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# A Study of the Effects of the Professional Semester on Certain Aspects of Personality & Interests of Elementary Education Students Minor in Special Education

Dorine Geeslin  
*Western Kentucky University*

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Geeslin,  
Dorine H.

1976

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PROFESSIONAL  
SEMESTER ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF PERSONALITY  
AND INTERESTS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION  
STUDENTS MINORING IN SPECIAL  
EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Psychology  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by

Dorine H. Geeslin

December, 1976

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Recommended March 3, 1977  
(Date)

Harry R. Rohr  
Director of Thesis

Lynn Clark  
Curtis L. Englebright

Approved March 22, 1977  
(Date)

Almer Gray  
Dean of the Graduate College

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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF PERSONALITY AND INTERESTS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION STUDENTS MINORING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dorine H. Geeslin            December, 1976            pages

Directed by: H. R. Robe, C. L. Englebright, and L. F. Clark

Department of Psychology            Western Kentucky University

When 32 elementary education students, 16 of whom were enrolled in an off-campus block of laboratory experiences with handicapped, took the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study and the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, Form DD, there was no evidence that the professional semester affected self-confidence or social adjustment as measured by the number of extrapunitive and need-persistence reactions, respectively, on the P-F Study. The  $t$  test was used to compare the mean number of those responses made by members of the two groups. There was considerable evidence, however, that the number of subjects who gave elementary education the same or an even higher rank following the professional semester was too great to be attributed to chance when compared by means of chi square to the number and direction of rank changes made by members of the control group on the same occupational survey. The support which this study has given to actual classroom experience as a cause of increased professional commitment is sufficiently great to imply that other students might profit if their programs contained periods of time spent in daily contact with learners before their student teaching experiences begin.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

For decades researchers have been adding to their knowledge of personality by means of attitude surveys. Teacher attitudes and perception of the teacher's role have become topics of research interest. Until recently, the role of the elementary teacher was a general one. Only teachers of older pupils or of adults were specialists. As specialities have arisen in the elementary education field, new avenues for research have appeared.

One area of specialization at present is that of the elementary teacher whose certificate has been endorsed to permit teaching handicapped children. College students in that field at Western Kentucky University are referred to as special education minors and are required to devote a semester to a block of professional courses, including a practicum, which brings them into direct contact with learners who have problems. Recently developed courses require hands-on, field-based experiences. A student may have several two-week assignments at schools and hospitals populated in part by handicapped children. This school term is generally called the "professional semester." It is described more fully in Appendix A.

Apparently college students look forward to the professional semester. There is a belief among special education faculty members that students have more self-confidence, better social adjustment, and a firmer commitment to teaching following their field-based experience. That belief has not generated a quantity of research. Even though confidence and adjustment may be revealed by reactions to frustrations, very few of the frustration studies have had teacher education students as their subjects.

This investigation attempted to answer the question--Is there a measurable difference in certain reactions and interests of the student after he has completed the professional semester? More specifically--Will reactions of prospective teachers to frustrations change either in direction or in type? Will commitment to teaching change or remain unchanged?

Teacher educators should be as cognizant as possible of the effects of their own teacher education programs. This awareness seems especially important at the present time when educators are being urged to "move teacher education from the four walls of a sterile college classroom to the public school arena of real life" and "merge general and special methods into a single set of clinical experiences provided in the public school setting" (Buck & Orr, 1972, p. 37). One program, described by Shirley (1975) causes sophomores to divide their time equally between methods

courses on campus and work in the public school classrooms. Surveys of attrition rate and students' attitudes indicate that "a change from the traditionally taught methods courses to the mixing of study and direct involvement in the public school classroom seems to be an improvement in teacher education" (p. 7).

If a program is considered effective, it is logical that an effort be made to learn why it is effective and the ways in which it is effective. Such efforts are likely to result in research. The present investigation, undertaken to study the effects of the professional semester, may establish a starting point for a research program that evaluates innovative programs in teacher education.

#### Review of Related Literature

##### Personality Traits and Characteristics

Among the instruments that have been used to measure teacher attitude are the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI), the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey, the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, the F Scale, and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule. Several writers have sought to measure changes in various facets of personality resulting from specific experiences which the teacher-education student has undergone. Using the MTAI to produce attitude scores, Callis (1950) and Sandgren and Schmid (1956) reported an increase in the scores of undergraduates,

but the former found a decrease in scores when subjects ceased to be students and became teachers. None of these subjects, however, was preparing to teach the handicapped.

Among those investigations that indicated the futility of expecting change in the structure of personality over a short period of time was that of Rocchio and Kearney (Getzels & Jackson, 1963) who used a course in mental hygiene as the independent variable; the work of McGee (1955) using the F Scale in measuring authoritarian trends in personality and suggesting ways to counter authoritarianism rather than to change personalities; and that of I. L. Smith (1968) who measured short-term changes in psychological needs of teachers, finding them relatively stable and likely to remain unchanged in the absence of a planned program of intervention. Having assumed that reaction to frustration is not a characteristic so well-rooted in the personality that it won't change, the writer has reviewed the literature surrounding response patterns and included it in the following discussion of "adjustment."

#### Adjustment

Meisgier (1965) compared student teachers of the handicapped with other student teachers. One pattern which emerged was the successful student teacher of the handicapped as a well-adjusted, emotionally stable person able to encounter the many trying situations that arise in a special class. Bullock and Whelen (1971) included in their report

several suggestions for teacher training programs postulated by Mackie, Kvaraceus and Williams following a comprehensive attempt to determine the competencies needed by teachers of emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted children. Included in the suggestions was "Stress the theory and dynamics of personal social adjustment" (p. 486). In reporting their own work, they related that teachers of the emotionally disturbed ranked in third place this competency: "The ability to tolerate antisocial behavior particularly when it is directed toward authority" (p. 487). R. M. Smith (1968) stated that the teacher of the mentally retarded must be satisfied with demonstrations of minimal change by the children. The writers discussed in this paragraph have emphasized the importance of adjustment for the teacher of the handicapped. Two of them have introduced the concept of tolerance for frustration without using that terminology.

A few studies have assessed adjustment by using an instrument developed by Rosenzweig (1948) in which three directions for aggression are posited. The extrapunitive direction is that in which the individual aggressively attributes the frustration to something or someone other than himself; the intropunitive reaction occurs when the individual places the blame for the frustration upon himself; and the third direction, impunitive, is characterized by an absence of blame. In fact, aggression may be evaded altogether and an attempt made to gloss over the frustration

entirely or even to show that it has been helpful. Schill and Black (1967) hypothesized that subjects with high need for approval (n approval), as measured by the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, would be less prone to express aggression against their environment, with extrapunitive responses, or toward themselves, with intropunitive responses, but would exhibit a greater tendency toward nonrecognition of hostility, using responses classified as impunitive. The evidence largely supported the hypothesis. Although there was no statistically significant difference in the number of intropunitive reactions, subjects with high n approval gave more impunitive responses. They were aggressive only in situations where cultural standards clearly prescribe it, thereby maintaining a defensive self picture. Apparently those subjects able to express aggression with extrapunitive reactions were considered the better-adjusted subjects.

In studying an experimental graduate program at the University of Florida, Busby, Combs, Blume, Avila and Oberlin (1974) collected data with several instruments. One of them was the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. A high score on that scale was interpreted to mean that an individual had a high degree of self-acceptance. Hence, he had more self-confidence, according to the report. Whetstone (1965) found that effective teachers made more extrapunitive responses than either intropunitive or impunitive responses.

Investigating the difference in direction of aggression between achievers and underachievers, Roth and Puri (1967) hypothesized that the direction of the achievers' aggression would be extrapunitive. Their hypothesis was upheld. Those writers saw attacks from within as effective as attacks by others in decompensating the self-structure. Their statements implied that the more effective person's direction of aggression was extrapunitive.

Fisher and Hines (1951) used both normal and psychotic subjects in their attempt to measure methods for managing hostility over a range of conditions. They found that an increase in assertive aggression was accompanied by a decrease in self-blaming hostility and that a health management of hostility impulses depended, in part, on provision of a sufficient number of channels for draining off hostility outwardly. When hostility impulses were well-managed, the individual was left free to express justified aggression without inappropriate feelings of guilt and anxiety. "The healthy individual has many techniques and mechanisms for releasing hostility feelings, for directing them outward" (p. 51). These investigators have given considerable support to the writer's assumption that the self-confident person can direct his aggression toward an offender rather than directing it inwardly or pretending there has been no offense.

In addition to the three directions for hostility, Rosenzweig (1948) divided reactions to frustrations into three types. Obstacle-dominance consisted of reactions in which an object rather than a person was presumed to have caused an inconvenience; ego-defense was the category of the reaction in which the individual's main concern was to protect himself; and need-persistence was the type of reaction to frustration in which reaching a solution superseded the placing of blame. Bjerstedt (1970), in reviewing the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study (P-F Study), linked need-persistence to constructive aggression; whereas, ego-defense was termed destructive aggression; and obstacle-dominance was described as a curtailed response. His review supported this writer's assumption that the well-adjusted person would seek solutions to problems rather than protect his own ego. Moreover, psychological literature is replete with agreement that the well-adjusted person solves his problems. Nevertheless, Bjerstedt's review underscored the usefulness of the P-F Study as an instrument for measuring adjustment.

This study has attempted to identify personality structures thought to be subject to short-run change. The writer assumed that reaction to frustration was not so well-established in the personality that it could not change. This assumption appeared to receive support from both Rosenzweig (1947) and Brown (1947). The former described the



measurement of such reactions as a limited projective procedure for disclosing patterns of response to everyday stress, patterns that are widely recognized as important in adjustment. The latter seemed to agree that the P-F Study would not reveal profound or extensive knowledge concerning the personality since its more modest scope related to certain aspects of social adjustment.

#### Interests and Attitudes Toward Work

An attitude believed to be subject to change is the attitude toward work. In his summary of the literature prior to 1960 Vroom (1962) showed that work content and successful performance are related to work attitudes. More recently Alfano (1973) designed and used a scale to measure attitude toward work. Believing his instrument could depict changes over a period of a few months, he showed a relationship between work attitude, ego-strength and self-confidence. Cattell (1965) defined attitude in terms of interest, mentioning both the Strong Interest Blank and the Kuder as interest tests "in which the person literally checks off the occupations and activities he thinks would most interest him" (pp. 348, 349). Kuder (1971) cited job satisfaction studies and concluded: "Given the required abilities, the young person who enters an occupation consistent with his interests is more likely to be a satisfied worker than one who does not" (p. 5).

### Statement of the Problem

This review of the literature has emphasized a need for investigating the attitudes of students preparing to teach the handicapped. Even though research has been concerned with special education classes more in the last decade than formerly, few studies have investigated the effects of selected practices on their teachers. This review has pointed out the futility of attempts to measure short-term changes in personality structures. It has mentioned reaction to frustration and attitudes or interests as aspects of social adjustment believed subject to the influence of changes in self-confidence. Few studies, however, have investigated social adjustment, self-confidence, and vocational interests of teacher education students. Even fewer investigations of this nature have had special education students as their subjects. There has been a dearth of experimentation seeking the effects of the professional semester on the reactions and interests of those special education students who experienced it.

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were investigated:

1. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of extrapunitive responses, as measured by the P-F Study posttest, made by members of two groups in teacher education: one, the experimental, whose members have completed the field-based professional semester; the

other, the control group, whose members have finished a semester's work on campus.

2. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of changes in direction toward extrapunitive responses made by members of the two groups when posttest results on the P-F Study are compared with pretest responses on the same instrument.

3. There will be no statistically significant difference in the mean number of need-persistence responses made by members of the two groups on the posttest.

4. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of changes toward need-persistence types of responses made by the members of the two groups between the two administrations of the P-F Study.

5. There will be no statistically significant difference between the two groups in the number of subjects for whom elementary education as a college major obtains the same or even more favorable rank when an occupational interest survey given at the beginning of the semester is followed by a posttest at the end of the semester.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODS

This investigation sought to measure the effects of the professional semester on the self-confidence and social adjustment of the participants as indicated by the direction and type of reactions to frustration. It also examined commitment to elementary education as their college major before and after the professional semester. Scores on a projective measure of frustration, the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study (1948), and on an interest test, Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, Form DD (1964), comprised the data that were analyzed. Scores earned by members of the experimental group composed of elementary education students minoring in special education and enrolled in the professional semester were compared with scores of members of the control group, elementary education students who spent the semester taking courses on campus.

#### Subjects

An intact group of those 25 teacher education students accepted for the professional semester at Western Kentucky University became the initial experimental group. However, one student invalidated his pretest and did not appear for

the posttest; eight others maintained that their interests were solely in secondary education; consequently, the experimental group was composed of the remaining 16 students. The control group members were drawn from five classes required of elementary education majors. The population was defined as those who had finished the introductory elementary education course and possibly other education courses, but had not yet become seniors. They were, moreover, in the traditional teacher preparation program, not in the newer competency based teacher education program then in its second year at the university. None had been involved in a practicum or in any course that brought a student into more than a cursory contact with elementary school pupils. In all, 35 such students were given the pretests. Their papers were numbered, and 16 were selected by means of a table of random numbers. The decision to choose a number equal to the number in the experimental group was influenced by Edwards (1968) who stated that the  $t$  test is little affected by heterogeneity of variance or nonnormality of distribution of the variable when there is an equal number of observations for each treatment group. Since the  $t$  test had been proposed for investigating four of the five hypotheses, maintaining its sensitivity was a prime concern for this investigator.

### Procedures

Before the end of the first week of the semester, subjects in both groups were pretested with the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study and the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, Form DD. The former was used in measuring direction and type of reactions to frustration, self-confidence having been related to extrapunitive responses and social adjustment to need-persistence reactions. Pretest results were investigated statistically by the  $t$  test to learn whether or not subjects in the two groups belonged to the same population before the treatment period. The occupational interest survey was used to find the rank which each subject assigned to elementary education as a college major.

Posttests were given subjects in each group at the close of the semester. Hypotheses #1 and #3 were investigated by the  $t$  test to find whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the mean number of extrapunitive responses or need-persistence reactions respectively, by members of the two groups. Hypotheses #2 and #4, involving the number of changed responses, were similarly treated to emphasize the influence of the treatment on differences between pretest and posttest results.

The occupational interest survey was also administered at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Changes in the ranking of elementary education as a major choice were

investigated by Chi Square to learn whether changes resulted from chance factors alone. These differences were the concern of hypothesis #5.

### The Measuring Instruments

#### The Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study

Even though the manual for the adult form of the P-F Study contains considerable information regarding direction and type of reactions to frustration, as already described in this paper, and is specific even to the extent of providing numerous examples for scoring, it does not touch upon the validity or the reliability of the instrument. Other studies, however, have concerned themselves with these aspects of the P-F Study. Mirmow (1952) summarized dozens of studies and showed that several investigators had reported the global validity of the P-F Study in eliciting behavior consistent with the total personality of the individual, but none had provided consistent data concerning the validity of single aspects of the instrument. She also discussed several investigations made under the assumption that exposure of the individual to a period of stress would produce a measurable change in reactions to frustrations as measured by the instrument. She concluded that the data supported the validity of the P-F Study.

Challman (Buros, 1970), in his discussion of the reliability of the P-F Study, quoted an assertion of its

author that the adult form has a retest reliability coefficient between .60 and .80. Bjerstedt (Buros, 1970) reported its internal consistency low, but stated "there is no reason that first-half scores should be identical to second-half scores" (p. 1320). Each of the two preceding reviewers treated the subject of interscorer consistency, the latter stating that it "is fairly high according to several studies" (p. 1320); the former more explicitly setting reliability of scoring at .85.

Kuder Occupational Interest  
Survey, Form DD

The scores on this occupational scale show the degree of relationship between the individual's interest patterns and the patterns characteristic of professionals in more than 100 occupations and of students in 48 college-major groups, one of which is elementary education. The items in the scale are the same ones used in the Kuder Preference Record, Form D. The scoring and interpretation have been enlarged upon, even though the subject is directed to mark the least preferred and the most preferred activity in each of 100 triads, as in the older test. In addition to the interest-correlation scores already mentioned, each individual's score sheet ranks the occupations and the college-major groups according to the order of preference indicated by the individual's responses. The rank given to elementary



education by each subject in the pretest and posttest was a part of the concern of the present investigation.

Kuder (1971) engaged in a massive validation of his instrument, using 3,000 subjects, 100 in each of 30 occupational groups. He was concerned with errors of classification, apparent when a member of one occupation scored higher on another occupation than on his own. The consistency with which members obtained a higher score on their own occupational scales than on other scales was expressed as Phi coefficients. They ranged between .42 and 1.00 with most of them above .80. More pertinent to the present investigation was the validation study made with the same scores, but analyzed from the standpoint of rank given his own occupation by each subject. More of the 100 subjects in each group ranked their own occupations first then second, or third, etc. Since 64% of the total group scored highest on their own scales, with only 10% ranking another occupation significantly above their own in the scoring, Kuder interpreted the results as an illustration of the ability of the scales to classify individuals correctly.

Kuder also investigated the reliability of the instrument. In a test-retest situation with a time lapse of two weeks, he found the median reliability for several groups to be .90. Another approach to reliability was the consistency of the differences between scores on each pair

of scales. When the survey was administered twice to 92 subjects, correlations ranged from .84 to .92.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The t test was used to find whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the number of extrapunitive responses, as measured by the P-F Study posttest, made by members of the experimental group, who had finished the professional semester in special education, and by the members of the control group. The critical ratio was found to be negative .43, and the null hypothesis was accepted. The data used in investigating that hypothesis, as well as the other hypotheses related to the P-F Study, are summarized in Table 1. Raw data from which the summary was made appear in Appendix B.

Pretest results are also shown in Table 1 even though no hypothesis was set forth concerning them. The work was carried out to learn whether or not the two samples originated from the same population. Interpretation of results was simplified by the fact that, according to the ratio yielded by the t test, members of the two groups did not differ in their reactions at the beginning of the study.

Although an examination of the means and standard deviations for the changes shown in Table 1 reveals slight changes in the direction of extrapunitive responses for the

TABLE 1.--Comparison of mean number of selected reactions and changes on a projective frustration test by an experimental group (E) enrolled in field-based classes and a control (C) group enrolled in on-campus classes

Source	Selected Response			
	Extrapunitive		Need-Persistence	
	E Group	C Group	E Group	C Group
Pretest				
Mean	7.31	8.19	7.66	6.72
Standard Deviation	2.83	3.25	2.53	2.16
<u>t</u>	-.81		1.13	
Posttest				
Mean	7.81	8.31	7.69	7.44
Standard Deviation	3.21	3.33	1.89	1.74
<u>t</u>	-.43		.39	
Changes toward				
Mean	1.47	1.03	.81	1.34
Standard Deviation	1.62	1.16	1.07	1.60
<u>t</u>	.88		-1.10	

NOTE: With 15 degrees of freedom and alpha level at .05, t is statistically significant only when its absolute value exceeds 2.045.

experimental group, the difference was not statistically significant, and the hypothesis of no difference was supported.

Hypothesis #3 stated that there would be no statistically significant difference in the mean number of need-persistence responses made by members of the two groups on the posttest. With  $t$  equal to .39, the null hypothesis was supported. Members of the two groups had also belonged to the same population with respect to types of reactions to frustration at the beginning of the investigation, according to pretest results.

Hypothesis #4 was concerned with the number of changes toward need-persistence responses made by members of the two groups between pretest and posttest. A few pretest responses other than problem-solving were changed to the need-persistence type on the posttest by members of each group, with the control group making the greater number of changes. However, the critical ratio of negative 1.10 did not fall into the rejection zone of the curve related to the  $t$  test; therefore, the hypothesis was supported.

Change in the rank of elementary education as a college major was being investigated as a measure of the effect of the professional semester on the commitment to teaching of those subjects who participated in it. Hypothesis #5 stated that there would be no statistically significant difference

between the two groups in the number of subjects for whom elementary education as a college major obtained the same or an even more favorable rank when an occupational interest inventory given at the beginning of the semester is followed by a posttest at the end. Each group contained subjects who placed elementary education in a less favorable rank on the posttest, others who gave it a more favorable rank, and a few who made no change.

The rank given their major by each subject in each group on both the pretest and the posttest comprises Appendix C. Chi Square was computed from a four fold contingency table with the data classified as it appears in Table 2.

TABLE 2.--Contingency table showing number of subjects in each of two groups who gave elementary education a less favorable rank or a more favorable or unchanged rank on the occupational interest survey posttest as compared with its pretest

Group	Posttest Rank of Elementary Education		Total
	Less Favorable	More Favorable or Same	
Experimental	4	12	16
Control	10	6	16
Totals	16	16	32

Four members of the experimental group were shown to regress in their interest in elementary education as a college major; whereas ten subjects in the control group ranked elementary education less favorably on the posttest. The remaining members of each group gave their major either the same rank or an improved rank on the posttest. Chi Square was found to be 4.57, well above 3.841, which is the table value of Chi Square with one degree of freedom when alpha level equals .05. The results, then, were statistically significant and ascribable to the treatment. Hypothesis #5 was rejected.

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

This investigation sought to measure the effects of the professional semester on the self-confidence, social adjustment, and professional commitment of the elementary education students who pursued it. Self-confidence and social adjustment were, for the purposes of the study, assumed to be the extrapunitive direction and the need-persistence type, respectively, of reactions to frustration, as measured by the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study (P-F Study). Professional commitment was measured by the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, Form DD.

Subjects in both groups were tested with the two instruments at the beginning and at the close of the 1976 spring semester. One purpose of the P-F Study pretest was to learn whether or not the subjects were members of the same population with respect to reactions to frustration before the treatment semester. Analysis of data would have become quite complicated had two separate populations emerged at that point. However, the two groups did not differ statistically in the number of extrapunitive or need-persistence responses on the pretest. The occupational interest survey was also administered as a pretest since



changes in the rank given to elementary education was the variable under scrutiny. A comparison of the number of such changes made on the posttest by members of the two groups indicated that those in the experimental group had held or increased their interest in the elementary education major, while those subjects who remained on campus, the control group, had regressed in that interest, as measured by the survey. Specifically, four experimental group subjects gave elementary education a lower rank on the posttest while ten control group subjects did so. The remaining subjects in each group gave their major either the same rank or a more favorable rank than they had given it on the pretest. Differences, investigated by Chi Square, were statistically significant at the .95 level of confidence. Belief that elementary education students minoring in special education return to campus with a firmer commitment to teaching following their field-based professional semester was well-supported by the evidence. Results of the P-F Study posttest, however, indicated that subjects in the two groups had remained members of the same population relative to their reactions to frustration even though one group of subjects had experienced the professional semester.

Even though no evidence was provided to indicate that the professional semester increased the self-confidence and social adjustment of students who experienced it, the

opposing idea that self-confidence and social adjustment were diminished by the experience was not supported. On the basis of one study it would be hazardous even to state that confidence and adjustment remain unchanged. The effect of the professional semester on those aspects of personality simply is not known. This investigation, if it has done nothing else in relation to personality characteristics, has pointed up the difficulty of isolating and measuring changes. The professional semester most assuredly has effect, if not on confidence and adjustment, then on other aspects of personality. If personality characteristics seem impervious to short-term influences, the search for the effects of the professional semester will be more difficult, but should proceed nevertheless. Additional research is clearly in order.

#### Limitations of the Study

Perhaps the most serious limitation of this investigation was the selection of all subjects from one institution, Western Kentucky University. This institution, however, is not completely unlike other regional universities in the midwest, and results can be tentatively generalized in the absence of data to the contrary.

All elementary education majors enrolled for the professional semester in the spring of 1977 became subjects in the experimental group. This was tantamount to the selection of 1976 as a typical year, as though its students were

representative of students in other years. There is no evidence to support or refute the idea that 1976's students comprised a satisfactory replica of student populations in preceding or subsequent years. Should 1976 be found to have been an atypical year, results could hardly be generalized beyond the class for which the data were accumulated. Such a consequence, however, is highly unlikely.

#### Commitment to Teaching

This investigation has given considerable support to the view that students return from their field-based experience with a firmer professional commitment. Since the professional semester seems to establish a firmer commitment to teaching, would it not be wise to incorporate a professional semester in the regular teacher preparation program? Is the professional semester equivalent to, or as intense as, student teaching? The present study has generated these researchable problems or questions. Only research designed to study the experiences and reactions of students can supply direction to their programs. Such research is clearly in order.

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APPENDIX A  
THE PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER



## THE PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER

### Its History at Western Kentucky University

Prior to the 1971-72 school year, there was no organized program for educating teachers of the handicapped at Western Kentucky University. Instead, there were several courses in various departments, the successful completion of which would result in endorsement of a teaching certificate to include the teaching of educable mentally retarded children. This was minimal preparation which could hardly be considered a program.

Beginning in 1971 four courses were formed into a block of 15 semester hours. Two of the four had been in the Department of Psychology. They were moved to the Department of Elementary Education and renumbered. The other two courses were new. These four courses, named in the following section, became the professional semester. Approximately two years later, the areas of Reading and Special Education were spun from the Department of Elementary Education, forming the Department of Reading and Special Education (RDSE). The professional semester underwent no change as a result of the reorganization, however, and the close cooperation between departments made the elementary education

major with a special education minor a very feasible program for students to follow.

A Description of the  
Professional Semester

When a student minoring in special education becomes a sophomore, he may apply for the professional semester, electing to pursue it in either his second or third year of college. He should complete Education 100, Introduction to Elementary Education; Psychology 100, Introduction to Psychology; Psychology 220, Human Growth and Development; and RDSE 220, Teaching Reading in the Elementary School, before registering for the professional semester. It is highly recommended that his admission to teacher education also precede his undertaking the professional semester. The student then registers for three courses carrying three semester hours credit each and for one six-semester hour course. The latter is RDSE 350, Practicum Experiences in Special Education. The three hour courses are: RDSE 300, The Exceptional Child; RDSE 301, The Mentally Retarded Child; and RDSE 302, Behavior Deviations in Children and Youth.

Students spend approximately two weeks on campus attending lectures and reading textbooks, thus beginning their study of the theories that undergird special education. Then they begin the first of five two-week placements which provide the experience expected in a

practicum. Theoretical aspects are not suspended, however, since students continue to read on their own initiative and to prepare term papers required for successful completion of the courses. It is the practicum, however, which appears to have the greatest impact on the students. A typical professional semester might be comprised of two-week stays at a facility where emotionally disturbed youngsters live from Sunday night until Friday afternoon with practicum students living under the same roof; at a school in which each pupil has been handicapped by cerebral palsy and may need help with eating and with other body functions; at a group of cottages that house educable mentally retarded (EMR) and trainable mentally retarded (TMR) children and adults; at an institution for the profoundly mentally retarded where every patient is non-ambulatory; and at a public school which has a special classroom set up for the EMR or, perhaps, for those with learning disabilities (LD). A student with those placements would be likely to observe certain aspects of a token economy. He would see the "time out room" in use. He would find his charges upset one day and calm the next. He might even experience being locked in a hall with several youngsters whose past histories include running away when given opportunity to do so. These experiences are recounted in the diary which each student keeps. The diaries reflect the students' earnest efforts to find time to read the textbooks, write the term papers and prepare for the tests which accompany the courses concurrent with the practicum.

Mostly, however, their diaries concern themselves with the children, the "kids," as they are often called. They are taken swimming. They are taken on picnics, to the playground, to the store. They are fed, bathed, loved, taught, and eventually, left. Students proclaim that they want to stay longer, that they would gladly return, that they find certain youngsters adorable, and, sometimes, that they would be willing to adopt particular children for their very own. Their theme is one of desire to help. The words "excited," "nervous," and "scared" appear at the outset. "Hate to leave" is a recurring phrase. The word "frustrated" is not absent.

The diaries also show that students are assigned to specific teachers who evaluate their work, that they are visited by their college supervisors from time to time, and that there is an honest attempt made to teach the handicapped whatever they are ready to learn, be it buttoning and zipping, number work, or reading. Their positive assessment of the professional semester is revealed by declarations that they learned as much in the practicum as in all their campus courses put together or that they feel sorry for anyone who did not have their experiences.

APPENDIX B  
TABULAR PRESENTATIONS OF RESPONSES ON THE  
ROSENZWEIG PICTURE-FRUSTRATION STUDY

TABLE A.--Number of P-F Study responses in each direction for subjects in each group on pretest and posttest

Subject	Experimental Group						Control Group					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
	E	I	M	E	I	M	E	I	M	E	I	M
1	8.5	11.0	4.5	2.5	10.5	10.0	10.0	7.5	6.5	10.0	7.0	7.0
2	7.0	7.5	8.5	5.0	9.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	5.0	7.5	10.5
3	3.0	11.5	9.5	6.0	6.5	11.5	4.5	8.5	11.0	6.5	7.5	10.0
4	5.5	10.5	8.0	4.0	8.0	11.0	5.5	8.0	9.5	6.0	7.5	10.5
5	11.5	7.0	5.5	13.5	7.5	3.0	6.5	7.5	10.0	4.0	10.0	10.0
6	8.0	6.5	8.5	6.5	8.5	8.0	7.0	8.5	8.5	9.0	11.0	4.0
7	8.5	8.0	7.5	10.0	7.5	6.5	7.5	8.0	8.5	10.0	6.0	8.0
8	7.0	8.0	7.0	10.0	7.0	7.0	13.5	6.0	4.5	17.0	3.0	4.0
9	2.0	10.5	11.5	4.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	6.0	7.0	11.0
10	6.5	10.5	7.0	10.5	7.5	6.0	13.5	6.5	4.0	9.0	8.0	7.0
11	7.0	8.0	9.0	7.0	8.5	8.5	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	6.0	8.0
12	6.0	9.0	8.0	7.5	10.5	6.0	11.0	5.5	7.5	8.5	8.0	7.5
13	13.5	6.5	4.0	10.5	7.0	6.5	13.5	7.5	3.0	12.5	4.5	7.0
14	9.5	6.5	8.0	11.0	7.5	5.5	8.0	6.0	9.0	10.0	6.0	8.0
15	5.5	12.0	6.5	10.5	9.0	4.5	4.0	11.0	9.0	6.0	11.0	7.0
16	8.0	9.0	7.0	6.5	8.0	8.5	4.0	10.0	10.0	4.5	10.5	8.0

TABLE B.--Number of P-F Study responses of each type for subjects in each group on pretest and posttest

Subject	Experimental Group						Control Group					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
	O-D	E-D	N-P	O-D	E-D	N-P	O-D	E-D	N-P	O-D	E-D	N-P
1	5.5	7.0	11.5	5.0	7.0	11.0	6.5	13.5	4.0	3.0	13.5	7.5
2	4.5	10.0	8.5	0.0	10.5	10.5	5.5	105.0	8.0	4.0	8.5	10.5
3	5.0	8.5	10.5	4.0	11.0	9.5	5.5	9.5	9.0	6.0	8.5	9.5
4	4.0	13.5	6.5	5.0	11.5	6.5	6.0	9.5	7.5	7.5	8.5	8.0
5	5.5	15.5	3.0	5.0	13.5	5.5	6.0	8.5	9.5	7.0	9.0	8.0
6	6.5	10.5	6.0	6.0	12.0	5.0	4.5	12.0	7.5	7.5	9.0	7.5
7	5.5	13.0	5.5	4.0	14.0	6.0	6.0	11.5	6.5	7.0	12.0	5.0
8	5.0	9.5	7.5	6.0	10.0	8.0	5.0	14.5	4.5	3.0	15.5	5.5
9	6.0	6.0	12.0	6.0	8.5	9.5	3.0	15.0	6.0	4.0	15.0	5.0
10	6.0	9.0	9.0	6.0	13.0	5.0	1.0	19.5	3.5	5.0	11.5	7.5
11	7.0	11.0	6.0	5.0	10.0	9.0	3.5	10.5	10.0	2.0	15.0	6.0
12	9.0	8.0	6.0	6.0	9.5	8.5	8.5	10.5	5.0	5.5	10.5	8.0
13	5.0	13.0	6.0	7.0	10.0	7.0	8.5	9.0	6.5	7.5	11.5	5.0
14	5.0	13.5	5.5	4.5	13.0	6.5	5.0	14.0	4.0	4.0	12.0	8.0
15	3.0	12.5	8.5	5.5	11.5	7.0	6.5	10.0	7.5	5.0	9.0	10.0
16	3.5	10.0	10.5	4.5	9.5	9.0	5.0	10.5	8.5	3.5	11.5	8.0

APPENDIX C

TABULAR PRESENTATION OF RANK GIVEN ELEMENTARY  
EDUCATION AS A COLLEGE MAJOR ON THE KUDER  
OCCUPATIONAL INTEREST SURVEY, FORM DD



TABLE C.--Rank given elementary education as a college major by subjects in each group on the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, Form DD pretest and posttest

Subject	Group			
	Experimental		Control	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
1	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.5
2	6.5	4.0	4.0	6.0
3	6.0	6.0	9.0	7.0
4	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0
5	3.0	3.5	2.5	3.5
6	14.5	11.0	2.5	1.0
7	10.0	7.5	11.0	9.0
8	1.5	4.0	2.0	3.0
9	3.0	3.5	4.5	4.0
10	4.0	3.5	1.5	3.0
11	1.0	1.0	7.0	7.5
12	4.0	1.5	2.5	4.0
13	2.0	6.0	1.0	3.0
14	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0
15	6.5	2.0	2.0	3.0
16	7.0	6.0	4.0	4.5