

Hybrid course focuses on inclusive instruction

by Amanda Munger - Thursday, May 13, 2010

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2724/hybrid-course-focuses-on-inclusive-instruction/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is preparing future teachers for inclusive classrooms through a combined traditional and special education course.

An experimental course, Elementary Education 384: Teaching Mathematics PK-8 was born of the Response to Intervention mandate, which requires schools across the nation to end the practice of pullout programs for students identified as having learning disabilities.

Judith Hanks, the curriculum and instruction professor for the course, said the mandate requires classroom teachers to team up with special education teachers rather than the two being separate.

“It is a revision of how schools provide services for students classified as ‘at-risk,’” she said. “It will remove the labels. All students will be in an inclusive classroom.”

The course aims to equip teachers with the skills to teach students of all learning abilities and to more closely collaborate with special education teachers.

“All of our new graduates will need to be prepared to meet the needs of children who have processing problems, who might be autistic, or have some behavioral or learning problem that is impacting their learning,” Hanks said.

The class was first offered in fall 2009 and is co-taught by Hanks and Stacey Skoning, an assistant professor of special education at UW Oshkosh. The course is a requirement for elementary education majors, dual elementary and special education majors, and special education majors.

Ava McCall, the chair of the curriculum and instruction department for the College of Education and Human Services, said the co-teaching technique — that is, combining the expertise of two or more faculty members — can only benefit college students.

“Team-teaching the math methods course is a model for how educators might work together to meet the learning needs of all students,” McCall said. “It requires coordination among two different faculty members and departments, but the results should be a richer learning experience for our students.”

Hanks and Skoning distributed a survey to students regarding the class last semester and received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

One student wrote, “My feelings toward teaching math have changed because I now feel more confident that I will be able to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners and know where to find additional resources to help me develop meaningful math experiences for students.”

Other students mentioned they learned ways of assessing students and enjoyed having the special-education perspective they do not always get in other classes.

Hankes said this class is the first of its kind at UW Oshkosh.

“We are on the leading edge of the mandate,” she said.

[See more photos taken during the Teaching Mathematics PK-8 class.](#)