

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM : SPRING SEMESTER, 1981

Promoting Language Across the Curriculum in the Elementary School (PLACES) Module

INTRODUCTION

The Promoting Language Across the Curriculum in ^{the} Elementary School (PLACES) module is a new, experimental module of the Professional Development Program. It forms part of the Professional Development Program's Spring 1981 offerings of special alternative programs. PLACES' goals and objectives are the same as those of the normal program, but there are some differences of procedure which characterize the module. These differences are highlighted below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACES MODULE

1. The module will comprise of some 20 - 24 students entering their one year Professional Development Program, and a team of teachers and administrators drawn from 3 elementary schools in one school district (preferably, for reasons alluded to below, the Vancouver School District #39).

This total team will work together to relate educational theory and practice in an extended semester-long experience (Education 401 and 402).

SFU Instructional Team

Pat Holborn, Christine Miller, Thora Lee Nomm and Meguido Zola form the core of the instructional team. They share all instructional functions among them; however, the first three also have particular responsibility for the day-to-day supervision of a set number of students assigned to them.

The core team has access to a wide array of resource people drawn from the Faculty.

The core team is supported by a team of Program Coordinators: Joan Collins, Marsha Barry and, perhaps, a Field Coordinator responsible for placements, etc.

School District Personnel

The staffs of three elementary schools in Vancouver School District with, more particularly, a group of 3 - 4 teachers and their principal, will form the team of School District personnel.

This team will be supported by a liaison person from the Vancouver School District, most preferably Dr. John Wormsbecker, Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

2. The PLACES module will operate so that the 20 - 24 student teachers are equally distributed among the 3 elementary schools, with one Faculty Associate (Pat Holborn, Christine Miller, and Thora Lee Nomm) assigned to each school and the Faculty Advisor (Meguido Zola) assigned to all schools. Within each

school, staff would serve as the support unit for 6 - 8 student teachers, who would be assigned in pairs to a School Associate for the whole semester. It is hoped that all staff members would in some way contribute to student teachers' professional development, according to interests and expertise; thus, in some cases, more than 3 to 4 School Associates might be involved in the program within a school, at different times, and in differing degrees.

The Faculty Associate resident in each school would be readily available to facilitate communication, to serve as resource person to the staff as well as students, and to coordinate student teachers' experiences at the school as, also, across the Module, etc.

3. The program will comprise both study of theory (i.e., a 402 component) and a teaching practicum (i.e., a 401 component).

Instruction in theory will be closely integrated with teaching practice throughout the 13 week-long semester, as well as closely related to student-teachers' actual experiences in the school practicum.

The 402 component will include seminars, workshops, and readings planned by the Faculty Associate in consultation with the students and the school staff. It will be carried out mainly in the school setting, with strong contributions from (and to) the School Associates and other members of the hosting school's staff.

At times, students from all three module schools will work together, and on some pre-designated days students will meet on campus with other 401-402 modules. A detailed timetable will be provided to sponsor schools in the module prior to the start of the program.

4. The 402 component of the program will emphasize instruction in generic teaching skills, that is, instruction whose objectives are met, in the 'normal' program, through Faculty Associate seminars, Study Groups and Theme Days.

That part of the 402 component which, in the 'normal' program, addresses instruction in curriculum, will focus on curriculum with special reference to the place of language across the curriculum and the integration of the language arts through the elementary school curriculum. This gives recognition to the fact that language is the most important curricular area in the elementary school in terms of the amount of time and resources normally allocated to its direct instruction. This also recognizes the usefulness of employing one subject of the curriculum as an integrator of all subject matter. And, finally, this recognizes the particular expertise of the SFU instructional team, and makes use of an opportunity to serve the expressed philosophy and in-service education needs of a school district viz., Vancouver School District's desire to continue to 'build unity into language development' as well as, specifically, to continue the Project B.U.I.L.D. emphasis.

CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

The following are suggested as useful criteria to ensure the success of a cooperative university-school program such as the PLACES module:

1. A supportive school administrator and staff who subscribe to the notion of a school-based teacher education program, and who are willing to host,

and integrate within their teaching staff, a small number of student teachers together with a SFU Faculty Associate. Availability of some teacher release time (e.g., in the form of spares) would be a help but is not necessary.

2. School Associates who are willing to share their classes with, and to work closely together with, student teachers and a faculty associate, bearing in mind that the welfare of pupils is always paramount.
3. A school philosophy that is committed to and emphasizes:
 - * a child-centred education and environment
 - * recognition, acceptance, and valuing of individual differences
 - * pupil responsibility, choice, and self-direction in pursuing their learning
 - * the teaching of thinking, problem-solving, and creativity
4. A commitment to the Vancouver School District Project B.U.I.L.D., and to the philosophy of integrating the language arts through the curriculum.
5. A space available within the school to accommodate small-group seminars and, in the case of one of the 3 schools, a space to accommodate some 25 people.

BENEFITS TO A SCHOOL STAFF

There are some obvious benefits that will accrue to a school staff who participate in the PLACES module. These benefits are highlighted below:

1. An opportunity to participate in a teacher education program and to work closely together with other professionals to develop future members of one's profession e.g., ^{through} sharing of responsibilities for teacher education with Faculty Associates, input into form and content of both theoretical and practical aspects of teacher education, etc.
2. Close professional contact with a university, and access to university resources with opportunity for staff and/or individual professional development (e.g., ^{through} seminars and workshops, Directed Studies, etc.) For the School Associate an obvious benefit is the first-hand training in, and experience of, supervision and evaluation methods and techniques.
3. Continuous support to School Associates from a resident Faculty Associate; assistance in developing curriculum and integrating language arts through the curriculum; possible release time for School Associates to pursue their own learning; liaison with their teachers through the module.