

Special Education Undergraduate Program Development: A Process for Building Coherence

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SESSION AGENDA

- Introductions
- Background
- Process for developing coherence
- Barriers & solutions
- Implications



INTRODUCTIONS

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Hello
my name is

BACKGROUND



THE PROBLEM

- Persistent shortage of special education teachers (e.g., Billingsley & Bettini, 2019)
- Solution in 2018: undergraduate initial licensure programs
- The sprint to develop programs
- Outcome: 4 state-approved undergraduate special education programs
 - K-12 Special Education-General Curriculum
 - K-12 Special Education-Adapted Curriculum
 - PK-12 Special Education Blindness/Visual Impairments
 - No licensure
- **Programs met regulations, but lacked coherence and were similar to graduate-level equivalent courses**

PROGRAM COHERENCE



Aligning a clear vision of teaching and learning across courses and field experiences, as well as across university- and school-based teacher educators (Cavanna et al., 2021)



Higher levels of coherence → greater outcomes for teacher candidates & increased teacher retention (Cavanna et al., 2021; Dack, 2019)



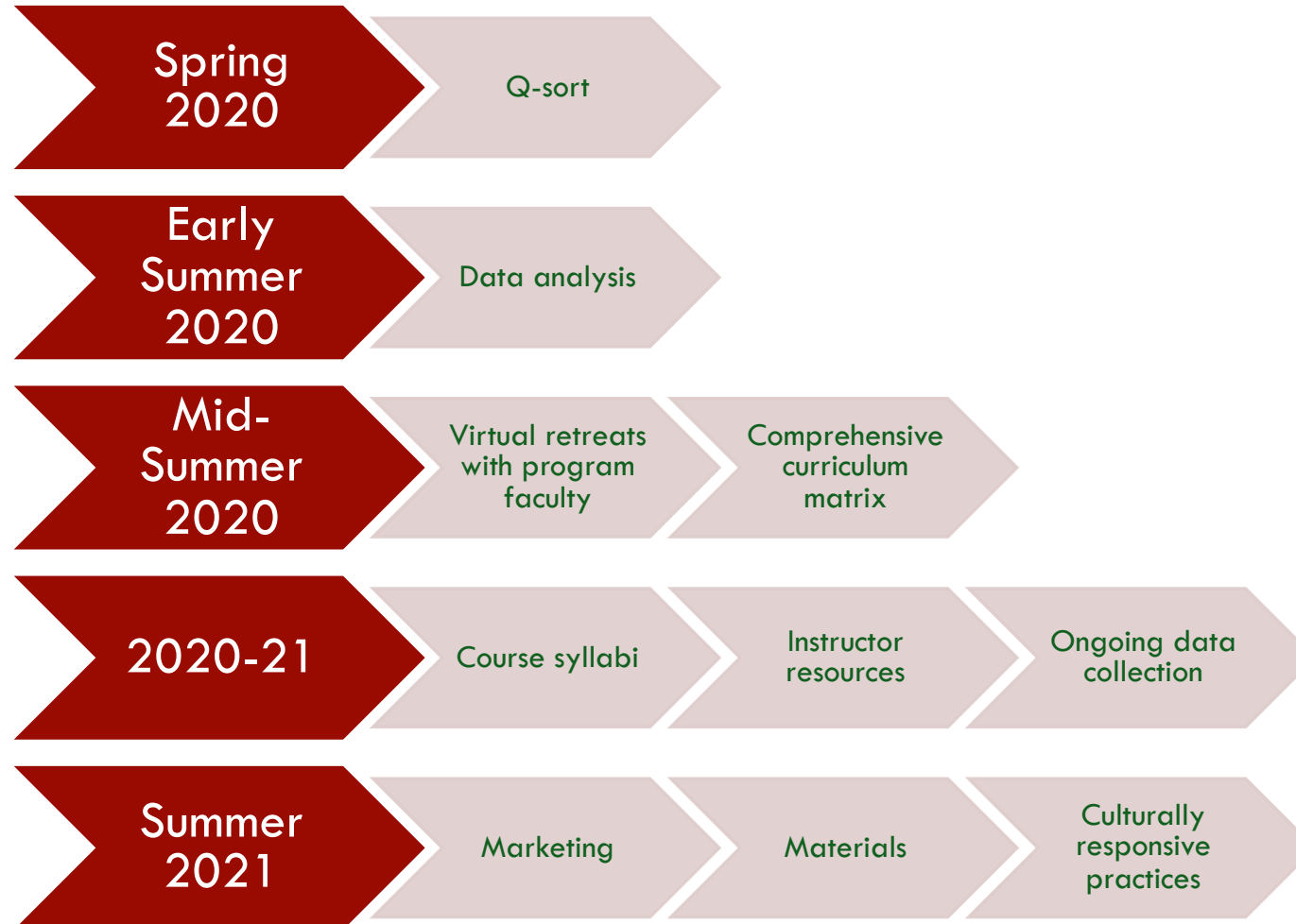
Guiding questions:

What are the teacher candidate content and skill priorities of faculty and program stakeholders?
How could these priorities be integrated into a coherent undergraduate initial licensure program?

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING COHERENCE



PROCESS OVERVIEW



CEDAR CENTER ROADMAP

Step	Description
1. Engage key leaders	Establish a steering committee Generate support and buy in Communicate a vision for reform
2. Facilitate a needs assessment	Examine multiple sources of data Engage external stakeholders Gather faculty input Leverage current initiatives
3. Determine program review focus	Decide instructional focus of review Select individual programs or courses for review Create a workgroup to conduct the review
4. Review programs	Choose program review tools Establish program review process Analyze program review data
5. Develop action plan	Identify action steps for program improvement Secure resources to support program improvement Specify outputs and outcomes Develop progress monitoring and data collection plan
6. Implement reforms	Address implementation opportunities and challenges Develop faculty capacity
7. Practice continuous improvement	Collect and analyze data Make program adjustments as needed
8. Scale impact	Communicate achievements Scale efforts

Q SORT

- Used as a systematic, data-based approach to identifying program priorities
- Q Sort = respondents compare items and judge where to place them (Thomas & Watson, 2002)
- Q Sort development:
 - Followed procedures by Sayeski & Higgins (2014)
 - Statements developed from CEC's (2012) Initial Specialty Set: Individualized General Curriculum (92 items), reduced to 72 items and reworded for consistency
 - Disseminated to 3 experts in the field for feedback
 - Revised items for a total of 55 Q Sort statements

Q SORT DISSEMINATION

Scaled Categories	Category Descriptions
Mastery Knowledge 7 Items	Candidate applies the skill with ease and/or could teach others the concept
Application Knowledge 12 Items	Candidate could apply the skill in practice and/or has a strong grasp of the knowledge
Theoretical Knowledge 17 Items	Candidate could pass an exam question related to this concept
Superficial Knowledge 12 Items	Candidate would have passing knowledge of this concept and may know where to go for more information
Limited Knowledge 7 Items	Content may be included in a course but may not be tested on an exam or as part of a course assignment/field experience expectation

Q SORT RESPONDENTS

	Invited	Responses	Response Rate
Faculty Members*	15	14	93.3%
Total External Stakeholders**	18	6	33.3%
Special Education Teacher	0	1	
School administrator	13	5	38.5%
School district administrator	5	1	20%
TOTAL	33	20	60.6%

*One faculty member's responses were excluded, so the data was used from 13 faculty members (81.25% of all faculty)

**External stakeholder data included 6 of 18 invited external stakeholders, plus a special education teacher invited by an administrator

PRIORITY & ESSENTIAL ITEMS

Two categories of statements to guide programmatic coherence

Priority Items: items rated as *Mastery* or *Applied* by most (70% or more) respondents

- 7 Priority Items

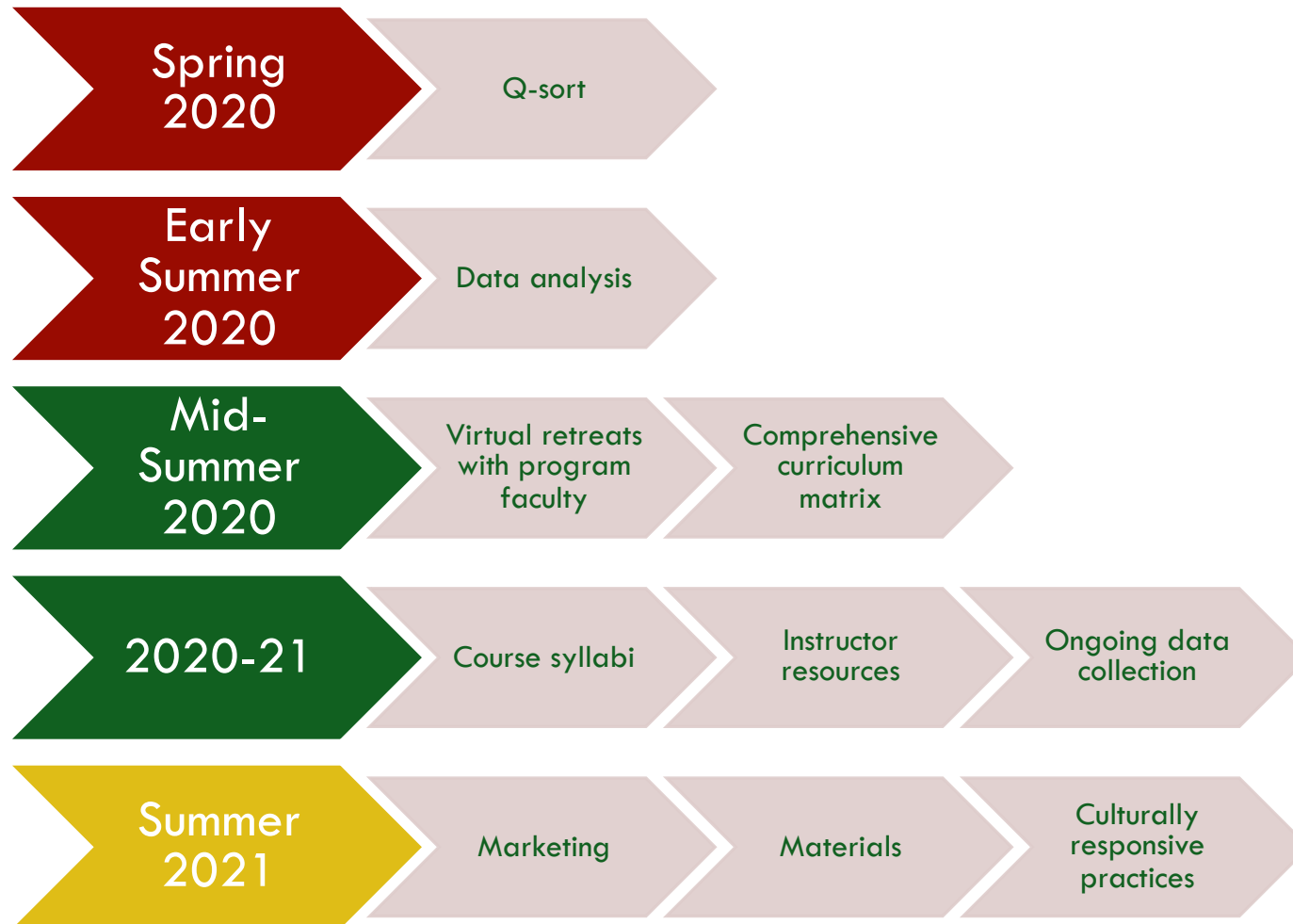
Essential Items: items rated as *Mastery*, *Applied*, or *Theoretical* by most (70% or more) respondents

- 23 Essential Items

CEEDAR CENTER ROADMAP

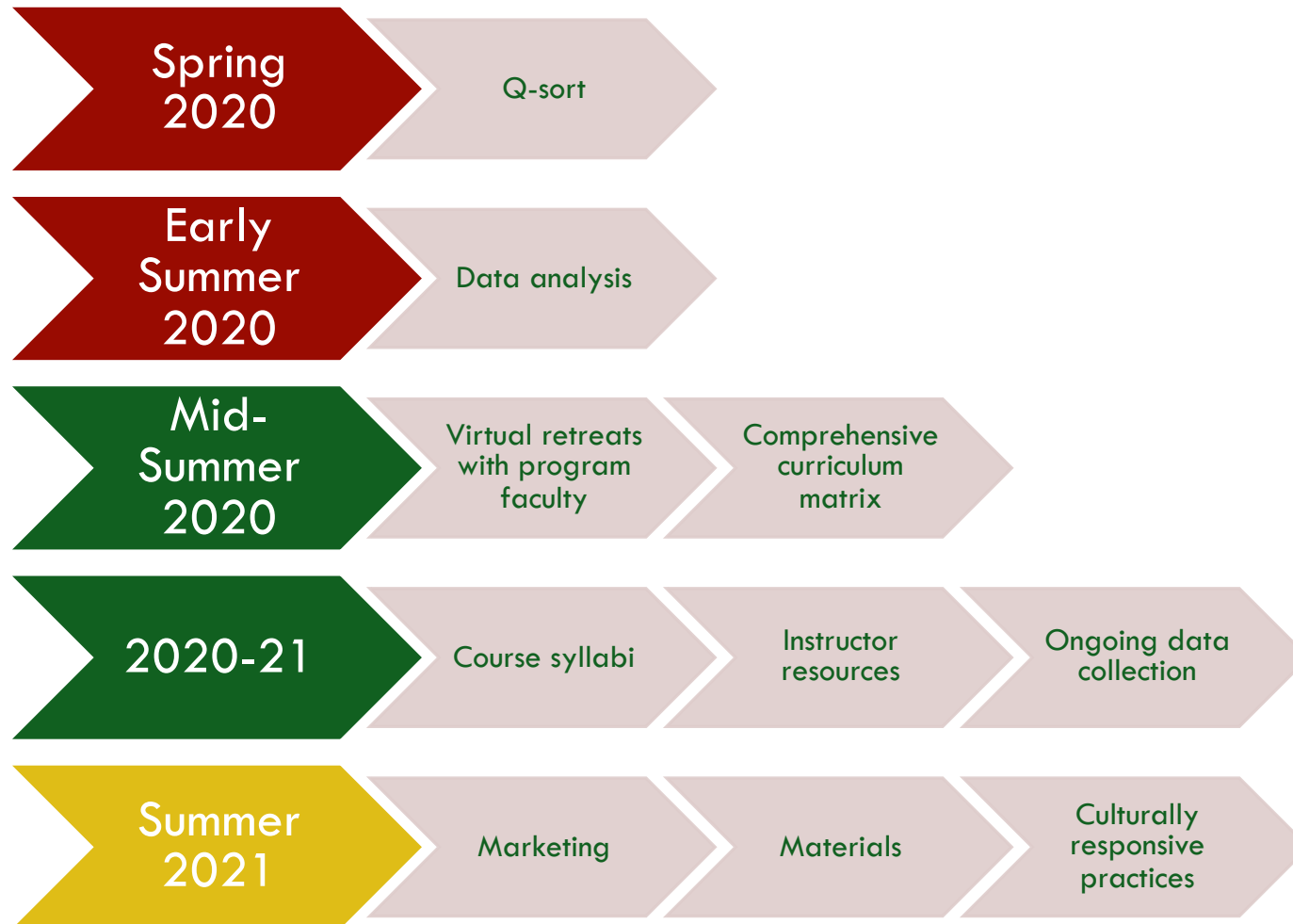
Step	Our Institution Actions
1. Engage key leaders	Two faculty identified to lead efforts Funding and graduate research assistant support secured
2. Facilitate a needs assessment	Near replication of Sayeski & Higgins (2014) Q Sort Included program faculty and external stakeholders
3. Determine program review focus	Identified undergraduate general curriculum focus Recruited workgroups for program review Established all day retreat agenda to review
4. Review programs	Used results of Q Sort for priority and essential items review Conducted retreats for review process
5. Develop action plan	Conducted review process of core courses with other program faculty Specified outcomes for implementation Began action plan process
6. Implement reforms	Established undergraduate faculty discussion group Established general curriculum teaching discussion group
7. Practice continuous improvement	Ongoing activities
8. Scale impact	Ongoing activities

COHERENCE ACTIVITIES



B.S. Ed., General K-12 Licensure Program Planning Matrix		Course Group	General K-12 Concentration Courses																					
			EDSE 241 (Characteristics)		EDSE 341 (Language Acquisition and Reading Development) ***should this be a pre-requisite for 441?		EDSE 441 (Instructional Strategies for Reading and Writing) *Mastery of knowledge		EDSE 443 (Instructional Strategies for Math) *Mastery of knowledge		EDSE 445 (Clinical Practice 1) *Note: additional modules, instructional activities incorporated in addition to seminars to build observation and reflection skills (justification for 3 credit-hour instruction)		EDSE 446 (Clinical Practice 2)		EDSE 482 (Internship) *Mastery of skills (mastery of knowledge might come earlier)		EDSE 201 (Intro to sped)		EDSE 251 (Classroom Management & Positive Behavior Supports)		EDSE 252 (Classroom Management & Positive Behavior Supports)			
			Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)	Addressed (x or blank)	Knowledge Level (M, A, T, S, L)
CEC Initial Preparation Standards	CEC Initial Preparation Standards Description																							
1.0 Learner development and individual learning differences	Beginning special education professionals understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.		x		x		x		x		x							x						x
Q54.	Candidate can describe defining characteristics of SWD who access the general curriculum		X	TA	X	A	X	A	X	A	X	A	X		M	X	M	X	S					X
2.0 Learning environments	Beginning special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well being, positive social interactions, and self-determination.												x								x			
Q7.	Candidate can establish a consistent classroom routine in a variety of educational settings						X	L (instructional)	X	L (instructional)	x	T/A (critiquing)			A (critically analyzing)	x	M				x	T		
Q11.	Candidate can identify ways to adapt the physical environment to provide optimal learning opportunities for SWD						X	L	X	L	X	A	X		M	X	M				X	T		
3.0 Curricular content knowledge	Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.				x		x		x		x							x			x			x
Q26.	Candidate can make instructional changes to general curricula and lessons to make them accessible for SWD		X	L	X	S/T (first place)	X	A	X	A	X	T/A	X		A	X	M							X
4.0 Assessment	Beginning special education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions.				x		x				x		x											
Q8.	Candidate can use a variety of effective procedures for progress monitoring both appropriate and problematic social behaviors of SWD						X	S	X	S						X	M							
Q32.	Candidate can define and correctly use specialized terminology from assessment of SWD (e.g., types of scoring, types of tests)				X	TA	X	TA	X	TA				more		X	M							

COHERENCE ACTIVITIES



BARRIERS



BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED

Collaborating across programs & shared core courses

Scheduling courses:

- Transfer & part-time students
- College requirements for courses to run (e.g., cross-listing, once/year vs. once/semester)
- Course sequencing for content

Disseminating information to maintain coherence

Unique needs of undergraduate students (e.g., dispositions)

SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED

Division director
support to fund summer
work/retreats & GRA
support

Working with academic
advisors to adjust
course sequencing &
plan for part-time
students' schedules

Use of technology to
organize & disseminate
information

Regular meetings with
current instructors to
discuss observations /
problem solve

Identifying college and
university supports for
undergraduate students

Collaborating with
other new
undergraduate initial
licensure programs at
our institution

IMPLICATIONS

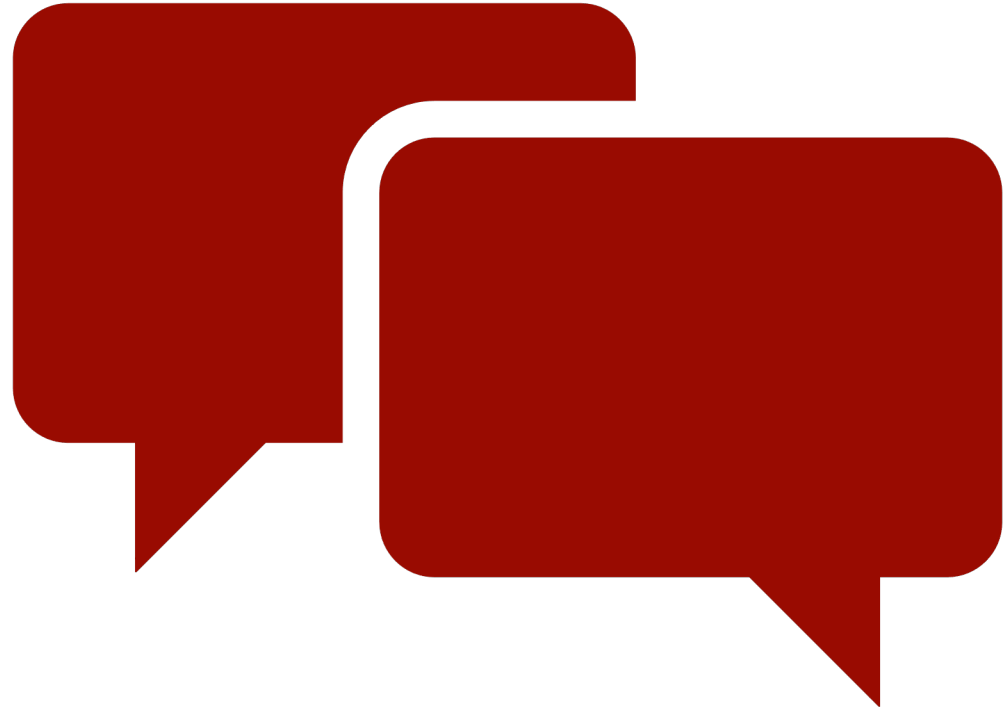


For
Practice

For
Research

IMPLICATIONS

DISCUSSION



THANK YOU!



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