

Chapter 2

Implementation of Paired Placement and Co- Planning/Co-Teaching Field Experience Models Across Multiple Contexts

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ABSTRACT

A consortium of 24 universities and their school partners engaged in a networked improvement community design to develop clinical experience models designed to build candidates' facility with the effective mathematics teaching practices and other equitable teaching strategies to promote secondary school students' success in achieving college- and career-ready standards. The authors discuss mechanisms to aid in the implementation of two alternative models: 1) the paired placement model, in which two prospective teachers are paired with a single mentor teacher, allowing the mentor teacher to provide

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purposeful coaching and mentoring and the two pre-service teachers to offer each other feedback, mentoring, and support; and 2) co-planning and co-teaching, which has been found to help teacher candidates gain greater pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of students through collaboration and communication between teacher candidates and mentor teachers who plan, implement, and assess instruction together.

INTRODUCTION

For nearly nine decades, student teaching and field experiences of teacher candidates have remained significantly unchanged (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; King, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Historically, criticisms of teacher education have included the qualifications of teacher educators, the qualifications of teacher candidates, the structure of the institutions providing teacher education, the inconsistency of the curriculum in teacher education programs, and the gap between theory and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Lanier & Little, 1986; Levine, 2006). However, since the early 2000s, there has been a global increase in research of reformed practices in teacher education programs and teacher candidate development (King, 2006; Capraro, Capraro, & Helfeldt, 2010; Tschida, Smith, & Forgarty, 2015; Lang, Neal, Karvouni, & Chandler, 2015). At the center of this reform has been an effort to connect theory to practice through well-designed field experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2010). According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2008), “field experiences and clinical practice are integral program components for the initial and advance preparation of teacher candidates” (p. 32). These experiences should allow teacher candidates to apply their acquired knowledge, skills, and dispositions in multiple settings relevant to their program of study (NCATE, 2008). Well designed and properly sequenced field experiences help teacher candidates to successfully develop the competencies necessary to begin careers as teachers (NCATE, 2008). Additionally, to align teacher candidates’ pedagogical knowledge and teaching practices, collaboration among the teacher candidate, university instructor, and the mentor teacher must take place (NCATE, 2008, Putnam & Borko, 2000). The view of knowledge as socially-constructed clearly implies that an important part of learning to teach is becoming enculturated into the teaching community (Putnam & Borko, 2000). It is clear that learning from practice is key to developing well-prepared teacher candidates (Duncan-Howell, 2010). To ensure field experiences provide teacher candidates with the opportunities to learn through practice, several aspects of the field experience must be considered.

First, the assigned field experiences and teacher candidates’ education courses must be closely aligned and connected. In many cases, a disconnect exists between the university teacher-education courses and teacher candidates’ assigned field experiences (Zeichner, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010). It is not uncommon for a mentor teacher to have little or no knowledge about the course, or objectives for the course, in which the assigned teacher candidate is currently enrolled. Similarly, the instructor of the university courses often has little knowledge of the teaching practices of the mentor teacher for which his or her teacher candidates have been assigned (Zeichner, 2010). This disconnect may often result from field placement assignments being outsourced to a central administrative office, with little or no consideration given from university faculty, mentor teacher, or school administration (Zeichner, 2010). The disconnect may be further compounded as many tenure track faculty are not assigned to student supervision within field placements, thus, placing further separation between the teacher candidates’ courses and field placements (Zeichner, 2010).

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