

Mutually Beneficial Professional Development Partnerships: One Model

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Abstract: In recent years, EPPs and the schools in which pre-service teachers observe and practice teaching have more intensely focused on the myriad benefits resultant of their partnerships. Consequently, many EPPs have models that foster mutually beneficial relationships to support both the pre-service teachers they are training and to contribute meaningfully to the profession in various ways. One model of this mutually beneficial partnership has been created at our university as a result of our continuous improvement efforts through rigorous data analysis to provide our preservice teachers with the best possible preparation for entering the teaching field and a desire to be an asset to our PDS and the children they serve.

KEYWORDS: pre-service teacher impact on P12 student learning, expert/novice collaboration, mutually beneficial partnership

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

2. a school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
4. a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;
7. a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration;

Clinical teaching experiences have long been accepted as best practice in the field of education. Participation in field-based interactions were borne out of a need for pre-service teachers to gain valuable skills before embarking on their first years of teaching and have been shaped through the years by many factors such as advancements in our knowledge of best practice as a result of a plethora of educational research supporting clinical experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Murray, 1996; Pigge & Marso, 1997). Additionally, legislative initiatives on the state and federal levels, in response to increased public interest in creating quality educators to prepare our nation's children for the 21st century global workplace, have had a powerful influence on Education Preparation Provider's (EPP) program requirements (e.g. Council for Accreditation and Educator Preparation, Texas Education Agency). As pre-service educator experiences have evolved under these influences, many EPPs also provide their pre-service teachers with numerous opportunities to work with students and schools long before the traditional clinical teaching experience (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Dixon & Ishler, 1992).

More recently, both the EPPs and the schools in which pre-service teachers observe and practice teaching, Professional Development Schools (PDS), have realized the myriad benefits resultant of their partnerships (Beal et. al., 2011; Breault & Breault, 2012; Cozza, 2010; Pellett & Pellet, 2009). Consequently, many EPPs have models that foster mutually beneficial relationships to support both the pre-service teachers they are training and to contribute meaningfully to the profession in various ways. However, no one model has yet to be found exemplary, as the notion of mutually beneficial partnerships, although not new, has just recently gained a heightened level of attention.

One such model of this mutually beneficial partnership has been created at our university as a result of our continuous improvement efforts to provide our preservice teachers with the best possible preparation for entering the teaching field and a desire to be an asset to our PDS and the children they serve.

One Model

With each of our PDS partnerships, much time and effort has gone into creating experiences that are meaningful. Not only do our students participate in clinical teaching, but they also work in the field and engage with students long before their final semester. These experiences give our students numerous opportunities to grow as pre-service teachers but also provide our PDS with valuable resources. As a priority, our university uses its best efforts to ensure that the clinical and field experience programs at the PDS are conducted in such a manner as to enhance the education of the PDS' students and support their faculty. Only those pre-service teachers who have satisfactorily completed the prerequisite portion of their content curriculum are selected for participation in the program, as our commitment to giving P12 students a quality education is of the utmost importance.

Through a collaboration of committees, stakeholders, and faculty whose focus is to foster the communication and cooperation among the various PDS and the university, the university and PDS actively work to maintain an environment of quality learning experiences for both university and PDS students. Below is an overview of the components put in place to facilitate these efforts.

Advisory Committee of Program Quality

The purpose of the Advisory Committee of Program Quality (ACPQ) is to advise, review, evaluate, recommend and co-construct policies and procedures related to the evaluation and continuous improvement of graduate and undergraduate programs including program evaluation, key assessments, student recruitment, student quality, and program impact on P12 student learning leading to initial or advanced certification. Additionally, the committee advise, review, evaluate, recommend, co-construct, and implement policies and procedures related to the placement and evaluation of graduate and undergraduate students in field and clinical teaching experiences including graduate practicum and internships related to the orientation, training, and evaluation of clinical educators.

Other responsibilities ACPQ members have are to identify and address issues and concerns related to graduate and undergraduate program quality and capacity, continuous improvement, and field-based/clinical experiences. These include the review of qualifications for university supervisors, cooperating teachers, clinical supervisors, practicum supervisors or any other certification personnel who either host or supervise candidates seeking initial or advanced certification. In this capacity, the ACPQ committee may make recommendations in its purview for approval by the College Council and the college's other oversight committee, described below, the Teacher Education Committee.

To ensure that the committee provides useful, timely, relevant, and informed guidance, members of the ACPQ meet at least once each semester and consist of at least one stakeholder from each of the following areas: public school administration, public school human resources personnel, public school faculty (P-12), the college dean, university faculty from each content area college, PDS education faculty, college graduate faculty from advanced certification, and each of the national accreditation standard committee chairs. This collaboration and communication among stakeholders allows for timely input affecting programmatic changes that are responsive to both the university and the PDS's needs, making this the initial step in a truly mutually beneficial partnership (West College of Education, 2016).

Teacher Education Committee

The Teacher Education Committee, chaired by the dean, which convenes at least twice a year, oversees final admission to the teacher education program, clinical teaching placements, field experience requirements and placements, and considers recommendations for curricular changes within the program. Membership is comprised of all college deans across the university, college department chairs directly associated with teacher preparation, the certification officer, three public school representatives, and an education service center representative. By including public school representatives and staff from the education resource center as well as college

faculty and administration, we are further strengthening our commitment to the professional development of both the candidates and the PDS in which they are placed.

Both of these aforementioned advisory committees give our college faculty and stakeholders numerous opportunities to collaborate and communicate how we can best be of service to both our teacher candidates and the PDS (West College of Education, 2016).

Clinical Experiences

Clinical experiences including both initial clinical experiences (e.g. classroom observations and initial teaching experiences during methods courses) as well as clinical teaching are an essential part of the professional preparation program (Bral, Curry, & Capps, 2017; West College of Education, 2016). Clinical experiences vary across many undergraduate programs and are designed and implemented through collaboration with school districts and community partners. Teacher candidates gain essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions through observations and teaching opportunities in a wide variety of diverse settings (e.g. urban/rural, SES, special needs, race/ethnicity) and are expected to contribute meaningfully to the schools in which they conduct any of their clinical experiences (West College of Education, 2016).

The Office of Certification serves as a liaison between the college and school districts and other community partners as well as meetings through both of the committees mentioned above (West College of Education, 2010). Mentor teachers guiding teacher candidates during the methods courses as well as clinical teaching mentors assess candidate impact during the various experiences in which candidates are expected to engage. Pre-service teacher candidates must also assess their own contribution to the profession as well as their impact on student learning in the reflections required for the experiences. These experiences include the following (West College of Education, 2016):

- Classroom Observations- initial field experiences involving reflective observations of P-12 students, teachers, and faculty/staff members engaging in educational activities in a school setting.
- Individual Student Observations- initial field experiences involving reflective observations of individual P-12 students
- Teacher Assistant- assisting the teacher of record in educational activities in a school setting
- Lab Assistant- assisting the teacher of record in educational scientific activities in a school lab setting
- Tutoring- additional, special, remedial, or accelerated instruction involving a single student or very small group
- Whole Group Instruction- instruction and support that involves the whole-class
- Small Group Instruction- instruction and support that involves students working together in small groups
- Field-Based Projects- field experiences working with P-12 students outside a typical classroom setting
- Planning Instruction- Unit and Lesson Planning, Assessment, Delivery, and Reflection. Teacher candidates must demonstrate the ability to plan, assess, and implement

instruction. During the professional methods courses and clinical teaching, candidates are required to determine a set of multiple learning objectives aligned to state content standards appropriate to the lesson(s) the candidate is preparing.

- Clinical Teaching or Internship- minimum of 12-week full day classroom teaching experience school under the supervision of a cooperating teaching and university supervisor. Internship- A supervised full-time educator assignment for one full school year under the supervision of a university supervisor and teacher mentor.

As would be expected, the candidate expectations and responsibilities during the clinical experiences are created to provide support for the candidates' development as a professional educator; however, our program design and mission reflects a strong commitment to benefit the P12 students and the PDS involved. While planning for instruction, candidates collaborate with college faculty and their mentor teachers to plan lessons and schedule learning activities for the successful achievement of the P12 students' expected outcomes. As candidates progress through the program and gain more experience, they are expected to demonstrate effective best practices in teaching that facilitate higher order thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Under the guidance of experienced university and teacher mentors, candidates learn a variety of instructional strategies designed to encourage P12 learners to develop a deeper understanding and connection of content, global, and cultural issues (West College of Education, 2014).

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards provide a framework for outlining expectations for teacher candidates. Using the INTASC model standards, candidates work with college faculty and school-based educators to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning and are expected to engage in opportunities of working with individual students, small groups, and the whole class in their placements. Candidates are tasked with demonstrating, through their planning and teaching, an "understanding of how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and design and implement developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences" (Council of Chief State Officers, 2013, p. 8). Candidates' planning and teaching must reflect the ability to identify, reflect upon, and adjust to student learning differences and diverse cultures within the PDS communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that meet individual student needs (Council of Chief State Officers, 2013). Candidates must demonstrate an "understanding of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and create learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content" (Council of Chief State Officers, 2013, p. 8). They are also required to demonstrate implementation of purposeful, varied assessments designed to encourage learner reflection, monitor student progress, and to facilitate instructor and student decision-making (Council of Chief State Officers, 2013). As part of their evaluations conducted by both college faculty and PDS partners, teacher candidates work with college faculty and their mentor teacher to reflect on their practice and explain their teaching decisions to provide insight into the metacognitive aspects of their teaching.

During their methods courses preservice teachers demonstrate and validate numerous hours of positive student interactions and opportunities to engage in learning and self-reflection. The methods course also provide an opportunity for teacher candidates to explore teacher roles

and responsibilities, including collaborating with families, colleagues, other school professionals. In addition, they collaborate with various professionals to provide technology-enhanced learning opportunities for the P12 students.

Regular conferences with the faculty and school-based educators to reflect on feedback on performance, strengths, and areas for improvement are a requirement at every level of all clinical experiences. These frequent collaborations among school-based educators, candidates, and college faculty ensures that valuable feedback is implemented in a timely and efficacious manner into the planning, teaching, and assessment practices of the teacher candidates. It is evident in each of the components of the clinical experiences that a major focus is not only on the professional development of the pre-service teacher candidates but also the academic achievement and quality of the educational experience of the P12 students they interact with. This cyclical process of ongoing communication, reflection, and implementation of feedback allows for the candidate, mentor teacher, and college faculty to reflect on personal teaching practices in a professional conversation that can benefit all parties involved.

Midwestern Impact on Student Learning Portfolio (MISL)

Successful completion and submission of a Midwestern Impact on Student Learning (MISL) portfolio is required during the first six weeks of clinical teaching. Teachers candidates are required to plan, implement, and assess student learning within a unit of study.

The Midwestern Impact on Student Learning (MISL) measures content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and effect on student learning in the following domains: Learning Environments; Individual Development and Diversity; Collaboration; Planning Process and Content; Assessment; Strategies and Methods; Reflection; Professional Development; and Communication.

Each of the ten areas is scored with one of four ratings: Exemplary 4, Competent 3, Needs Improvement 2, and Unsatisfactory 1. An overall score of 20 (meets expectations) is required for successful completion of clinical teaching for all teacher candidates, ensuring that only those who are prepared to successfully impact the learning of P12 students are certified.

The MISL is a record of the candidates' ability to carefully consider all contextual factors that influence instruction and to then use those factors to plan and design a unit of instruction, including an assessment plan that can demonstrate changes in student knowledge, skills, or dispositions resulting from instruction (West College of Education, 2016). The MISL includes both reflexive (description of instructional decision making during the unit) and reflective components that encourage candidates to plan instruction strategically and to approach teaching in a purposeful, thoughtful, and methodical manner.

This component of the clinical experience is mainly focused on the impact our teacher candidates have on their P12 students and strengthening their understanding of the connection between instructional decision-making and student outcomes which inherently bolsters the mutually beneficial component both the university and PDS strive for.

Supporting Data

In addition to the candidates’ own analysis and reflection of their impact on student learning, as mentioned above in the current model, a vast array of program data is mined from the various surveys, assignments, and key assessments that ensure program quality. One such instrument (see Appendix A), newly implemented in Fall of 2017 to further assess our contribution to the PDS, has yielded critical information regarding mentor teacher perceptions of pre-service teacher candidates’ impact on the students they have worked with during and prior to clinical teaching. At the conclusion of the semester, mentor teachers indicate if pre-service candidates have had significant *benefit*, *some benefit*, *little benefit*, or *no benefit* to the class. The categories are assigned a numerical value for analysis with *significant benefit* being a three to *no benefit* being a zero value. Mentor teachers can also assign an N/A if students did not have an opportunity to make an impact in that particular area which is assigned no value in the analysis. This data is used by the ACPQ, TEC, and education faculty in order to be responsive to the needs of the candidates, the mentor teachers, and the P12 students.

The table below depicts data collected on the impact of candidates on P12 students during all clinical teaching experiences and lists the categories assessed by the mentor teachers with the corresponding mean scores. The data displayed in Table 1 reflects aggregate data from impact surveys collected from Fall 2017 through the Spring 2018 semesters.

Table 1.

Mean Scores for the *Impact of WCOE Candidates on PDS* survey instrument

Domains	Mean Scores	Illustrative Quotes
Classroom Observation	2.52	Knew the students before I came into the classroom.
Individual Student Observation	2.64	Helping redirect disruptive behavior during teaching. Helping individual students with work to ensure they did not fall behind or become frustrated.
Teacher Assistant	2.84	When I unexpectedly lost my voice, she took over without me having to ask.

Lab Assistant	2.62	Ms. D brings new innovative ideas to the class. She created some models students could use in class when learning human body systems. She has patience and great listening skills with students!
Tutoring	2.82	Tenacious, great communicator, detailed, excellent at engaging students!
Whole group instruction	2.80	She offered lesson plan differentiations that the class had never experienced which was beneficial to their experience.
Small group instruction	2.81	She was a huge help, especially helping with small groups of struggling students. This was extremely beneficial to our class.
Field based projects	2.77	Very helpful with students; great with classroom management.

In response to the analysis of this data, areas of improvement have been highlighted in which we are addressing to further our candidates' positive impacts on students in the classroom as well as furthering our benefit to the PDS in which we have partnerships. Below are some of the initiatives that have been implemented in direct response to the data provided.

Implementation of the Co-Teaching Model (Adapted from Cook & Friend, 1995)

In an effort to further facilitate a truly professional collaboration for the benefit of both the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher, a co-teaching model was adopted for the clinical experiences. With this implementation, students will experience a gradual release of responsibility leading a more prepared, confident, and successful teacher candidate. Additionally, by encouraging continued, sustained collaboration throughout the whole of the clinical experiences, this model emphasizes the mutual benefits of a working partnership between professionals both novice and expert.

- One Teach, One Observe — One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the (instructing) teacher. The key to this strategy is to have a focus for the observation.
- One Teach, One Assist — One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other teacher assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments.
- Station Teaching — the co-teaching pair divide the instructional content into parts and the students into groups. Groups spend a designated amount of time at each station. Often an independent station will be used.
- Parallel Teaching — each teacher instructs half of the students. The two teachers are addressing the same instructional material and present the lesson using the same teaching strategy. The greatest benefit is the reduction of student to teacher ratio.
- Supplemental Teaching — This strategy allows one teacher to work with students at their expected grade level, while the co-teacher works with those students who need the information and/or materials extended or remediated.
- Alternative/Differentiated Teaching — Alternative teaching strategies provide two different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students, however the instructional methodology is different.
- Team Teaching — well-planned, team taught lessons, exhibit an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson. From a student's perspective, there is no clearly defined leader, as both teachers share the instruction, are free to interject information, and available to assist students and answer questions. (Adapted from Cook & Friend, 1995)

Additional Steps

Even though the highest assigned score for a domain is 3 and the lowest mean score is 2.52, there are still numerous opportunities for improvement. As a result, a mid-semester formative impact survey will be utilized in the methods courses in the Fall to more quickly respond to needs that may arise. Each semester, candidates have various volunteer opportunities helping with parent nights, professional development conferences offered through the university to the PDS faculty, and after school programs at the PDS. Currently the impact of our candidates on the P12 students and their benefit to the PDS in these capacities is not formally assessed with the existing measures as these are not required activities for candidates. Therefore, we are

working to formalize professional and community involvement components, such as tutoring, attending meetings and workshops with mentor teachers, assisting with extracurricular P12 activities like camps, and assisting with parent/teacher conferences to the methods courses prior to clinical teaching so that candidates have more opportunities for one-on-one interaction with P12 students. This will allow candidates additional experiences to draw from when planning instruction based on individual student needs using informed selection of differentiation techniques and appropriate accommodations for special populations.

Through our commitment to offer the best training for our future teachers and to be of service to the in service teachers we partner with, our college provides various professional development opportunities. In conjunction with the regional education service center, our college hosts the Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading, a one-day conference offering workshops focusing on multidisciplinary literacy improvement. Additionally, in order to provide teachers with skills related to addressing mental health and substance abuse related crises, our college is providing Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to all pre-service teachers as well as our PDS partners. Training teachers how to effectively recognize, understand, and address mental health concerns of their students in the classroom will further the EPP's partnership with the community. Students, community partners, and faculty members that participate will undergo an eight-hour training that teaches participants how to recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance abuse, how to assess for suicidal ideation and self-harm, listen non-judgmentally, encourage, and provide referrals and resources to students who may need professional help (West College of Education, 2014).

These steps added to the current model underscore not only the program's emphasis on pre-service candidate impact on P12 student learning but they also strive to facilitate the growth of a truly mutually beneficial environment for the PDS, the candidates and the P12 students involved.

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Appendix A

Impact of WCOE Candidates on PDS

As part of our continuous improvement process, we would also like to gather information regarding the impact of our interns on your classroom and school. As you know we have several clinical experiences that are required of our candidates. Below, please indicate in which of the experiences your intern/observer participated AND the extent to which it was beneficial to you and your students.

Campus _____ Cooperating Teacher/Mentor _____

Grade _____ Subject _____

	Participated Y/N	Significant Benefit to Class	Some Benefit to Class	Little Benefit to the Class	No Benefit to the Class
Classroom Observation					
Individual Student Observation					
Teacher Assistant					
Lab Assistant					

Tutoring					
Whole group instruction					
Small group instruction					
Field based projects					

Other Benefits to the Class:

Other Comments (please use the back if needed):

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