Final Proposal Application

2003 Christa McAuliffe Award

for Excellence in Teacher Education

Award Category: High Quality Induction Program

Applicant: The CADRE Project, College of Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Contact Person:
Dr. John Langan, Chair
Teacher Education Department
College of Education
University of Nebraska at Omaha
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE  68182
jlangan@mail.unomaha.edu
402-554-3666
402-554-3744 (FAX)
Describe your program: mission goals, structure, etc.

The mission of the College of Education is to promote excellence through instruction, research, and service. Through instruction, the college has a rich history of preparing teachers, counselors, librarians, and administrators for the schools. It also prepares professionals in agency counseling, recreation, community health, exercise science, and speech pathology. Through research, the college adds to the knowledge base by sharing its findings to the professional community. It is through this discovery, documentation, and dissemination of truth that individuals and society can advance. Through service, the college offers direct assistance to the community and state, the professions, and the university, thereby improving conditions under which individuals work, live, and develop.

The Career Advancement and Development for Recruits and Experienced teachers (CADRE) Project is an intensive induction program designed to assist newly certified teachers (CADRE Teachers) as they enter the teaching profession. The CADRE teachers complete graduate course work specifically designed to address the needs of first year teachers. As part of the program, the teachers also complete a yearlong teaching experience (in a partnership school district) and receive intensive mentoring from master teachers (CADRE Associates). The CADRE Associates are provided opportunities for continued professional growth and development through participation in the project. CADRE II: The Arts, an extension of the CADRE Project, focuses on infusing comprehensive art education into the elementary school curriculum in an effort to enhance professional teaching and enrich K-6 pupil learning. In sum, the project is both a graduate induction program for beginning teachers and a professional renewal program for experienced teachers.

Goals of the CADRE Project

- To provide entry-year assistance to beginning teachers through graduate study focused on the needs of first-year teachers.
- To implement and extend research-based teaching techniques and strategies with opportunities for evaluation, feedback, and reflection on the benefits of the techniques and strategies.
- To pair beginning teachers with master teachers who mentor them as instructional pedagogy and theory are implemented in the classroom.
- To raise the level of performance of beginning teachers, thus enhancing student performance.
- To enrich the teacher preparation and public school curriculums through an interdisciplinary approach that links the colleges of Education, Arts & Sciences, Fine Arts and the public schools in course development and delivery.
- To enhance teacher retention and professional growth.
- To provide incentives for professional growth and advanced career options to master teachers.
- To provide networking opportunities for teachers, school districts, the community and the university as a means of developing a culture of collaboration between content and pedagogy specialists.
- To implement a comprehensive approach to learning and teaching in and through the arts.
Key Components

Specially Designed Curriculum
The new, first-year CADRE teachers begin graduate studies in the summer prior to the start of their teaching assignment. Course work continues through the academic year with completion in the following summer. The curriculum focuses on the needs of first year teachers. Course work and seminar experiences deal with classroom management, implementation of instructional strategies, special needs of special learners, parent interaction, professional development, and action (classroom-based) research. Courses are taught by full-time university faculty and CADRE Associates.

CADRE Associates
The CADRE Associates are experienced teachers who hold a master’s degree and are selected by the partnership school districts and the university to participate in the project. The Associates remain employees of the school district, but assume a variety of responsibilities as they devote approximately 25% of their time to mentoring CADRE Teachers, 25% of their time to the university, and 50% of their time to special assignments within their school district. Associates serve for a two or three-year period depending upon the needs of the cooperating school district.

Specially Selected Placement in MOEC School
The Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium is the organization responsible for the development and implementation of the CADRE Project. MOEC is a collaborative organization that seeks to unite the talents and energies of seven metropolitan Omaha area public school districts and the College of Education. The CADRE Teachers are selected by the MOEC school district according to that district’s hiring practices.

Portfolio Assessment
Throughout the program, CADRE teachers with the assistance of a master teacher and a university faculty construct a portfolio in which they chronicle and analyze their experiences during their first year of teaching. This portfolio serves as the capstone experience of the program.

Financial Support
Financial support is provided through collaborative financing between the university and the MOEC school districts. Graduate tuition and fees are paid through the CADRE Project and CADRE Teachers receive a $12,000 stipend for their year-long teaching assignment. In addition, CADRE Associates are paid by their employing school districts and receive 50% release time to participate in the project.

Longitudinal Research
University faculty, CADRE Associates, and CADRE Teachers are involved in research studies that examine the effectiveness of the program, its impact on the new teachers, and its impact on the P-12 pupils. Details of these research efforts are provided in Sections C and D.

To date, 217 teachers have completed the CADRE Project. In addition, this year, there are 34 teachers participating in the Project; 22 in CADRE and 12 in CADRE II: The Arts.

Cooperative Effort
The CADRE Project is a partnership program between the College of Education (Teacher Education Department) and the seven member public school districts in the Metropolitan Omaha
Education Consortium (MOEC). MOEC was established in 1988. It consists of the Dean of the College of Education and the seven superintendents of the public school districts in the greater Omaha area. The member school districts are Bellevue, Council Bluffs (Iowa), Millard, Omaha, Papillion/LaVista, Ralston, and Westside. The schools serve approximately 100,000 pupils and have a professional staff of 8500 individuals. The primary goal of MOEC is to serve as a catalyst to provide the best education possible for both the youth and professional educators in the Omaha community. A common interest of the consortium has been bridging the teacher preparation experience at the university with the full-time classroom teaching experience in the public schools. The CADRE Project, which began in 1994, is successfully addressing this interest.

As participants in the CADRE Project, the CADRE teachers hold a regular Nebraska Teaching certificate and assume full responsibility for a classroom in one of the seven MOEC school districts. The teachers meet the criteria for admission to graduate programs in the College of Education and are selected for the project by individual school districts according to that district’s hiring practices. That is, CADRE teachers are sponsored by school districts and are viewed as beginning teachers in the districts. Each school district selects master teachers who serve as CADRE Associates. The associates are relieved of their teaching duties and are assigned to CADRE teachers to act as mentors. The Associates also conduct other activities (e.g., research, service projects) for the college and the district in accordance with the needs of the project and identified needs within the district.

In addition to the MOEC collaboration, the college also founded the Content and Pedagogy Council and the Content and Pedagogy Committee. The Council addresses educational challenges and opportunities by maximizing communication and collaboration among metropolitan area public schools, academic units at the university (including education, arts and sciences, fine arts, business, and information science and technology), the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and additional community stakeholders. The council serves as a unified voice advocating for excellence in education. It also provides oversight and direction to the Content and Pedagogy Committee in that committee’s efforts to facilitate best practices in the initial preparation and continuing professional development of teachers and administrators.

The Content and Pedagogy Committee includes faculty from the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Fine Arts and K-12 teachers from the local school districts. The committee was established to promote cooperative efforts among the participating faculties. Activities of the committee include cross-college and cross-discipline grant writing, collaborative course offerings, work with the Nebraska Math/Science Coalition, alignment of general education and specialty courses with teacher certification requirements, assessment of content knowledge, and other issues related to preparing highly qualified teachers and administrators. The committee offers an effective forum for increased collaboration across the academic units in the university.

The threads of activities in MOEC, the Council, and the Committee are woven together in the rich tapestry of the CARDE Project and the learning experiences provided to the CADRE teachers, associates and P-12 pupils in the schools.
What evidence do you have of the program’s positive impact on its teacher candidates?

The CADRE project was designed to provide support to first-year teachers and to see what supports made a difference in the induction year experiences of beginning teachers. A longitudinal study by McGlamery (2001) examined beginning teachers’ level of teaching skills. The study used a matched-pair design that controlled for years of teaching experience, subjects taught, grade levels taught, and school context. Half of the teachers (subjects) completed the CADRE Project and half were not part of the project. A total of 164 teachers were evaluated for the study (82 CADRE teachers and 82 non-CADRE teachers). Data from the 2002-2003 school year were recently completed bringing the total number of teachers evaluated to 206 and extending the longitudinal study to a six year time frame.

Teachers were evaluated using a modified version of the Continuum of Effective Teacher Skills developed by Moir, Freeman, Petrock and Baron (1995). This instrument contains three main domains of teaching skills with each domain divided into subskill areas. Domain 1 focuses on classroom management and has 15 areas covering student behavior, managing the physical environment, student rapport/social interactions, and whole group instruction and use of collaborative activities. Domain 2 deals with delivering instruction to all students and contains six areas including effective teaching strategies, use of student prior knowledge and higher order thinking, and use of a variety of instructional resources. Domain 3 evaluates subject matter knowledge through six areas on subject knowledge, integration, and concept clarification; subject matter knowledge and teaching strategies; and selecting learning materials that reflect students’ diversity. Teachers are rated in each area using a five-point scale as follows:

1 = Beginning Level (skill is not demonstrated)
2 = Emerging Level (skill is demonstrated in rudimentary form)
3 = Developing Level (skill is demonstrated)
4 = Integrating level (skill is demonstrated frequently)
5 = Innovating Level (skill is demonstrated consistently with expertise)

Observations and evaluations were conducted by CADRE Associates. Associates are master teachers from each of the participating school districts. Each associate collected data in a district other than his/her home district. Data collection was “blinded” so that the associates did not know whether the beginning teacher was in the CADRE project or the control group of teachers.

Results of the study showed that first-year teachers, whether in the CADRE Project or not, begin with similar skill levels. However, CADRE teachers quickly move beyond their non-CADRE counterparts in all domains (and subskill areas) of teaching over the six year time frame studied. Several key areas are worth highlighting.

The greatest differences between CADRE and non-CADRE teachers scoring 3-5 were seen in the following areas: (1) selecting learning materials that reflect students’ diversity (CADRE = 86%; non-CADRE = 48%; difference = 38%), (2) using a variety of instructional resources (CADRE = 96%; non-CADRE = 59%; difference = 37%); (3) classroom management (CADRE = 83%, non-CADRE = 51%; difference = 32%); and (4) subject matter knowledge and teaching strategies (CADRE = 89%; non-CADRE = 58%; difference = 31%). CADRE teachers achieved high percentages of teachers ranking in the 3-5 range in all subskill areas evaluated. Chi-square statistical analyses of the ratings and differences showed all differences to be significant at the .01 level or better.

The results clearly show that participation in the CADRE Project made a difference for teachers in their induction year and continued to make a difference in their performance as they
continued in the profession. Teachers expanded, refined, and fine-tuned their teaching skills as a result of participation in the project. As teachers expanded their teaching expertise, this allowed them to have a greater impact on the learning of students whom they taught.

Each beginning teacher in the CADRE Project completes a professional portfolio that showcases her/his growth as a teacher during that first year experience. Building the portfolio is a yearlong effort guided by the beginning teacher’s mentor and a full-time faculty member at the university. The beginning teacher presents the portfolio to a panel of full-time faculty and CADRE Associates who rate the contents and presentation as Outstanding, Above Average, Average, Fair, or Poor. More than 90% of the portfolios are rated as Above Average or Outstanding. The beginning teachers have commented that creating the portfolio forced them to examine, reflect on, and self-critique their instructional practices and experiences.

An additional measure of impact on candidates’ learning is to examine why teachers selected to be in the CADRE Project, how long these candidates stay in the profession (retention), and their perceptions of the profession.

In a 2001 study, 117 CADRE teachers (75%) responded to surveys seeking information on why they entered the CADRE Project and their continuing experiences in education over a five-year period.

The CADRE teachers top reasons for joining the project included the mentoring support offered, opportunities to improve instructional skills, and advancement on the salary schedule for taking graduate courses and completing a master’s degree. Also seen as a benefit was the cohort experience. That is, participating in the project with a selected group of other first-year teachers and CADRE Associates (master teachers) created a sense of comradeship among the participants and strengthened their commitment to the profession and to supporting each other. Comments such as the following were typical:

*I thought mentoring would be someone to observe my teaching and give me feedback. It is so much more! ...I’m definitely a better teacher because of her. I’ve moved from what to teach to how to teach.*

*I’ve learned that teaching is about making decisions. I have the benefit of 27 other beginning teachers and experienced mentors to bounce my ideas off of.*

*I’m coming into the profession realizing that teaching is not just the interaction with students, but how you think about that interaction.*

Nationally, the figures on teacher retention are grim. It is estimated that 30% of beginning teachers do not teach beyond the first two years in the profession. This figure jumps to 40% leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching. The results from the study showed that 104 of the 117 CADRE teachers (89%) are still teaching after five years. Furthermore, nearly half (49%) of the CADRE teachers have completed additional training, teaching endorsements, and degrees in areas such as English as a Second Language, instructional technology, Reading Recovery, educational administration, and content areas.

The survey also allowed respondents to provide open-ended feedback on how the project impacted them both personally and professionally. According to the survey results, those offering comments enthusiastically supported CADRE as one of the pivotal experiences in their personal and professional lives (Jasnoch, Wickham, Edick, & McGlamery, 2001). Only two
negative responses were returned. Both cited lack of support at the building level as reasons for disliking the experience. These seemed to be isolated problems.

**What evidence do you have of the program graduates’ positive impact on P-12 pupil learning?**

Teachers who function at the higher levels of performance (Integrated, Innovative) as reported in the previous section are more effective in the classrooms and thus have a greater impact on the students in those classrooms. Building principals are routinely surveyed by CADRE project faculty and Associates to gauge the principals’ perceptions of the CADRE teachers success and their impact on student performance. McGlamery, Fluckiger, and Edick (2002) reported that building principals preferred hiring CADRE teachers because they are perceived as making a difference in student learning. The principals further commented that the CADRE teachers positively affect the school climate and promote curricular changes that boost student achievement.

In a related study conducted by one of the participating school districts, the district compared the performance of their students on a standardized achievement test (California Achievement Test/5) used by the district as an annual measure of student performance. The sorting variable for the comparison groups were teachers who had completed/graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha teacher preparation programs and teachers from other preparation programs. The UNO group included teachers who completed the CADRE Project. In the study, the performance of classes at five different grade levels (Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) taught by UNO prepared teachers was compared with other classes in the same building and at the same grade level taught by non-UNO prepared teachers. Performance was compared for reading, math, language, and total battery percentile scores. There were twenty-four classes in each group. Five at the second grade level; four at third grade; five at fourth grade; five at fifth grade; and five at sixth grade. In addition, the performance of the students was compared to district-wide means.

The following results were garnered from the district report.

- On total battery score, the performance of students in 16 of the classrooms taught by UNO teachers equaled or exceeded the performance of the students in the comparison classrooms.
- In subject areas, the following pattern of scores by UNO taught classrooms equaling or exceeding the comparison classrooms was seen: math 20, language 17, reading 14.
- The percentage of students (91.2%) in the UNO taught classrooms who met the district criteria for reading performance was substantially higher than the district average (85.6%).
- On mastery of reading objectives, students in UNO taught classrooms scored higher than the district average on 21 of the 28 objectives and scored higher on 17 of the 28 objectives when compared with classrooms from their own schools.

The above studies begin to provide a picture of how teachers impact the learning of students in classrooms. Clearly, principals highly value the teachers who have completed the CADRE Project. These individuals are viewed not just as good teachers in their own classrooms, but as teachers who can and do have an impact on the entire school. The second study is less definitive because the UNO group included CADRE and non-CADRE teachers. Even so, the results do indicate that teachers who completed preparation programs at UNO (whether through the
CADRE Project or through the usually programs) had a strong impact on the learning and performance of the students with whom they worked.

Finally, there is evidence related to P-12 pupil learning that, while not “direct,” certainly supports the argument for improved student learning. These are recognition of outstanding teaching, and teacher testimony.

Individual CADRE participants have received the following honors/awards: National Geographic Teacher Award, District Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award, Disney Teacher of the Year, Sallie Mae First Year Teacher Award and various grants or special funding for programs developed by the teacher.

CADRE teachers also offered the following comments on their experiences.

*I think CADRE has helped me to stand out in our district. The districts expect a lot of CADRE teachers and expect us to live up to the reputation of CADRE.*

*This job has made me reflect on the importance of our role as classroom teachers. I’m a teacher – and more proud of it than ever before.*
Appendix I

Study Results

Summary Data from the *Developmental Continuum of Teacher Abilities* Ratings (2002)

The Table shows the percentage of CADRE and non-CADRE teachers receiving a rating of 3, 4, or 5 in each of the domain and subskill clusters. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/Subskill Cluster</th>
<th>2002 Ratings: n = 206</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CADRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/Classroom Management – Student Behavior</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/Managing the Physical Environment</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/Student Rapport and Social Interactions</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/Whole Group Instruction and Use of Collaborative Activities</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/Effective Teaching Strategies</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/Use of Student Prior Knowledge and Higher Order Thinking Skills</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/Uses a Variety of Instructional Resources</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/Subject Knowledge, Integration, and Concept</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/Subject Matter Knowledge and Teaching Strategies</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/Selects Learning Materials that Reflect Students’ Diversity</td>
<td>86%</td>
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Appendix II

References Cited in the Application


