

Teachers Receive Sensitivity Training

By Michele Hart

Some teachers are ill-prepared to deal with students with special problems or needs, according to Patricia Stohle Fontaine, a fourth- and fifth-grade teacher at Marshall Elementary School, Harrisburg, and a Penn State Harrisburg alumnus.

To avoid having more teachers like those described by Fontaine, all Capital College elementary education majors are required to complete a semester-long sensitivity training course in order to graduate.

"You get teachers who haven't thought about these things," said Dr. Duane R. Smith, assistant education professor. "Our purpose is to force them (the students) into thinking about things they wouldn't normally think of."

Students involved in the course begin by studying the physical and mental growth of children, and then move on to examine physical, ethnic, and emotional differences in children.

"We look at kids who have emotional problems and how they fit

into groups and make transitions into new classes," Smith said.

Smith also said the course involves a "heavy" load of work. The students complete exercises, watch movies, participate in discussions, and read research materials and textbook selections that talk about subjects from handicapped children to prejudice.

"We deal with concepts that we think they need to be aware of," he said, including reaching out to students, interpersonal effectiveness, and self-actualization.

"There is such a thing as a self-fulfilling prophecy that goes both ways in that what a student is told will eventually be how he feels," Smith explained. Avoiding negative self-actualizations is important for young children, he said.

The exercises the course participants must complete include blind-folded trust walks, reading with special glasses to replicate dyslexia, and spending a full day in a wheelchair.

"It (the wheelchair exercise) makes them look at a person in a

wheelchair in a different way," Smith said. "We don't try to make people completely different, just sensitive to the way other people are."

During the course of the semester, the students go into public schools for four weeks two different times. One of those field experiences has to be in an urban school, Smith explained, so the student teachers can be exposed to a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

"We want them to see what those ethnic differences are," he said.

According to Smith "those students who do well in the course do well in the field."

"When people leave they aren't perfect, but at least we think they've seen some things," he said.

Fontaine, who said she knows first-hand what discrimination is, feels the sensitivity training is very important for prospective teachers.

"It gives you the insight of how that person feels," she said.

Knowing how a child feels is of paramount importance, she said, "be-

cause those children come to you the teacher with dreams; even if they are little, small dreams."

Fontaine tried a sensitivity experiment of her own with her students by dividing them into groups of white-shirted and blue-shirted children. She then told one group they were inferior to the other.

That experience of discrimination "really hit home to my students," she said.

Fontaine added that her training at Capital College made her aware of how environment affects growth and education.

"It really helped me to understand children and be accepting of their differences."

The ideal of sensitivity training is not a new one to the elementary education program. Smith said the course has always been in existence in one form or another, although it has been reorganized a few times.

"But the whole concept of sensitivity training for teachers has always been here," he said.

Business Survey Responses

By Kathleen Riley-King

Of the twelve responses received, all agreed that more open forums would be beneficial and that faculty members should attend the forums. All of the respondents said that they would be willing to attend additional forums. The respondents felt that the forums should be held at various times of the day and evening "so all would have a chance to attend."

Two respondents attended the February 4 forum, one attended the February 2 forum, and two attended the March 19 forum. Those who did not attend any of the forums cited not knowing about them, not enough advance notice, conflict with classes, and conflict with work schedules as reasons for not attending. Several students pointed out that night students should be offered forums as well.

Comments and questions for the division included:

* "Could apathy be a response to a 'who cares about the student-consumer' attitude on the college's part?"

* "All the new transfer students should have an individual [advising] session prior to pre-registration of classes. The student and the advisor should go over the transfer of credits."

* "Why are part-time students treated like second-class students by both faculty and students? For most of us, this is our only option. We are not taking an easy out!"

* "Would appreciate a *smiling, helpful* admin. support staff."

* "If a teacher can't speak my language, he shouldn't teach in it."

* "If you say you care, then hire some teachers who care more for their students than their egos."

* "I am very disappointed in the quality of the education at this school. A graduate should be proud of their alma mater, and the education you get here doesn't deserve that sentiment."

* "Most of the faculty have no actual experience. We need people with practical experience to help prepare us for the business world."

* "... Dr. Blumberg has the tendency to avoid the question and glaze things over."

* "... Dr. Blumberg is an avoider and doesn't do anything about problems."

** "Sometimes I wonder why we express our opinions. These problems have been brought to the B.A. division before and nothing has been done. Are these forums really going to help? All we can do is try. Also, professors seem to be so concerned with publications that they aren't concerned with the students. Their first priority should be the students. We pay them!!"

* "[We are] in desperate need of a *quiet* place to study (library quiet area is not quiet and CUB bldg. 'Quiet Room' gets pre-empted for aerobics)."

Thanks for your responses!

Business Students: Walk in and Be Advised

By Kathleen Riley-King

Go into E355, turn right, and go to the end of the hall, last door on the right.

What's there? The new Business Advising Center, supervised by Beth Jones, coordinator of undergraduate Business programs.

At the advising center, you will find academic advising assistants, Monica Zimmerman and Valerie Henkel.

According to Jones, the new advising center was established in November 1986 to provide students with an additional resource for academic advising.

Henkel and Zimmerman can aid with registration and can answer students' questions about program requirements. Both can also approve schedules of classes.

Another goal for the advising center is outreach, says Jones. Business students with less than a 2.0 grade-point average will be identified. The center will contact these students and offer them assistance in completing their programs.

Jones says that each student is still assigned a faculty advisor and that the advising center is to be used as a supplement to--not a replacement for--the advisor.

During spring pre-registration and registration weeks, Henkel and Zimmerman assisted approximately sixty to seventy students per week, says Jones. But during other weeks, about thirty-five students per week have been seeking assistance.

Although the advising center is set up on a walk-in basis, a student desiring to make an appointment may do so. In fact, since evening hours are limited, Jones says that evening students may want to make appointments.

Hours:

Mon.	8 a.m.-7 p.m.
Tues.	11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Wed.	8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thurs.	11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fri.	8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Phone Number: 948-6152