

Old Dominion UNIVERSITY

Darden College of Education Commonwealth Special Education Endorsement Programs: *A Distance Learning Approach to Alternative Licensure*

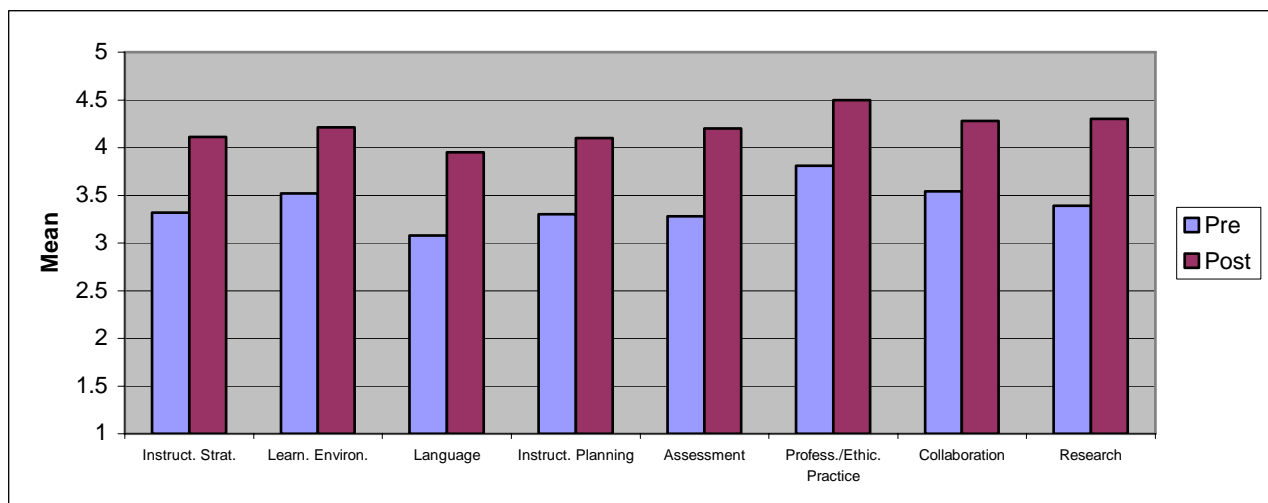
The primary mission of the **Commonwealth Special Education Endorsement Programs (CSEEP)** is to provide superior preparation and a readily accessible path to full licensure for the more than 2,500 conditionally licensed special education teachers and qualified non-licensed personnel across the Commonwealth. Currently, the program has 296 participants pursuing licensure in learning disabilities, mental retardation, and/or emotional disturbance. Eligible participants hold conditional/provisional special education licensure or paraprofessional/non-licensed positions in Virginia school divisions.

The CSEEP programs are a clear success. To date, CSEEP has enabled over 1,100 teachers to achieve full licensure and to acquire the skills necessary to effectively educate their students with disabilities. The programs also have been accorded national recognition. In 2005, the *American Association of State Colleges and Universities* awarded the Christa McAuliffe Award for Teaching Excellence to the CSEEP program. CSEEP also won the *American Council on Rural Special Education's* Exemplary Program Award in February 2006. In February of 2007, the CSEEP program was named a finalist for the *Association of Teacher Educators'* Distinguished Program in Teacher Education. Other benchmarks of success include high rates of teacher retention and principal (employer) satisfaction.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

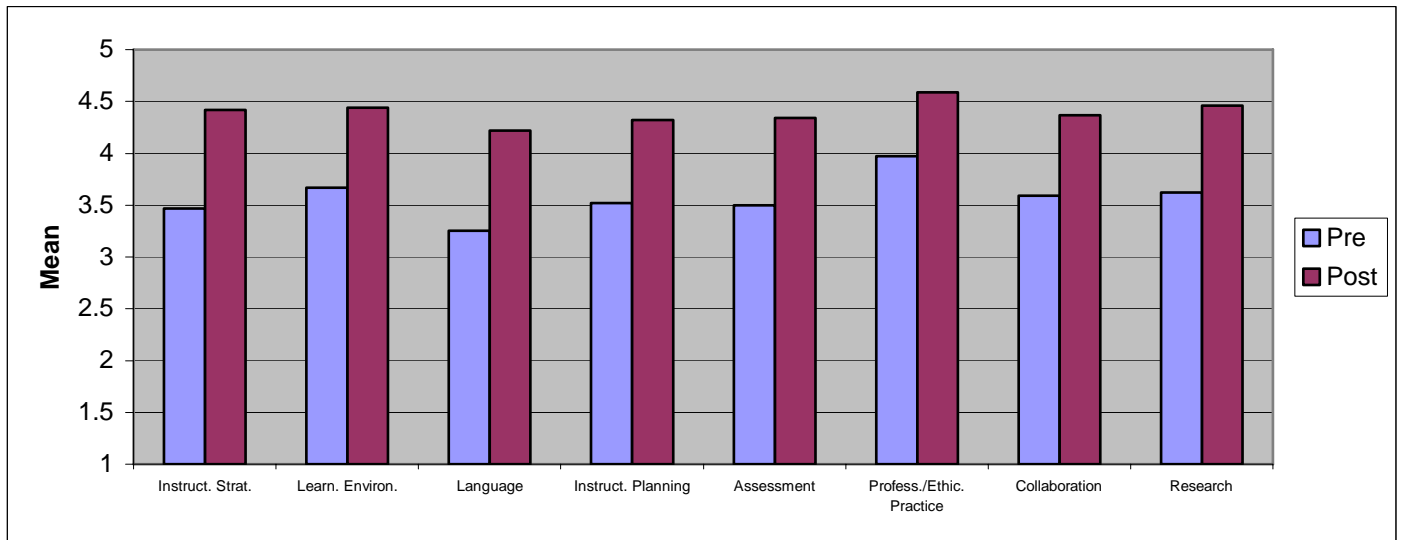
Using a pre/ post task instrument, participants assess their preparedness using the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Performance-Based Standards for Special Educators. Data from 365 participants indicate that, after completing their teacher licensure through CSEEP, participants were better prepared to implement all of the CEC standards (see Figure 1). These data suggest the program has a direct impact not only on the quality of the teacher, but also on the quality of the special education instruction that grant participants provide to their students.

Figure 1. Participant Task Rating Form Data



CSEEP participants also are required to have mentors. As peer coaches and classroom-level experts, mentors' assessments and observations of conditionally licensed participants are invaluable. Mentors also complete a Pre/Post Task Rating Form based on CEC standards for their mentees. Again, data confirm that participants are better prepared to implement all of the standards after completing their teacher licensure through CSEEP.

Figure 2. Mentor Task Rating Form Data



Beginning in the fall semester of 2006, the grant added an additional observation to be completed by mentors. The new survey provides a qualitative measure of the participants' performance based on CEC standards. This observation requires that mentors identify strengths and weaknesses of their respective participants during that semester. The data were analyzed by depicting the number of strengths and weaknesses per participant per semester and sums were computed according to each standard. In the Fall 2006 semester, 112 mentors completed this evaluation on their participants and 116 mentors completed it in the Spring 2007 semester. Data indicate that participants are improving their weaknesses and increasing their strengths through the CSEEP programs.

In all, the CSEEP programs continue to be a success across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Data from program participants, mentors and principals indicate that CSEEP teachers are performing with excellence in the classroom. These conclusions are supported by student outcome data that indicate heightened student engagement, increased correct responses, and improvements in classroom behavior.

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