704 | .421 | 3.575 | 1.707 |
| 4. CM | 2.228 | 1.431 | 2.805 | 1.057 | 3.233 | .849 | 3.8 | .556 | 3.508 | 1.676 |
| 5. FS | 2.304 | 1.448 | 2.82 | 1.016 | 3.34 | .907 | 3.919 | .464 | 3.408 | 1.719 |
| 6. DR | 2.28 | 1.516 | 2.785 | 1.032 | 3.267 | .933 | 3.788 | .576 | 3.358 | 1.77 |
| 7. WP | 1.908 | 1.345 | 1.425 | .816 | 2.497 | 1.279 | 3.465 | 1.093 | 1.65 | 1.787 |

the direction hypothesized; that is, each successively more experienced group rated themselves higher in achievement of teaching competencies. For the remaining six sub-scales the pattern hypothesized was seen only in Groups I through IV; Group V, the most experienced group of teacher candidates, consistently rated themselves lower than Group IV.

A similar phenomenon was evident in the standard deviations of the five groups across the seven sub-scales. The groups did not become more homogeneous as amount of experience increased. In fact, the group with the most experience, the student teachers, showed consistently more dispersal in self-ratings than any of the other groups. The hypothesized trend for greater experience to be associated with increased homogeneity was seen in sub-scales three through seven, but only for Groups I and IV. For sub-scales one and two the deviations within the groups appeared random.

Since the mean scores of the five groups were different these data were then analyzed using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance. The results are shown in Table 6.

This test was significant at less than the .05 level of confidence. Therefore, the general null hypothesis that the means of the five groups were equal could be rejected. The univariate F test with a significance

Table 6.--Multivariate analysis of variance of mean self-ratings.

| Source of variance | df | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of field experience) | (28, 369.1884) | 4.6633 | .0001 |

level of $\frac{.05}{7}$ = .007 was then employed to find the scale(s) which contributed to the significant differences between groups. The results are shown in Table 7.

Since each sub-scale was found to be significant in its contribution to the total differences between groups, a series of post hoc comparisons was done to identify the groups significantly different on each scale. Group V was the group of greatest interest; therefore, the following contrasts were tested: Group I-Group V ($\mu_1 - \mu_5$); Group II-Group V ($\mu_2 - \mu_5$); Group III-Group V ($\mu_3 - \mu_5$); Group IV-Group V ($\mu_4 - \mu_5$). The analysis of variance tables (Table 8 to Table 14) follow for each of the seven sub-scales.

A pattern is seen to emerge in which for competency areas of classroom management, facilitating social-emotional maturity and dealing with and relating to other professionals, initial field experience contributed the most noticeably to perceptions of increased achievement. In the areas of assessing and evaluating behavior, conducting instruction and working with parents the "core"

Table 7.--Univariate F test for mean scores, achievement dimension.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sub-scale 1 (PI) | 4 | 15.183 | 18.175 | .0001* |
| Sub-scale 2 (AE) | 4 | 15.929 | 16.816 | .0001* |
| Sub-scale 3 (CI) | 4 | 10.337 | 10.572 | .0001* |
| Sub-scale 4 (CM) | 4 | 9.005 | 7.484 | .0001* |
| Sub-scale 5 (FS) | 4 | 9.332 | 7.655 | .0001* |
| Sub-scale 6 (DR) | 4 | 8.187 | 6.164 | .0002* |
| Sub-scale 7 (WP) | 4 | 15.1712 | 9.723 | .0001* |

*Significant at the $\alpha$ = .007 level of confidence.

Table 8.--Analysis of variance for sub-scale 1, planning instruction.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of experience) | (5-1)=4 | | | |
| $\mu_1 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 41.482 | 49.658 | .0001* |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 10.3 | 12.324 | .0007* |
| $\mu_3 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 8.64 | 10.343 | .002 |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | 1 | .314 | .358 | .541 |

Error term .835

*Significant at $\alpha$ = .001.

Table 9.--Analysis of variance for sub-scale 2, assessing and evaluating behavior.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of experience) | (5-1)=4 | | | |
| $\mu_1 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 30.412 | 32.106 | .0001* |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 29.457 | 31.1 | .0001* |
| $\mu_3 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 1.472 | 1.554 | .2153 |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 2.375 | .376 | .5412 |

Error term .947

*Significant at $\alpha$ = .001.

Table 10.--Analysis of variance for sub-scale 3, conducting instruction.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of experience) | (5-1)=4 | | | |
| $\mu_1 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 29.769 | 30.448 | .0001* |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 8.249 | 8.437 | .0045 |
| $\mu_3 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 3.194 | 3.267 | .074 |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | 1 | .136 | .139 | .71 |

Error term .978

*Significant at $\alpha$ = .001.

Table 11.--Analysis of variance for sub-scale 4, classroom management.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of experience) | (5-1)=4 | | | |
| $\mu_1 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 24.114 | 20.04 | .0001* |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 7.433 | 6.178 | .015 |
| $\mu_3 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 3.776 | 3.138 | .079 |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | 1 | .699 | .581 | .448 |

Error term 1.203

*Significant at $\alpha$ = .001.

Table 12.--Analysis of variance for sub-scale 5, facilitating social-emotional maturity.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of experience) | (5-1)=4 | | | |
| $\mu_1 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 23.484 | 19.263 | .0001* |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 8.775 | 7.198 | .009 |
| $\mu_3 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 2.928 | 2.402 | .124 |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 2.143 | 1.758 | .188 |

Error term 1.219

*Significant at $\alpha$ = .001.

Table 13.--Analysis of variance for sub-scale 6, dealing with and relating to other professionals.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of experience) | (5-1)=4 | | | |
| $\mu_1 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 21.214 | 15.972 | .0002* |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 7.516 | 5.658 | .019 |
| $\mu_3 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 2.497 | 1.88 | .173 |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 1.519 | 1.144 | .287 |

Error term 1.328

*Significant at $\alpha$ = .001.

Table 14.--Analysis of variance for sub-scale 7, working with parents.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of experience) | (5-1)=4 | | | |
| $\mu_1 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 5.181 | 3.321 | .071 |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 25.824 | 16.55 | .0001* |
| $\mu_3 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 2.622 | 1.68 | .198 |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | 1 | 27.059 | 17.342 | .0001* |

Error term 1.56

*Significant at $\alpha$ = .001.

level field experience operated in a similar manner. Only in planning instruction did the perception of achievement of competency increase steadily and gradually over the levels of field experience. The area of greatest concern should be that of working with parents since student teachers rated themselves lower than Groups I, III and IV on this competency dimension.

## Cooperating Teacher Rating of Achievement of Teaching Competencies

Table 15 reports the mean achievement ratings given teacher candidates by their cooperating teachers in the seven categories of teaching competency. Group II was comprised of cooperating teachers assigned to students in an initial field experience; Group IV of those assigned to students in a more advanced field experience and Group V of those assigned to student teachers. The numbers in each group refer to the number of observations, not the number of individual teachers, since some teachers supervised more than one student. Also, the numbers do not necessarily correspond to the numbers in the student groups since some surveys were not returned, thereby precluding a one-to-one correspondence between each teacher candidate and his or her respective cooperating teacher.

It is clear from the data presented in Table 15 that cooperating teachers rated candidates higher in achievement of teaching competencies as the candidates

Table 15.--Cooperating teachers' mean ratings of teacher candidates' achievement of teaching competencies.

| Competency Sub-scale | Group II N=15[a] | | Group IV N=25 | | Group V N=19 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD |
| 1. PI | 2.75 | .717 | 3.208 | .999 | 3.88 | .609 |
| 2. AE | .922 | 1.2 | 2.545 | 1.518 | 3.708 | .867 |
| 3. CI | 2.852 | .564 | 3.3 | .937 | 3.773 | .57 |
| 4. CM | 2.728 | .569 | 3.263 | 1.023 | 3.585 | .82 |
| 5. FS | 2.657 | .606 | 3.194 | 1.003 | 3.762 | .655 |
| 6. DR | 3.134 | 1.321 | 3.35 | 1.115 | 3.75 | .788 |
| 7. WP | .542 | .839 | .862 | 1.382 | 1.995 | 1.885 |

[a]N refers to the number of observations in each group, not to the number of cooperating teachers.

increased in experience. This finding supports research hypothesis four across each of the seven sub-scales of teaching competency.

In order to determine whether the magnitude of the differences among the three teacher groups was significant the mean teacher ratings on each sub-scale were submitted to a multivariate analysis of variance. Table 16 shows that the three groups differed significantly.

Table 16.--Multivariate analysis of variance of teacher ratings.

| Source of variance | df | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of field experience) | (14, 100) | 3.203 | .0003 |

The results of the univariate F test given in Table 17 indicate that the differences occurred on the sub-scales relating to planning instruction, assessing and evaluating behavior, conducting instruction, and facilitating social-emotional maturity. On the remaining three sub-scales differences were not significant.

The mean teacher ratings on each sub-scale found to be significant were then examined using the following contrasts: Group II teachers minus Group V teachers ($\mu_2 - \mu_5$); Group IV teachers minus Group V teachers ($\mu_4 - \mu_5$); and Group II teachers minus Group IV teachers ($\mu_2 - \mu_4$). Results are given by sub-scale in Tables 18

Table 17.--Univariate F test for mean teacher ratings.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sub-scale 1 (PI) | 2 | 5.586 | 8.272 | .0007* |
| Sub-scale 2 (AE) | 2 | 32.791 | 20.742 | .00001* |
| Sub-scale 3 (CI) | 2 | 3.676 | 6.508 | .0029* |
| Sub-scale 4 (CM) | 2 | 3.06 | 4.159 | .021 |
| Sub-scale 5 (FS) | 2 | 5.084 | 7.721 | .001* |
| Sub-scale 6 (DR) | 2 | 1.635 | 1.395 | .256 |
| Sub-scale 7 (WP) | 2 | 10.535 | 4.951 | .010 |

*Significant at the $\alpha$ = .007 level of confidence.

through 21. The rate of change in the area of assessing and evaluating behavior appears the most dramatic, with each of the three groups being significantly different from the other two.

## Comparison of Candidates' Self-Ratings and Cooperating Teacher Ratings

Whether teacher candidates' perceptions of their competency became more like those of their cooperating teachers as amount of field experience increased was examined. For this comparison only matched pairs of teacher candidates and cooperating teachers were used. Where data from only one of a teacher candidate-cooperating teacher pair were available such data were discarded. If more than one cooperating teacher evaluated

Table 18.--Post hoc analysis of teacher ratings for sub-scale 1, planning instruction.

| Contrast | Value | S. Error | t Value | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | -1.124 | .282 | -3.984 | 56 | .000* |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | - .671 | .249 | -2.7 | 56 | .009 |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_4$ | - .453 | .267 | -1.697 | 56 | .095 |

*Significant at the $\alpha$ = .002 level of confidence.

Table 19.--Post hoc analysis of teacher ratings for sub-scale 2, assessing and evaluating behavior.

| Contrast | Value | S. Error | t Value | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | -2.786 | .435 | -6.399 | 56 | .000* |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | -1.163 | .384 | -3.031 | 56 | .004 |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_4$ | -1.623 | .412 | -3.943 | 56 | .000* |

*Significant at the $\alpha$ = .002 level of confidence.

Table 20.--Post hoc analysis of teacher ratings for sub-scale 3, conducting instruction.

| Contrast | Value | S. Error | t Value | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | - .921 | .259 | -3.564 | 56 | .001* |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | - .473 | .228 | -2.078 | 56 | .042 |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_4$ | - .448 | .245 | -1.833 | 56 | .072 |

*Significant at the $\alpha$ = .002 level of confidence.

Table 21.--Post hoc analysis of teacher ratings for sub-scale 5, facilitating social-emotional maturity.

| Contrast | Value | S. Error | t Value | df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\mu_2 - \mu_5$ | -1.105 | .281 | -3.936 | 56 | .000* |
| $\mu_4 - \mu_5$ | - .567 | .247 | -2.293 | 56 | .026 |
| $\mu_2 - \mu_4$ | - .538 | .266 | -2.026 | 56 | .048 |

*Significant at the $\alpha$ = .002 level of confidence.

a given teacher candidate each observation was considered separately for purposes of analysis. For each pair the student self-rating was subtracted from the cooperating teacher rating on each of the seven sub-scales. The resulting mean deviation scores and standard deviations are shown in Table 22 for each group on each sub-scale.

Table 22 shows that Group II, students in initial field experiences, most closely approximated the evaluations of their cooperating teachers. Group IV was the most discrepant when self-ratings were compared with cooperating teacher evaluations.

To determine whether the differences among the mean deviation scores of the three groups were statistically significant, a multivariate analysis of variance was performed. Results are given in Table 23.

Since the differences in mean deviation scores were statistically significant at the $\alpha$ = .05 level of confidence, the univariate F test was used to identify the

Table 22.--Mean deviation scores of matched pairs of cooperating teachers and teacher candidates on competency ratings.

| Competency Sub-scale | Group II N=13 | | Group IV N=21 | | Group V N=11 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD |
| 1. PI | .154 | 1.063 | -.39 | 1.023 | .436 | 1.722 |
| 2. AE | -.623 | 1.767 | -.667 | 1.473 | 1.036 | 1.974 |
| 3. CI | .123 | 1.456 | -.448 | .944 | .527 | 1.99 |
| 4. CM | .138 | 1.373 | -.576 | 1.046 | .464 | 1.948 |
| 5. FS | -.038 | 1.652 | -.695 | .971 | .782 | 1.852 |
| 6. DR | .515 | 2.019 | -.529 | 1.372 | .791 | 2.096 |
| 7. WP | -.746 | 1.095 | -2.6 | 1.304 | .855 | 3.321 |

Table 23.--Multivariate analysis of variance of mean competency deviation scores.

| Source of variance | df | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|
| Status (amount of field experience) | (14,72) | 2.436 | .007 |

competency areas which contributed to the differences (see Table 24). Sub-scale 7 alone, working with parents, accounted for the statistically significant variance among the groups. Inspection of the mean deviation scores in Table 22 showed that teacher candidates in Group IV deviated markedly from their cooperating teachers in evaluating competency in this area. Their cooperating teachers rated the teacher candidates in Group IV considerably lower on working with parents than the candidates rated themselves. It was concluded that the null hypothesis--$H_0$: $(\mu_{2(t)} - \mu_2) = (\mu_{4(t)} - \mu_4) = (\mu_{5(t)} - \mu_4)$--could be rejected but the research hypothesis was not substantiated. No further post hoc analyses were done.

Table 24.--Univariate F test of mean competency deviation scores.

| Source of variance | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sub-scale 1 (PI) | 2 | 2.78 | 1.821 | .174 |
| Sub-scale 2 (AE) | 2 | 11.825 | 4.144 | .023 |
| Sub-scale 3 (CI) | 2 | 3.687 | 1.869 | .167 |
| Sub-scale 4 (CM) | 2 | 4.492 | 2.288 | .114 |
| Sub-scale 5 (FS) | 2 | 7.977 | 3.9 | .028 |
| Sub-scale 6 (DR) | 2 | 7.895 | 2.541 | .091 |
| Sub-scale 7 (WP) | 2 | 45.126 | 11.943 | .00008* |

*Significant at the $\alpha = .007$ level of confidence.

As they are now assigned candidates begin each field experience without knowing the cooperating teachers' expectations. For their part cooperating teachers ordinarily evaluate candidates without any knowledge of their previous experience of prior level of competence. It is possible that the mean deviation scores would have shown a much different pattern across the three groups if candidates were assigned to the same cooperating teachers over their three field experiences or if the training institution and the cooperating teachers communicated more specific standards of performance to the candidates.

## Relationship Between Specific Independent Variables and Self-Perception of Achievement of Specific Teaching Competencies

Descriptive information obtained from Part I of the Survey instrument is summarized below. Table 25 shows the distribution of positive responses to items 3a to 3e. Each of these items divided the population into two categories on the basis of their contact with the mentally retarded prior to their enrolling in college.

Of the 113 respondents, 74 or 65.5 percent reported having done some volunteer or paid work with the mentally retarded prior to entering college. The number of years spent ranged from one to a high of nine. Since involvement in volunteer service is a requirement for acceptance into special education programs at Michigan State University

Table 25.--Contact with the mentally retarded.

| Item | N of "Yes" Responses | % of Total Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Related to a Mentally Retarded Person | 24 | 21.4 |
| Have a Friend Related to a Mentally Retarded Person | 59 | 52.2 |
| Mentally Retarded Person Lives in Neighborhood | 49 | 43.8 |
| Attended School with Special Class | 49 | 43.8 |
| Know Teacher of Mentally Retarded | 92 | 81.4 |

it is not surprising that 94 or 83.2 percent of the teacher candidates reported doing volunteer or paid work with the mentally retarded since entering college. Obviously the number of years spent is limited by the number of years enrolled in college.

The number of special education courses, other than field work, taken was reported by 103 of the respondents. The distribution of the responses is shown in Table 26.

It should be noted that respondents may have misread the question and reported credits taken rather than courses.

For subjects who reported their grade point averages, high school grade point averages ranged from 2.2 to

Table 26.--Special education courses taken.

| N of Courses | N of Respondents | % of Total Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 26 | 25.2 |
| 1 | 13 | 12.6 |
| 2 | 5 | 4.9 |
| 3 | 2 | 1.9 |
| 4 | 8 | 7.8 |
| 5 | 8 | 7.8 |
| 6 | 9 | 8.7 |
| 7 | 8 | 7.8 |
| 8 | 5 | 4.9 |
| 9 | 7 | 6.8 |
| 10 | 4 | 3.9 |
| 12 | 1 | 1.0 |
| 14 | 2 | 1.9 |
| 15 | 3 | 2.9 |
| 21 | 1 | 1.0 |
| 33 | 1 | 1.0 |

4.0 with a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of .367. College grade point averages ranged from 2.0 to 4.0 with a mean of 3.08 and a standard deviation of .429.

The Pearson product moment correlations were obtained between the variables: number of hours of volunteer work before college; number of hours of volunteer work in college; number of special education courses taken; grade point average in high school; grade point average in college; and subjects' self-ratings in the seven categories of specific teaching competencies: planning instruction (PI); assessing and evaluating behavior (AE); conducting instruction (CI); classroom management (CM); facilitating social-emotional maturity (FS); dealing with and relating to other professionals (DR); and working with parents (WP). The correlations are shown in Table 27.

Sixteen of the correlations obtained were statistically significant at the .05 level or below. The number of hours of volunteer work engaged in during college and the number of special education courses taken were related slightly though significantly to self-ratings in each of the seven categories of specific teaching competencies. Nevertheless, since none of the correlations exceeded .32, their practicality in predicting teacher candidates' self-perception of achievement of specific competencies is of little value.

Table 27.--Correlation between teacher candidates' self-rating of achievement of teaching competencies and selected independent variables.

| Variable | Teaching Competency Area N=113 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PI | AE | CI | CM | FS | DR | WP |
| Volunteer hours before college | .128 | .087 | .134 | .118 | .158* | .114 | .104 |
| Volunteer hours during college | .294** | .305** | .244** | .212* | .222** | .246** | .173* |
| Special education courses | .24* | .308** | .264* | .278** | .248* | .325** | .267* |
| gpa in college | .192* | .101 | .038 | .026 | .062 | .07 | .081 |
| gpa in high school | -.011 | -.011 | .012 | -.036 | -.009 | -.069 | .072 |

* $p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Grade point averages and hours of volunteer work done before enrolling in college were not related to self-perception of achievement except on the individual subscales of planning instruction and facilitating social and emotional maturity.

## Discussion

The research thus far reported will be discussed in terms of its implications in the following areas: recruitment of teacher candidates; the design and evaluation of teacher preparation programs in relation to curricular strengths and weaknesses and consumer satisfaction; and in-service training for teachers new to the field. These areas were delineated in Chapter I. An additional area of discussion is that of the continued use of the survey instrument as an assessment tool in teacher preparation programs.

### Recruitment of Teacher Candidates

From the results of this research study it appears that the usually accepted criteria for enrollment in a special education teacher preparation program--grade point average and volunteer service to the handicapped--operate at little better than a chance level in predicting students' self-perceptions of their teaching competencies. Grade point average serves to screen out the grossly unqualified. Requirements related to volunteer or paid work with the

mentally impaired prior to acceptance into the program may, however, serve a function as a self-screening device. Students who self-selected themselves out of a special education teacher training program on the basis of a volunteer experience with the handicapped are not represented in the population under study. Nevertheless, it is likely that such a phenomenon does occur.

## Design and Evaluation of Teacher Preparation Program

From the data generated by this research study a fairly consistent pattern became visible. Groups I through IV in general conformed to the expectations expressed in the relevant research hypotheses. The importance ratings of Group I were most different from those of the criterion group while Groups II, III and IV more closely approximated the criterion group. In self-ratings of achievement Groups I through IV generally increased in their self-ratings across levels of field experience.

Group V, the student teachers, deviated from those expectations. Their importance ratings differed more from the criterion group's ratings than did those of Group IV. Also, student teachers rated themselves lower than had been hypothesized in achievement in six of the areas of teaching competency; that is, Group V teacher candidates' self-ratings were lower than Group IV teacher candidates'

self-ratings. These findings could lead to the supposition that student teachers in classes for the mentally retarded were not receiving necessary guidance and support. Such guidance and support might enable them to develop added self-confidence which would be reflected in their self-rating.

In support of this supposition it should be noted that the student teachers had the lowest percentage of returns of the survey instrument. The 50 percent return may be representative of those teacher candidates with the more positive self-ratings. In other words, if all student teachers had returned surveys it is possible that the outcome would have been more negative than it was.

That student teacher self-ratings were more reflective of level of self-confidence than of actual skill is supported by the fact that cooperating teachers saw their student teachers as more competent than they saw themselves in all seven areas of teaching competency. Perhaps these positive evaluations were not adequately communicated to the student teachers. In the teacher preparation program, therefore, it may be necessary to build in a better support and guidance system for student teachers, either through university supervision or through better communication between cooperating teacher and student teacher.

Alternative explanations exist for the decline in self-ratings by student teachers. One such explanation is that for the first time in the sequence of field experiences the teacher candidates feel the weight of teaching responsibility. It may be that the impact of such responsibility would be lessened if student teaching were deferred for another quarter or if it became, as some theorists recommend, a part of a fifth-year internship. On the other hand, the effect might be similar regardless of the time at which student teaching were introduced.

The drop in self-ratings by student teachers may not be the negative phenomenon this study supposed it to be. Perhaps such a decline is a necessary and unavoidable concomitant of the reality testing involved in the student teaching experience and, in fact, facilitates the eventual attainment of greater teaching competency.

It may also be that the particular group under study was unique in its responses. Further research, especially longitudinal research, may conclude that teacher candidates do not invariably perceive themselves as less competent as a concomitant of the student teaching experience.

However, if the results of this study are replicated, they may indicate a need for restructuring field experiences in such a way that the demands made on teacher candidates are delineated with greater specificity. If

certain teaching competencies were identified as the focus for each level of field experience, expectations could be communicated in greater detail thereby allowing for a reduction in anxiety level and a more gradual transition to the fuller responsibility of student teaching. For example, for teacher candidates other than student teachers the competency area of assessing and evaluating behavior might require additional emphasis during the initial field experience and the area of working with parents during both the initial and "core" field experiences. Students involved in these experiences rated themselves lowest in these competencies.

If teacher education programs associated a graduated series of teaching competencies with levels of field experience a major outcome would result. The effects of field experiences would be more consistent for all candidates because particular cooperating teachers would hold a common set of expectations.

In-service Training

In-service training needs for newly employed teachers of the mentally retarded may be looked at from two viewpoints, that of the neophyte and that of an objective observer. In this research an attempt was made to identify these two viewpoints. Student teachers, those who will be newly employed, were asked for their perceptions of the importance of and their competency in seven

areas of teaching skills. On the basis of their responses in-service needs would appear to be in working with parents, an area where self-ratings were low, and in assessing and evaluating behavior, where both self-ratings and importance ratings were low.

From the viewpoint of the objective observer, in this case the cooperating teacher, classroom management would have to be added to the in-service program. Though cooperating teachers rated student teachers higher in classroom management than they rated themselves, it was the second lowest area of competence. Only working with parents was rated lower by cooperating teachers.

Use of the Survey Instrument

Teacher candidates and cooperating teachers who responded to the survey often included written comments on the instrument even though these were not solicited. Some respondents asked for copies of the competencies and others for the results of the research when it became available. It appeared from these comments that the survey could be used as a means both of assessment of student performance in field experiences and of communication between cooperating teachers and teacher candidates.

If this were to be done several changes in the format of the survey are recommended on the basis of respondent feedback. First, the survey would be easier

to use if it were collapsed into the seven sub-scales used in the data analysis. Cooperating teachers could rate teacher candidates from one to five on the seven sub-scales, using the specific competencies in each sub-scale as guidelines but not necessarily scoring each. Secondly, some competency statements could be clarified. For example, competency twenty-five refers to large group instruction. A number should be provided as a rule-of-thumb since what is a large group in one special education classroom is a small group in another. Some directions should be clarified. In the rating scale, for example, the criterion for a rating of three should be changed since it is not uncommon that a teacher aide in a special education classroom is fully certified and is as competent as the classroom teacher. The exigencies of the job market, not level of competency, make her a teacher aide. Finally, in future research, instruments precoded for assignment to appropriate analysis groups could be used. Such a procedure would preclude to some extent the loss of data which occurred in the present study when respondents failed to complete or incorrectly completed the personal identification portions of the survey.

Given these modifications the instrument may continue to be a useful tool in the teacher preparation program. It might also be used in the in-service training of special education teachers and in working with regular

education teachers who are being asked to "mainstream" or integrate mentally retarded students into their classes. The instrument could serve as the basis for discussion of needed competencies among principals, teacher-consultants in special education, and classroom teachers.

## Summary

In summary, in regard to each of the research hypotheses and its alternative null hypothesis the following was found:

Hypothesis 1: As amount of field experience increased there were no significant differences among groups of teacher candidates or between teacher candidates and experienced teachers in their perceptions of the importance of specific teaching competencies. Therefore the null hypothesis could not be rejected ($\alpha = .05$).

Hypothesis 2: Differences among groups of teacher candidates in their perceptions of their competence were significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level. Therefore, the null hypothesis could be rejected. However, the pattern of differences found did not support the alternative research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Inspection of the data led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that the standard deviations of the competency self-ratings of the five teacher candidate groups were equal. No

statistical test was employed. Again, the pattern found did not support the alternative research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: The three groups of cooperating teachers differed significantly in their ratings of the teacher candidates they supervised. Therefore, the null hypothesis could be rejected. The differences were in the direction hypothesized in the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Mean deviation scores of paired teacher candidates and cooperating teachers differed significantly. The null hypothesis could, therefore, be rejected. However, the differences among the three groups were accounted for by only one of the seven areas of teaching competency; and the direction of change did not support the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: Hours volunteered during college and number of special education courses taken were significantly related to teacher candidates' self-ratings of achievement of teaching competency. Therefore the null hypothesis could be rejected. However, the correlations, though statistically significant, were not of such magnitude as to have major practical application.

# CHAPTER V

# SUMMARY

## Overview

In this chapter the research study reported in the preceding chapters is summarized briefly. Recommendations based on the findings, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research will be discussed.

In this research groups of students preparing to be teachers of the mentally retarded at Michigan State University were surveyed. Subjects were grouped by the amount of field experience in which they had participated. Group I had no field experience; Group II, III and IV had increasingly extensive field experiences; Group V were student teachers.

The purposes of the study were to:

1. Identify the areas of teaching competency perceived to be important by groups of teacher candidates and to compare these with the perceptions of teachers in the field.
2. Examine teacher candidates' self-ratings of achievement of teaching competency across levels of field experience.

3. Examine within-group similarity of self-ratings across levels of field experience.
4. Examine evaluations of teacher candidates made by cooperating teachers across levels of field experience.
5. Compare teacher candidates' self-ratings with cooperating teacher evaluations.
6. Relate teacher candidates' self-ratings to selected variables other than level of field experience.

It was found that:

1. As amount of field experience increased there were no significant differences among groups of teacher candidates or between teacher candidates and experienced teachers in their perceptions of the importance of specific teaching competencies.
2. Teacher candidates' self-ratings of achievement of teaching competency rose across levels of field experience with the exception of student teachers. Their self-ratings were lower than those of the group with the next highest amount of field experience.
3. Similarity of self-ratings within groups of teacher candidates increased across levels of field experience when students with no field experience were compared to those with increasing amounts of

field experience. However, the student teachers again were the exception; their self-ratings were the least homogeneous of any group.

4. Cooperating teachers considered teacher candidates more competent as amount of field experience increased.
5. When mean deviation scores of paired teacher candidates and cooperating teachers were examined it was found that teacher candidates' perceptions of their achievement of teaching competency did not become significantly more like those of their cooperating teachers as amount of field work increased.
6. Teacher candidates' self-ratings in all areas of teaching competency were related at a low but statistically significant level to hours of volunteer work during college and special education courses taken.

## Limitations of the Study

The generalizability of this study is limited because the population was comprised solely of students from Michigan State University. Students enrolled in teacher preparation programs at other colleges and universities may differ in the perceptions both of importance and of achievement of specific teaching competencies.

In the ideal research world it would have been possible to select a comparable group of students in a training program with no field work component. However, no such program was readily identifiable. Therefore no "control" group could be used.

Research such as the kind described here was cross-sectional. Stronger, but more difficult to obtain, results would likely come from a similar study in which a group of incoming students were followed through their four years of college.

The practical necessity of working with an already existing group of subjects operated not only in regard to the students but to the cooperating teachers as well. No empirical evidence existed that the cooperating teachers were themselves competent in the areas under consideration or were able to evaluate adequately the students who were assigned to them. Their competency had to be assumed as a "given."

## Suggestions for Further Research

The present research can be viewed as part of a sequence of inquiry leading to the validation of a body of specific teaching competencies for teachers of the mentally impaired. The competencies thus validated may, in fact, have broad practical application to teachers in other areas of exceptionality and even to regular class teachers who are increasingly being mandated to accommodate

handicapped students in their classes. Initially, Hoeksema (1975) identified the specific teaching competencies under discussion and attempted to establish their validity as determined by practitioners in the field. The study described here also attempted to establish their validity but as determined by the consumers of a teacher education program. The study was, in a broad sense, a program evaluation study.

It remains for future researchers to apply these validation studies to both undergraduate preparation programs and to in-service training programs.

Undergraduate Preparation

In the area of recruitment, it would be valuable to look at those students who were admitted to the special education program in mental retardation but did not complete it and to those students who participated in prescreening volunteer experiences and then chose not to apply for admission to the program. Perhaps factors such as grade point average, prior exposure to the mentally retarded, and initial self-rating on an instrument such as the one used in this study can, in fact, separate out these groups from those who do complete the program.

In the undergraduate teacher education program itself the primary research need is in the area of the measurement of teacher candidates' competencies. The present study used the admittedly crude measure of teacher

candidates' self-assessment and assessment by cooperating teachers as indicative of the attainment of competencies. More objective outcome measures should be devised and their reliability and validity tested. The optimum outcome measure would be one which related attainment of specific teaching competencies with measured pupil achievement and, perhaps, pupil attitude. However, use of such an outcome measure would be difficult because of the many uncontrolled and uncontrollable factors which operate when teacher candidates work directly with handicapped students. Measures which are less direct than measures of pupil achievement but still more objective than those used in the present study are needed.

Secondly, modifications of the teacher preparation program to provide more support and guidance to teacher candidates at the student teaching level and more direct relationship between development of specific teaching competencies and the content of specific courses and field experiences could form the basis of one or more future research studies. In longitudinal studies it may be possible to identify more accurately the pattern of change in teacher candidates' attitudes and competencies over time. However, the practical problems are great because of the number of students who "drop out" of programs during their college years and the number of those who transfer

into a program from another college, university or other area of specialization.

In a third type of study candidates who have completed a teacher education program could be followed through at least their first year of teaching to see what relationship, if any, exists between their self-ratings of competency as student teachers and their success on the job.

In-service Training

At the same time that a body of specific teaching competencies is identified, validated, and imparted to teacher candidates that same body can and should be used experimentally as the basis of in-service training for teachers already practicing. Hoeksema (1975) found that teachers in the field identified certain competencies as those in which they needed additional training. In the present study student teachers, next September's neophytes, rated themselves as less than totally competent in all areas of teaching skill. Both of these findings point to the need for in-service training that is directed toward practitioners' felt needs and also validated through the use of objective outcome measures.

Finally, the survey instrument used in this study should be evaluated by further research to determine its applicability as a gross evaluatory tool in teacher training programs and in the ongoing assessment of practitioners in the classroom.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

# STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

A Survey of Students Preparing to be Teachers of the Mentally Impaired

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your perceptions of the competencies necessary for teachers of the mentally impaired. Your responses are significant in the continuing effort to improve teacher training programs. Information about your background is also helpful in describing students who intend to be teachers of the mentally impaired. Your cooperation in completing the survey is greatly appreciated.

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Please fill in your name below. This will enable us to keep track of who has returned the survey. Your name will be detached from the survey as soon as it is received to insure your anonymity.

NAME: _____
Last First Maiden

Part I. Personal Data

1. Age 2. Sex: Male_____

Female_____

3. Contact with the mentally impaired: please check the statements which apply to you.

a. I am related to a mentally retarded person. ____

b. I have a friend(s) who is related to a mentally retarded person. ____

c. A mentally retarded person lives in my neighborhood. ____

d. The grade and/or high school I attended had a special class for the mentally retarded. ____

e. I know a teacher of the mentally retarded. ____

f. Before I started college I did volunteer and/or paid work with the mentally retarded. ____

If so, for how many years? ____

Approximate total number of hours. ____

g. Since I have been in college I have done volunteer and/or paid work with the mentally retarded. ____

If so, for how many years? ____

Approximate total number of hours. ____

h. Since I have been in college I have taken lab/field courses in exceptional education (include courses taken this term). ____

If so, check those taken (including this term).

Sophomore level field experience w/mentally retarded ____

Junior level "core" field experience ____

Senior level "mr block" field experience ____

Student teaching w/mentally retarded ____

4. Indicate the total number of special education courses other than lab/field you have taken (include courses taken this term). ____

5. List your college grade point average. ____

6. List your high school grade point average. ____

PART II

SELECTED COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHERS OF THE MENTALLY IMPAIRED

A. All competencies listed below are believed to be important for teachers of the mentally impaired. Some, however, are more essential than others. Rate each statement below according to how important that competency is to you as a prospective teacher of the mentally impaired. Circle "1" for those which are least important; circle "5" for those which are most important. You may circle a number somewhere between "1" and "5."

NOTE: Please ignore the second column. Use only column A.

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| **Planning Instruction** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Setting goals which take into account the expected adult status of students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Formulating instructional goals for the year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Organizing the sequence of goals for the year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Selecting goals for specific units of instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Selecting content appropriate to identified goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| 6. Preparing written lesson plans | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Writing behaviorally stated objectives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Individualizing instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Breaking tasks into small steps from simple to complex. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Choosing instructional methods for specific lessons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Organizing the sequence of daily lessons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Finding materials appropriate to instructional goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Modifying commercial teaching aids to meet specific needs of students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Originating new materials. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Assessing and Evaluating Behavior | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Construction informal tests for assessing a child's status. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| 16. Administering commercially prepared tests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Using the results of teacher-administered tests to develop educational plans for children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Interpreting data from formal tests administered by a diagnostician in developing educational plans for children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Carrying out preassessment strategies to determine student readiness for specific learning activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Post-testing students to verify the outcomes of instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Conducting Instruction | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21. Making learning tasks clear to children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Operating audio-visual equipment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Using a multi-sensory approach for children with sensory deficits. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| 24. Carrying out instruction that is consistent with identified objectives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Conducting large group learning activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Synchronizing different activities conducted simultaneously. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Using behavior modification techniques. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Providing feedback to pupils during learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Using a variety of methods for motivating students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Classroom Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30. Making classroom rules and procedures clear to students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Arranging the physical props in the classroom to facilitate learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Handling unacceptable behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| 33. Determining what is rewarding for each child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. Administering rewards or punishments to change pupil behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Maintaining student respect. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Facilitating Social-Emotional Maturity | | | | | | | | | | |
| 36. Developing goals for pupils in the affective domain. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. Implementing instructional activities which promote the awareness and expression of personal values, attitudes and feelings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. Helping students become aware of the values, attitudes, and feelings of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Encouraging cooperative interpersonal relationships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. Adjusting your behavior according to children's moods. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| 41. Acting as an affective model by expressing your feelings honestly and openly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. Communicating to children that their feelings are understood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Helping children accept themselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. Promoting children's independence. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Dealing and Relation with Other Professionals | | | | | | | | | | |
| 45. Asking for help or ideas from other staff. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. Seeking help for students from agencies outside the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Getting to know other teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. Handling administrators' observations of your teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Knowing the principal's expectations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. Handling criticism from other teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| 51. Working with teacher aides. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Following administrative directives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Tolerating different opinions without taking personal offense. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Consulting with regular classroom teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Working with Parents** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 55. Using a variety of methods to communicate with parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56. Dealing with parent criticisms. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. Using accepted principles of counseling, interviewing and guidance in parent conferences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. Listening to parents with the goal of seeing their point of view. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. Obtaining information about the child from parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | COLUMN A IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY | | | | | COLUMN B SELF ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most | Least | | | | Most |
| 60. Enlisting parent participation in the educational planning for their child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 61. Coordinating home and school approaches to children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62. Responding to parents in ways which lead to support of the school program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 63. Helping parents to deal with their children at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

B. As an undergraduate student in special education you participate in the process of increasing your competence as a teacher of the mentally impaired. In some areas you may need little or no improvement while in others you may be very eager to improve your skill. Please respond to each of the competency statements on the preceding pages according to the following scale:

1--I have not developed this competency at this time.

2--I am beginning to develop this competency; I need a good deal of direction.

3--I am about as competent as a teacher aide; I need some direction.

4--I am about as competent as a beginning teacher; I can function independently.

5--I am about as competent as an experienced teacher.

Return to page 3 and complete Column B by circling the appropriate responses.

# APPENDIX B

# COOPERATING TEACHER SURVEY INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX B

COOPERATING TEACHER SURVEY INSTRUMENT

A Survey of Cooperating Teachers of Students Preparing to be Teachers of the Mentally Impaired

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your perceptions of the teaching competence of special education students you supervise. Your responses are significant in the continuing effort to improve teacher training programs. They will not be associated with individual students and will have no bearing on student grades. Your cooperation in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

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Please fill in the information requested below. This will enable us to keep track of who has returned the survey. It will be detached from the survey to insure your anonymity.

NAME: _____

(Last) (First)

1. The student I am supervising is a

   ____ sophomore

   ____ junior

   ____ senior

2. He/she is taking

   ____ sophomore level field experience w/mentally retarded

   ____ senior level field experience/"MR block"

   ____ student teaching

## SELECTED COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHERS OF THE MENTALLY IMPAIRED

All competencies listed below are believed to be important for teachers of the mentally impaired. Undergraduate students in special education participate in a gradual process of increasing their competence as teachers of the mentally impaired. In some areas they may need little or no improvement while in others they may need to improve their skill. Please respond to each of the competency statements below according to the way in which the following scale applies to the student you are now supervising:

1--has not developed this competency at this time.

2--is beginning to develop this competency; needs a good deal of direction.

3--is about as competent as a teacher aide; needs some direction.

4--is about as competent as a beginning teacher; can function independently.

5--is about as competent as an experienced teacher.

Complete the survey by circling the appropriate responses.

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY Least | | | | Most |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Planning Instruction | | | | | |
| 1. Setting goals which take into account the expected adult status of students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Formulating instructional goals for the year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Organizing the sequence of goals for the year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most |
| 4. Selecting goals for specific units of instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Selecting content appropriate to identified goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Preparing written lesson plans. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Writing behaviorally stated objectives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Individualizing instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Breaking tasks into small steps from simple to complex. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Choosing instructional methods for specific lessons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Organizing the sequence of daily lessons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Finding materials appropriate to instructional goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Modifying commercial teaching aids to meet specific needs of students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Originating new materials. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most |
| **Assessing and Evaluating Behavior** | | | | | |
| 15. Constructing informal tests for assessing a child's status. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Administering commercially prepared tests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Using the results of teacher-administered tests to develop educational plans for children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Interpreting data from formal tests administered by a diagnostician in developing educational plans for children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Carrying out preassessment strategies to determine student readiness for specific learning activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Post-testing students to verify the outcomes of instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Conducting Instruction** | | | | | |
| 21. Making learning tasks clear to children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Operating audio-visual equipment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most |
| 23. Using a multi-sensory approach for children with sensory deficits. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. Carrying out instruction that is consistent with identified objectives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Conducting large group learning activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Synchronizing different activities conducted simultaneously. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Using behavior modification techniques. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Providing feedback to pupils during learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Using a variety of methods for motivating students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Classroom Management | | | | | |
| 30. Making classroom rules and procedures clear to students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Arranging the physical props in the classroom to facilitate learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. Handling unacceptable behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most |
| 33. Determining what is rewarding for each child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. Administering rewards or punishments to change pupil behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Maintaining student respect. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Facilitating Social-Emotional Maturity<br>36. Developing goals for pupils in the affective domain. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. Implementing instructional activities which promote the awareness and expression of personal values, attitudes and feelings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. Helping students become aware of the values, attitudes, and feelings of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Encouraging cooperative interpersonal relationships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. Adjusting your behavior according to children's moods. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. Acting as an affective model by expressing your feelings honestly and openly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most |
| 42. Communicating to children that their feelings are understood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Helping children accept themselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. Promoting children's independence. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Dealing and Relating with Other Professionals | | | | | |
| 45. Asking for help or ideas from other staff. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. Seeking help for students from agencies outside the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Getting to know other teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. Handling administrators' observation of your teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Knowing the principal's expectations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. Handling criticism from other teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. Working with teacher aides. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Following administrative directives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Tolerating different opinions without taking personal offense. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| COMPETENCY STATEMENTS | ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Least | | | | Most |
| 54. Consulting with regular classroom teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Working with Parents** | | | | | |
| 55. Using a variety of methods to communicate with parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56. Dealing with parent criticisms. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. Using accepted principles of counseling, interviewing and guidance in parent conferences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. Listening to parents with the goal of seeing their point of view. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. Obtaining information about the child from parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60. Enlisting parent participation in the educational planning for their child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 61. Coordinating home and school approaches to children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62. Responding to parents in ways which lead to support of the school program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 63. Helping parents to deal with their children at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# APPENDIX C

# STUDENT COVER LETTERS

## APPENDIX C

## STUDENT COVER LETTERS

### Student Cover Letter
### Groups I, II, III, IV

Dear Student,

A persistent concern in the field of mental retardation is the improvement of teacher training programs. You, as a student preparing to be a teacher of the mentally retarded, can provide information which will have an impact on such programs. Simple stated, we need to know about you and your perceptions in order to better understand the process of teacher education.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your cooperation in completing the enclosed opinion survey. Return of this questionnaire within one week would be greatly appreciated. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Your participation in this research will help us to better serve mentally retarded children. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kowalski

Student Cover Letter
Group V

Dear Student:

A persistent concern in the field of mental retardation is the improvement of teacher training programs. You, as a student preparing to be a teacher of the mentally retarded, can provide information which will have an impact on such programs. Simply stated, we need to know about you and your perceptions in order to better understand the process of teacher education.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your cooperation in completing the enclosed opinion survey. Return of this questionnaire within one week would be greatly appreciated. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

The graduate affairs committee of the Division of Student Teaching and Professional Development has approved the data collection and hopes that each student teacher and supervising teacher in mental impairment will participate in the study. Such participation will help us to better serve mentally retarded children. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kowalski
350 Erickson Hall
(355-4545)

gk

encs.

# APPENDIX D

# COOPERATING TEACHER COVER LETTERS

## APPENDIX D

## COOPERATING TEACHER COVER LETTERS

### Cooperating Teacher Cover Letter Groups II and IV

Dear Teacher:

A persistent concern in the field of mental retardation is the improvement of teacher training programs. You, as a cooperating teacher working with a student preparing for certification in mental impairment, can provide information which will have an impact on such programs. Simply stated, we need to know your perceptions about your student teacher or student aide in order to better understand the process of teacher education.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your cooperation in completing the enclosed opinion survey. Your student will receive a similar survey and we ask that they be completed independently. Return of the questionnaire within one week would be greatly appreciated. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Your participation in this research will help all of us to better serve mentally retarded children. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cooperating Teacher Cover Letter
Group V

Dear Teacher:

A persistent concern in the field of mental retardation is the improvement of teacher training programs. You, as a supervising teacher working with a student preparing for certification in mental impairment, can provide information which will have an impact on such programs. Simply stated, we need to know your perceptions about your student teacher in order to better understand the process of teacher education.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your cooperation in completing the enclosed opinion survey. Your student will receive a similar survey and we ask that they be completed independently. Return of the questionnaire within one week would be greatly appreciated. A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

The graduate affairs committee of the Division of Student Teaching and Professional Development has approved the data collection and hopes that each student teacher and supervising teacher in mental impairment will participate in the study. Such participation will help all of us to better serve mentally retarded children. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kowalski
350 Erickson Hall
(355-4545)

gk

encs.

# APPENDIX E

# FOLLOW-UP LETTERS TO NONRESPONDENTS

## APPENDIX E

## FOLLOW-UP LETTERS TO NONRESPONDENTS

Dear Teacher:

Our records show that by March 12, 1977, we had not received your response to the Cooperating Teacher Survey. Since the information which you can provide is crucial to the study being done we urge that you return your completed questionnaire as soon as possible.

If your survey form is in the mail please disregard this letter. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kowalski
350 Erickson Hall
(355-4545)

gk

Dear Student:

Our recent records show that as of March 14, 1977, we had not yet received your response to the STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE. Since the information which you can provide is crucial to the study being done we urge that you return your completed questionnaire as soon as possible.

If your survey form is in the mail pleasr disregard this letter. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kowalski
350 Erickson Hall
(355-4545)

gk

Dear Teacher:

Recently we wrote to you requesting that you complete a Cooperating Teacher Survey for each mental retardation student from Michigan State University whom you supervised during the winter term. Through telephone contact we have found that several people never received the survey. We have, therefore, enclosed a copy of the questionnaire with this letter.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kowalski
350 Erickson Hall
(355-4545)

gk

encs.

Dear Student:

Our recent records show that as of March 31, 1977 we had not yet received your response to the STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT. It is possible that the survey was lost in the mail. Since the information that you can provide is crucial to the study being done, we have enclosed a copy of the survey with this letter.

If you have already mailed your form, please disregard this letter. If not, it is important that we receive your completed questionnaire as soon as possible. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kowalski
350 Erickson Hall
(355-4545)

gk

encs.