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A monograph on the

1996 and 1997 Alumni Honors Award Projects

completed for the

Graduate Teacher Education Program

and reviewed by

Joan D. Mathis, Ed.D.
Director of Field Experiences

December 1997
Mission

Nova Southeastern University is a dynamic, not-for-profit, independent institution dedicated to providing high-quality educational programs of distinction from preschool through the professional and doctoral levels, as well as service to the community. Nova Southeastern University prepares students for lifelong learning and leadership roles in business and the professions. It offers academic programs at times convenient to students, employing innovative delivery systems and rich learning resources, on campus and at distant sites. The university fosters inquiry, research, and creative professional activity by uniting faculty and students in acquiring and applying knowledge in clinical, community, and professional settings.

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In Memoriam

Dr. John McKinney was a longtime employee of Nova Southeastern University. His original job with NSU was serving as an adjunct educational leadership faculty member for the GEM Program in the early 1980s at the program’s Miami site. Later, Dr. McKinney was an administrator at the site for several years, during which he was a popular practicum advisor.

After retiring as a school principal in the Dade County Public Schools, Dr. McKinney served as university supervisor for student teachers in the GTEP Initial Certification Plan. He continued as adjunct professor for educational leadership classes, as well.

We will miss his cheerful presence and positive outlook on the future of education. His “can-do” attitude was contagious. This edition of FOCUS on Change is dedicated to the memory of this outstanding contributor to the field of education (d.1997).
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Effecting Change

When Graduate Teacher Education Program (GTEP) students start selecting topics for school improvement projects, many exciting events begin to occur. The first is an expansion of professional networks followed by increased recognition as leaders in their fields. The excitement generated by implementing a unique problem-solving project often promotes valuable energy and synergy among peers.

The projects presented in this book are selected examples of excellence in practice submitted during the 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 academic years. The projects were chosen by GTEP program faculty from a collection of more than 200 distinguished candidates. All have been recognized for their impact by schools, districts, and communities.

I congratulate all of these educators who have made significant education improvements happen.

Joan D. Mathis, Ed.D.
Director of Field Experiences
Preface

The Practicum Internship is an applied research project that GTEP students implement as part of the requirements for a master’s or educational specialist degree. The practicum provides a unique experience in problem solving with teaching and learning based on the literature.

The practicum is a collaborative effort involving a practicum advisor, a local mentor, and other professionals in the internship setting. GTEP students design strategies to solve problems and address issues that need improvement in their work settings.

Each project described here was unique at the practicum site and had significant impact not only on the target group and the environment in which it took place, but also on the professional growth and development of its writer. Every project in this publication has been recommended for inclusion in the ERIC databank. Copies of these documents are available from the Einstein Library. It is a pleasure to present them here.
Achievement

Math Proficiency
Marcia Austin

Educational leadership major Marcia Austin designed a practicum to help secondary students improve their proficiency and self-confidence in mathematics. It was hoped that this would increase registration in upper-level math courses at Central High School in Brooksville, Florida.

Objectives were for 90% of students to complete a level two math course with a “C” or better average, show a 90% increase in their confidence and attitude toward math, and increase registration in upper level math courses by 85%. The program was also intended to assist other math teachers by increasing the use of less conventional teaching strategies by 80% and increasing student participation in an afterschool tutorial program by 100%.

Students were required to complete pre- and postsurveys on math attitudes and to seek tutoring in areas in which they were less than proficient. All program objectives were met. An analysis of survey results and comparison of pre- and posttest scores indicated a dramatic increase in abilities, confidence, and attitude toward math.
The practicum continued to be used at the school with modifications to discourage student procrastination. Ms. Austin now serves as assistant principal at Dolores Parrott Middle School in Brooksville, Florida.

**Degree:** Educational Specialist  
**Title:** Improving Mathematics Proficiency of Secondary Students Through a Continuous Progress Assessment Program (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Heather McDaniel, Tampa

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**Innovative Remediation**  
**DeeLynn Bennett**

DeeLynn Bennett, an educational leadership major from Port Charlotte, Florida, devised a unique program to assist seventh grade students at Murdock Middle School who were achieving at low levels. Poor grades and the results of a teacher survey showed that the problem stemmed from insufficient basic skills. The program was designed to improve these skills in a homogeneous environment to prepare the students for returning to a heterogeneous classroom.

To achieve this goal, teachers changed their teaching strategies and students their approach to learning. This was accomplished by generating reports every 3 weeks to monitor the progress of students and teachers alike. Students began showing significant improvement after 6 weeks. After 12 weeks, 83% were achieving a satisfactory level or better in all academic classes. Eleven percent were placed back in heterogeneous classes in all four academic subjects, 11% in three subjects, 56% in two subjects and the remaining 11% in one. Only two students remained in the basic skills class after 12 weeks. Although they had improved by
at least one letter grade in most subjects, both continued to achieve average or below-average grades and were identified as needing continued assistance. The attendance rate improved significantly (60% or better) for all students except one, and teachers noted a dramatic improvement in the students’ attitude toward learning.

The teachers assimilated at least 12 of the 18 teaching strategies introduced by Ms. Bennett into their approach. These included hands-on activities as well as visual and auditory learning aids. The study was successful for students and provided teachers with an opportunity to design and implement a variety of creative teaching methods.

Degree: Educational Specialist
Title: Helping Seventh-Grade Low-Achieving Students Increase Academic Achievement through Remediation in Homogeneous Environments (1996)
Advisor: Dr. Charles Bell, Fort Myers

Alternative Assessment
Peter J. Carole

Concerned that the Las Vegas fourth grade chorus students could not recognize the quality of their singing, educational leadership major Peter Carole designed a program to increase the knowledge of vocal performance among students and their parents and to create a method for comparison and self-evaluation. Mr. Carole organized a joint effort by fourth grade teachers, the music coordinator, and the school administrator to create a singing evaluation rubric that contained 10 qualities of vocal performance. Mr. Carole and the students assessed their performances jointly.
During the course of implementation, the students worked in groups of different sizes and completed peer evaluations as well as self-evaluations. As a result of this program, the students’ singing-performance knowledge improved by 45% to 100%, which was far more than the 20% projected. The change in parents’ knowledge followed a similar pattern.

The project was recommended for continued use in all levels at Rex Belle Elementary School in Las Vegas. It was also being considered for possible inclusion in district assessment guidelines for choral programs, due to its contribution to districtwide assessment objectives.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Alternative Assessment in Music Education (1995)
Superior Award, 1996; ERIC 1995
Advisor: Dr. Sandra Ransel, Las Vegas

Teaching Reading to ESOL Students
Susan N. Casbarro

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) major Susan Casbarro developed a program to help ESOL students at Embassy Creek Elementary School in Cooper City, Florida, increase reading comprehension. Although the school had state-of-the-art equipment, fifth and sixth grade students had consistently scored low in reading. Problem skill areas were cause and effect, predicting, making judgments, comparing concepts, drawing conclusions, and sequential ordering.

Ms. Casbarro chose two target groups: five teachers and five students. Teachers were trained in techniques for ESOL students, which increased joint ESOL planning time by 10% per week.
Reading in the social studies area was addressed using interactive questioning with trade books.

The target students were taught to take part by using accompanying visuals and responding to teacher cues. Semantic organizers were also employed. The program was highly successful and met all objectives.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Development and Implementation of a Content-Area Reading/Study Strategy Program for ESOL Students (1996)  
**ERIC 1996**  
**Advisor:** Dr. Marjorie Lyons, Fort Lauderdale

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### Thematic Tutoring  
**Hanna Colombey**

**Hanna Colombey**, a major in specific learning disabilities, created a basic skills tutoring project for a small group of elementary school children at Kids in Distress, a residential foster care center in Fort Lauderdale. Many of the children suffered from learning disabilities and parental neglect. Ms. Colombey’s project was designed to help the students maintain their basic language and mathematics skills over the summer.
Strategies included thematic instruction and portfolio assessment. A safari theme was chosen. Each week, the children chose an animal from a different area of the world and explored the culture of the people from that area through reading, writing, and math. Concrete, semi-concrete, and abstract assignments were included. As a final project, the students made a board game in which the players used a large floor map to find the animals’ native countries.

Students who did not attend regularly made little or no progress. However, the children who attended regularly not only maintained their skills, but increased them over the summer. Ms. Colombey did not take credit for the growth, since the students also attended public summer school, and the improvement could be attributed to either or both programs. Ms. Colombey strongly recommends that only trained special educators attempt to institute this curriculum.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Maintaining Basic Skills Through Summer Thematic Tutoring with Exceptional Students in Residential Foster Care (1995); ERIC 1995  
**Advisor:** Dr. John Madison, Fort Lauderdale
As a teacher at Nova High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, English education major Rosilis Cuevas was concerned about the writing level of the ninth grade regular English class students. They exhibited a negative attitude toward writing, had difficulty selecting topics, and were satisfied with unedited first drafts after two to five minutes of effort.

The strategy Ms. Cuevas introduced was based on the concept of "writing as a process." Students kept logs of short writing samples. The length of writing time was gradually increased over 12 weeks from 3 to 15 minutes. After seven drafts had been composed, each student selected one to refine over the next few weeks. Dialogue was added and the use of a technique called "snapshots and thoughtshots" was introduced. After many refinements had been made, Ms. Cuevas held individual conferences to complete the editing process. Finally, colorful verbs were selected to replace versions of the verb "to be."

The 20-minute writing session used as a posttest reflected a change in attitude toward writing and an increase of more than 50% in skills. Ms. Cuevas has continued to use the process at the school with variations for each class. Honors English has been added to her teaching assignment.
Skill Application
Billie Jo Diehl

Billie Jo Diehl, a special education teacher and major in mentally handicapped education, taught a class of mildly and moderately handicapped students at Hillcrest School in Ocala Florida. Some students needed to learn how to be more independent at school, at home, and in the community. The main challenge was skill application: reading signs, completing home chores, and improving social behavior.

Students were taken directly to a community-based institution, where they were taught skills and could practice them the same day. Other facilities, including a group home, a hotel, and various business locations, were used on successive weeks. Students learned to transfer their skills from one setting to another. All students made appreciable gains in identifying 10 signs, demonstrating 16 appropriate social behaviors, learning to make a bed, and applying all these skills at home.
When the project was completed, a schoolwide, community-based instruction program was added as a goal for the 1997-1998 School Improvement Plan. Ms. Diehl finds working with mentally handicapped students very rewarding. One of her goals is to obtain an Ed.S. in reading and language arts.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Effects of Increased Community-Based Instruction Upon Skill Acquisition and Application in Elementary-Level Students with Mental Handicaps (1996)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Sharon Griffin, Gainesville

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**Writing Skills**  
**Sharon E. Frink**

English education major Sharon Frink developed a practicum to improve the timed writing, proofreading ability, and attitude toward writing among ninth-grade English students at Orlando’s Dr. Phillips High School.

The objectives were for the target group to score a three or better on a timed essay, improve reading skills by 38%, and improve attitude toward writing by 14%. Objectives were set and measured according to the Florida Writes! 6-point rubric.
Working with peer editing groups and in cooperative learning groups, the students participated in several on-demand writing sessions. In individual conferences with Ms. Frink, students discussed problems and established goals. After learning proofreading strategies, the students practiced on their own writings and on those of their peers.

As a result of participating in this project, the students improved their attitude toward writing and proofreading and surpassed expectations for on-demand writing scores. Other English teachers at the school began to use the curriculum in their own classes.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Improving the Timed Writing Scores, Proofreading Skills and Positive Attitudes of Ninth Grade English Students (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Rose Taylor, Orlando

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**Reading Skills**  
**Susan J. Gruber**

Elementary education major **Susan Gruber**, a volunteer at Archer Middle School in Archer, Florida, developed a practicum designed to provide a strong foundation for literacy among fourth-grade poor readers. Objectives were to achieve a 40% improvement in reading accuracy, reading rate, comprehension, and spelling skills as well as to demonstrate a more positive attitude toward language experiences. Selected strategies chosen to improve phonological awareness included the use of traditional rhymes and songs as vehicles for aural and oral reading and writing practice.
Success was measured through tests and an attitude survey prepared by the teacher. All students demonstrated positive gains through participation in the program. The objectives for reading rates and comprehension were mostly attained. Although all students did not achieve the desired levels in reading accuracy, spelling skills, and attitudes, significant progress was measured.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Helping Fourth-Grade Poor Readers Through Operation READ, a Phonological Awareness Training Program (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Sharon Griffin, Gainesville

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**Creative Thinking Skills**  
**Rosa M. Harkow**

When gifted second and third graders at Miami’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas Elementary School demonstrated severely deficient creative thinking skills, elementary education major **Rosa Harkow** developed a practicum to meet their needs.

The purpose of the project was to introduce strategies that would enhance thinking and writing skills. Targeted objectives were to increase overall verbal and figural creativity, fluency and originality, and flexibility.
The students participated in creative problem-solving encounters with their classmates and used computer software to produce original writings. They experimented with creative, open-ended projects. The students met the targeted increase of 80% or more in overall creative skills. All participants did not meet the projected increase in figural and verbal fluency and figural originality, but all students made significant progress in these areas.

Ms. Harkow now provides districtwide support and training in the areas of critical and creative thinking for elementary school teachers of advanced programs. The practicum techniques are still being used by the gifted program teachers at the school.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Increasing Creative Thinking Skills in Second and Third Grade Gifted Students Using Imagery, Computers, and Creative Problem Solving (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Sherry Manburg, Miami

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**Applied Science**  
**Melissa J. Hovan**

Science education major **Melissa Hovan**, a science resource teacher at Riviera Magnet Elementary School in Riviera Beach, Florida, developed a practicum designed to help change third-grade students' perception of science and to motivate them to pursue science-related careers.

The program's objectives were for the students to increase their awareness of scientists and science-related careers, demonstrate learned historical facts and scientific concepts more often, and raise their ability to assess their own science-related skills. The
target group was required to take part in cooperative, hands-on science experiments, listen to guest speakers involved in science-related careers, participate in scientific investigations with their family members, and learn about people who had been influential in the scientific community.

Using the Draw-A-Scientist Test (DAST), laboratory evaluation forms, student surveys, and personal journals to evaluate the objectives, evaluations determined that members of the group had dramatically broadened their perceptions of science and scientists. The curriculum has been integrated into the teaching program for second- and third-grade students at the school.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Changing Third-Grade Students’ Perceptions of Science Through Career Awareness and Hands-On Science Experiences (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Dennis Murphy, West Palm Beach

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**Special Education Computer Training**  
**Jacqueline S. Johnson**

When a required curriculum at Las Vegas’ Western High School had to be adapted for use by special education students, computer science education major *Jacqueline Johnson* used the opportunity for a practicum. The target group was composed of resource room learning-disabled students and students with more severe impairments.

Ms. Johnson’s objectives were to design a one-semester course that would receive 90% acceptance by a committee composed of administrators and teachers and would improve the students’ computer literacy and application skills by 50%.
Using information gathered from the literature on existing curricula and from available material, Ms. Johnson designed a program utilizing auditory and visual modes as well as familiar paper-and-pencil and hands-on activities. As a result, all objectives were met.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Adaptation and Implementation of Curriculum for a High School Special Education Computer Science Program (1996); ERIC 1997  
**Advisor:** Dr. Don McHenry, Las Vegas

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**Reading Improvement**  
*Sheryl Krueger-Andris*

Reading major *Sheryl Krueger-Andris* developed a practicum to meet the needs of eight second-grade students at Fort Lauderdale Elementary School. Ms. Andris’ students had demonstrated difficulty reading and writing at grade level. The objectives were to develop a program that would improve reading levels, writing ability, and attitudes toward reading.

Ms. Andris designed a curriculum that featured peer tutoring, the writing process, and portfolio assessment. Through the use of story and sentence mapping, students made significant gains in eagerness to learn. The project proved highly successful in improving the students’ sight vocabulary, reading level, and writing ability as measured through pre- and posttests.

Ms. Andris recommended that the program continue throughout the year. An expansion to include all second- and fifth-grade students would be ideal for a cross-age reading program.
**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Improving Second-Grade Reading Achievement Through Writing, Peer Tutoring, and Portfolio Assessment (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Yvetta George, Fort Lauderdale

**Listening/Reading Comprehension**  
*Lilliam Martini*

Reading major *Lilliam Martini* developed a program to increase listening and reading comprehension scores in a class of 15 kindergarten students at the multiethnic Coral Gables Elementary School.

Objectives were for the students to improve their ability to listen and follow directions by 40% and their ability to identify details and main ideas by 30%, and to increase their story listening at home by 100%. The target group was encouraged to participate in listening activities that employed techniques such as reading aloud, listening and following directions, sequencing, and maintaining home reading logs. The program objectives were met, and all children in the group made significant improvement.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Improving Kindergartners’ Listening/Reading Comprehension Through an Assortment of Listening Skills and Strategies (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Barbara Moller, Miami.
Kathryn Phebus, an educational leadership major and science teacher at East Lake High School in Tarpon Springs, Florida, designed a course linking mathematical skills with their practical application in solving physics problems. Called TRISICS, the team-taught curriculum was composed of trigonometry and physics concepts and was used with juniors and seniors who were taking courses in both subjects.

Objectives were to increase mathematics skills by 10%, improve understanding of vectors and trigonometry applications in physics by 10%, and establish a link between physics and trigonometry. This was achieved by completing teacher-designed TRISICS projects, which emphasized basic trigonometric functions as applied to vectors and vector resolution. Students developed personal problem-solving models by working in groups. All program objectives were met, and the students improved their approach to problem solving, problem-solving methods, and the ability to use mathematics skills in physics.

The innovative program has garnered press coverage as well as inquiries from other schools in the state. As a result of its success, the TRISICS project has been awarded additional grants for its continuation and expansion. Enrollment in the
course has expanded. Robotics and animation units have been added to further integrate science, math, and technology, and a separate link has been established with an engineering firm involved in robotics.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** TRISICS: An Integrative Course to Strengthen Problem-Solving Skills (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Joseph Acotto, Fort Lauderdale

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**PreK Parental Involvement**  
*Lillian V. Rivera*

Located in one of Miami’s poorest neighborhoods, Liberty City Elementary School serves families with few resources and little education. Teacher and prekindergarten/handicapped major *Lillian Rivera* developed a practicum to enhance the literacy-related skills of the school’s prekindergarten students and to prepare them for kindergarten.

The objectives were for all entering students, regardless of their level of development, to learn appropriate pre-writing and pre-reading skills. Before the program began, their abilities were assessed through developmental tests.

Parental involvement was encouraged through workshops, home visits, field trips to the public library, and weekly classroom activities. Age-appropriate activities were demonstrated, and emphasis was placed on the importance of parental role models in developing literacy skills. A lending library was established, and list of recommended childrens’ books distributed to parents. A read-a-thon was organized through which parents, teachers, school personnel, and five first graders read to prekindergarten students.
students daily. Twelve parents participated. The early intervention students’ growth removed them from the at-risk category.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Increasing Pre-Reading, Pre-Writing and Book-Reading Skills Through a Parental Program by Offering Parent Training Sessions (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Barbara Moller, Miami
Leadership

Multiple Intelligences
Kimberly Bloor

Elementary education major and second grade teacher Kimberly Bloor designed a practicum to address the concern that the teachers at Blanton Elementary School in St. Petersburg, Florida, were overly focused on reading and mathematics.

The purpose of the project was to provide the teachers with new instructional strategies to be used in the classroom. Seventeen teachers and a random selection of 17 students from their classrooms were chosen for the project. Ms. Bloor conducted numerous training sessions for teachers which, focused on writing, implementing, discussing, and evaluating. The teachers became knowledgeable about Gardener’s Theory. The students participated in lessons for multiple intelligences. Success among the teachers was measured by documenting results in a classroom log and recording discussion notes. Success among the students was measured through their demonstration of knowledge about multiple intelligences through pre- and posttests. Both targeted groups improved dramatically in all areas, and all program objectives were met. The teachers involved in the project incorporated and extended the use of multiple intelligences into their curriculum and encouraged new teachers at the school to do the same.

Ms. Bloor was chosen one of the Top Ten Teachers in Pinellas County for the 1996-1997 year.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Implementing Inservice Training Sessions to Improve Teacher/Student Awareness of the Seven Intelligences (1997)
Advisor: Dr. Mary Anne Ratliff, Tampa
Educational leadership major Cindy Dean of Fort Lauderdale tackled the teaching of reading skills to increase learning in an urban elementary school. For the project, eight teachers were selected from grades three, four, and five at Quiet Waters Elementary School in Deerfield Beach, Florida.

The teachers first analyzed their teaching styles, then the preferred reading styles of their students. The teachers also learned how to administer and analyze the Reading Styles Inventory. Armed with this information, they developed various teaching materials, including recorded books and color overlays for Scoptic Sensitivity Syndrome. Teachers redesigned their classrooms, adding bean bag chairs and couches donated by the parents to provide comfortable reading areas.

In comparing pre- and posttests, seven of the eight participants showed a minimum 10% increase in positive attitudes and acquired knowledge. All eight have continued to incorporate the learned strategies into their classes.
Their success has prompted other teachers to request inservice classes on the topic.

The school has subsequently adopted many of the program’s objectives into their Improvement Plan and purchased technology to accommodate these strategies. Ms. Dean was invited to speak on this topic for the Deerfield Beach Quality Coalition Innovative Zone and at the 1996 Broward Schools of Excellence Convention.

**Degree:** Educational Specialist  
**Title:** Increasing Intermediate Teachers’ Awareness of Reading Styles and Strategies to Improve Students’ Learning (1996); ERIC 1996  
**Advisor:** Dr. Dale Kadlecek, Fort Lauderdale

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**Raising Academic Achievement**  
Constance M. Fedele

In this project, Title I Program Assistant and educational leadership major Constance Fedele created a *Title I Schoolwide Project Plan Transition Guide* to facilitate stakeholders’ understanding of the Schoolwide Project planning process. The way each school utilized its resources to bring about meaningful change in student performance was determined by how well this process was understood.

Schoolwide Project planning coordinators in the Columbia County School System facilitated the process at their respective schools. Success was measured by the integration of federal, state, and district requirements in each plan; use of resources; data-driven, curriculum-based decision making, research and educational rationale; the transition of all Title I inventory in
support of the plan; school board approval for each plan; and an increased knowledge base of the Schoolwide Project planning process.

Ms. Fedele continued to work with the director of federal projects and the Schoolwide Project planning coordinators in streamlining this evolving process after practicum implementation was complete.

**Degree:** Educational Specialist  
**Title:** Making the Title I Schoolwide Transition: Raising Levels of Academic Achievement Maximizing Physical, Material, Human, Monetary, and Curriculum Resources (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Leonard Weiss, Gainesville

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**Technology for Special Education**  
*Cindy K. Frisch*

Educational leadership major *Cindy Frisch* of Fort Lauderdale implemented this project while working as a curriculum assistant at Whispering Pines School in Miramar, Florida. The focus was to encourage targeted instructional staff in a center for severely emotionally disturbed K-12 students to integrate technology into their curriculum.

Staff members learned to design individual technology plans that
became part of their professional portfolios. An informal, learner-driven organization called the Professional Growth for the 21st Century (PG-21) Group was established as the vehicle for sharing readings, videotapes, audio tapes, and various formats for training, discussion groups, and activities.

Results showed that 88% of participants felt that their involvement would greatly impact their teaching strategies: 75% planned to use at least two of the technology-inclusion strategies on an ongoing basis in their classrooms. Due to the tremendous success of the project, Ms. Frisch recommended that the school move toward a peer-training model.

The original project was introduced at a principal's meeting as an effective staff-training model. Since then, the facility has continued to make use of the project through a Title VI grant received by Ms. Frisch for the school. By May 1996, Ms. Frisch had been appointed inclusion coordinator/ESE specialist at South Broward High School.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Professional Growth of Instructional Staff of K-12 Severely Emotionally Disturbed Students Through Individualized Technology Inservice (1995)
Advisor: Dr. Dale Kadlecek, Fort Lauderdale
Educational leadership major and teacher Roger Jacks employed the principle of peer pressure when tackling the issue of sexual harassment among students at Las Vegas' Rancho High School. A practicum was created to educate student leaders, who would then set the tone for their classmates.

The Principles of Leadership class—a student government class populated by student council officers, class officers, and activity club officers in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades—was targeted for the project.

Objectives were for student leaders to learn about the effects of harassment, to change their attitude toward condoning it, and to create a school sexual harassment policy that was understood by fellow students. Implementation of the practicum included writing a district-coordinated school sexual harassment policy and meeting objectives by using a nationally recognized training program approved by the State of Nevada Department of Education.

The policy was officially adopted at Rancho High School as well as other schools within the district and was used for the teacher inservice program on sexual harassment. Mr. Jacks was promoted to coordinator in charge of creating new magnet schools for medicine and allied health and aerospace and aviation.
Parent/Teacher Partnerships  
*Pamela E. King*

To help kindergarten and first-grade students in a multi-age classroom improve their reading skills, educational leadership major *Pamela King* designed a program to make parents and teachers partners in the effort. The goal was to encourage students to spend more time reading and writing outside of school. Project objectives were twofold: for teachers to use effective ways of working with parents, and to offer workshops that were so enjoyable and instructive that 85% of parents would participate.

Special children’s literature was chosen for the program, and 70 book bags with multiple copies of the selections were created. Bags also contained teacher-made forms and specific strategies materials directed toward staff development and parent training. Implementation began with separate workshops for teachers and parents on use of the book bags. Students took the book bags home, completed the activities, and wrote journal articles on the stories. Students presented their entries to classmates in school.
Participating teachers planned a young authors' conference, where students demonstrated reading and writing skills to their parents, who were also able to view their children's published works.

All objectives were met, and the program was considered highly successful. It continues to be used with the same age group and has been expanded to include the fourth grade.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** A Program to Foster a Partnership Between Parents and Teachers to Improve Reading Instruction in Kindergarten and First Grade (1995)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Patricia Shelton, Melbourne

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**Involving Title I Parents**  
**Linda W. Laye**

The challenge of involving Title I parents in their children's education was met head-on by educational leadership major and Title I resource teacher **Linda Laye**. Working with Cracker Trail Elementary School in Sebring, Florida, Ms. Laye designed a practicum to improve parents' involvement with the school and with their children's education.

Twenty-five parents of Title I students were selected for the program. None had any previous involvement with the school. The first task was to help them feel comfortable at the school. Three workshops held at convenient times and sensitive to language barriers were offered to help parents learn how to become involved and how to use specific parent-child activities. The focus was on computers, "make and take," and learning styles. Child care and transportation were provided. Monthly newsletters with workshop reminders were sent to English-
speaking parents, and all children made invitations for their parents. At the workshop, students were given backpacks containing a Walkman, reading and math activities, puzzles, and art projects to work on with their parents. Rewards were given for backpacks returned with the completed activities.

Attendance at all three workshops reached 89%. While success may be due to many factors, Ms. Laye reported that parent liaisons were key. Liaisons convinced the parents of the importance of their participation by making home visits and phone calls and by providing car pools. As a result of this project, Ms. Laye was promoted to curriculum resource teacher and parental involvement director at the school.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Reaching the Unreachable Parent Through an Extensive Title I Parent Involvement Program (1995); ERIC 1995  
**Advisor:** Dr. Mary Ann Ratliff, Tampa

**Computer Literacy for Teachers**  
**Clyde R. Shirley**

While most junior high students today are computer literate, many of their teachers are not. The 65 teachers at Burns Junior High School in Brandon, Florida, were no exception. Educational leadership major Clyde Shirley, a teacher at the school, designed a program to improve computer literacy and reduce associated anxiety among the teachers.
An electronic grade book was chosen for the project. Objectives were for the faculty to use the electronic grade book, score 80% on a posttraining test, demonstrate a low level of computer anxiety, and learn how to install and use a reformatting program to enter class rosters in the grade book. Six hours of demonstration and hands-on instruction were provided. Continuous on-site support was offered for 12 weeks.

The most successful objective was the one relating to the reformatting program. However, satisfactory improvement was made in all areas. More than half the faculty members now use the electronic grade book program, and additional training is being provided.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Improving Junior High School Teacher Computer Literacy Through the Use of an Electronic Grade Book (1996)
Advisor: Dr. Linda Gaughan, Tampa

Classroom Management
Jeffrey S. Spiro

When it became clear that newly hired teachers at Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School in Fort Myers, Florida, wrote far more discipline referrals than their colleagues, educational leadership major and teacher-on-assignment Jeffrey Spiro designed a practicum to assist in further developing classroom management and discipline maintenance skills. Program objectives were threefold: for new teachers to increase their knowledge and enforcement of the discipline plan by 50%, to decrease the number of referrals written for insubordination and disruption by 50%, and to experience an increase in their comfort level regarding classroom management and discipline.
Mr. Spiro held weekly inservice meetings with 15 selected teachers. Strategies for classroom management were analyzed for effectiveness. New strategies were introduced that focused on positive reinforcement.

Success was measured through pre- and posttraining surveys as well as through administrative observations. All the objectives were met with results exceeding expectations.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** A New Teacher Staff Development Program on Classroom Management Strategies (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Douglas Whittaker, Fort Myers

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**Increasing Attendance**  
**Valerie Wanza**

Educational leadership major **Valerie Wanza**, a teacher at Fort Lauderdale’s Dillard High School, developed a program to help increase attendance among 10th grade potential dropouts. Objectives of the practicum were ambitious and included increasing daily attendance by at least 40%, developing positive career and life goals, and for four of the students to develop positive education goals.

Students were paired with teachers for mentoring: Local business leaders and community activists were selected to serve as additional mentors. Community mentors met with students during the school day and donated prizes for a weekly attendance drawing. The group was required to complete a biotherapeutic learning packet, participate in regular counseling sessions, and complete a vocational technology portfolio.
These exercises had a positive influence on the students. Attendance increased by 52%. Each participant developed three to five positive career or life goals, and the targeted young men became conscious of the need for further education.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Increasing Attendance of Inner-City Youths (1996)  
ERIC 1997  
**Advisor:** Dr. Patricia H. Cameron, Fort Lauderdale

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**Multimedia Integration**  
**Creed R. Wheeler**

Despite an abundance of technology available to teachers at Mainland High School in Daytona Beach, Florida, a model technology school, teachers were not taking advantage of available resources. *Creed Wheeler’s* survey revealed that most did not know what was available on campus or how it might be integrated into the curriculum. Teachers were unsure how to find help in accessing and using technology.

Mr. Wheeler, an educational leadership major and teacher, tackled the problem by using a stakeholder group that created a slide show and two interactive directories using technology available at the school. Objectives were to increase awareness of the available technology among faculty members and to train them in its use. A multimedia
presentation highlighted the campus technologies with suggestions for application.

The program was well received and demonstrated a dramatic increase in campus technology awareness. It continues to be used with modifications. Subsequently, Mr. Wheeler was appointed network administrator and technology coordinator for a new high school.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Using a Multimedia Presentation to Facilitate Faculty Integration of Technology in a Public High School (1995)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Virginia Sharpe, Daytona Beach
Program Development

Cultural Awareness
Pamela L. Doering

Social studies major Pamela Doering developed and implemented a practicum to increase cultural awareness and literacy among sixth grade world geography students at The First Academy in Oviedo, Florida.

Objectives were to increase cultural knowledge by 30%, have all students write an original folktale for a class anthology, establish a cultural resource center containing double the current amount of culture-based instructional materials, and have 15 to 17 students show an increase in personal experience with another culture. Strategies included integrating units on North America and Europe, focusing on folk tales and novels, and using cooperative learning projects that incorporated computer technology.

Success was measured through pre- and posttests on cultural knowledge and cultural experience. Although not all objectives were met, the target group did improve in all areas concerning cultural literacy. As a result, the project was made an integral part of the social studies curriculum at the school.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Increasing Cultural Awareness of Sixth-Grade Geography Students Through the Use of Integrated Curriculum, Literature-Based Instruction and Cooperative Learning Strategies (1997)
Superior Award, 1997: ERIC 1997
Advisor: Dr. Heather McDaniel, Orlando
Positive Discipline
Reginald D. Forbes

Educational leadership major and administrative dean Reginald Forbes designed a program to reduce negative behavior among middle school students in an urban school. For the project, Mr. Forbes targeted 600 students in grades six to eight at Howard Middle School in Orlando, Florida. Objectives were to reduce the number of behavior infractions in the cafeteria and hallway by 15% and the number of suspensions by an equal amount.

Students were taught social skills and given lessons on respect and decorum. This positive discipline program required students, faculty, and administrators to work together to solve hallway and cafeteria problems. Candid videos of student behaviors in which teachers used role playing to demonstrate appropriate behavior were shown to students in special training.

Success was measured by examining discipline records and surveying the faculty. Although the objectives were not fully met, the number of discipline problems dropped. The school continued the program the following year. Mr. Forbes was promoted to the position of assistant principal.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Implementation of a Positive Discipline Program to Increase Social Skills of Middle Grade Students (1996); ERIC 1994
Advisor: Dr. Heather McDaniel, Orlando

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When special education students at Caloosa Middle School in Cape Coral, Florida, exhibited inappropriate social skills for their age, educational leadership major Barbara Griffin devised a program to increase their competence.

As a guidance counselor, Ms. Griffin recognized that poor social skills were causing students to experience difficulty relating to their teachers and peers both inside and outside the classroom. Objectives projected decreasing inappropriate behavior in the special education classroom and increasing appropriate social interactions among the students by 30%. It was also hoped that each student would make a new friend with a nondisabled peer.

The program included formal instruction in social skills, creating a network of peers and adults to assist on an ongoing basis. Ms. Griffin set weekly meetings of a collaborative team that monitored solution strategies. Three of the objectives were met; one was partially achieved. The overall result was a marked increase in appropriate social skills. The program will continue at the school. Ms. Griffin has been appointed as an assistant principal in the district.

Degree: Educational Specialist
Title: Helping Developmentally Disabled Students Increase Social Skills Through Instruction and Social Networking: A Pilot Project (1995)
Advisor: Dr. Charles Bell, Fort Myers
Integrated Writing Curriculum
Karyn Hillary

An inservice training program established by English teacher and educational leadership major Karyn Hillary was designed to increase writing skills among third- and fourth-grade students at suburban Kingswood Elementary School in Brandon, Florida. A group of nine teachers and 200 students were targeted. The teachers were encouraged to use strategies that integrated curriculum areas.

Levels of success were measured by evaluating pretraining and posttraining writing samples, though the direct observation of teachers' integration of writing into the curriculum, and by an open-ended statement review. As a result of integrated curriculum use, the targeted students showed gains in their ability to write using a realistic situation. Teacher reactions were positive, and the school has continued to use Ms. Hillary's strategies to enhance the writing curriculum.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Improving Third- and Fourth-Grade Student Writing Through Use of Integrated Curriculum (1996); ERIC 1996
Advisor: Dr. Linda Gaughan, Tampa
Computer-Mediated Communication
Beverly M. Kilgore

The Information Age has arrived, and elementary school children must learn computer communication skills. Beverly Kilgore, a computer science education major in Arizona, started off the students at Scottsdale's Sonoran Sky Elementary School by teaching them how to use e-mail on their local area network (LAN), then how to apply these skills to the Internet.

Students were taught Internet etiquette and responsible use of the computer's finite resources, such as hard drive space. All embraced the opportunity, successfully managing their resources and learning proper etiquette. As a result, all students in grades 3-6 at the school learned to use global e-mail. Their accomplishments caught the attention of Apple Computers, which issued a press release resulting in extensive media interest throughout Arizona and Texas.

Degree: Master of Science
Title: Driver's Education for the Information Superhighway: Computer-Mediated Communication on a Local Area Network (1995); ERIC 1995
Advisor: Dr. Robert McClarin, Phoenix
Peer Mediation Training
Kathryn Kirleis

Kathryn Kirleis, a social worker at Florida’s Land O’Lakes High School, wondered what impact conflict management training would have on students with emotional and behavioral problems. Ms. Kirleis, who worked with the emotionally handicapped, developed a research program in which a targeted group of students participated in peer mediation training, then worked with teachers and other staff members in solving classroom conflicts.

The objective of the project was to have students use the conflict management strategies they learned. It was hoped that this would decrease conflictual behavior by 25% and result in 20% fewer discipline referrals. Actual results exceeded expectations: Discipline referrals decreased by 74% (Level One), 49% (Level Two), and 34% (Level Three).

The school continues to use peer mediation in mainstream classes. Educationally handicapped (EH) students voluntarily participate. Ms. Kirleis was promoted to Exceptional Student Education Counselor/Parent Education Specialist with the Pasco County School System.
Learning Readiness
Sari B. Klein

Preschool-age autistic children require special preparation before they can begin to learn. Sari Klein, majoring in educationally handicapped and a teacher at the Baudhuin Oral School in Davie, Florida, designed a program to teach learning readiness skills to PreK autistic children through the use of repeated discrete trials.

Objectives were for the students to learn how to follow three commands—“sit quietly,” “look at me” and “do this”—with 90% accuracy over a four-day period. Strategies included multiple daily discrete trials starting with physical modeling by the teacher. Quiet vocal instructions were used.

Weekly results were graphed for 12 weeks to show growth. Both students met the objective for “sit quietly.” One also met the objectives for “look at me” and “do this.” Although the other student did not, overall compliance increased. The program was deemed a success, and several employees were hired to begin discrete trial training in Tier 2 classrooms.
Conflict Resolution

Dorri B. Linde

PreK/primary major Dorri Linde developed and implemented a practicum designed to provide win-win solutions for conflict resolution in a kindergarten classroom through systematic reasoning. Ms. Linde’s classroom at Hidden Oak Elementary School in Gainesville, Florida, was targeted for the project. Objectives included a 25% group reduction in impulsive and aggressive behavior; the group to identify at least three forms of anger management and to implement problem-solving strategies for conflict resolution; and an increase in the use of problem-solving and anger-management techniques to resolve interpersonal conflicts in the classroom.

Activities were based on The Second Step Program created by the Committee for Children in Seattle, Washington. This special project focuses on aggression and violence prevention. The targeted group was slated to be tracked for 5 years. The curriculum consisted of 27 lessons in empathy training, problem-
solving, and anger management using children’s literature, music, and puppets.

Changes were measured five times during the project. All members of the target group decreased their aggressive behavior by 44% or more. The project instilled a feeling of pride and accomplishment among the students. Staff acknowledgment of the target group’s social development was overwhelming.

Ms. Linde recommended this program for all kindergarten and Headstart programs at the school.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Prosocial Problem-Solving Techniques for Conflict Resolution in the Kindergarten Classroom (1997)  
**Advisor:** Dr. Wilma J. Robles de Melendez, Gainesville
Educational media major Karen Poulsen designed and implemented a practicum to increase student participation in a districtwide storytelling festival. As a volunteer, Ms. Poulsen developed a partnership between the county public library and the school system. Objectives were for students to participate in the Annual Storytelling Festival, to tell a story from memory, and to tell a story in a small group.

The target group consisted of 10 fourth graders at Horizon Elementary School in Port Orange, Florida. Techniques used to achieve the objectives included group improvisations, vocal and physical exercises, creative dramatics, and participation in a preview performance.
All objectives were met, and seven of the targeted students participated in the storytelling festival.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Increasing the Participation of Fourth-Grade Students in a Storytelling Festival (1996)  
**Superior Award, 1997**  
**Advisor:** Dr. Virginia Sharpe, Daytona

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**Teen Parents**  
*Portia Ann Marie Schmidt*

Educational leadership major *Portia Ann Marie Schmidt*, an instructor with the Lee Adolescent Mothers Program in Fort Myers, Florida, designed a peer mediation program to resolve conflicts among students, staff, and administrators at this teen parent school.

The goal was for teachers and students to increase their knowledge of conflict resolution methods. It was hoped that students would exhibit more positive attitudes and use critical thinking skills, and that teachers would reduce suspensions by 15%. Methodology included active listening, problem solving, group cooperation, role playing, and group discussion. Materials were made available through a grant from Drug-Free Schools.

Frequent meetings helped teachers to refine activities. A school mediation team was selected from the target group. All objectives were met to some degree, although the target group was reduced from 35 to 28 by the end of the project. Students completing the project made gains of 20% in resolving conflicts.

Ms. Schmidt subsequently modified the program for middle school students and taught it again the following year.
Interaction Skills  
Lisa R. Schmiedeke

As a teacher of mentally handicapped elementary school children, Lisa Schmiedeke recognized the vital importance of students utilizing skills learned in the classroom when associating with normally developing peers. Ms. Schmiedeke developed a social skills training program to improve this interaction. The target group included 6 educable mentally-handicapped children, ages 5-8; one trainable mentally-handicapped child, age 7; and 23 nonhandicapped kindergarten children. Strategies included instruction, demonstration, role modeling, and feedback on positive interaction. Observation data collected during the students' free play time documented the level of behavior carry-over into social situations.
The special educators of Hillsborough County School District identified this as a model classroom for mentally handicapped students. A grant was funded for a summer session called "Social Supermarket." During this session, the six skills introduced in the practicum were addressed. The project was presented at the 1996 Council for Exceptional Children Convention. Ms. Schmiedeke was selected as a Florida Uniting Students in Education (FUSE) trainer for the school district.

**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Enhancing the Social Interaction Skills of Students Who are Mildly Mentally Handicapped and Their Typically Developing Peers in a Free Play Setting (1995)  
**Advisor:** Linda K. Gaughan, Tampa
Reducing Violence
Robert Vicari

In an attempt to reduce school crime and violence at a suburban middle school, teacher and educational leadership major Robert Vicari developed a practicum focusing on peer mediation techniques. Objectives were for targeted students serving as peer mediators to successfully conduct a peer mediation session, and for incidents of violence in grades six through eight to decrease by 36%.

A mediation team of 13 seventh and eighth graders at Osceola Middle School in Seminole, Florida, was trained in the strategies for conflict resolution. They completed a 2-hour orientation and 14-hour training program before using the skills to solve conflicts and develop written peer behavioral contracts.

Both objectives were met. Success was measured through an analysis and comparison of school records and office referrals between pre- and postimplementation.

Degree: Educational Specialist
Title: Reducing the Number of Incidents of Crime and Violence Through the Implementation of a Peer Mediation Program (1997)
Advisor: Dr. Mary Ann Ratliff, Tampa
Employment Portfolios
Ann Wissner

Educational leadership major Ann Wissner, a transition specialist at Velasco Student Services Center in Tampa, Florida, established a project to use employment portfolios to match moderately handicapped students with the most appropriate jobs after graduation. The objective was to increase the chance of employment after graduation for supported employment workers.

The project was conducted with five area businesses that participate in a community-based training program with the school system. Participants included 5 teachers and 20 students. Teachers served as job coaches and visited the job sites. Interagency meetings increased understanding among agencies and other stakeholders of the special education students’ abilities and training.

Comprehensive employment portfolios for job interviews were prepared with samples of the students’ work. Students included in the portfolios information on job-training skills, their use of critical thinking, and practice interview skills. Nineteen students completed portfolios. Self-evaluations were conducted by the target group.

As a result, both students and their parents knew more about what was expected on the job, and the participating agencies became more knowledgeable about the applicants’ abilities and limitations.
**Degree:** Master of Science  
**Title:** Developing Employment Portfolios for Students with Moderate Mental Handicaps Participating in a Community-Based Training Program (1996)  
**Advisor:** Linda K. Gaughan, Tampa