

GOALS 2000 ENHANCES TEAM PLANNING

A \$77,000 state grant has been awarded to enhance the skills of future teachers and their mentors working in multi-cultural settings. It focuses on providing a single-tier approach to elementary school teaching, with emphasis on a "push-in," rather than "pull-out" program model.

Included are teachers, support services staff, student teachers and interns.

The partnership between GVSU and Grand Rapids Public Schools is based at Buchanan Elementary and coordinated by Assistant Professor Barbara J. Reinken, Ph.D. Ten Education students are participating and have been joined by others from Social Work and Nursing. The project is headed by Assistant Professor Linda McCrea, Ed.D. Also involved with team planning and consultation with Buchanan staff and university students is Assistant Professor Sandra Miller, Ph.D.

"Buchanan is one of the first elementary schools in Grand Rapids doing block scheduling to provide for uninterrupted teaching time," McCrea said. "This allows time for team planning."

As part of the research project, various types of data collection methods will be used, including pre-testing, post-testing and results of the Preprofessional Teacher Perceiver interview.

GRANT JOINS SPECIAL ED AND GENERAL ED

A collaboration grant provided Teacher Education students at GVSU with an opportunity to add another dimension to their classroom expertise.

The pilot program, headed by Sandra Miller, Ph.D., Brenda Lazarus, Ph.D. and Linda McCrea, Ed.D., provided general education and special education students with crossover experience for their respective first field experiences. The 15-week program last year partnered together 12 pre-teachers. It provided each participant with 10 weeks of teaching within their own area and the other five weeks teaching at their partner's school.

Throughout the semester, students were required to collaborate with their partners and share their experiences with their professors at GVSU and teachers and administrators at Southwood and Burton elementary schools in Grand Rapids.

"The exciting thing about it is that general educators were no longer frightened of special education when they left the program," McCrea said. "They left it with an understanding that special education students aren't so much different from slow learners in general education classes."

"For special education teachers, it gives them exposure to teaching in front of a large group. It's good for students, because it gave them a lot of valuable additional experience to put on their resumes when administrators are looking for elementary teachers."

FACULTY STUDY GROUP EXCHANGES IDEAS

What began as a small group of GVSU faculty sharing ideas about their profession at an informal lunchtime setting has grown into a focus group tackling topical issues.

The Faculty Study Group, started last year by Joseph Fisher, Ph.D., meets once a month to discuss a particular topic of interest.

Topics have included course planning, translation of research into practice, phonological awareness and classroom grouping.

"It's to enrich our own understanding by learning from other people's points of view on a given issue or topic," Fisher said. "We pick a topic and look for readings or information related to the topic. The next time we meet, we share what we've learned from the readings and our own experiences to make sense of the readings."

The Faculty Study Group has grown to approximately 12 participants, including members of the public school systems from Grand Rapids and Allendale. Meetings are typically held at the Eberhard Center in downtown Grand Rapids.

"The idea is built on a democratic body, in which each member has equal weight in what direction we take," Fisher said. "We define our agenda and follow our own direction from that point. It's an outstanding opportunity for informal professional growth."



Jeff Cooper, right, discusses environmental math in a field of study for M-TEC.

M-TEC Provides Boost For Minority Teachers

The retention and graduation rates of minority students in education are on the rise at Grand Valley State University, thanks in part, to its Minority Teacher Education Program (M-TEC).

Attempting to reverse the trends of high attrition rates of minority students while increasing the number for minority teachers, M-TEC provides academic support and financial assistance to those in need. Weekly programs are held throughout the fall and winter semesters. A mentor/mentee support program helps students adjust to college life while preparing them for the classroom.

Similar programs are in place for minority students with business (M-BEC) and science (M-SEC) majors.

"We sometimes break away from the traditional way to do things," says Eduardo Sanchez-Rojas, director of the programs. "With only one to three percent of minority teachers in math and sciences, we have to stress the importance of more minorities to get involved and stick with it."

A program was launched this past summer that focused on environmental math, combining M-TEC and M-SEC students. They studied marine biology, water quality and cycles in Ottawa and Muskegon counties with an emphasis on the mathematics involved. It included trips on Lake Michigan aboard GVSU's W.G. Jackson research vessel.

This fall, M-TEC is launching a pilot program with the Grand Rapids Public School district that will provide one-on-one mentor relationships between GVSU students and teachers already in the field. The program provides opportunities for

young educators to attend in-service training sessions in the district and pairs one teacher as a mentor for each student involved in the program to openly discuss and provide input about the profession.

"It's a phenomenal program," says Donald Williams Sr., GVSU Dean of Minority Affairs. "Public schools are in dire straits for minority teachers. They simply cannot find them."

"This program will enhance our mission of making the dream of becoming teacher a reality."

M-TEC was launched at GVSU in 1994 and continues to add programs and financial aid for qualifying students. The results have been commendable.

"In 1990, there were very few African Americans that graduated from schools of education," Williams said. "Education is one of the most severely hit areas, because minority students are gravitating to the professions they've been previously barred from. That gave rise to the Minority Teacher Education Center in '94. What we do is exalt education. We support kids who've always wanted to be teachers and let them know that there's a reasonable chance that they can also earn a good wage."

Since M-TEC's inception, Sanchez-Rojas said that GVSU's retention rate of minority students has risen to 84 percent.

"We've flipped the coin," Sanchez-Rojas said. "Instead of losing minority students, we are retaining them. We need more minority students and then we need them as role models in the classroom."

"The students in the program know they have to become role models for all minorities. The challenge ahead of us is for people behind us."