



Facing the Special Education Teacher Shortage: Growing Your Own Teachers

NANCY MAMLIN, PH.D., NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

JENNIFER DILIBERTO, PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

KALIN STEWART, MAT, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Participant outcomes

- ❖ Identify reasons pre-service special educators choose their careers as teachers.
- ❖ Identify traits of current special education teacher candidates in college/university programs.
- ❖ Develop strategies for recruiting individuals into a career in special education.

Purpose

In response to the shortage of special education teachers and decrease in education majors nationally, the study investigated reasons current teacher candidates gave for pursuing a special education license. Implications for recruitment were derived from the themes identified within the open-ended responses.

Method

Surveyed teacher preparation candidates in North Carolina who were pursuing initial licensure in Special Education.

Surveys sent through department chairs and program coordinators.

85 respondents; 3 eliminated due to incomplete information. Total *n* of 82.

Demographics

	Overall	
Female		75
Male		8
Married		20
Single		60
Divorced		1
Widowed		1
	Dependents	
0		36
1-2		10
3 or more		10
No response		27

Demographics

	Employment	
Employed in a School System		24
	Full Time	21
	Part Time	3
	TA	9
	Teachers (alt. licensure)	10
	Desired Setting	
General Curriculum		56
Adapted Curriculum		21
BK		1
General/Adapted both		1
Other		1

Results

Results

	Desired Future Teaching Location	
	From NC	From another state/country
Teach in Home County	24	-
Stay in NC- Specific County	14	5
Teach in home state	7	2
Teach in a different state	6	3
Teach Abroad	1	3
Stay in NC	-	9
Undecided Location	7	0
Other	2	

Results

When the Respondent Decided to Pursue Teaching as a Career	
Elementary School	12
Secondary (middle/high school)	17
College (Undergraduate)	10
Post-College	6
Always	8

Who or What Influenced Decisions to become a Teacher?

Individuals in the profession (e.g., relative, friends, non-related professionals, university people and programs)

Supportive individuals not in the profession that encouraged the pursuit

Family members with disability

Their own teachers

Assignment from high school and college (e.g., senior project, internships, service learning projects, classes in SPED minor programs)

Individuals with disabilities (non-relative)

Ability to help students

Prior experiences (e.g., Special Olympics, Best Buddies, camps, working in specific settings with individuals with disabilities)

Noticed the need/Learning of job availability

Concern with diversity

Personal experiences with individuals with disabilities

Friend (e.g., SPED major)

Discussion

Implications for Recruitment

Based on the survey results, many creative ideas for fostering individual interest into the field of special education emerged. With the help of community partners and B-12 educational programs, together we can plant the seed of interest. Most of the respondents could pin-point the decision to specific experiences or interactions

Recruitment Ideas?

Recruitment Ideas

Service learning projects in both college and middle/high school focusing on individuals with disabilities

SCEC at universities to speak out about profession

High school senior projects on education

Volunteer experiences with individuals with disabilities

Summer jobs with SPED programs/camps

Teacher cadet programs in middle/high schools

IHE licensure programs in SPED

IHE minor programs in SPED

Making jobs to IHE programs

Educating the community about the need for SPED teachers and their roles as educators

SPED faculty making personal contacts

Internships in SPED classrooms for ALL education majors

Quality SPED CTs (e.g., passionate and enthusiastic)

Middle/high schools students volunteering in inclusive preschools and separate settings

Partnering with teacher recruitment organizations

Peer tutoring

Recruitment ideas from LEAs

- Fast track to licensure
- Volunteer activities/opportunities for middle schoolers
- Grants - "pay" for teacher assistants while completing student teaching
- Compile a list of grants offered through IHEs
- Compile a list of lateral entry programs offered through IHEs
- Contact IHEs with exceptional/passionate teachers to serve as cooperating teachers
- Provide tuition reimbursement for lateral entry teachers
- Ongoing support from IHE professors after graduation
- "Work day" for paperwork
- Begin training in the summer
- Work with teacher who is leaving
- Solid professional development plan
- Provide coaching support
- Bring staff development to teachers through mandatory workdays
- Assist with professional development fees/reimbursement

Nancy Mamlin – nmamlin@nccu.edu

Jennifer Diliberto – jdil@email.unc.edu

Kalin Stewart – kalinrh@live.unc.edu