Teacher Residency Programs: Federal Mandates, Teacher Shortages, and Teacher Education Innovation

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Abstract: Several federal mandates have converged to create a need for better-qualified teachers in math, science, special education, and bilingual education and, in some instances, a combination of these areas. The 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act revised Title II pertaining to higher education-based educator preparation programs. The result was Teacher Quality Partnership grants (e.g., the Teacher Residency model). The College of Education in partnership with the College of Science and Austin Independent School District received one of the original eight (8) grants in 2009 for 5 years. This presentation will review the major goals of this teacher residency program, delineate issues surrounding the preparation of teachers in critical shortage areas including special education, and provoke discussion about innovative practices for teacher preparation in the 21st century.

Dr. Jo Webber is Professor of Special Education and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the College of Education. She is a past president of the International Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, a division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Dr. Webber serves on the advisory committee of The Teaching Residency Program for Critical Shortage Areas and has developed the Texas State University Career Alternatives in Special Education (CASE) program. Her interests include recruitment of qualified special education teachers, educating students with autism and emotional and behavioral disorders, and promoting positive behavioral programming in the schools.