

The Program & Its Purpose

The X-CED Program is intended to develop graduates who possess a cross-cultural perspective and sensitivity in their approach to education, with a particular emphasis on the multicultural environment of Alaska.

The general objectives of the program are:

1. To improve the quality of education for Alaska's multicultural population by assisting educators in developing a cross-cultural understanding of educational issues.
2. To provide a program of cross-cultural and liberal arts studies to students in rural Alaskan communities.
3. To prepare educators uniquely suited to live and work effectively in cross-cultural educational settings.
4. To provide alternative approaches to educational problem-solving and program development.

These objectives are based on the assumption that educators cannot be separated from their own cultural environment or the cultural environment in which they work. This interrelationship is emphasized through the following distinguishing characteristics:

1. Education is placed in

a broad cross-cultural perspective so that schooling and other educational practices are assessed as they relate to the cultural patterns of the community and those of the educator.

2. Educational content is approached from an interdisciplinary orientation so that the methods and perspectives of various academic disciplines are brought to bear on the analysis of complex socio-cultural issues, particularly education and development issues.

3. The training of educators relies heavily on actual field experience. The cross-cultural perspective and sensitivity needed for effectiveness in a multicultural situation can only be obtained through intensive and extensive involvement in a cross-cultural environment.

Students admitted into the program as full-time undergraduate students may eventually enroll in a Bachelor of Education degree program leading to teacher certification in one of the following areas:

- a. Elementary - cross-cultural emphasis with an integrated major/minor in the social sciences, humanities, or math/science.
- b. Secondary small high school emphasis with an integrated teaching major/minor in the social sciences, humanities, or math/science.
- c. A bilingual education minor can also be obtained in either the elementary or secondary programs.

Most courses delivered through the X-CED Program are designed, taught and administered by X-CED faculty members. These courses are delivered to students in their home communities and stress active rather than passive learning. The courses are designed to take advantage of the students' cultural backgrounds and experiences in their home communities, including work in the local schools.

Courses are delivered to students by a distant learning system which involves structured independent learning activities that are regularly monitored, facilitated and enhanced by field faculty members who travel to each field site. The content of the learning activities is conveyed through photo-copied materials, textbooks, audiotapes, videotapes and teleconferences. Students are expected to pursue these independent learning activities on a regular basis, e.g., daily, and to be fully

prepared for all instructional sessions with field faculty members. Group instructional meetings are held at various times throughout the academic year and students are required to be prepared for and attend these meetings as they are an integral part of the delivery system.

The X-CED field-based instructional program follows a Fall and Spring semester system. Students are strongly encouraged to spend some time on a university campus, particularly during the summers.

The education approaches of the X-CED Program possess three distinguishing characteristics:

1. Education is defined in broad cross-cultural terms, thus encompassing educational needs and issues in addition to those involving the public school or teacher certification. Schooling is placed in a cross-cultural perspective and teaching practices are assessed as they relate to the cultural patterns of the community. In addition, educational needs such as those related to the implementation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act are addressed in the same comprehensive cross-cultural framework.

2. The academic orientation of the cross-cultural education programs is interdisciplinary. The content of the programs draws heavily from the disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, sociology, economics and English. Education is viewed as an applied field in which the methods and perspectives of various academic disciplines are brought to bear on the analyses of complex socio-cultural issues. Adjunct faculty for the programs are drawn from the Alaska Native Language Center, the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, and the respective academic departments and schools.

3. The cross-cultural education programs rely heavily on actual field experience. The cross-cultural perspective and sensitivity envisioned as an outgrowth of these programs can be accomplished only through intensive and extensive involvement in a real-life field environment.

Teaching methodologies derived from these approaches are designed specifically for the rural Alaskan classroom in a multi-cultural environment.