Keene State College
Teacher Candidate Preparation Program
Post-Baccalaureate Special Education

A new Masters in Special Education option was designed and approved by the Keene State College Senate during the fall semester of 2008, and will be implemented in summer 2009. The 2009-2010 academic year will be the last year of operation for the Special Education Post-Baccalaureate program. The courses, assessments, and competencies for certification in this program have been integrated into the new M.Ed. in Special Education.

1. **How have you used your data to make changes in the following areas of your program?**
   a. <u>Advisement practices</u>:

The M.Ed. Special Education Option is designed to support individuals to achieve special education certification at the initial level as well as enhance competence and extend learning beyond certification competencies in the area of special education. The option combines certification coursework with a professional leadership experience and culminates with the design and implementation of a school-based research project that showcases an individual student's area of expertise and leadership capacity in special education. The program begins in the summer and can be completed in one year (full-time) or two years (part-time). The certification aspects of this portfolio based program blend special education content knowledge courses with a yearlong internship experience. The internship may be conducted on-the-job (for students employed as a teacher in an appropriate special education setting) or in a field experience approved by the faculty coordinator(s) of this program. The certification component follows standards set forth by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and the New Hampshire Department of Education. The KSC Conceptual Framework for Teacher Education Programs provides students with a frame of reference as they work through the program. The implementation of the M.Ed. Special Education Option has resulted in a replacement of the Post-Baccalaureate Special Education (PB SPED) program.

Advising is being provided to current Post-Bac students who indicate an interest in pursuing the M.Ed. Special education Option. Upon successful completion of the Post Bac Special Education certification program, candidates will apply for the M.Ed. Special Education program and complete the 12 credits Demonstration of Professional Leadership components: EDUC 670 Educational Research Foundations (3 credits), EDUC 675 Educational Research Design (3 credits), EDUC 680 Educational Research Capstone (6 credits). Program assessment data has helped us to clearly articulate our program which, in turn, has enabled us to clearly communicate expectations and requirements to students in the program.

The graduate Special Education Program Coordinator is working closely with the Special education faculty in advising students who are currently majoring in elementary and secondary education and who are considering certification in special education via the Master's degree program. Undergraduate students who are considering the new Master's program in Special Education are encouraged to take two special education courses during their Junior and Senior undergraduate years: EDSP 250 Foundations in special education & EDSP 350 Curriculum and Instructional Design in Special Education. Students who successfully complete these CEC competency-based courses at the undergraduate level and meet admissions requirements for the M.Ed. program will not have to take equivalent competency based courses in the Master's Degree program as these competencies will already have been demonstrated as an undergraduate student. This will help to provide an incentive for undergraduates to pursue special education. A program planning sheet has been developed by Dr. Nancy Lory to assist undergraduate students who are considering this option. This planning sheet is used by all special education faculty.

b. Assessment practices or tools:

The M.Ed. in Special Education is designed for individuals who seek certification by the NH Department of Education in General Special Education (K-12) and a Master of Education degree.   Significant planning took place in the development of the M.Ed. option and data from a range of sources was utilized in the development of the curriculum package including surveys of students, program assessment data, and investigation of other college/university programs in New England.

All assessment tools for the Post Bac program will be carried over and utilized in the newly developed Masters program and ongoing analysis of program data has driven program adjustments to the courses and internship experiences. This data was especially important during the design of the curriculum package for the new M.Ed. certification option. Below is a sampling of some of the improvements we have made based on program assessment data we have collected from our assessments.

The *Content-Based Special Educator Portfolio Review* assessment was refined and implemented in 2006-2007. The data clearly shows that candidates have successfully met or exceeded expectations related to the standards assessed by the components of the assessment tool. The aggregate data helps us to examine ways to improve how we build special education content knowledge throughout our program and will inform the future curriculum development of graduate level special education certification programs at KSC. After the 2006-2007 academic year, it was clear that we needed to communicate this new portfolio process more effectively to students as well as to faculty who teach in the program. After examining data made minor adjustments to the process were made which resulted in faculty being more comfortable using the assessment.

Since a high percentage of special education content knowledge is found in Standards 1-3, the foundational special education coursework that addresses these standards was examined and assignments and resulting artifacts for the portfolio review have been revised. Candidates will provide a reflective summary at the end of each semester related to how artifacts from each course in the program address CEC standards rather than completing a separate page for each artifact in every course. This gives candidates an opportunity to synthesize their coursework and make the connection to the CEC standards addressed in the course drawing from both SPA assessments and other activities and assignments in a course.

Through examination of data related to *CEC Standard 6: Language,* we made several adjustments to the curriculum and implemented a new SPA assessment this year, *Language, Development, Differences, and Disabilities*. We recently collected our first set of data in Tk20 this past summer and will be meeting with the undergraduate program faculty to discuss how to make adjustments to this assessment as they adopted the same assessment for their program.

The data shows that candidates responded well to ongoing feedback across components of the *Special Education Process Work Sample* (Assessment 2) as a majority of candidates met or exceeded expectations. The assessment was refined to more descriptively assess various components and more specifically address the Standard 6 by embedding aspects of this standard in this assessment and more explicitly describing where this standard is assessed. After review of the data and based on qualitative review of this assessment, it appears that although the work sample addresses this standard, a new assessment was needed to provide foundational knowledge about Standard 6 thereby strengthening how Standard 6 is addressed. This assessment was redesigned and data collected for the 2009-2010 cohort via the TK20 data collection system.

Also, it was also clear that Part III of Assessment 2 needed to be redesigned so the program fully adopted the updated assessment from the undergraduate program for Part III in 2008-2009. Upon review of this data it appeared that all candidates met or exceeded expectations on Part III and demonstrated a clear understanding of the special education process as they continued into the Internship II experience. Overall, this assessment is one of our strongest assessments in the program and these targeted improvements will help to further strengthen candidates' content knowledge and skills.

The *Lesson Plan Work Sample* is a long standing assessment in the program and has evolved over years and has been enhanced to explicitly show the alignment to CEC standards and more descriptively reflect each component of the assessment. The updates on this assessment took place over the last two years as these were driven by examination of the data and feedback from the initial SPA review of program. Various teaching strategies have been implemented to address difficulty areas of instructional planning in the context of lesson planning. Areas targeted include but are not limited to the writing of solid instructional objectives and documenting the procedures of the lesson plan. The importance of reflecting on lesson effectiveness has also been stressed in our revamped assessment tool.

c. Curricular design:

A curriculum proposal for a change to the PB SPED program was submitted and approved by the Faculty Senate in the Fall 2008. This change included moving this program from post-baccalaureate certification to graduate initial certification including an M.Ed. This program builds on the assessment system established for our undergraduate and PB SPED program as well as adds a graduate special education research and capstone component to enhance the critical thinking and research skills of candidates who receive special education certification. With the movement in the field of special education to the use of evidence based practices this will be an important expansion of our existing PB SPED program. The program assessment data from our SPA assessments were critical to the design of the curriculum and assessment process. See previous section for highlights related to improvements in the curriculum and assessment processes.

2. **How do evaluation instruments and feedback from pre-service candidate and partners (formative/summative) directly inform your program design and delivery?**

The *Special Education Internship: Field Work Evaluation* tool is used to developmentally assess candidate progress and performance during the Internship I and II field experiences. This is a comprehensive assessment that has been refined to descriptively connect to CEC skill related standards.

The Cooperating Professional in the field rates a candidate's performance and the candidate also self-assesses their performance at various critical junctures during Internship I and II (midterm and at the end of each internship). The KSC Site Supervisor assigns an overall rating based on an integration of the Cooperating Professionals ratings, the candidate's self assessment and their own perspective to determine the final ratings on individual components of the field work evaluation. The overall rating for each component and the assessment is used for candidate evaluation and for the purpose of program assessment.

Findings from Assessment 4, *Special Education Internship: Field Work Evaluation*, showed that 100% of PB SPED candidates met or exceeded expectations on all 10 components of this assessment over the past three years of formal data collection. The lowest ratings appeared to be related to Standard 6 (Language) although candidates did appear to meet expectations related to these skills assessed in the field. All other components of the assessment were highly rated with over 50% of candidates receiving exceeded expectation scores.

Additionally, two meetings are held during the academic year between the Program Coordinator and cooperating professionals. The main purpose is to review the roles and responsibilities of the intern, cooperating professionals and Keene State college

supervisor. These meetings have also provided an opportunity for Keene State to get feedback from the field in terms of our curriculum associated work samples regarding the preparedness of our candidates and appropriateness of our program as it relates to current issues in special education. Establishing good communication and collaboration with practitioners in the field is critical to our continued evaluation of the program and development and evaluation of the Master's program curriculum.

3. **How is technology used in your program curriculum…**
   a. **to gather data and inform curriculum?**
   b. **to engage our pre-service candidates by modeling best practices in our classrooms?**
   c. **to inform the curriculum design and pedagogy with students in the field?**

Keene State College has made a commitment to program management and data analysis with the recent implementation of the Tk20 software program. We are embarking on the use of Tk20, which will serve as the vehicle for posting key assessments, centralizing data collection, and providing more immediate access to information. This system will also provide support to students as they track their own progress through our special education programs. In the past three years we created Excel templates for each assessment and utilized this framework to help guide us in program improvements. Our first two assessments this year have utilized the Tk20 system, and we ran a report to review our summer data as we implemented a new SPA assessment in the summer coursework.

Students come to campus much better informed about their own use of technology than they did ten years ago. Most students are capable of creating Powerpoint presentations, readily access the Blackboard course system, and some have a knowledge base on Excel.   However, their knowledge of classroom applications and assistive technology is less proficient. They are eager to participate in learning about new applications. We model a range of instructional technology options in courses we teach including powerpoint presentations, internet resource searches, Blackboard discussion groups to name a few.

In the *EDUCSP 601 Context for Special Education* course, students complete a case study that explores the use of assistive technology (AT) in the classroom setting. Low and high tech options are discussed and the instructor brings the students to the KSC Office of Disability Services where Mr. Wayne Harvey demonstrates the range of AT that is used on campus. Examples include Dragon Naturally Speaking, Kurzweil Reading System, JAWS, Books for the Blind and Dyslexic, embossing of graphic representations for students who are blind or visually impaired, and closed system enlargers. In addition, the instructor uses the CEC Technology Wheel that summarizes the ways in which teachers can select appropriate AT for their students. High tech and low tech communication boards are emphasized for students with either communication or physical disabilities that preclude oral communication.

Throughout the special education program, prospective teachers must demonstrate the use of graphic organizers and visual tools for concept development, pre-writing techniques, and notetaking strategies. Students are also involved in Blackboard, using discussion boards to enhance their depth of understanding concepts, to invite risk-taking in terms of sharing perspectives, and to promote *listening and building* on others' contributions through the threads. Further, Blackboard is used to model ways to prompt time management, suggestions for organizing tasks, and ideas for enhancing study strategies.   In some of the placements for Internship, students are using the Smartboard as a tool for instruction; modeled first by cooperating professionals. Students research current issues in special education via the internet source Smart Briefs which is sponsored by the Council for Exceptional children.

Email, and/ or Blackboard are used to convene groups of students on campus, keep them in conversation with each other to support planning instruction and processing challenges they face. Links to effective sites are also part of sharing with technology. Students in the field use email and phone conversations (old fashioned technology) to touch base, ask questions, raise issues, share concerns, problem solve around curriculum, students with whom they are working, and collaborations with cooperating teachers.

4. **For your program, please list all forms of technology used to develop and / or reinforce content mastery for our pre-service candidate and in service candidates**
   - Blackboard
   - Power Point
   - Demonstration of a range of assistive technology through our Office for Disability Services
   - Internet based modules (case studies) related to specific content based subjects (e.g. classroom management), online video and audio
   - Web and Library searches
   - Inspiration
   - Email consultation with Cooperating Professionals and Students

5. **How have you made program adjustments and changes through the examination of dispositional data (include unit and SPA related dispositional data) for our candidates over the past three years?**

The *Teacher Candidate Dispositions Assessment* addresses both professional and collaborative behaviors consistent with best practice and is designed to be used during the Special Education Internship I field experience. The items included in the assessment are grounded in the KSC conceptual framework that is applicable to all KSC teacher candidates.

At the end of the Internship I field experience candidates are formally assessed using this tool so that initial data can be collected about a candidate's foundational

professional and collaborative behaviors while working as an intern. This assessment is completed by the Cooperating Professional who conducts the Internship I supervision (this individual has the primary opportunity to observe behaviors in a professional setting) and submitted to the KSC Supervisor for review. The information from the assessment allows the KSC Supervisor, the candidate, and the Cooperating Professional to jointly plan if concerns about foundational professional and collaborative behaviors are identified.

Dispositions are also reinforced in the collaboration section of the *Special Education Internship: Field Work Evaluation* tool. In 2008, this tool was more explicitly aligned to the CEC standards and the new collaboration section provides more specific assessment of candidate dispositions and collaborative skills.

Traditionally, the population of students for the post-baccalaureate program bring with them a wealth of professional experiences upon entry into the program, and these candidates self-assess their dispositions during the admissions process to graduate study. Additionally, as of 2008, all applicants to graduate study in special education are required to obtain references who rate possible candidates on the same dispositional issues that we assess while students are in the program. This program adjustment was developed to emphasize dispositions upfront with candidates and stress the importance of professional dispositions in the program. New candidates for the M.Ed. in Special Education who are KSC graduates will have a solid foundation already established as they will all have been assessed on the same disposition structure.

6. If you did not provide student work samples demonstrating "did not meet" quality, please explain why:

While it is not unheard of for students to not meet expectations, it has been several years since a student's work demonstrates challenges to deem her/ his work in need of such improvements that s/he is ineligible for certification. For many of the program assessments, we follow a process approach to meeting competency. For example, on components related to the special education work sample, many students require more work to meet minimum standards and are given drafts with "needs improvement" ratings.

Assessments related to lesson planning, on-site teaching/ supervision, and reflection are examined after there has been direct instruction, substantial opportunities to practice in the field, and considerable feedback prior to documents used to judge performance. Similarly, for Assessment II (Documenting the Special Education Process) and Assessment VI (Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior), students receive instruction, write drafts, engage in peer revision meetings, get faculty feedback, and submit final versions. The products that are evaluated remain the student's as each chooses to use input from others in her/ his own way, expanding on use of

assessment data, working on technical writing, and drawing from resources on intervention strategies or teaching approaches.

Candidates who experience low ratings on specific components of the internship develop a plan with the KSC Site Supervisor to address concerns and are given an opportunity to re-do the work samples until they demonstrate skills and knowledge that meets expectations. Candidates who do not show sufficient evidence documenting progress related to content knowledge in their portfolio are provided with an improvement plan. If lack of progress continues, the candidate will not be allowed to continue in the program.

What are presented as artifacts show the final work of candidates in the program and you will see where certain components were improved upon as they progressed through the program (lower rated assessments). Students who do not meet expectations on assessments or requirements for a course do not continue on to the Internship I in the fall where the majority of the program assessments are conducted. All students must complete the summer coursework successfully in order to continue.