

Success in High-Need Schools Journal

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Theme: "Evaluating Outcomes of Teacher Quality Enhancement"

Introduction

The Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) *Center for Success in High-Need Schools* was founded in 2004 on the assumption that collaborative partnerships, especially between colleges and schools and between teacher education and arts and sciences faculty, would help close the achievement gap among the largely minority students at high-need schools. No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the signature educational initiative of the Bush era, provided the primary funding impetus for the Center, of which a five-year \$7.2 million Teacher Quality Enhancement Program (TQEP) grant was the centerpiece.

ACI member colleges and universities made ideal partners for a program whose success depended on committed long-term college-school relationships, shared responsibility and decision-making, and a joint focus on students and learning. Eight ACI members from across Illinois became TQEP grant co-collaborators with the Center: Aurora University, Concordia University Chicago, Elmhurst College, Lake Forest College, McKendree University, North Central College, Quincy University, and University of St. Francis. The case studies that compose this issue of the *Journal for Success in High-Need Schools* tell their stories--what they put in place, what they achieved, and what they have sustained since TQEP grant funding ended in 2009.

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Publisher's Column, by Jan Fitzsimmons, Ph.D.

In the eight years since the Associated Colleges of Illinois received its first U.S. Department of Education grants and established its *Center for Success in High-Need schools*, the *Center* has demonstrated that purposeful, collaborative action and critical, intentional data collection can advance systemic and sustainable change, ultimately resulting in equitable education for all. The *Center's* accomplishments have marked a refreshing change for me. As a teacher educator at North Central College in Naperville, IL, an ACI member institution, I am disheartened by the degree to which teacher preparation programs have been branded villains in the nation's struggle to reinvent public schools. Yet, as my experiences as Director of ACI's *Center for Success in High-Need Schools* attest, the colleges, universities, and the departments of education residing among institutions of private higher education are ready, willing and able to prepare teachers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to promote the success of our neediest children,

This issue of *Success in High-Need Schools* highlights the heretofore untapped collaborative capacity of the private colleges and universities responsible for preparing a significant percentage of new teachers for K-12 schools. The eight case studies documented in this issue illustrate the broad spectrum of possibilities for P-20 partnerships aimed at closing the achievement gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers. They focus on the importance of partnership with K-12 schools, intention, classroom dialogue, collaboration across colleges, universities, and rigorous ongoing experience in high-need schools. The results these ACI *Center* partners have achieved clearly demonstrate that authentic P-20 partnerships can bridge the gap between theory and practice, producing sustainable, scalable solutions to the challenges of high-need schools.

Teacher preparation programs are powerful agents of change, not merely passive residents of an ivory tower. These programs can and should be vehicles of progress that respond to real-world needs and actively seek solutions to our toughest education challenges. The message is simply this: Higher education is not only a place where great minds think great thoughts, generate scholarship, and engage in profound dialogue. It also cultivates critical action to inform public policy and drive institutional change. The eight case studies in this issue illustrate outcomes that have led to transformed preparation programs that build commitment to teach in the neediest schools and share lessons learned and policy implications of those lessons for recruiting, preparing, and retaining excellent diverse teachers. **Jerry Berberet's** summary of the data collected on each of these case studies adds further support for such P-20 collaborations.

Now place the collaborations described and their suggestions for sustainable and scalable solutions in the new landscape of education in a state — like Illinois — that is on the move and not only encouraging but driving change as the **Linda Tomlinson** column describes, and you see a bright future for all children. I invite and challenge colleagues across the nation to share the vision and enthusiasm of these authors and their colleges, universities, K-12 schools and state education departments to move from ideas to action.



Author Bio

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Transformative Partnerships – Authentic Change: Outcome of the ACI Teacher Quality Enhancement Partnership Projects, by Jerry Berberet, Editor, *Journal for Success in High-Need Schools*

In 2004, the Associated Colleges of Illinois created the ACI Center for Success in High-Need Schools to partner with its twenty-three private liberal arts and master's college and university members in a comprehensive program to recruit, prepare, and retain highly-qualified teachers for schools in low-income communities across the state. The Center was founded on the assumption that the power of collaborative partnerships, especially between colleges and schools and between teacher education and arts and sciences faculty would be transforming and that authentic change would occur to help close the achievement gap among the largely minority students at high-need schools. No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the signature educational initiative of the Bush era, provided the primary funding impetus for the Center, of which a five-year \$7.2 million Teacher Quality Enhancement Program (TQEP) grant was the centerpiece.

With their large and well-established teacher education programs, noteworthy for faculty mentoring of students and emphasis on hands-on field experiences, ACI members made ideal partners for a program whose success depended on committed long-term college-school relationships, shared responsibility and decision-making, and a joint focus on students and learning. Eight ACI members from across Illinois became TQEP grant co-collaborators with the Center: Aurora University, Concordia University Chicago, Elmhurst College, Lake Forest College, McKendree University, North Central College, Quincy University, and University of St. Francis. The case studies that compose this issue of the *Journal for Success in High-Need Schools* tell their stories--what they put in place, what they achieved, and what they have sustained since TQEP grant funding ended in 2009.

Impressively, based on the quantitative evaluation of project achievements (OER Associates, 2009), these eight colleges and universities, with an aggregate undergraduate enrollment of less than 15,000 students, created partnerships with more than 60 elementary and secondary schools, worked with nearly 550 teachers in these schools, engaged the active collaboration of nearly three hundred teacher education and arts and sciences faculty members, and saw the percentage of ACI teacher education graduates teaching in high-need schools jump from 35-43% during 2003-05. A total of 965 pre-service program graduates from the eight TQEP institutions became high-need school teachers over the five-year project period, 100% of them being certified as NCLB "highly qualified." Reflecting the magnitude of the program's impact, 2,471 pre-service candidate placements in high-need schools occurred during the project; 2,151 candidates participated in 425 career-related field experiences; 2,766 candidates were exposed to the economic, social, family, and ethnic issues of high-need schools through 436 field experiences; and 4,130 pre-service, accelerated program, and alternative certification candidates were trained to use technology.

Nearly 90% of these new teachers rated their pre-service preparation as effective after one year of teaching and 82% of a sampling of principals rated them as highly competent professionally. Indeed, just under 97% of classes at partner elementary schools were taught by teachers with academic majors in the arts and sciences or with demonstrated high performance in their content areas and 99% of core academic courses in partner high schools were taught by teachers meeting this standard. Regarding teacher retention, 425 beginning teachers attended at least two ACI induction workshops and 600 beginning teachers participated in the ACI online mentoring program. Regarding student achievement, students at 47 of the 61 partner schools (77%) scored above the project goal of 50% of students exceeding state standards and 97% of students were promoted to the next grade level. Admittedly, the data on

student achievement is much less complete than that on the teachers.

The TQEP project had four goals:

1. Redesign and restructure teacher education programs.
2. Prepare pre-service candidates to be high quality teachers for high-need schools.
3. Effectively support and retain new teachers for high-need schools.
4. Develop new policies and organizational structures to sustain TQEP campus projects and to disseminate accomplishments.

The four goals of the TQEP project were seen as essential strategies to achieve transformation and lasting impact on teaching and learning in high-need schools. First, the project had to redesign and restructure participating teacher education programs through collaboration with arts and sciences faculty to increase the academic content of preparation curricula and use of relevant pedagogies in arts and sciences courses. Teacher preparation programs also needed to develop strategies targeted to high-need schools such as Response to Intervention (RtI), differentiated instruction, and culturally relevant curricula. Finally, through the school partnerships, the project dramatically expanded school-site instruction and field placements at all stages of the curriculum, thereby instituting a “culture of clinical practice” in candidate preparation.

Where the first goal focused on curriculum, the second goal emphasized college-school relationships, recruiting candidates and developing their dispositions for teaching in high-need schools, and actively engaging cooperating teachers and their students, the latter through such approaches as professional development opportunities for teachers and programs designed for English as a Second Language (ESL) students. The second goal was intended to implement a level of collaboration and shared decision-making unheard of in traditional teacher education programs. The third goal addressed the chronic problem of teacher turnover in high-need schools (approximately one-half leaving after their first year) which has hamstrung educational reform for decades. The Center created the ACI Induction Academy which offered four induction workshops each year for beginning teachers, a three-day teacher professional development summer conference, an online new teacher mentoring program, a new teacher coaching program involving veteran teachers who are ACI member alumni, and a leadership forum fostering dialogue between teachers and principals.

The fourth goal addressed challenges in which grant programs often fall short--how to sustain and institutionalize new programs and best practices developed with grant support, and how to disseminate successful and replicable project models to others so that grant funds have wider impact. Because the Center stressed replicability and sustainability from the beginning, all of the eight campuses put in place curricula and partnerships that have endured and all developed truly innovative and distinctive program models worthy of being replicated by others. Regarding the former, the project achieved a generative quality on participating campuses one would associate with dynamic and vital programs that make continuous program improvement a way of life. Regarding replicable models, each campus created programs that are being disseminated through such means as the Center’s annual *Arts and Sciences Colloquium*, monthly partnership meetings and forums, and the *Journal for Success in High-Need Schools*.

Examples of these program models, described in detail in the ACI member project case studies in this issue of the *journal*, include:

- **Aurora University's New Teacher Academy**, established through teacher education and arts and sciences faculty collaboration, is an induction model resembling the ACI Induction Academy that serves Aurora area schools and teachers while also being open to pre-service candidates on campus.
- **Concordia University's iPod Team** involved faculty from three colleges who collaborated with Lincoln School to train teachers to use iPods to help students with language acquisition through student research, development, and production of pod casts.
- **Elmhurst College** developed *TeacherNet*, a professional development event on campus each semester for area high-need school teachers on such topics as Response to Intervention, cultural and literacy issues, and family physical and emotional health in the high-need community.
- **Lake Forest College's** signature program model is its *Culturally Responsive Internship*, offered in collaboration with the Waukegan Schools. This internship model is an intensive two-week introduction to the Waukegan community--immigrant and socioeconomic patterns, family values, and cultural perspectives--as a basis for developing a culturally responsive instructional design and effective student relationships.
- **McKendree University** established the *Metro-East Teleconferencing* program utilizing technology to enable candidates to gain field experiences through observing and interacting with high-need classrooms at a distance from the campus.
- **North Central College** created the *Pipeline to Urban Teaching* program through which all pre-service candidates gain field exposure to teaching in high-need schools early in their preparation program. A special feature is the summer *Junior-Senior Scholars* program on campus which enrolls more than 150 inner-city students in a monthly long academic day camp and provides many candidates with intensive intern teaching opportunities.
- **Quincy University** and the **University of St. Francis** founded *professional development schools* with high-need elementary and secondary school partners in their communities. These partnerships have been so successful that numerous arts and sciences faculty, as well as teacher education faculty, have become involved and most teacher preparation courses are offered at the school sites. Curriculum development and program decision-making are joint ventures of professors, teachers, and administrators.

Key conclusions, perhaps "lessons learned," emerge from the eight ACI member case studies (Fitzsimmons, 2009):

1. The significant collaborations that occurred between teacher education and arts and sciences faculty members not only demonstrated that the two faculty groups have much to offer each other, but helped to create or strengthen

a culture that all faculty are responsible for preparing good teachers.

2. The project refuted negative stereotypes and misperceptions, often shared by candidates and faculty alike, about the high-need school environment, resulting in increased interest and commitment to teaching careers and collaboration in high-need schools. Perhaps Ladson-Billings pinpoints these misconceptions best when she argues for placing multiculturalism squarely in a framework focused not on “helping the less fortunate,” but rather on supporting children to “become educated enough to develop intellectual, political, cultural, and economic independence.”
3. Development of teacher preparation curricula featuring early and intensive field experiences builds candidate interest and sense of readiness for the challenges of a teaching career in the high-need school environment (Hollins and Guzman, 2005).
4. Strong college-school partnerships are built on a foundation of active faculty- teacher collaboration, school-site integration of candidate methods instruction and field experiences, and shared college-school decision-making. The more effective the partnership the greater the understanding and appreciation among the partners becomes for the role each plays in the preparation and professional development of strong candidates and teachers in high-need schools.

Indeed, the Associated Colleges of Illinois TQEP experience validates research on what makes college-school partnerships effective. These findings underscore the importance of college and school acting as full and equal partners working side by side on schooling and teacher education plans they have developed collaboratively. In addition to shared decision-making, it is important, as well, for the partners to share facilities, fiscal resources, and personnel. Effective partnerships strive to institutionalize their work at the sites of all partners, in the process creating an inter-institutional structure that allows change and improvement to occur at both the PK-12 and higher education levels while fostering a more seamless system of PK-20 education (Clifford *et al*, 2007; Catelli *et al*, 2000).

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: Aurora University, by Sherry Eagle and Daniel Hipp

Author Bios

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Introduction

Aurora University (AU) traces its origins to the 1893 founding of a seminary in the small town of Mendota, IL. In the over one hundred years since that beginning, the former Aurora College has grown to see an expansion of curricular offerings in a number of professional fields, beyond the traditional liberal arts programs, and began to award advanced degrees in selected disciplines. These changes culminated in the 1985 decision to rechristen the institution Aurora University. AU is comprised of two main campuses, one in Aurora, IL and one in Williams Bay, WI, which serve different populations but collaboratively strive to achieve the university's mission to be "an inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning." Aurora University enrolls over 4000 students in its undergraduate and graduate programs on these two campuses.

The College of Education offers a variety of professional preparation programs for both future and current educators. At the undergraduate level, best teaching practices are learned in small interactive classes and find immediate application in our partner schools. Programs are offered in secondary education content areas (mathematics, biology, English language arts, and social studies), elementary education, special education and physical education. At the graduate level, programs are available for current teachers in educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, reading instruction, and special education. Career changers are also served through a broad range of certification programs. The doctoral program is the capstone of College of Education offerings. Twenty-four full-time teaching faculty members and nine administrative faculty comprise the College of Education faculty.

AU partners with the two public school districts that serve most of Aurora's residents—West Aurora District 129, serving the west side of the city and East Aurora District 131 which serves the east side. The former has a growing and diverse student population: 41% Hispanic, 38% non-Hispanic Caucasian, 18% African-American, and 2% Asian, with 39% of its students qualifying as low income. Fewer than 60% of its African-American and disabled students meet or exceed the Illinois Learning Standards' targets set by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in mathematics. The latter's most recent Illinois School Report Card reported a total enrollment of 12,496, of whom 82% are Hispanic, 9% African-American, and 6% Caucasian, and 68% of its students living in low-income families. According to East Aurora Superintendent Jerome Roberts, "most of our district's funding is devoted to students who have been identified as 'at risk' and therefore, we have limited funding for programs for students who are meeting state expectations."

Project Overview

During years one and two of the grant, AU focused its efforts on partnership cultivation. We established two working groups—one internal to the university comprised of faculty and administrators from the College of Education and the

College of Arts and Sciences; the other expanded this group to include instructors and administrative staff from the two partner districts. Regular meetings of these two bodies resulted in a process by which grant funds supported established programs in both districts aimed at the mentoring and retention of new teachers, such as pre-school year workshops, professional development sessions, and experienced and novice teacher mentorship pairings. Admittedly, during the earliest phases of our project grant dollars bolstered established structures supporting teachers within our high-need partner districts, but we felt this would foster fuller and more fruitful collaboration during the three remaining years.

Our focus upon issues confronting new teachers and those about to enter the profession was guided by our experiences as educators. Having worked with these populations in the college classroom and observing them in field experiences as students near graduation, we sensed that these years marking the transition from student to professional are ones when soon-to-be and new teachers are most vulnerable and in need of support. And recent research that is beginning to emerge about teacher-induction confirms this sentiment. The New Teacher Center (2008) offers a cost-benefit analysis to argue for the economic reasons for creating highly structured mentoring and support programs for new teachers in the public schools. Likewise, Thompson, Pack, Goe, and Ponte (2005) present data that shows the impact that the development of such programming can have not just in economic terms of saving districts the cost of replacing teachers who are not retained, but also in student achievement. The National Academy of Sciences (2007) argues for the need for greater content expertise in new teachers, particularly in mathematics and science, emphasizing that teacher training and support programs are effective not only in allowing new teachers to take on the challenges of a new profession, but also in enabling them quickly to develop practices to teach effectively the content that twenty-first century students need to compete in the global marketplace.

Our assessment of grant achievements at the mid-point of year two included gathering feedback on issues confronting new teachers and candidates in training that would be most helpful from the school districts' points of view. They reported that new teachers most needed professional development in classroom management, interacting with parents, and working with ELL students and students with special needs. As a result, by the conclusion of year two the partners established AU's New Teacher Academy. In fall 2006, the New Teacher Academy invited teacher candidates enrolled in AU programs along with novice and experienced teachers from our two partner districts to four sessions: "How Diversity Shapes Today's Classroom," "How NCLB Impacts Today's Classroom," "Classroom Management," and "Getting Ready for Parent/Teacher Conferences." A total of 140 candidates, novice teachers, and veteran teachers attended these sessions led by collaborative teams of school district teachers and university faculty.

Based on the success of these programs, as reflected in survey data and focus group studies afterwards, the grant leadership team decided to offer a second set of workshops during fall 2007. Consultations with the partner districts identified session topics felt to be most useful to new teachers and those preparing to enter the profession: "The First Days of School," "Getting Ready for Parent/Teacher Conferences," "Professional Support and Professional Development," and "Classroom Management: What to Do When Things Get Out of Control." The success of this second year of the academy was reflected in assessment data and by the faculty in both Arts and Sciences and Education as the speaker and workshop model was adopted by the faculty who coordinate our course, EDU 4750, Student Teaching Seminar. All elementary and secondary education majors take this course to complement their student teaching internship. Continued consultation with the partner districts in identifying topics and selecting experienced teachers to speak on these topics to our student teachers has also affirmed the Academy's effectiveness. We regard the New Teacher Academy as one of the greatest achievements of our project because it led to a lasting change to the "infrastructure" of our curriculum. Using the academy model and grant resources we offered bimonthly seminars on student-leadership skills and development. These sessions led by individuals such as the mayor of Aurora and the president of Aurora University evolved into a program that also attracted a three-year grant from 3M focused on student leadership. This program, entitled LEAD (Leadership Education and Development), now awards a

certificate to students who serve in leadership positions on campus and in the community.

Meanwhile, the steering committee developed other initiatives, some, that continued throughout all five years of the project. The Math Coaching Program, established at both high schools (West Aurora HS in 129 and East Aurora HS in 131), linked experienced instructors in both high schools with a cadre of novice teachers to promote best practices in math instruction. These coaches consulted regularly with a faculty member in the math program at AU about teaching strategies and content standards for teacher candidates while AU underwent its own self-study in preparation for our NCATE accreditation. AU also launched and sustained an E-mentoring Program for new teachers, providing online support for instructors on issues typically confronting those new to the profession and to high-need environments. Additionally, project dollars were invested in AU's Future Educators Association through the sponsorship of noteworthy speakers such Dr. Harry Wong.

As year three of the project commenced, the steering committee developed an initiative focused squarely on improving our secondary education by emphasizing preparation for teaching in high-need schools environments. Our Secondary Education Curriculum Review Project established four working groups in each of the four secondary education certification programs (math, biology, social studies, and English language arts) comprised of arts and science discipline faculty, counterpart faculty from the College of Education, and practitioners from the partner districts who teach in the content areas. In this project, alignment with the grant goals of improving mastery of standards in content areas was more directly addressed than in any of AU's project initiatives. Syllabi for key content courses were reviewed and the practitioners offered recommendations about content matters likely to be contained within the school district curricula.

One key recommendation in this initiative was to augment the opportunities of our teacher candidates to participate in field experiences in our partner districts, particularly early in their work towards certification. AU's City-Wide After School Program had already functioned as a vehicle to place all participating AU students in area elementary and middle schools, but legislation passed through the Illinois Assembly in May 2007, opened a path for AU to launch its Supplemental Educational Services Tutoring Program (SES) that would grant clinical credit to students who would also be paid for their work. AU juniors and seniors who were accepted into the program received training and subsequently tutored middle school students on site in school district 131 in both mathematics and science. By 2008, this program served over 100 students in three partner middle schools and met the contact hour requirements to qualify as an SES provider under the provisions of NCLB. We regard this program to be an important achievement because the grant enabled us to create a sustainable infrastructure through investments of the university and the partner school district.

Much like the establishment of a speaker series within the Student Teaching Seminar that emerged from the work done in creating the New Teacher Academy, the SES tutoring program became a sustainable program for the university and even a revenue-generator. Also, the program will continue to be offered to the partner district in future years as it will under the purview of the university partner, Communities in School beginning in the 2011-12 academic year. Furthermore, the success of the City-Wide After School program (a project not directly supported by the grant but related to its goals in serving students in high-need environments) coupled with the emergence of the SES program, which provides our teacher candidates with active teaching experiences in high-need settings, has stimulated discussion among arts and science and teacher education faculty about these teaching opportunities earning field experience credit for candidate certification. Consequently, these programs may find a home in our permanent curriculum, thus fulfilling the goal of exposing all our future teachers to high-need school environments and impacting our campus in a lasting way.

The fifth year of the project has resulted in one final initiative that has the prospect of bearing similarly lasting fruit. As

an offshoot of the SES tutoring program, the project team sought to focus grant dollars on gifted students in high-need schools in order to expose our candidates to the challenges and opportunities of gifted education in high-need schools. Programming that we targeted toward gifted students included attendance at the Illinois Associated for Gifted Children conference; a professional development session on gifted education provided by an AU faculty member with expertise in the field; observing a classroom at the Illinois Math and Science Academy, followed by discussion of giftedness in math and science; and a workshop on gifted education conducted by directors of the Gifted Academy for 4th and 5th graders in D131. Evaluation of this programming will seek to answer questions about the effectiveness of preparation of candidates to teach students who excel beyond measured achievement standards, in comparison to the preparation for teaching students who struggle to meet those standards.

Project Outcomes

Our University is different today because of our partnership with the ACI Center for Success in High-Need Schools. First are changes within the faculty and within relationships between faculty members and faculty structures. Members of the original steering committee have emerged as faculty leaders within our institution, in no small part due to their work on this grant. One member became Honors Program Director after beginning work on this grant. A second has become University Assessment director and a third has been named assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and is the director of the Illinois Math and Science Partnership grants awarded to Aurora University by ISBE. When AU sought the IMSP grants from ISBE, we proposed the model of collaboration between colleges and among partner districts that we learned through our ACI project collaborations. As a result AU received four teacher leadership grants in math and science to develop master's degree programs at both the elementary and secondary levels, programs now entering their third year which have engaged university faculty across disciplines and colleges and which have attracted educators from high-need school districts within a fifty-mile radius of our campus.

But beyond these individual faculty members emerging as university leaders, the project's impact has been most positively felt in "cultural" ways on our campus through the collaborative structures it has established. Beyond anecdotes of improved communication and understanding among arts and science and teacher education faculty members are the lasting changes in our governance structure that this project helped enact. The Council for Certification of School Professionals is the official governance body for all matters pertaining to programs that offer certifications to practitioners in schools. The Institute for Collaboration, the university entity that oversees this project, now provides regular reports on programming and curriculum to this body, which reports directly to the Faculty Senate, that are forwarded to the university provost, president, and board of trustees.

The curriculum has changed in some substantive ways, though many proposed changes have not yet found their way into the curriculum. Still, however, substantial changes have occurred within the secondary education programs which we chose to be our primary area of focus for much of the project. Our soliciting the input of practitioners in English language arts led to the successful proposal, passed through governance, to add coursework in multi-cultural young adult literature into our teacher preparation program. Math faculty, in response to feedback from area practitioners that geometry in their curriculum existed as an "island" in an otherwise algebraic approach to math, infused their syllabi with a greater emphasis on geometric concepts. The social studies program adopted a new course in human geography to fill key gaps in meeting NCATE standards, an action hiring practitioners also recommended in order to strengthen the background of candidates. Making these changes has made content area faculty increasingly sensitive to adaptation of content to needs of students preparing to teach in these environments. The project has made us aware that perhaps 50% of students in AU upper division content courses are seeking certification. Consequently, we have sought to enable candidates can practice teaching and presentation skills in these courses.

The impact on our teacher candidates is difficult to measure conclusively, but two sources of evidence seem indicative. First, a focus group conducted with students who served in the SES program during the 2007-08 academic year

revealed general program satisfaction but also awareness that their conventional teacher training curriculum inadequately prepared them regarding classroom management and instruction of ELL students. This finding led to conversations between arts and science and teacher education faculty about developing a course specifically focused on the classroom environment—which our undergraduate curriculum at the elementary and secondary levels currently lacks—a course which currently exists for candidates returning to our post-baccalaureate program to obtain certification.

Second, assessment data from project year four among our SES students suggests changes in their attitudes toward high-need school environments and their willingness to work in them. One student reported her increased commitment to teach in such an environment and being inspired to serve as a role model for others. Other students acknowledged that they would consider teaching in such a school if the job opportunity became available. One student, however, found the experience challenging enough that she believed she would not accept a position in an environment such as the one where she had tutored. Her reaction speaks to the value of providing candidates with this exposure, perhaps as an example of a future educator whom a high-need school district would have difficulty retaining. Our candidates have been changed in positive ways through the grant because of the enhanced opportunities they have experienced to apply theoretical ideas about pedagogy in active teaching environments. They have seen firsthand the added challenges that school districts serving low-income populations face, while observing the determination of families in these environments to take advantage of educational programs that the grant has supported to give their children additional opportunities for success. Teacher candidates who have participated in programs such as our SES tutoring program or the New Teacher Academy have also gained an understanding of the importance of professional development as their careers unfold, thus enhancing their professional marketability due to their experiences beyond the conventional AU curriculum.

Current Challenges and Future Plans

Perhaps not surprisingly, our greatest challenge is the sustainability of initiatives our project has implemented with ACI Center grant support. AU has positioned itself through the project as an institution that can develop transformative teacher education programming for its candidates, providing them with opportunities to engage with students in our high-need partner districts in ways not typically found in university classrooms or conventional field experiences. Programs such as our SES tutoring experience or our speaker series now residing in the student teaching seminar have proven of such value that the university now commits its own dollars to their support. In addition to making lasting changes in the training of future teachers, we benefit from the strengthened bonds formed with our partner districts which will enable us to continue collaboration to achieve the shared goal of educating all members of our community effectively.

The grant has resulted in lasting changes in culture and curriculum at our institution. What gives us confidence that our project has met the challenge of sustainability are the ways that elements of our university community have welcomed the new ideas the project has generated. For instance, our NCATE accreditation process identified the vulnerability in our teacher training programs of insufficiently exposing our candidates to diverse populations in their field experiences. A sub-committee of our governing body overseeing certification programs has recommended that we explore the SES tutoring program, as well as the MyTime after school program, as formal field experiences within our curriculum to address this vulnerability.

Further, our master's program in mathematics designed for middle school teachers resulted from conversations during early stages of the project, and it now comprises a lasting part of our graduate curriculum. Finally, our focus on gifted education in high-need schools during the final year of the project may become a permanent part of our curriculum. Our plans for continued assessment and improvement of our teacher training programs will follow the model that we learned through this project: to search for sources of support to promote innovation and the infusion of new ideas

into our established ways of doing business, to demonstrate the positive impact that these innovations can have on our candidates and their future students, and to find the means to sustain the momentum of these programs and to find a curricular home for them.

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: Concordia University Chicago, by Jane R. Buerger and Dara Soljaga

Introduction to Concordia University

Located in River Forest, Illinois, Concordia University is a private, independent, faith-based university, accredited by North Central Association and NCATE. The original campus was established in 1864, in Addison, Illinois, for the purpose of preparing candidates to become excellent educators for the schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The campus was relocated to River Forest in 1913, and the institution became known as Concordia Teachers College. More recently, Concordia, now known as Concordia University Chicago, has expanded its offerings to include degrees in the liberal arts, business, social work, and school counseling. The institution has broadened the scope of its education programs and now prepares and supports teachers for careers in both public and parochial schools.

In order to serve the growing graduate population, Concordia's College of Education underwent a substantial restructuring. At this time undergraduate and Master of Arts programs in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education, as well as a K-12 program in special education, are housed in the College of Education. K-12 programs in physical education, art education, and music education are offered through collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences.

The graduate teacher education programs, most of which are offered in a cohort format, are currently housed in the College of Graduate and Innovative Programs. Each semester new cohorts are begun in Chicago and in the surrounding suburbs, and many teachers from public high-need schools enroll in these programs. Masters programs are available in reading education, school counseling, and educational leadership, as well as curriculum and instruction with an optional strand for ESL teachers. Doctoral programs are also available.

Project Overview

The University's ACI *Center* project partnership activities focused on three schools located in Berwyn, approximately four miles from the Concordia campus. Two of these, Karel Havlicek Elementary School and Lincoln Middle School, are located in Berwyn North School District #98, and the third, Hiawatha Elementary School, is located in Berwyn School District #100. All three schools report a predominately Hispanic enrollment (76%-81%). Between 79% and 91% of the students are categorized as low-income. The percentage of students having limited English proficiency runs as high as 26%.

The goals for Concordia's project paralleled those of the umbrella ACI *Center* Teacher Quality Enhancement grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Specifically, our project sought to:

1. Redesign Concordia's teacher education program to include an increased focus on multiculturalism and teaching in high-needs schools;
2. Plan activities to prepare Concordia candidates to teach in high-need schools;
3. Support teachers in the schools listed above; and
4. Develop structures and obtain materials to sustain the activities of the project.

Goals 1 & 2: Preparing Concordia candidates to teach in high-needs schools

During the five-year TQE project, it became evident that students benefitted from activities that took them into high-need schools and that participation was enhanced when the activities were part of the requirements for courses in the teacher education program. An early attempt to provide on-campus seminars drew only a small number of students. The program, called Each One Teach One, offered valuable information for pre-service teachers, but a major difficulty

was trying to fit the sessions into already over-crowded student schedules. Once time was reserved specifically for providing course-related field experiences, participation increased dramatically.

In 2006 Concordia University established a partnership with the Karel Havlicek School to provide a spring after-school reading program. Concordia undergraduates who were enrolled in literacy 1, a reading methods class, went to Havilcek School one day a week for eight weeks. The college students tutored grades 4 and 5 children who were struggling with reading. The professor of the literacy class monitored the hour-long tutoring sessions as the teacher candidates presented and reinforced a variety of reading strategies with the young learners. The tutoring program began in 2006 with 25 teacher candidates from Concordia and 50 students from Havilcek. By 2008 the numbers had increased to 34 Concordia candidates serving 70 young readers.

At first the Havlicek students were a bit uneasy since they were not confident about their reading skills. Although the teachers at Havlicek recommended that their students participate in the program and the parents agreed to let their children participate, the students themselves initially were not enthusiastic about this opportunity. Nearly four years later, a greater number of fifth graders were enrolling in the program, either because the students themselves had a good experience as fourth graders or because their friends recommended the program. The Concordia professors heard the following comments from the young readers: "My Concordia teacher is very nice." "We read stories that I like." "My reading teacher talks to me and listens to me." The teachers at Havlicek have told Concordia professors how grateful they were to have the after school reading program. The teachers not only appreciated the improvement in their students' reading levels, but they were also happy about the students' willingness to continue learning to read. At this time Havlicek continues to host after-school reading clubs and has added morning clubs as well.

The collaboration between Concordia and Havlicek has continued as a result of the requirements of Response to Intervention (RtI). Concordia teacher candidates enrolled in the college's multiculturalism class are required to complete at least 40 hours of field experience over a ten week period. Before the candidates begin their field experience, teachers from Havlicek visit the Concordia class for an orientation period. Topics discussed include the duties of the candidates, the expectations of the classroom teachers, and the demographics of the school.

During the 2010-11 academic year, nearly 120 teacher candidates from Concordia have participated in this field experience. The candidates work with small groups and with individual students in the school's yellow and red RtI tiers. The sessions, which are offered to all grades at Havlicek, focus on tutoring in literacy skills.

Goal 3: Support for teachers in high-needs schools

In 2006 Concordia used ACI Center partnership grant funds to purchase reading materials and to provide support for struggling readers. In 2006 Hiawatha School was given money to buy books to support their reading program. The school district had already bought a new textbook series, and, in order to enhance the new reading program, Concordia provided leveled readers (small paperbacks) for the primary grades. These books help the young students master basic sight words by reading additional stories with controlled vocabulary. A report from a school administrator indicated that the books were "well-used."

In another joint activity, Concordia professors, together with teachers from Lincoln Middle School, participated in a study which asked the question "How does iPod technology facilitate language acquisition skills in culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students?" This experience provided an opportunity for collaboration between professors from the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Graduate and Innovative Programs. The program also included contributions from the College of Education offices of field experience and instructional design, and three teachers, a technical administrator, and the principal from Lincoln School. Grant funding provided

iPods, headphones, iPod socks, compensation for training the Lincoln teachers, and compensation for the teachers conducting the after school program.

Concordia provided three training sessions for the three teachers from Lincoln School and for one technical assistant. These sessions included an introduction to how pod casts work and how to use a free software program to record the pod casts. Instruction was also provided to the technical staff on how to load the software onto their computers. The participants discussed course management strategies, as well as ideas for the development of lesson plans.

The Lincoln School teachers selected 15 students who needed the most help in English language acquisition. These students participated in an after-school program, meeting two days a week, and completed several pod cast projects of their own design. One project, "Welcome New Students," provided information that was also appropriate for the orientation of new faculty, staff, and administrators. The pod cast presented information a new student would need to know about "who, what, where, when, why, and how" of Lincoln Middle School. A second project, called "Berwyn: Researching Our City" covered the various elements of who and what makes up the community, including famous people of Berwyn. Teachers and professors involved in these first two projects observed the enthusiasm with which the students embraced, acquired, and applied research skills.

Throughout this pilot program the Lincoln School teachers and technology staff expanded their views of how various technologies like the iPod can be used in lessons for both English Language Learners and grade level proficient students. In turn the Lincoln School teachers are now able to articulate these strategies to current and future students, administrators, staff, and community members and to train additional teachers for future iPod projects. An important contribution made to Lincoln Middle School by the iPod project was the establishment of a link on the Lincoln Middle School website which could be used to view the two pod casts. This link showed the entire community tangible evidence that addresses the research question, "How does iPod technology facilitate language acquisition skills in culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students?"

The culminating activity for the project was a late afternoon open house which gave the ESL students a chance to demonstrate their new skills to teachers, parents, and professors from Concordia. Even though some of the parents were not able to communicate in English, their pride in the accomplishments of their sons and daughters was obvious. Classroom teachers were amazed because children who had little English proficiency in September were happily teaching the technologically-challenged adults how to use iPods in April.

Goal 4: Sustaining the Project

During the summer of 2008, a multi-disciplinary faculty team consisting of three professors from the College of Education and two professors from the College of Arts and Sciences, collaborated on an ACI *Center* sponsored summer action research project. The professors developed and administered a survey designed to gauge self-perceptions of all full-time faculty currently teaching at Concordia University regarding the degree to which they make their students aware of how particular forms of cultural capital are valued. As part of our current curriculum transformation project, the inquiry examined existing paradigms of cultural capital and instructor awareness related to content teaching and general attitudes conveyed to pre-service teacher candidates.

The research was phase one of an ongoing project to understand professor appreciation for and infusion of cultural capital perspectives into education coursework. Preliminary ramifications of professorial awareness of cultural capital include, but are not limited to, heightened consciousness for future teachers of marginalized/urban students. The initial findings were presented at the annual AESA (American Educational Studies Association) conference in Savannah, GA on October 30, 2008 in a presentation entitled "Class Secrets: Uncovering Cultural Capital Awareness on Campus."

As part of the effort to develop structures and obtain materials to sustain the activities of the project, the College of Education purchased a variety of books and other materials to support the preparation of effective urban educators. All of the major academic publishers are represented in the extensive library of educational literature. The collection includes high-quality children's literature in multiple languages, instructional support materials and works of theory and scholarship. All the materials bear a label identifying the use of ACI *Center* partnership funds for their purchase. Hopefully, all faculty members, pre-service teachers and practicing teachers will use these materials in their day-to-day work supporting urban or high need students.

A part of the acquisition involved an expansion of the university's holdings of children's books published in Spanish. Given the exponentially growing Spanish speaking population in high-need schools, having an additional thirty-four book titles will help undergraduate pre-service teachers who work with linguistically and culturally diverse populations develop lessons that utilize a bilingual approach. For young children, an important approach to learning a new language is reading to them in their first language. As a result, the child's first language is reinforced and language development becomes additive and not subtractive. The child is better able to construct meaning in the new language by having a better scaffold in their first language.

Project Outcomes

A number of factors have been instrumental in the College of Education's assessment of how Concordia programs are serving high-needs schools. Our involvement in the ACI *Center* project came during a time when the University began offering graduate programs in urban schools and when a number of new professors, many with urban experience, joined the faculty. The result is an increased awareness of the needs of urban schools and a commitment to serve the children and teachers in those schools. Other benefits include the collaboration between three of the university's four colleges as a result of the iPod project and the summer research program and the addition of the Urban Teaching Resource Center housed in the education building.

At this time the most significant changes in Concordia's curriculum have occurred in the required field experiences and in the topics covered in the undergraduate multicultural education class. The goals of the multicultural education class, taken by all undergraduate education candidates, have been revised to include topics on teaching in high-need schools. Although not directly related to the *Center* partnership projects, the fact that the curriculum and instruction M.A. program now includes a course, Socially, Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Learners: Perspectives for Practitioners, is evidence of the increased level of awareness of social issues in urban schools.

The continued partnership with Havlicek Elementary School and with the other schools in Berwyn is evidence of the positive impact that the grant activities have had on Concordia's relationship with the surrounding communities. At the end of the 2007-08 school year, 240 middle school children came to Concordia for a visit. Although this activity was not directly connected to the grant, the College of Education and the university admission office worked together to give the children a chance to see what it might be like to attend a private college and perhaps to see themselves as future college students.

An unexpected outcome came as a result of the iPod project. Because of the training involved for both the Concordia University and Lincoln Middle School teams, a curriculum unit was developed for use in a new eighteen-credit certificate program as well as a proposed Master of Arts degree in educational technology. The educational technology certificate is primarily designed for practicing teachers or for individuals in graduate level teacher preparation programs. In addition the Concordia instructional design team led a session on the use of iPod technology in elementary schools at the university's annual reading conference.

Project Sustainability

This project has been extremely valuable for the College of Education in that the professors seem united in their desire to design activities that will give all teacher candidates a chance to experience urban school environments. Perhaps this would have happened anyway, but the grant gave us extra incentive to begin projects that are immediately valuable and also sustainable in the future.

Now that the field experiences at Havlicek are part of the requirements of Concordia's multiculturalism course, students can see their work as part of an ongoing program, rather than as a series of unrelated school visits. Since Concordia students come from a wide geographical area, it is sometimes difficult to convince the candidates (and their parents) that travel in urban areas is safe. By providing experiences where university professors accompany the students into the city, we hope to change the students' impressions and perhaps convince them that the urban schools provide a challenging and rewarding place for them to enter the teaching profession.

The activities above describe how Concordia candidates are being prepared for service in high-need schools. Because of changes in leadership and in university structure, it is difficult to predict what the future will hold for Concordia's involvement with high-need schools. The recent exponential growth of the graduate cohort programs has allowed the College to serve a greater number of teachers in the Chicago Public Schools, as well as high-need suburban schools, and a group of younger professors are bringing an increased awareness of social issues. We can hope that the connections formed and the lessons learned from our Teacher Quality enhancement grant will continue to influence programs offered by Concordia University Chicago.

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: Elmhurst College, by Brian Kahn and Judith Kaminski

Introduction

In the 1990's many reforms were taking place in the field of education, including the initial and continuing education of teachers. In a 1996 report issued by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCATE), one major recommendation called on universities to focus more on building strong clinical training and induction programs. Previously, in the report entitled "Restructuring the Education of Teachers", the Association of Teacher Educators recommended that part of the redesign of teacher education include more extensive field experiences along with more collaborative efforts linking the schools with the schools of education (ATE, 1991). A number of researchers including Cornbleth & Ellsworth (1994), Zimpher & Sherrill (1996), and Imag & Switzer (1996), describe the changing role of public school teachers in the teacher education process, one in which teachers play a much greater role in clinical experiences. Coupled with these changing roles is the significance placed on greater collaboration between public schools and universities as more meaningful field experiences for preservice candidates are designed and implemented.

Today, as educational reform moves into the twenty-first century, public school and university educators continue to extol the benefits of positive school-university partnerships. In an article entitled, "Greater Expectations for Student Learning: The Missing Connections," Linda Darling-Hammond noted that improving student learning "will require not only partnerships between schools and universities--particularly in those places where new and more powerful schools need to be invented--but also policy and action on the part of the higher education community..." (2000, p. 35-38). Similarly, Wise & Levine (2002) contend that the school-university partnership is one of the most important steps to raise achievement among low-performing students in high-need schools because it enables university academic knowledge to join forces with the more day-to-day needs of the public schools.

Considering Elmhurst College's long tradition of working with local school districts, the decision was made to use TQE grant funds to sustain and create new partnerships in five area school districts: Villa Park School District 45, Addison School District 4, Leyden Consolidated High School District 212, Berkeley School District 87, and Berwyn School District 100. Four out of the five districts serve grades K-8 and one district consists of two high schools grades 9-12. All five school districts have seen an explosive growth in their Hispanic population over the last 9 years, some growing as much as 25%. Each of our school partners are identified as high-need and thus at a greater risk for failure. All but one of the partner districts have improved their test scores in mathematics and reading by at least 10% since 2004.

Project Overview

Although Elmhurst's ACI *Center* partnership project has undergone some changes over the past five years, the original aims remain constant, including better preparation of our teacher candidates to work in high-need schools, greater inclusion of high-need teaching practices throughout our teacher education program, and development of meaningful and lasting partnerships with local schools and school districts to facilitate greater attention to actual field experiences for our teacher candidates as they work with students in the schools. We strive for all of our teacher candidates, regardless of their program (secondary, elementary, early childhood, special education), to participate in well-structured, mentored, and hands-on experiences working with students in diverse settings.

The Elmhurst TQE project pursued five project goals:

1. To improve the mastery of content through collaboration of teacher education and arts and science faculty in designing and delivering pre-service curricula. This goal is also intended to strengthen the links between instructors teaching general education courses, instructors teaching secondary certification courses, and the

education faculty. All members of the college community are crucial to the preparation of the teacher candidate and, while all play slightly different roles, it is imperative that we continue to recognize the need for this collaboration as we assist these candidates in better understanding the connections between education courses and more traditional content area courses.

2. To increase exposure of teacher candidates to the economic, social, familial, and ethnicity issues present in high-needs schools and their communities. This goal required a “curriculum transformation” process within the education department. Candidates require theoretical as well as practical knowledge as they strive to better understand strategies and practices for working with children and families in high-need communities. We initiated our consideration of curriculum transformation as a way to create more opportunities for our students to be exposed to high-need issues and teaching strategies. Education faculty examined the content of their courses to increase candidate exposure to high-need strategies and practices as well as social and economic implications of working in high-need schools and communities. Syllabi were reworked to assure that teacher candidates, regardless of program level, would have consistent encounters with these high-need issues on campus as well as in their field experience in the schools.
3. To provide significant on-site instruction and clinical experiences for teacher candidates, taught collaboratively with area classroom teachers. Through the project a number of clinical experiences and collaborative partnerships have been established to provide teacher candidates with significant clinical experiences. Five of these clinical experiences continue beyond the five-year project grant period.
4. To assess the effectiveness of our teacher preparation programs in addressing issues of high-need students and to conduct semiannual and annual evaluations of project activities. Throughout the project, the College has arranged “End of the Semester Celebrations” to bring together teacher candidates, classroom teachers, and university faculty. During these events, roundtable discussions are held to examine the effectiveness of the partnerships. Useful suggestions for project improvements came from these sessions. We also surveyed teacher candidates at the end of each semester as well and conducted up to ten one-on-one interviews with some.
5. To create a campus infrastructure and school district support to sustain the partnerships. Both college and school personnel are committed to maintaining project partnerships and to funding the programs for at least one year after the grant ended. Partnership continuation will be evaluated annually. As schools and communities change, it is important to recognize that not all partnerships last forever and at times conditions dictate a change in relationships.

In an effort to achieve these goals, the Elmhurst department of education embarked on a plan to establish and nurture a number of initiatives in these local school districts. The “best fit” for Elmhurst College appeared to center around a number of new field experiences for preservice teacher candidates. As our students were already completing several of field experiences, it made the most sense to refocus a number of these in a few of the high-needs districts in close proximity to the college. The following section describes in detail the nature of our TQE initiatives.

Tutoring Services-General

Implemented at East and West Leyden High Schools, this initiative is an ongoing part of the secondary methods course SEC 410 offered on campus. Each teacher candidate in the course is expected to complete at least 10 hours per semester at one of the two schools working one-on-one and/or in small groups with students. Originally, this program targeted students at the freshman and sophomore levels who were failing two or more classes. Several teachers at the school sites were hired with grant funds to coordinate the tutoring sessions. Attendance was low the first year, but

has grown considerably today as failing students are required to attend after-school tutoring sessions. Presently, there are 25 participating students per teacher supervisor in 4 different classrooms, mostly sophomores and juniors.

The tutoring program has become part of the school improvement plan. From it other school programs have arisen, including the Freshman Study Program at West with more than 100 freshmen participants. Although tutoring is offered in only four core subjects, students needing tutoring in other electives are also encouraged to attend. Teachers at the partnering high schools also serve as temporary mentors for Elmhurst teacher candidates and share a variety of teaching strategies with them prior to and while the students work at the school. In addition to tutoring at the school, teacher candidates are required to journal their experiences weekly and track their progress with students. Their reflections are then shared during a student teaching seminar on campus.

Tutoring Services – Special Education Students

The grant also helped us to develop a middle school special education tutoring program in response to a request from the principal at MacArthur Middle School in the Berkeley District 87 to assist special education students struggling in the area of reading. This initiative has now been in place for three years. All teacher candidates, regardless of program, participate in one of the portfolio synthesis courses (300 level) which focuses on diversity issues in schools, particularly those of high-need special education students. Each candidate completes a minimum of five hours at the middle school tutoring special education students who have been identified by the building coordinator (funded through the grant). Candidates are introduced to methods of strategic tutoring by school special education teachers who provide this instruction on campus during several of the class sessions. At the school site, candidates work one-on-one and in small groups to assist students primarily in the areas of math and literacy. The number of students needing tutoring varies from week to week. Building coordinators guide candidates as they develop brief but meaningful relationships with the students in the special education classrooms. Like the other initiative, this one is also an important part of the school improvement plan as they struggle to meet AYP.

Science Practicum for Elementary Students – “Children Discovering Science”

During the first few years of this hands-on science experience, students from York Center School in Villa Park School District 45 were bused to the Elmhurst campus twice each week for an after school Science learning experience. Teacher candidates in the science methods course prepared hands-on science experiments and other learning activities for the students at York Center (grades 3-5). The primary goal is for teacher candidates to practice effective science teaching strategies with high-need students. Students who volunteer for this after school program are largely from low-income families who have a variety of language difficulties. They receive little hands-on science instruction; this program allows them to bring science into their lives in an exciting and meaningful way.

This initiative has undergone a number of changes over the past five years. For the second year in a row, the Elmhurst candidates travel to the schools to work with the students, a more cost-effective plan. Also, two new elementary schools have been added to the initiative – Lincoln and Army Trail elementary schools in Addison District 4. Today, all elementary teacher candidates enrolled in EED 326 – Science Methods participate in one of the sessions at the three schools throughout the semester. Prior to each school year, teachers at each site are paid an honorarium to help organize the sessions so that they are aligned with the district’s science curriculum. In addition, several teachers are paid an honorarium to attend the weekly sessions to work with the candidates. The building principal monitors the sessions.

Greater emphasis is now being placed on developing higher order thinking skills of the students in grades 3-5. The teacher candidates execute lesson plans based on the school district’s science curriculum and the recommendations of the teachers serving as on-site supervisors. Beyond participating in six hours of after school sessions, candidates in writing fashion their experiences as a requirement in the methods class. This initiative has now become part of the

school improvement plan for both school districts.

Emergent Literacy in K-3 Setting for ELL Learners

This initiative teamed teacher candidates in a literacy course with second grade students at Stevenson school in Villa Park. Candidates worked with two classroom teachers to create interactive literacy lessons based in the science curriculum for ELL learners and tutored students several days after school. Topics varied from year to year, including units on magnets, leaves, spiders, and water. Tutors were volunteers to a specific methods course at the college. Due to changes in the district administration and teacher reassignment, this initiative is no longer available.

Middle School Observation/Participation in Berwyn Middle Schools

This initiative is one option for middle school teacher candidates at two possible sites for observing and working with young adolescents. Candidates in EDU 260 introductory seminar, EDU 360 middle school philosophy and methods, and EDU 361 adolescent psychology participate in this field experience. Candidates spend 15-20 hours working with 6-8 graders in a team setting and complete field reflections as a course requirement. Both Heritage and Freedom middle schools participate and typically about ten teacher candidates per year work in each of the two schools.

Project Outcomes

Our project has had substantial impact on the Elmhurst College Education Department faculty, the teacher candidates, our school partners, and, ultimately, the students in the K-12 classrooms in which we serve. Much of what we have learned focuses on the process of creating meaningful school partnerships and the ways in which we provide meaningful high-need experiences for our teacher candidates.

The education faculty is much more in tune with high-need issues than ever before. Our various initiatives impact the daily experience of all education faculty members as their students participate in these settings. Likewise, high-need issues are a greater part of the overall curriculum for all teacher candidates in the education program. Faculty members have become aware of the workings of ACI and the opportunities available to ACI partner colleges. The department project coordinating committee has helped to maintain lines of communication between the project manager and the department. As a result, more faculty members have gotten involved in ACI Center activities. For example, during the past four years, Elmhurst faculty members have been awarded four ACI innovation grants to undertake initiatives including multicultural experiences in elementary classrooms, early literacy experiences for students and families dealing with ELL issues, and ways in which classroom teachers can begin to play a greater role as mentors to teacher candidates in high-need schools.

Another innovation within the department is the creation of TeacherNet, an outreach program that provides in-service opportunities for teachers in all of our partner schools. Each semester, the TeacherNet committee sponsors a different event on campus to assist area teachers to better understand the needs of children in high-need classrooms. Past events have included a workshop on RtI (Response to Intervention), a Golden Apple presentation for beginning teachers, and a multipurpose workshop with breakout sessions on literacy issues, family relationships, and physical and emotional health issues of families living in high-need communities. Our partner teachers attend these sessions without charge while receiving CPU credits and printed materials on the topics presented.

Finally, our teacher education and arts & science faculty members have established new professional connections through the ACI Arts and Science colloquium held each fall. Teams of faculty members from across arts and sciences and education departments create a summer action research project and present their findings at the colloquium, on campus, and to local teachers. Elmhurst College faculty members have participated in several of these annual colloquiums to present action research project findings. Not only does this assist our faculty to better collaborate across departments but also exposes them to the work of their colleagues at colleges and universities nearby.

As a consequence, our teacher candidates reported a greater awareness of high-need schools and the high-need population which has assisted them in developing specific strategies to use in the classroom. The candidates' perspectives on these issues have been altered and they have been able to transfer what they have learned in the college classroom to their work in the field. Many say that they would now be more willing to work in schools where students need additional services.

Teachers and principals working with our candidates see positive changes in student attitudes and improvements in their learning. Face-to-face interviews with two of the building principals and the teacher coordinator for the initiative yielded a great many positive evaluative comments including the following:

- “Many of our students are from low-income families and are considered at-risk – they really need these kinds of hands-on science experiences and this helps bring science alive for them and they are better able to relate to the material covered in the regular classroom.”
- “These students really enjoy the after school experience – they even call it ‘The Science Club’ and keep asking if they can participate again the upcoming semester. Some also call it the ‘Elmhurst College Teachers Club’ as they are aware that they are helping the teacher candidates to become better teachers.”
- “The Elmhurst students get to work with diversity issues as well as lesson planning and the mechanics of teaching. They also get lots of feedback from the mentor teachers involved and, of course, have lots of interaction with students.”
- “The students in the schools see this activity as a privilege and they know they have to be on their best behavior in order to be able to participate.”
- “While there is not real data to suggest that this program directly affects science grades, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest great improvement in attitude towards science and willingness to engage in hands-on activities.”

The teachers in the schools are also benefiting as their students are provided this extra experience. They are grateful for the program and take personal pleasure in working with our candidates – this initiative has really elevated their attitude towards teaching. And from the principal at a school partnering in science: “This program is deeply engaging for our students – their scores went up in science at the fourth grade level and the two teachers really appreciate the program and the level of enthusiasm exhibited by the candidates. This has been part of our school improvement plan for several years now and will remain so even after the grant funds are gone.”

Our high school tutoring partners where several hundred students now participate, we received comments such as the following:

- “This initiative provides the opportunity for our struggling students to come after school and get their homework done – many would not if left to their own devices. They can get help with areas in which they are struggling and ask questions.”
- “The teachers at the school realize that this program actually allows them to work with additional students during the day and they see lots of reward in the level of success on the part of the students. Lots of solid

relationships have been built each semester between the high school students and the teacher candidates.”

- “The students truly want their mentors to be there after school and they have come to depend upon them. Many students go to get help without being assigned.”
- “Now no one is failing six or seven classes – without this program we would have many more failed classes. This program is built into the school day of certain at-risk students and they even come on Friday if they happen to miss a day during the week. It is also part of the school improvement program and has become part of the overall school culture.”

The focus on juniors and seniors was expanded to include the freshman study program, a pilot with more than 100 student participants in 2008-09. Both high schools have hired additional staff to deal with at-risk students in this freshman guided study program.

Project Implications and Sustainability

The implications are many and affect the student population at both the college and the district schools as well as the faculties at all sites. Our program is about curriculum transformation. By the fifth project year, these initiatives were imbedded in our Education Department curriculum. As a result, all education candidates in all our programs will be impacted in some way through their involvement in these initiatives and will have an opportunity to interact with students who have been identified as high-need. Transformation is now a sustainable part of our education curriculum, requiring a commitment from the faculty to this curriculum.

Teacher candidates are talking about the Response to Intervention seminar in their classes and in their field experiences. The department TQE initiatives offer the pre-service candidates opportunities not only to talk about RtI but actually be a part of how it affects students in classrooms by working with in-service teachers. Candidates are better prepared via strategies and observations. There are more sites available for them to practice high-need strategies and experience first-hand how they work. Our partner schools and our in-service teachers see themselves as teacher educators. The students in these high need classrooms benefit academically and our candidates benefit because they can observe the effectiveness of their work in the changes they observe in their students.

There is a greater awareness on the part of pre-service candidates that our entire department is now working together to meet the needs of diversity in the classrooms of high-need students. Teachers and administrators from our partner schools say they see positive changes in their students because they perceive that what we are doing is making a difference. They cite positive individual student and candidate experiences and the teachers tell us they can see a difference in their students.

Naturally, sustainability is one of the keys to the future of our initiatives as well as one of our greatest challenges. All of the districts we serve with these programs are high-need, so money is a major issue. Fortunately, our partner districts believe project initiatives are important for their students. Because the programs have become a part of their school improvement plans, we will be able to continue for the near future. Each of the districts has agreed to fund part of its initiative and has worked with us to restructure their initiatives so they can continue effectively at low cost. For example, one district will pay for most of the costs of each coordinator at each school; another district will pick up the transportation costs and the planning honorariums for the teachers. Without this support we would not be able to continue with all of our activities. The support of the districts demonstrates the strength of our partnership and the commitment to their students and the teacher education program at Elmhurst College.

Elmhurst College will attempt to sustain the project for the longer term. These initiatives are critical to preparation of our candidates to teach in high-need schools and to the sustainability of the school partnerships. Project initiatives are part of a process; they should be always changing to meet needs of the students at the school sites and the needs of the pre-service candidates as those needs evolve and change. The in-service teachers have also become part of the process, committed to their profession and to the children they teach.

The collaborative partnerships we have formed, and will continue to form, strengthen Elmhurst College in the communities we serve. The perception of the quality of our candidates and what they do demonstrates our willingness to give back to the community. In a discussion regarding reductions in the project budget for the final grant year, a special needs teacher in a high-need school declared that he would even do the work for nothing, saying, "my students get as much [out of this experience] as do the Elmhurst students." Pre-service teachers consider the initiatives to be professional development, an opportunity not only to grow and learn but to become part of the teacher educator community.

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: Lake Forest College, by Shelley Sherman and Dawn Abt-Perkins

Introduction

Lake Forest College is a small, highly-selective, liberal arts college of approximately 1300 students. Our students come from 44 states and 69 countries. We have a 12:1 student-faculty ratio. Our institutional focus is on providing a strong liberal arts education that prepares students as writers, speakers, and global citizens. We believe that small classes, professor mentorship, and close relationships built in a campus community all facilitate intellectual development.

The Education Department has approximately 75 majors, making it one of the most popular majors on campus. Students who major in education also major in another field. This includes majors in our elementary as well as our secondary programs. We do not have graduate programs in education or specialty areas such as special education. We view our mission as providing a strong background in classroom teaching in a general education classroom as a prerequisite for study in specialty fields of education. Students complete two majors and their certification programs within their four-year program of study. To accomplish this, students need to declare their intention to complete a certification program early in their academic career, need to be highly focused and effective students, and be highly organized in their approach to their academic program.

Students progress through our programs in a cohort, working together closely under the mentorship of teacher educators who know them as advisees, and developmentally, as students in several courses over a number of semesters. Our focus is on providing frequent and individualized feedback and support in a developmental program of study so that students optimize their skills and talents as teachers in the classroom. Effective instructional skill and design are our first curricular priorities. Responding to student needs and understanding developmentally-appropriate instruction are keys to success in our programs. We have been successful in placing first-year teachers in jobs in both high-need school districts and some of the most competitive school districts in the country. This placement record and our faculty's reputation as being responsive and supportive are the reasons we are considered successful by our students and by our campus community.

Lake Forest College partners with Waukegan Community Unit School District 60. The Waukegan school district consists of 21 schools that serve students in grades K-12. Nine of these schools are on academic watch status having failed to meet progress standards for four consecutive years. There are currently 16,185 students in the Waukegan system, 43% from low-income families. Population trends show a steady growth in the Hispanic population (53% in 1999 to 71% in 2008), while a steady decline in white, black and Asian populations. There is more than a 20% learning gap among Hispanic and black students compared to white students and more than a 50% learning gap in both mathematics and reading between white students and students with disabilities.

Project Overview

In 2000, partly in response to the new content area standards required of Illinois Teachers and partly because we wanted to better focus our efforts to support and assess teacher candidates at the pre-student teaching stages of their program of study, we redesigned our junior year half-day five days a week 14 week internship to take place in Waukegan Public Schools. In our elementary program, all interns were to be placed in Waukegan classrooms in grades K-2 and in our secondary programs in one of Waukegan's five middle schools. At first, our motives were logistical. If all students were placed in similar types of schools with similar demographics and similar challenges, we could be more consistent in our expectations for their teaching and evaluate more fairly their progress.

It was also easier to place students in Waukegan than elsewhere. Teachers were open to having another "set of hands" in their classrooms to help them manage and work with students. They were more open to our interns trying

new ideas than teachers in more "successful" school districts. Waukegan teachers are creative and inventive and had busy administrators who allowed them a great deal of instructional freedom. Some of this changed with No Child Left Behind, but, for the most part, Waukegan teachers and classrooms are still the most flexible places for teacher development.

In 2001-2004, we developed our "Waukegan Internship Program" which focused on what skills, dispositions, and experiences we thought necessary for this stage of teacher development. Our focus was exclusively on teacher development research and early field experiences and developing our cohort model with accompanying pacing guides, seminar topics, and assessment tools. We understood that we were in a high-need school district with a highly culturally diverse population, but we never made high-need issues central in our discussions. We spoke about our students being "responsive," but did not reference culturally responsive instruction or multicultural curriculum design in any integrated way. In our faculty discussions and in our seminars, we focused more on effective teaching in "any and all classrooms." We recognized that there were particular challenges that our interns faced working in Waukegan, but these were not highlighted nor did they become part of our course syllabi or seminar content. When we joined the *ACI Center for Success in High-Need Schools* partnership, this changed.

The first major change was in how we prepared our interns before they began to work with students and teachers in the field. In the past, the focus was on professional demeanor and dispositions (e.g. be on time, communicating with your cooperating teacher, how to handle materials, how to introduce yourself) and on the basics of instructional design (e.g. activity design, task orientation, lesson plan format). Now, we have a two-week introduction to the Waukegan community and its resources for instructional design, Waukegan parent communities and immigrant patterns, family values and perspectives on schooling, ways to build effective student relationships with Waukegan kids, and an introduction to autobiographical reflection necessary to develop a culturally responsive stance in interpreting schools, classrooms, teachers, parents and students.

Second, we fully integrated literacy courses in all programs with the internship so that as students were learning about teaching reading or content reading strategies, they were also responsible for acting upon that knowledge, working with students as readers and writers in Waukegan. As a result, the content of these courses changed to include more emphasis on culturally appropriate texts, ways to supplement and modify textual material, and more emphasis on ELL strategies and other forms of language and reading support. We modified our traditional case study assignment to focus on literacy development. Our interns were responsible for evaluating the progress of their instruction along the dimensions of growth in literacy: How were the instructional strategies used serving students as developing readers/writers?

Third, we developed a working definition of culturally responsive instruction that held certain expectations for teacher candidates. All candidates were expected to integrate community-based resources in their instructional design. Our interns were expected to be researchers, bringing into their classrooms primary documents and community resources. All candidates were to reflect on how their instruction was responding to what they knew about their students as community members, including their cultural/ethnic identities.

Fourth, we increased our expectations for differentiated planning. In the past, we had been pleased if an intern could implement direct instruction effectively. Now, we expected interns to plan differentiated lessons and be effective at implementing small group learning, team learning, learning station or center activities, individualized projects and scaffolded learning sequences. To do this, our interns had to spend a great deal more time in the early stages of the internship pre-testing students, observing students in various learning situations, and tutoring students to understand where they struggled. We are now more systematic and explicit about our expectations for different stages of the internship which culminates in a two-week unit of study we call, "total teach."

Fifth, we put responsiveness to students at the center of our assessment framework for the internship. In other words, interns had to do more than get students' attention and "deliver" a lesson with relatively few problems. Now they needed to show the impact of their instruction on a variety of students. To do this, they needed to collect data and keep careful records as they taught, especially during the total teach period when they were responsible for instructional design, delivery, and assessment.

Meanwhile, the education department faculty worked with new teachers in a summer induction program. The goal of this work was to authenticate what we were expecting of our interns by working on similar instructional design and delivery issues with new, successful teachers in Waukegan. As teacher educators, none of us had any teaching experience in high-need or urban schools. We considered ourselves to be experts in instructional design and implementation. But we needed to know if our knowledge translated to the teaching/learning context of Waukegan Public Schools. We also wanted to develop working relationships with a new pool of cooperating teachers who would not only allow us to "experiment" in their classrooms with our interns, but would understand enough of our philosophy and methods to effectively coach our interns and provide models for the practices we were supporting in our instruction. We wanted to "grow our own" cooperating teacher pool while learning along the way from these new teachers what we needed to emphasize in our instruction with our interns.

We also integrated arts and science faculty into our teacher education program who served as assessors and as resources to our teacher candidates during the internship. By helping us work with Waukegan's new teachers in the summer, faculty in the history, math, English, foreign language, and chemistry departments became more committed to teacher education generally and more knowledgeable about teaching and learning in Waukegan specifically. These arts and science faculty members have become essential resources for our teacher candidates as candidates develop content and materials for their community-based units of study.

Lessons Learned

New teachers in high-need schools need a community of positive, forward-looking, committed colleagues to sustain them. The new teachers we worked with every summer and in study groups throughout the year spoke of this work as their lifelines. Because we brought them together, they were able to survive the trials of the first years of teaching in this demanding environment. By collaborating they found that they were contributing to a school district responding to the challenges of a changing demographic. When we provided an historical framework of the Waukegan community and challenged them to respond to their students as members of such a community, they bonded together as new teachers for a new America. These new teachers inspired us as teacher educators to keep developing our knowledge base and to further commit to Waukegan Public Schools. We all became part of instructional reform for Waukegan.

Interns benefit from working with optimistic and reform-minded new teacher leaders. Experienced teachers can be too far removed from the dilemmas and concerns interns face. New teachers could share, in fresh and compelling ways, how they needed to face their own prejudices and fears when they started to work in Waukegan, how they needed to develop a new perspective on daily and long-term success, and how they struggled daily to maintain high expectations and support learners to meet them. New teachers are great teacher educators.

Concepts and theories such as "culturally responsive instruction" and "multicultural curriculum" need to be redefined developmentally in terms of expectations for practice and be fully integrated into the entire teacher education curriculum to be effective. These concepts also need to be wedded with more traditional concepts such as brain-based teaching, humanistic learning, direct instruction, differentiated instruction, and learning styles. In other words, multicultural education needs to be grounded in practice and supported through success stories of how such

approaches have positively influenced student development. This will make it more difficult to dismiss multiculturalism as simply politically correctness. Through high-need school experiences, teacher educators can walk the talk of multiculturalism, showing as well as telling interns why this approach matters.

Values and perspectives are as important as methods in teacher development for high-need schools. Teacher educators need to include self-awareness and critical consciousness as part of their assessment framework for field experiences in high needs schools. Without the reflective component, the lessons interns learn from these intensive learning experiences can be lost. Through careful, thorough reflective work, interns can build on the lessons learned from their work in high-need schools—lessons about the importance of cultural connections, community-based resources, and differentiated instruction. We consider these values, orientations, and skills to be foundational to good teaching in any community.

Teaching and learning need to be fully contextualized. It does matter where you teach and whom you teach and who you are as a teacher. In other words, generic or generalized approaches to teacher education lack transformational power for teacher candidates and their students alike. By becoming part of the community and its goals for its schools, teacher candidates move from being voyeurs to being reformer agents. This type of experience early in a teacher education program helps teacher candidates view their work as teachers from a service as well as professional orientation, and most important of all, consider, with confidence, teaching positions in high-need schools.

In interviews with teacher candidates following their internship experiences, all expressed a change in confidence about teaching in high-need schools and most expressed openness to considering teaching positions in high needs schools. Those who hesitated did so primarily as a result of careful reasoning about their own personal strengths and weaknesses. All put the needs of the students and possessing the skills and dispositions to meet those needs first as they respond to this question. When they complete the Waukegan internship, they understand and value the skills and dispositions of successful teachers in Waukegan.

Teacher educators need to be working in long-term school partnerships. When teacher educators are working in several school districts in one day, it is impossible for them to develop the deep understanding necessary to lead interns to be effective practitioners in challenging high-need school environments. Without such partnerships, teacher educators risk reinforcing stereotypes about high-need schools and the communities and families they serve. When teacher educators are fully engaged in a school district, they feel more comfortable in the schools and classrooms. Interns notice when their key mentors—their teacher educators—are comfortable and respond in kind.

Cohort models where teacher candidates are placed in the same high-need school community can be effective at building prospective teacher confidence. No teacher likes to work alone. New teachers need each other for support when they are being challenged personally and intellectually. High-need teaching environments challenge candidates continuously in multiple ways. Very little about these schools or students are familiar to our teacher candidates. They need peers who understand the challenges they are facing and who will join with them in collaboratively facing those challenges. In interview data, interns refer to their peers as being a key aspect of their support network during the internship experience.

Challenges and Sustainability

The test-prep instructional environment created in response to NCLB continues to present challenges to our teacher education program. We believe in teachers as curriculum-makers leading constructivist learning that results inspired and responsive teaching. As administrators respond to their fears about test scores and enforce teachers' use of standardized curricula and scripted instruction, we find the Waukegan environment less conducive to the experiences we need to provide our teacher candidates. Interns need room to create and to individualize and personalize

instruction. We are responsible for providing these opportunities for them. This is consistent, as well, with a liberal arts view of teacher preparation.

Lack of funding for materials, such as paper shortages and the inability to assign textbooks to individual children, is a continual challenge for teaching responsive and supportive instructional design. Overcrowded classrooms at the elementary level and high student absenteeism at the middle school level pose difficult challenges to meet with instructional design alone. Certainly, the challenges students face through living in poverty such as coming to school properly fed, rested, and with the materials necessary for learning, are difficult, if not impossible, for interns, much less experienced teachers, to address. Facing the limitations of what one can provide as a teacher is emotionally challenging for an intern. Teacher educators are challenged to help interns manage these feelings and maintain their focus on providing the best possible opportunities for academic achievement.

Lack of support in the field of teacher education for partnering with high-need schools is another continuing challenge. Teacher education programs are known, in part, by the type of school district partners they have. Partnering with large, urban school districts is viewed as beneficial for funding opportunities and provides a higher public profile for the college or university. Yet, it is important to collaborate with suburban, well-resourced schools in order to provide the breadth of possible job connections teacher candidates might consider when deciding on a teacher education program. Working with suburban or rural or small city high-need schools does not benefit teacher education programs or colleges in these traditional ways. These types of partnerships need to be supported from a purely altruistic stance by college administrators. In these highly competitive times, this is a continuing challenge.

Continuing to provide incentives for arts and science faculty to develop their commitment to teacher education programs is another on-going challenge. Currently, there is little reward within the academic culture for helping to prepare teachers. At best, it is viewed as service to the college. As such, teacher education programs compete with many service opportunities for faculty, some of which provide more visibility and more stature within the college environment. Arts and science faculty members who have been involved in our teacher education programs point to how they have grown as teachers as a result. Hopefully, providing forums on campus—panels and presentations—for faculty to share what they have gained from being involved in our teacher education programs and, more specifically, our Waukegan partnership, will encourage new faculty to become involved.

College administrators could help by recognizing publicly and personally the commitment these faculty members have made. As teacher educators, we need to work against becoming isolated in our work. It is certainly easy to do so as we run from school-based teaching to campus commitments. We need to keep thinking about ways to involve faculty across campus in research and instructional reform projects with us and with our teacher candidates.

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: McKendree University, *by Joseph J. Cipfl and Julie A. Tonsing-Meyer*

Introduction

McKendree University is located in Lebanon, Illinois, within 25 minutes of downtown St. Louis, Missouri. McKendree has a student population of approximately 1,500 at its main campus. Established in 1828 by pioneer Methodists, McKendree is the oldest college in Illinois, and the oldest in the nation with continuous ties to the United Methodist Church. First called Lebanon Seminary, the school opened in two rented sheds for 72 candidates. In 1830, Bishop William McKendree, the first American born bishop of the Methodist Church, permitted the Board of Trustees to change the institution's name to McKendree College. In 2007, McKendree College became McKendree University.

McKendree University offers programs in undergraduate and graduate preparation of education professionals that allow applicants the opportunity to prepare for initial and advanced certification in Illinois. Teacher candidates may major in elementary education to teach in grades K-9, or in secondary education programs in business marketing and computing, English language arts, history (social science), mathematics, science (biology or chemistry emphasis), or social science (history, political science or psychology emphasis) for grades 6-12. Candidates majoring in music education, physical education and visual arts may complete the special program for certification at grade levels K-12. Those majoring in special education have the option of completing the certification requirements for ages 3 to 21. Those majoring in the educational leadership advanced program have the option of completing certification requirements for general administrative (principal).

Teacher education at McKendree is based on the premise that the education of teachers occurs most successfully in the context of a liberal arts program; a broad background of courses in general education is required of all undergraduate majors. Further, candidates who are interested in a teaching career must develop the necessary skills of teaching through a sequence of professional educational courses in theory and methodologies. A series of clinical experiences in a variety of diverse school settings helps candidates to transfer college classroom instruction into practical teaching skills.

McKendree's two project partner schools in the Teacher Quality Enhancement grant were Belleville District 118 which serves the majority of the residents residing in the city of Belleville, enrolling approximately 3,700 students in pre-school through eighth grade. The growing and diverse population is 56.5% white, 33% black, 6.4% multi-racial, 2.4% Hispanic and 1.2% Asian. Over half of the population (53%) is considered low-income. The district made adequate yearly progress in 2008 and 86.5% of the students met or exceeded standards on the ISAT. The second partner *was* a large district with 10 schools serving almost 7,000 students residing in Granite City. The population is 81.1% white, 9% Black, 5% Hispanic, and 4% multi-racial. The district's minority population has doubled in the past ten years. Over half (52%) of the population is low-income. The district is making adequate yearly progress and 71% meet or exceed standards on the ISAT.

Project Overview

To address the issue of distance between McKendree University and high-need schools in the region, McKendree University developed the Metro-East Teleconferencing and Teaching Enhancement Program as the focus of its project. The purpose of the project *was* to expose McKendree's teacher candidates to students and learning in high-needs schools in the hope that they will become interested in teaching in high-need schools. The opportunities to learn in McKendree's partnering high-need schools were multifaceted and included *observing* instruction in the classroom.

State of the art web conferencing equipment for all partners was a key component of the Metro-East Teleconferencing and Teaching Enhancement Program. Each participating school was equipped with teleconferencing equipment, a

television, and a mobile cart. Campus technology personnel and the project coordinator work closely with partnering school technology personnel to ensure proper technical support and maintenance. Teleconferencing allowed students and faculty to observe and process these observations together. Over one hundred teacher candidates participated in web conferences each semester. The teacher candidates ranged from first semester freshman to first semester seniors. During each semester, teacher candidates would web conference with high-need classrooms approximately once a month.

McKendree University also developed a high-need school internship program through the project. A collaborative partnership was established between the university and the “Summer Bridges” program in the high-need schools in the Metro East area. Summer Bridges is a Title I funded summer compensatory program that serves East St Louis, Cahokia, Venice, and Madison Schools. Participating interns serve as teacher aides in East St Louis, Cahokia, and Granite City public schools.

During a three year period, over twenty-five teacher candidates were introduced to the culture of poverty and to the culture of African-American families via pre-participation training. This preparation was reinforced through a bus tour of the communities and some of the summer school sites. Extensive time was devoted to training the teacher candidates on Ruby Payne’s Framework for Understanding Poverty. Outside reading assignments included excerpts from Jonathon Kozol’s book, *Savage Inequalities*. A comparative analysis was conducted to ascertain the current state of the high-need schools. During their service as teacher aides, candidates became acquainted with students, teachers, administrators, and parents in the high-need schools. They witnessed the effects of poverty on students and families. They learned about the family and cultural dynamics and traditions of the African-American experience. Brown bag luncheons were held on campus as dissemination opportunities for teacher candidates to showcase their experiences for teacher education faculty and students, along with arts and science faculty.

Project Outcomes and Impacts

Prior to the project, the teacher preparation program at McKendree encountered difficulties in placing students in diverse settings and high-need schools. Even though the university is geographically near the St. Louis metropolitan area, the nearest high-needs schools are more than twenty miles away. Teacher candidates, many from small towns in the immediate area, were not comfortable traveling to these schools and their class schedules did not easily allow for the time that is necessary for travel and meaningful classroom experience. Thus teleconferencing appeared to provide a win-win learning opportunity.

Project partner classrooms participated in four or five web conferences each semester to discuss teaching methodologies and pedagogy with teacher candidates and McKendree education faculty. Arts and science faculty members were available for virtual visits to classrooms, as subject area experts. Candidates were able to benefit from reflections of their fellow peer observers, as well as from education and arts & science faculty expertise. Through these means, the desktop teleconferencing network provided a collaboration for improving preparation of new teachers for high-need schools, the enhancement of mentoring skills for practicing teachers and school administrators, and increased learning for K-12 students.

Great strides have been made in our teacher education-arts and sciences faculty collaboration. This collaboration includes faculty members from the psychology, business, and computer science departments who engaged in several projects including research. For example, psychology initiated a collaborative summer research project with teacher education colleagues on preparing teacher candidates to become culturally competent through an exploration of the theory of racial identity development. Members of the group researched topics on cultural differences and reported their findings to the group.

There have been changes in the mindset of faculty members working with this project. Faculty members have become more cognizant of looking for opportunities to assist these high-need schools however possible. For example, there was a need for developing hands-on mathematics curriculum in Granite City. Participating education faculty offered to help design and present professional development to the elementary and middle school teachers in the district. When an in-service teacher asks for help with math, science, or reading, we explore options to assist, including developing on-site projects involving our teacher candidate students.

The transformation the project caused started to unfold. Students from lily-white backgrounds who lived within a 20-mile radius of campus were being brought into direct contact with people who are very different ethnically and culturally—a dramatically new experience for all involved. On the whole, candidates responded well to this exposure and became interested in issues related to high-need populations. They developed a fuller understanding of the high-need school environment and its needs. After participating in web conferencing, teacher candidates began to request that their field placements and student teaching take place in the participating school districts. Teacher candidates started to apply and to be hired as teachers in the participating school districts as well. The literature is helpful in learning about high-need populations abstractly, but the learning experience is much more powerful through direct contact with high-need settings, either through actual or web-casting classroom visitations. The more our candidates experience, understand, and discuss high-need issues, the more comfortable they will become with high-need populations.

When data was first gathered through the project's web-based evaluation system, we found that at least 70-80% of the McKendree candidates who applied to work in high-need schools had had the prior experience of participating in project web conferences. The field placement requests suggested the importance of a three-dimensional experience in leading to the candidate decision to teach in a high-need school. Observing poverty and the needs of students first-hand clearly is important, along with learning in the campus classroom and having the web-conferencing experience. Even though the teacher candidates had the prior experience of seeing and talking with the classroom teachers through the web conferences, it was not until they were placed in the actual classroom that they truly understood what it is like to teach in a high-needs classroom. High-need schools are difficult for our candidates to visualize; yet physically going to a high-need school and housing projects really hit home. Our purpose was first to expose our candidates to high-need schools, and then to increase their desire to teach there. Students are now requesting placements in high-need schools, recognizing that they are out of their usual comfort zones in doing so. As a result we are also starting to see an increase in students wanting jobs in high-need schools. Clearly, the project has made a difference in how our students view high-need schools and high-need school children.

We believe our candidates are becoming more informed about teaching in high-need schools. They are less fearful about working in the high-need school environment and are becoming more motivated to do so. As well, our University faculty members are less fearful about visiting high-need schools. The reflection of one teacher candidate starkly portrays the candidate transformation through the project:

Watching the web conferences has changed my attitude completely in many ways. Before the class started, I was terrified and would have never considered teaching in a high needs school and now I recently interviewed to be a teacher's aide for the inner city school program. I was very much prejudiced and scared of the area before I saw the children in the classes. To my surprise, they were well-mannered and respectful to their teacher and were eager to learn. Now, with the teleconferencing and the upcoming field experience, I would now like to spend a few years teaching in an inner city high school to primarily help the kids and try to help them to develop for their upcoming careers and lives. I want to be the teacher for them that my high school teachers were for me, caring individuals that were always there for me.

Our partner schools appreciate our efforts and their staff members value what we are attempting to do. Anytime we partner with them, we have a positive experience. Cooperating teachers are non-threatening and eager to work with technology. They enjoy working with our teacher candidates and help significantly to mold candidates to be better teachers. These experiences affirm our candidates' reasons for going into teaching. Our partnering schools and their classroom teachers are becoming more technologically-aware as a result of being provided with desktop computers equipped with web cameras. The computer equipment follows the teacher for the duration of their involvement in the project. Teachers received training on equipment use, technology support, and a graduate tuition stipend (3 credit hours) or monetary stipend for each semester of participation. In addition, professional development opportunities have been available for these partner schools. An enthusiastic third grade teacher declared:

I have found that using the web-conferencing makes me more aware of my teaching style. The class is excited to know that university students are watching us and they always enjoy 'being on TV.' I hope that the students at McKendree will find it has given them some insight into life in a real classroom. Our school has the highest percentage of low-income students in Granite City. These students sometimes have needs that go beyond what a typical teacher might have to do. The students might come to understand that being a classroom teacher is more than opening a teacher's manual and having summers off.

Interviews with the teachers and administrators in the high-need schools where interns served as teacher aides resulted in a consistent pattern of praise for the level of assistance provided in the classroom by the interns. The teachers were encouraged to use the candidates for instructional purposes and all of them did so. Candidates presented full class instruction as well as small group instruction. Candidates participated in student assessment and instructional planning. The internship coordinator who conducted site visits spoke to the candidates and the teachers on a weekly basis and ensured that candidates were participating in meaningful instructional activities. At the conclusion of the internship experience, ten of the fourteen (71%) interns expressed interest in teaching in a high-need school, compared to eight (57%) who expressed this interest *before* the internship.

An additional highlight of the project involved the teachers and students in Belleville District 118 using the web conferencing equipment to talk with an astronaut while the astronaut was based at the international space station. Faculty also made a presentation about the Metro-East Teleconferencing and Teaching Enhancement Program at an international venue. McKendree University was invited by the ED-World Media Conference to present their model in Vienna, Austria, and as a result of the conference presentation, several international contacts were established.

Lessons Learned

This ACI *Center* partnership grant has enabled McKendree University to bring the high-need classroom into our methods and introductory teaching with technology courses via web conferencing. This application of technology has many far-reaching implications for our students and faculty. These glimpses into high-need classrooms have encouraged our education candidates to think broadly about education and actively seek employment upon graduation in high-needs schools.

Developing trust between McKendree faculty members and the LEA classroom teachers has been critical to the success of this project. Without mutual trust, it would be difficult to convince classroom teachers to allow such open and transparent access to their work.

Many of the lessons learned over the life of this project stem simply from getting the technology right. McKendree project staff members observed and sampled countless outside vendors and web-conferencing technologies before settling on an infrastructure to support this project in a way that was both effective and manageable. Faculty

members are confident that both the McKendree and LEA information technology departments are now fully capable of sustaining and maintaining the technology involved in managing web-conferencing in their classrooms.

Project Sustainability

On-going funding and continued willingness to participate remain constant challenges for the future of this project. So long as we have classroom teachers who are willing to provide access to their classrooms, we plan to continue this project.

The largest challenges associated with the project involved technical issues. Determining which type of web conferencing equipment would work best for two-way conversation presented an enormous issue. At first a basic web conferencing microphone and camera were used. This produced a very pixilated view and the sound quality was terrible. It was difficult if not impossible to hear children in the back of the classroom. The web camera was stationary which produced a limited viewing range. Two way communications were impossible to conduct. In addition, buffering issues were present. Coordinating two totally opposing technology departments was another challenge. Gaining the trust of the technology coordinators at all locations was another hurdle. Asking for the internet connection to be open and not always secure was difficult. Finally, a web conferencing technology was located that made possible acceptable two-way communication, excellent sound and picture quality and a camera which could be handled and moved remotely.

We would like to expand the reach of this project to include web conferences with classrooms located in other countries. The technology is now in place and the IT staffs of both our LEAs and the University are finally well established to manage the system. This will become a focus for the project next phase of development.

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: North Central College, *by Rebecca Clemente and Maureen Kincaid*

Introduction

North Central College, founded in 1861, is an independent, comprehensive college of the liberal arts and sciences affiliated with The United Methodist Church. The college offers Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees to its undergraduate students and Master of Science, Master of Business Administration, Masters of Arts, and Master of Leadership Studies to its graduate students. Current enrollment is approximately 2500 students, including more than 2200 undergraduates, mostly of traditional age (18-24-year-olds). Since 1916, teacher preparation has been part of North Central College.

The education department offers programs to prepare elementary, secondary (English, math, science [designations in biology, chemistry, and physics], and social science [designation history]), and K-12 (art, foreign language, music, and physical education) teachers. In addition, Masters of Arts degrees are offered in educational leadership and administration and curriculum and instruction. The education leadership and administration program prepares students for Type 75 certification (i.e., principal). The curriculum and instruction program allows graduate students to specialize in pedagogy, teacher leadership, mathematics, or reading teacher strands. The department has nine full-time and two half-time faculty members in addition to a large contingent of part-time faculty members who supervise and teach on a per-course basis. The department has two placement coordinators and two support staff. There are 347 undergraduate students, 152 in elementary education and 194 in secondary education. The currently enrollment of graduate students is 108.

East Aurora High School, Cowherd Middle School, and Oak Park Elementary, in Aurora East school district 131; and North Lawndale College Preparatory High School and Johnson Elementary School, in Chicago S.D. 299, were our original school partners. These schools have long-term relationships with North Central College through the Junior/Senior Scholars program (college readiness program established in 1989 for students K-12). The district 131 elementary school partner is 62% low-income and 94% Hispanic. The middle school is 80% Hispanic, 14% Black and 76% low-income. Students struggle to meet or exceed ISAT standards (47% at the elementary school and 62% at the middle school). Only one-quarter of the district's high school students meet or exceed state standards on the PSAT and just under one-half (46%) are low-income. Johnson School and North Lawndale Charter High School in the Chicago Public School District are 90% low-income. Only 14% of the high school students meet or exceed PSAT standards.

Project Overview

The Junior/Senior Scholars: Pipeline to Urban Teaching project is a teacher preparation model that allows students to gain knowledge, skills, and teaching experiences in high-need schools. It consists of integrated experiences, on campus and in the field, during North Central's teacher education program. Students are involved early and encouraged to participate in ongoing experiences with students in high-need schools to increase their probability of electing to teach in high-need schools.

The project model goals:

1. Provide knowledge, experiences and support to students as they gain understanding and skills for teaching in high-need schools.
2. Provide support to cooperating teachers, principals, and regional coordinators in high-need schools.
3. Strengthen the supportive structures in high-need schools to retain highly-qualified teachers.
4. Increase the numbers of highly qualified teachers in high-need schools.

The main Pipeline to Urban Teaching curricular entry point is through EDN 100 *Introduction to Education* which requires all students to gain their first field experience (a minimum of ten hours) through participating in the Junior/Senior Scholars tutoring program. Students can elect to work with elementary, middle, or high school students from high-need schools during the term of this course. Over the course of the project, approximately 570 students in EDN 100 have accrued 6910 hours in tutoring students in grades K-12 from our partner schools.

The department has systematically infused content throughout its curriculum to enable students to develop knowledge and skills for teaching in high-need schools. Both the elementary (EDN 240) and secondary (EDN 242) education program classroom management courses were increased from 2 credit hours to 3 credit hours and a significant amount of content related to teaching in high-need schools was added to both courses. Content addressing high-need issues was also infused into the department's capstone course, EDN 475, which is required for all elementary and secondary education program completers. Finally, content that addresses working with English Language Learners was infused in the Elementary Language Arts Methods course (EDN 360), including a field experience component in three models of ELL education: sheltered, bilingual, and all Spanish at Cowerd Middle School in Aurora and Pioneer Elementary School in West Chicago. Students observe ways in which teachers work with ELL students and write about their observations.

An intense eight-week summer internship was developed modeled after North Central's Junior/Senior Scholars Comprehensive College Readiness Program which provides year around programming in two high-need school communities and includes a five week summer academic camp. The internship takes learning from the classroom to the real world and increases the opportunity to learn by doing while providing a service to meet a real community need. The pre-service candidate interns implement the summer camp, acting as tutors and mentors. Pre-service candidates learn through active learning strategies to collaborate with cohorts, faculty and the community as their understanding of culturally responsive teaching and effective instruction evolves. Objectives and tasks for intern learning:

- Design lesson plans.
- Implement educational best practices to narrow the achievement gap.
- Monitor, record, and report student progress
- Communicate effectively with students, parents, colleagues, administrators and school personnel.
- Create a safe and nurturing environment for diverse youth to grow academically, socially and emotionally.
- Understand critical issues in urban education.
- Gain knowledge and appreciation for diversity and multiculturalism
- Develop service, activism and leadership skills
- Connect experiential learning with traditional coursework
- Share collective learning with others

Through this initiative arts and sciences faculty were encouraged to collaborate to strengthen teacher preparation. This led to development of interdisciplinary courses that focus on such critical issues as social justice and leadership and topics in subject matter like inquiry in science.

In addition, we developed programming throughout the academic year to build awareness and to invite students to consider the work of teaching in high-need schools. During the last three intersession terms we have sponsored one and three-week field experiences (called verandahs at North Central). We have taken students into schools and community entities (community centers, restaurants, city government, and homeless shelters) to broaden their understanding of the work each contributes to the betterment of students and their families.

We created a network of role models and conversation about teaching in high-need schools by bringing in speakers, Clayton Mohammad (Director of Community Relations, East Aurora School District), Brunell Donald, Public Defender, who attended Johnson Elementary (one of our partner schools), Esmé Raji Codell (*Educating Esmé*), Erin Gruwell (*Freedom Writers*), and tapped into campus faculty who research and talk about issues of race and social class including Dr. Richard Guzman and Dr. Stephen Caliendo. We had alumni dinners with alumni who teach in high-need schools who met with groups of students over dinner. This has been a wonderful way for our preservice teachers to grow vision and inspiration and gain some firsthand knowledge of efforts and successes in teaching and learning in high-need schools.

Project Outcomes and Impact

The EDN100 course represents for many (69%), the first experience working directly with children and for almost all (85%), working in a high-need school. Those who reported working previously with children had participated in summer camps or high school tutoring programs, but not in an experience as on-going and as classroom-based as this one. Survey and focus group data from EDN 100 reveal that the experience accomplishes two primary themes: 1) it serves to expose previously unaware students to the high-need school environment and the children it serves and 2) it creates and builds a sense of confidence and motivation for students' teaching skills and disposition to the career in general.

Introducing practical, hands-on experiences into the college curricula early in undergraduates' experiences is an essential strategy in building motivation and a sense of confidence in one's chosen major and career pathway. The EDN 100 course appears to be a critical step in this strategy. For example, student exit surveys suggest a heightened sense of confidence in their decision to pursue a teaching career. More than half of the student comments reflected thoughts such as this student: "When I first started school I was not sure if I wanted to be a teacher, the experience has helped me to find my desire of a major in education." Others came into the experience sure of their major, and felt confirmed by the experience. "It definitely assured me that I made the correct choice in choosing a major in education and I look forward to getting more involved." Another student added, "I feel that this course was just the beginning of a wonderful experience in teaching. I received plenty of useful and helpful information about teaching. I can't wait to begin working in this field." One College of DuPage transfer student spoke highly of the impact of her experience working with the Jr/Sr Scholars program, noting: "I would have never been able to set this (experience) up on my own, but here, it was all ready for me and it really helped me figure out what I want to do." On the other hand, and for just a few students (3%), the experience brought the realization that they did not want to pursue a teaching career: "I don't really want to teach anymore, but at least now I know." Several others, while still highly interested in teaching, learned that they did not like working with younger children and instead, would focus their future preferences on middle or high school levels. "I realized that junior high kids are not the type of students I can handle." Similarly, another student said, "I knew I wanted to be a high school teacher after this experience because I lack patience with younger kids."

Secondly, the other emerging theme from the EDN100 student surveys deals with students' growth in understanding the high-need school environment. For some, the experience dispelled myths about their safety in schools, or for others, it broadened their understanding of the needs of diverse cultures within a school. According to one student, "It helped me see what was truly involved in teaching in high risk areas and students." Another added, "It helped me to learn how to react to students of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, I'm more comfortable with these differences now."

With growing classes of EDN 100 students engaging with students in high-needs schools came a commitment to and an expansion to securing placements in high-need schools for the twenty-hour field experiences (i.e., math, science, and social studies) (see table below). A significant partnership has been developed with Hermes Elementary, East

Aurora School District, including placement of increased numbers of students in 20 hour field experiences, participation of graduate students in the education leadership and administration program in field experience projects, and hiring of a 2008 graduate.

As we revised our curriculum and instruction master's program we created a new course, Teaching Diverse Students. This is now among the core requirements. We felt strongly that as we worked on improving our undergraduate curriculum we needed to address existing inservice teachers on issues of diversity. This course was first taught winter 2009.

Table 1. High-need placements in math, science, and social studies methods – each a twenty hour field experience (number in high-need schools/total in course)			
Academic year	Math	Science	Social Studies
2005-2006	5/68 7.4%	2/74 3.7%	15/69 21.7%
2006-2007	3/79 4.8%	9/66 13.6%	9/67 13.4%
2007-2008	12/70 17%	26/65 40%	26/67 37.3%
2008-2009	5/61 8%	16/62 26%	16/62 26%
2009-2010	3/62 5%	7/62 12%	6/63 11%
2010-2011	5/20 (fall only) 20%	11/22 (fall only) 50%	11/23 (fall only) 48%

Table 2. High-need placements in elementary language arts and reading methods courses– each a forty hour field experience (number in high-need schools/total in course)		
Academic year	Language Arts (fall and winter term)	Reading (winter and spring term)
2005-2006	3/65 4.6%	3/60 5%
2006-2007	7/59 11.9%	5/59 8.5%
2007-2008	1/53 1.9%	2/51 3.9%
2008-2009	0%	0%
2009-2010	0%	0%

Table 3. High-need placements in secondary methods courses– each a fifty hour field experience (number in high-need schools/total in course)		
Academic year	General methods(fall and spring term)	High school methods (winter term)
2005-2006	5/87 5.7%	3/70 4.3%
2006-2007	3/73 4.1%	3/81 3.7%
2007-2008	10/82 12.2%	3/76 3.9%
2008-2009	2/52 4%	8/59 14%
2009-2010	2/90 2%	3/75 4%

Table 4. Student teachers in high-need schools		
2005-2006	9/137	6.6%
2006-2007	12/129	8.5%
2007-2008	13/144	9%
2008-2009	5/112	4%
2009-2010	12/116	10%

Since the inception of the project two new full-time faculty members have been added to the department, both with extensive experience in working in high-poverty schools and low-income neighborhoods. The experience these faculty brought to the department allowed the department to work more effectively with administration and teachers in high-need schools. Their experience also gave them critical insights for supervising our preservice students in high-need placements and engaging the students in important conversations about teaching in high-need schools.

The project's more intensive, summer-long high-needs schools internship appears to provide an equally positive but yet more *influential* experience for the college students/education majors in the program. 99% (all but one) of the interns report a better understanding of the high-need school setting after their internship experience, with 64% saying they now have a MUCH better understanding. Nearly that same amount (65%) of the interns intends to work in high-need schools upon graduation, and while many come into the internship having already made that intention known, over **20%** report changing their preferences due to the internship experience.

The intensity and rigor of the internship can be credited with making significant impact upon the college students' skills and confidence level. Most cited growth in putting classroom theory into practice, particularly after having responsibility for a "real" classroom of children, complete with lesson planning, assessment, and classroom management responsibilities. One campus administrator confirmed this impact, saying, "I can always tell which of our (education) majors have been a part of the high-need schools internship experience. They are much better prepared and confident once they begin their student teaching, no matter where we place them." Interns report the most growth in developing rapport with students and in managing classroom discipline.

Work in high-need schools helped education faculty garner support for the reading endorsement developed for elementary educators almost four years ago. Administrators in high-need schools continue to clamor for teachers with strong backgrounds in reading and alumni continue to share the importance of that work for their effectiveness in classrooms with a broad spectrum of abilities.

The project also fuelled our collaboration with Arts and Science faculty. This was primarily through the development of a Secondary Education Liaison Committee. This committee consists of a departmental representative from each of our secondary education minors. The primary work of this group is work around the State standards. This group meets three times a year discussing standards, changes to and expectations of program review, and sharing ideas of how to best educate preservice teachers. The department sponsored an assessment workshop for those programs considering portfolio assessment.

Interdisciplinary courses also grew out of arts and sciences and education faculty collaboration. For example, to build interest and awareness of communities in struggle, an interdisciplinary course was developed, Teaching in and Learning from Underserved Communities by Drs. Rebecca Clemente, education, and Jennifer Jackson, English. This is a

course for first-year students and is team taught. First-year students grapple with the issues and complexity of social justice, social class, race, and the concepts of community and citizenship.

Finally, the Science and Math Learning Collaborative (SMLC) grew out of our initial work with high-need schools. The SMLC was implemented two years ago with collaboration among the sciences and education faculty to explore the impact of gender equity professional development on middle school instruction and its subsequent effect on girls' persistence in STEM fields. Faculty participating in this endeavor is working closely with high-needs schools and math and science classroom teachers to complete and present action research that looks at gender equity from a neurological perspective, as well as a sociological and social/ emotional perspective.

Implications and Lessons Learned

It is critical for there to be full department participation in the direction and implications of the grant from the beginning. This is also true of forging school partnerships. Originally, only a small number of department members were involved. This caused increasing stress when the goals of the *Center* partnership project needed to be moved forward to realize curricular transformation in the department and at the college level.

Forging relationships with Arts and Science, when these alliances had been individual or nonexistent, takes time to develop. Perceptions and expectations about our work and the potential of collaborative work need to be transparent and open.

The choice of partner schools makes a difference. Existing relationships may not be suited to the goals of the project. School leadership fluctuates. Where leadership changed (as has happened in two of our schools) or where there was an inability of school leaders to take full opportunity of the financial and human resources made available, then there was little movement toward professional development or support for teachers. Where school leadership was strong and stable, positive experiences occurred that benefited the curriculum, students, and teachers. Taking time with LEA building leadership is critically necessary to ensure access to and reciprocity with administrators and inservice teachers. Similarly, school principals indicate that they are only willing to invest key teacher, staff and classroom instructional time to this program because they have seen evidence of its quality. Establishing that trust and confidence has occurred over time via consistent and well-prepared college students and coordinators.

Faculty members have to be educated just like candidates. Through field trips to partnering schools, faculty at North Central College learned to be more aware of the needs of the high-needs schools in the communities served by their college. However, faculty interviews also suggest they are now aware of the "richness of the opportunities there and the tremendous opportunity for us to connect our coursework and our clinical work for our undergraduates." Faculty members believe that the only way these connections have been facilitated is through collaboration and conversation. Building relationships with area administrators has been critical in this process.

Faculty members have also learned that changing attitudes and dispelling myths about working in high-need schools must be integrated throughout the pre-service curricula. Early practical opportunities serve to build confidence and confirm, and in some cases, change preferences or career choices.

It is important as the project unfolds to strategically plan for more involvement of department and campus faculty. Transformation needs a broader buy-in from members of a department so that curriculum transformation is purposeful and designed well. It is also important to use part of the project money to hire someone to enter data needed by the evaluators. When a program is large, such as ours, the data generated mounts up and there is a need for it to be submitted on a continuous basis.

On-going Challenges and Future Plans

Initially we were hoping that students would apply to be part of the Pipeline to Urban teaching program. While a number of students were interested, and students who received money through scholarships were required to participate, fewer than five students formally applied. Nevertheless, more than 20 students each term elected to continue their work in high-need schools through the Junior/ Senior Scholars Program where they provided leadership for the various tutoring and mentoring program components and placements in high-need schools increased. Our focus turned to how to engage more students in high-needs schools clinical work and how to embed critical knowledge and skills in all coursework. Secondary education presents another range of challenges, the size of our program and specificity of students' majors. In this program, students participate in a middle school and high school placement (those working towards special certificates also have an elementary experience). Since students are placed based on their discipline, finding high-needs and even diverse placements has been difficult. As shown in the previous table, the department has had more success in finding placements in middle schools, as well as elementary schools.

The department is interested in pursuing the development of courses in the areas of English Language Learning and special education. We have begun to work with the Dean to determine the feasibility of adding the coursework for the English Language Learner endorsement. While we do not have the resources to add a degree program in special education, the addition of courses in special education addressing characteristics, methods and assessment would strengthen our candidates' knowledge and skills and could lead to a provisional certificate in special education. Four years ago the department added courses for the reading endorsement for elementary education candidates. Expanding this coursework for secondary education candidates would strengthen their credentials. The addition of coursework in all three of these areas would strengthen the candidacy of students who want to teach in high need schools.

Finally, in spring term, the department will present a proposal to the Academic Program and Policies Committee for a diverse practicum that can be offered each December term. This practicum experience would allow students to travel to and from Chicago for a practicum experience, which is typically difficult to do during the regular term due to conflicts with other courses. Offering this practicum during D-term would allow students to spend time in high need schools on a daily basis for three weeks.

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: Quincy University, *by Ann K. Behrens*

Introduction

Quincy University is a private co-educational liberal arts university affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church and the Franciscan Friars. Founded in 1860, the University is home to 1270 students and offers 34 major areas of study and seven pre-professional programs. The faculty consists of 49 full-time and 67 part-time members with a student/faculty ratio of 12:1 and an average class size of 20.

The School of Education prepares approximately 50 undergraduate teacher candidates each year on the main campus. The majority of these students are elementary education majors, but degrees are also offered in special education, physical education, and secondary specializations in history, biology, English, music, and math education. Additional degrees are offered in sports management and sign language interpreting. Endorsements available to students include Reading, Middle School, Special Education, Bilingual and ESL. Most undergraduate teacher candidates are full-time, residential students. Quincy University has other preparation tracks for non-traditional programs, but these have not adopted the professional development school model of teacher preparation which grew out of the Quincy teacher quality enhancement project. At the graduate level, the Master of Science in Education degree offers concentrations in alternative certification, curriculum and instruction, leadership, reading education, school administration, special education, teaching certification, and counseling.

Thirteen full time faculty and staff and twenty-two part-time faculty and adjunct instructors comprise the School of Education on the main campus. In addition, four full-time arts and science faculty members teach methods courses to upper level students. All full-time faculty members hold doctoral degrees.

Quincy Public Schools is a K-12 district with approximately 6,400 students. The low-income rate for the district is 52.7% and the mobility rate is 14.9%. Of the ten schools in the district, four elementary schools, the intermediate school, the junior high and the high school have participated with QU in this collaboration. One elementary school partner was closed last year as a cost-saving measure. The district failed to make AYP under the No Child Left Behind guidelines for the last two years and is Academic Early Warning Status. Two of the elementary schools have been recognized as Blue Ribbon schools for outstanding achievement with high-risk students. Two parochial elementary schools and Quincy Notre Dame High School, a private Catholic high school with 500 students, are also currently involved in this partnership.

Project Overview

The primary goal of Quincy University's project in participating in the ACI Teacher Quality Enhancement program grant was to transform the University's undergraduate teacher preparation program into a professional development school (PDS) model of instructional delivery. The PDS model emphasizes collaboration between schools and universities and addresses four goals: improvement of student learning, teacher preparation, professional development, and research and inquiry into improved practice (Teitel, 2008). During the term of the grant, this initiative was known as the Collaborative Academy for Teacher Training (CATT). Increased collaboration between the university and K-12 practitioners was an additional goal. Improving the communication and collaboration between education and arts and science faculty members was a third objective.

As a result of adopting the PDS model, teacher candidates are introduced to K-12 classrooms as early as their freshman year. Through a variety of experiences such as observation, mentoring, tutoring, small and large group instruction, and even recess supervision, teacher candidates interact with K-12 students throughout most of their teacher preparation courses.

They are immersed in authentic experiences in K-12 classrooms beginning with their first course in education. Freshman and sophomore students, before even being admitted to the teacher education program, enroll in four pre-professional courses – Foundations of Education, Educational Psychology, Media and Technology in Education, and Survey of the Exceptional Child. By the time students complete these four courses, they have had experiences in classrooms K-12. Exposure to all levels early in their preparation allows teacher candidates to see that good instructional techniques transcend a particular grade level. As an example, a common misconception is that young students are not capable of higher-level thinking. Yet, having candidates observe classrooms in which higher-order thinking is stressed not only convinces them that it is possible, but also gives them a framework from which to build when they are developing their own lessons. The K-12 exposure also helps candidates realize that problems exist with students of all ages, and that the relationship teachers build with those students is a key component to helping them learn.

The first meeting of every course is on-campus. During this session students are required to sign confidentiality agreements. Issues of transportation, parking, school security measures, university ID requirements, professional dress, and other logistical situations are addressed. Many instructors have the site coordinator for the building attend this first meeting and discuss the building protocol and site-specific expectations.

Course instructors have a great deal of flexibility in determining the structure of their classes. Most courses meet once a week, but several have chosen to meet twice weekly. A number of methods courses use two or three partner schools throughout the semester so that teacher candidates can have exposure to multiple grade levels. The public schools in the city are organized in a K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12 grade format. A secondary education major should have experiences in grades 6-12, since that is the grade span for certification in the state. Elementary majors are certified for grades K-9. Limiting their experiences to one segment of that grade range would be a disservice to the candidates. Other Quincy instructors work in parochial schools which operate on a K-8, 9-12 design.

Following the content presentation, the teacher candidates disperse to their assigned classrooms to interact with students or to observe. During this time the instructor circulates among the rooms to monitor the candidates, to make notes on their performance, and to formulate questions for the discussion period that follows. Instructors also use other professionals in the building. As an example, the head of counseling at the junior high recently spoke to the middle school methods class about motivating the reluctant learner. The principal addressed the same class about her expectations of a beginning teacher and briefly outlined the evaluation process used in the district.

As a result of the feedback surveys administered each year, a new activity was introduced designed to give teacher candidates an additional opportunity to interact with the parents of the K-12 students. Five methods courses (math, language arts, science, special education, and physical education) held family curriculum nights at the middle school and a parochial elementary school. These joint ventures were planned and executed by the teacher candidates, with assistance from their methods instructors and the site coordinators in the various buildings. The curriculum nights were activity-oriented and designed to have students and their parents interact together. An added benefit was that parents became more aware of the CATT program within their own child's school. At the intermediate school sessions, the building principal did an evaluation of each teacher candidate's presentation which he shared with the candidate following the session. Not only was that feedback helpful to the candidates, it also gave the principal an opportunity to view prospective future teachers.

Because of the earlier exposure to working in classrooms, teacher candidates were better prepared when they enrolled in their field experience courses. As a result, the field placement coordinator was able to revise the requirements for each of three placements and increase the expectations for all candidates. Clinical placements were also redesigned; student teachers now do two eight-week placements at different grade levels within their area of certification.

Another opportunity available to teacher candidates involves off-site visits to more diverse settings. Quincy is a geographically isolated suburban/rural district with limited ethnic and religious diversity. One-day trips for a full day of observation in small rural settings with a high number of English Language Learners or to inner-city urban schools gives teacher candidates a glimpse of the varied issues they may face as teachers. Quincy University is currently working to expand these opportunities into more extended sessions offered during the summer and throughout the school year. A newly upgraded distance learning room, for example, offers great potential for expanding the experiences for candidates.

Teacher candidates are required to attend parent conferences and IEP meetings, especially if the candidate has been mentoring or tutoring the student. Insights into working with parents, delivering both good and bad news, and developing plans to deal with problems are invaluable to future teachers.

Project Outcomes and Impacts

The School of Education has completely transformed its method of instructional delivery as a result of the project-funded CATT initiative. Faculty now collaborate with one another in planning appropriate activities for courses, in finding ways to address content coverage with reduced contact time with candidates, and in working with K-12 teachers to plan syllabi, schedule classroom interactions, and evaluate the courses. One important outgrowth of this project has been the renewed appreciation and understanding the university and school partners have for the role that each plays in the development of strong teacher candidates. University instructors value the insights of the practitioners and the K-12 teachers have benefited from learning about best practices identified through research.

Action research projects have strengthened the collaboration between arts and sciences faculty and education faculty. As a result of these projects, secondary methods syllabi have been revised, creating a common set of essential questions and goals for each of the courses. Evaluation of student teachers has been strengthened by the revision of both the disposition and professional teaching standards assessment tools. Training for university and cooperating teachers has been redesigned to ensure more consistent marking of the assessments.

One significant innovative practice has been the introduction of a new lesson plan format. Built into this lesson plan are places to specifically delineate strategies for differentiation of instruction. The use of the backwards design process for developing unit plans is now a university expectation. Both of these initiatives resulted from discussions between the K-12 collaborating and cooperating teachers and the university supervisors. This design process has supported the work of the partner district in moving to a professional learning community by helping teacher candidates and their collaborating teachers identify the big ideas and essential questions which are the foundation of this movement.

Expectations for the more advanced field experience have increased to reflect the teacher candidates' earlier experiences in the classroom. They interact with students and teach lessons much sooner than under the traditional course delivery model. The field experience coordinator works closely with university instructors to provide experiences which support course content and, whenever possible, to keep teacher candidates working with the same students and teachers for both the coursework and the field experience activities.

Teacher candidates report feeling well-prepared to enter the classroom as first-year teachers and their teaching peers describe them as confident and better-prepared than other first-year teachers. Increasing numbers of teacher candidates have indicated a willingness to consider teaching in high-needs schools as a result of their earlier exposure to at-risk students.

Students in most partner schools are meeting AYP and scores continue to improve over time. While the CATT model cannot claim full responsibility for this success, certainly the presence of additional help in the classroom, focused

collaboration between the university and partner schools, and opportunities for shared professional development have benefited the students involved. This is especially important in light of the reductions in support personnel and teaching positions that have occurred recently.

The CATT collaboration also depends on the resources of the teachers and administrators of the Quincy Public Schools (QPS). This partnership is invaluable in the implementation and the continuation of this instructional delivery model. QPS not only provides facilities in each of the schools, but the teachers and administrators fully support the effort to produce future teachers better prepared to teach in high needs schools. Central office administrators in the school district give professional development credit to teachers who assist in this endeavor. One exciting professional development opportunity for our teacher candidates has been an invitation for them to attend all of the mentoring presentations sponsored for first and second-year teachers in the partner district.

John Wood Community College is also a collaborative partner in the CATT initiative. As the CATT format evolved at Quincy University, a new articulation agreement was developed between the departments of education at the two institutions. In the fall of 2007, John Wood Community College taught its Foundation of Education course using the CATT model.

Lessons Learned

The most important lesson learned from this initiative is that experience in the field, when tied directly to the content of coursework, is a powerful combination which helps teacher candidates see the connection between theory and practice and the direct implications of their knowledge and what their students learn. The professional development school model is growing rapidly throughout the country as a preferred method of preparation of teacher candidates.

The importance of communication throughout the partnership cannot be overstated. At every level, this is the key to success--instructors to collaborating teachers, site coordinators to university personnel, teacher candidates to classroom teachers. All channels of communication must operate openly and with a spirit of trust. When this element is present, problems are recognized and addressed before they escalate. Procedures and processes to ensure that communication lines remain open are very important.

Formalizing the partnership has been an important step to ensure sustainability of the model. Central office administrators and the dean of the School of Education are members of the project steering committee. Their project commitment, as evidenced through a memorandum of understanding outlining the basic elements of the partnership, has strengthened partner relationships and lends credibility to the efforts of all involved.

Building support for the model by including all stakeholders in the planning process was an important element in the successful implementation of CATT. Nearly a year was spent dreaming and visiting other schools using this model before actual implementation was attempted. Dramatic shifts in the plans occurred because of good ideas presented by community members, parents, teacher candidates, and business representatives.

Sustainability

The biggest challenge has been to maintain the enthusiasm and commitment over time. As individuals become comfortable in a situation, sometimes the attention to detail can slip as procedures become routine and taken for granted. Maintaining close relationships with all of the partners must remain a priority and courses must be continually examined for ways to improve and draw on the strengths of the delivery model. In addition, according to a recent study of the PDS model, "Sustainability is an issue in many PDS's when there are changes in leadership" (Walmsley, Bufkin, & Rule, 2009, p. 75). Teacher and administrative turnover at both the K-12 and University levels means that the commitment to the partnership must be re-examined and renewed every year. Regularly scheduled steering committee meetings address these concerns on a yearly basis.

Across Illinois, the issue of school funding is a problem for all school districts. Quincy Public Schools face severe financial challenges and many teaching and administrative positions have been eliminated in the last few years. This has created a greater workload and additional stress for the teachers remaining. The increasing expectations of No Child Left Behind to meet AYP create additional pressure. In some schools these factors have resulted in fewer teachers willing to take on the additional responsibilities of being a collaborating teacher. Another funding issue has been payment for the school-based site coordinators. Originally picked up by the grant, these small stipends were then absorbed by the school districts. This year the payments were one of the cost-saving cuts implemented by the school district, and the School of Education has assumed responsibility for the stipends. Calling it "program suicide," Schussler (2006) warned PDS partners of the dangers of adding to teachers' responsibilities without taking away other responsibilities. Finding multiple ways to reward teachers for their participation as PDS partners is an important goal which much be addressed immediately if the partnership is to remain viable.

Future plans include finding ways to expose our teacher candidates to even more diverse settings, whether through distance learning or through extended internships in the summer or throughout the school year. Increasing the use of technology as a tool of instruction for university instructors, collaborating teachers, and teacher candidates is another goal.

Acknowledging that any long-term partnership must evolve and change in order to grow, the partners have committed to the use of shared inquiry to improve practice. Despite the challenges of diminishing resources, changing leadership, and increasing standards of accountability, the collaboration between professionals is recognized as a powerful tool to address the problems in teaching and learning faced by K-12 and university instructors and students. To fulfill the PDS mission, partners must "share responsibility for professional and children's learning and commit and reallocate their resources to this new setting and new type of work" (Trachtman, 2007, p. 198). The PDS partnership between Quincy University and its public and parochial school partners is committed to fulfilling this mission.

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ACI Member Partnership Case Studies: University of St. Francis, by Barbara S. Ingold and John Gambro

Introduction

Established in 1920, the University of St. Francis (USF) is a Catholic, Franciscan institution offering undergraduate and graduate programs. Comprehensive and coeducational, the university serves approximately 1,400 students at its main campus in Joliet, Illinois, and more than 2,100 students at off-campus sites throughout the country. USF adopted university status in 1998, following a merger with the Saint Joseph College of Nursing. The University of St. Francis offers 41 undergraduate and 17 graduate programs housed in five colleges (Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Nursing and Allied Health, and Professional Studies) with 88 full-time and 260 part-time teaching faculty members and 260 part-time teaching faculty members. USF is a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education accredited institution.

The mission of the College of Education (COE) is to prepare competent and caring educators who *understand students, serve the community and develop professionally* in order to become ethical decision-makers and leaders. Serving approximately 700 students, the College prepares undergraduate and graduate candidates for initial teacher certification in elementary, secondary (English, math, science, biology, social science: history), and special education. COE also offers advanced major programs - Teaching and Learning Program, Educational Leadership Program, and Reading Specialist Program – leading to the master of science degree and related certification when applicable.

Living its motto, “Students Today, Learners for Life,” Joliet Public Schools District 86 seeks to empower students to become lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and caring members of their communities. In partnership with parents and the community the district aims to create a safe and positive environment for all students to learn and develop to their greatest potential. These are lofty goals, indeed, when one considers that the district serves over 10,000 students (pre-school through grade 8) in one early childhood center, 15 elementary schools, and four junior high schools, and that low-income families make up more than 65% of the student population. The ethnically diverse student population is 47% Hispanic, 31% African-American, 17% Caucasian and 5% multi-racial.

Project Overview

What became the USF Teacher Quality Enhancement Program (TQE-P) project took shape with creation of the Joliet Professional Development School Partnership (JPDSP), established during the 2003-2004 academic year as a result of converging needs. The district administration and Farragut Elementary, the latter placed on the Illinois State Watch List as it struggled to meet the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), are located just one block from the USF main campus. In keeping with TQE-P goals, COE felt its teacher education programs would be greatly enhanced by providing teacher candidates with enriching experiences in urban high-need schools consistent with the mission of COE and the university. A chance conversation between the USF president and the District 86 superintendent set in motion events leading to the launch of JPDSP a year later.

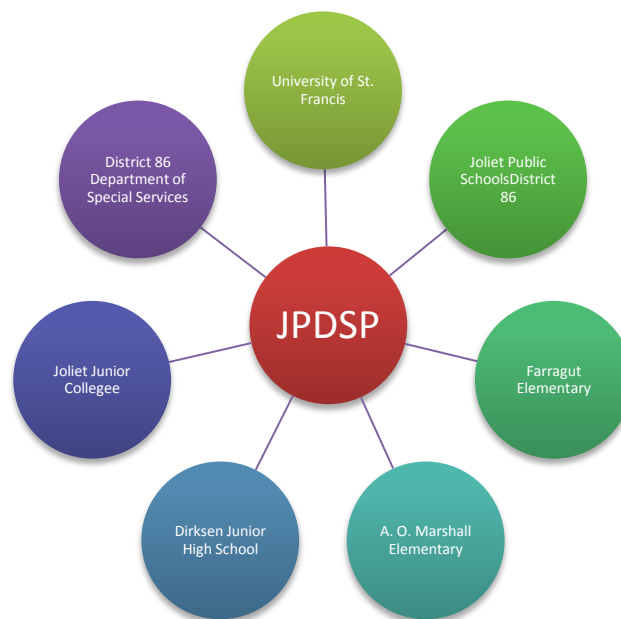
An innovation being tried in many states to close the achievement gap, professional development schools (PDS) are partnerships between professional education programs and preK-12 schools. They require significant commitment on the part of each partner, in part because they run against the grain of the way teacher education programs are traditionally structured as largely university-driven with little feedback or input from local schools. The PDS responds to the criticism that traditional teacher preparation suffers from a gap between theory learned at the university and practical applications in elementary school settings. Implementation of the PDS model requires a core change in teacher education philosophy. A PDS challenges partners to view teacher preparation collaboratively, similarly, perhaps, to this adaptation of an old African proverb, “It takes a village to train a teacher. It takes the whole educational community to prepare our effective teachers for the twenty-first century” (Chance, 2000, preface).

In addition to improving teacher education programs, PDSs are expected to lead to greater student learning due to parallel university/school collaborative inquiry and research PDS partners undertake to determine the most effective instructional practices that meet the needs of their students. Teitel (2003) asserts that PDSs further support student learning because they also collaborate in offering programs and services of social workers and mentors. He points out the wider community benefit a PDS often provides such as access to university facilities, museums, and labs.

Shared decision making, mutual commitment, and trust among partners form the core PDS foundation, a set of relationships built painstakingly over time. At the end of the first year of the partnership, the JPDSP leadership team which had been meeting monthly held a strategic planning session to reflect on the successes of year one and the challenges to be addressed and to develop a vision for the future. The team focused on the NCATE PDS standards as a guide for JPDSP strategic planning. During the session the JPDSP mission and vision were drafted, goals were set, and a strategic plan was prepared. A second District 86 school, A. O. Marshall, was invited to join JPDSP. At this stage, the JPDSP was selected as the USF project in partnership with the Associated Colleges of Illinois' *Center for Success in High-Need Schools*, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Enhancement-Partnership Program. Since 2004, the JPDSP has grown to include partnerships with four District 86 schools, the district's Department of Special Services, and Joliet Junior College.

JPDSP Mission and Goals

The JPDSP mission is to enhance collaboratively the professional preparation of teacher candidates and to promote continuous exemplary professional development of all JPDSP constituents. JPDSP seeks to improve student achievement through research-based practices carried out in an innovative teaching and learning environment in a diverse urban setting. The goals of the JPDSP are expressed in the four cornerstones of the partnership: Professional Development, Teacher Candidate Preparation, Action Research and Student Achievement.





The *Professional Development* cornerstone is intended to provide high quality teachers for high-need schools through continuing professional development of practicing educators to support improved student achievement. Through this cornerstone a community of learning has been established which calls on faculty, administrators, staff, and students at all partner institutions to recognize the value both of learning from each other and learning together. Reciprocal professional development is a prominent feature of this cornerstone as well as significant enhancement of professional development libraries and in-service teacher classrooms at the partner campuses.

The *Teacher Candidate Preparation* cornerstone is designed to enrich the ranks of high quality teachers for high-need schools with teachers well prepared to support improved student achievement. Improving teacher preparation through extensive collaboration, including intensive, closely supervised field experiences, the alignment of district and university curriculum, and the use of state of the art technology, are key elements of this cornerstone. Through the co-teaching field experience model teacher candidates become recognized members of the school educational team and are treated like staff members. In this field experience model, teacher candidates and cooperating teachers work together as a team with a common goal--to enhance student learning and development.

The *Action Research* cornerstone exists to foster inquiry-based research designed to improve teaching practices and student learning. The action research process includes literature review, data gathering and analysis, and data application to improve curriculum and instruction within the classroom. Finally, the purpose of the *Student Achievement* cornerstone is to focus efforts to improve student achievement at our partner schools on the first three goals and to provide a wide array of services that support the holistic development of students physically, socially, emotionally, and academically. In adopting an “educating the whole child” approach, JPDS reflects COE’s conceptual framework. In order to fulfill this goal, various areas within USF have engaged the JPDS mission, including the College of Nursing and Allied Health, the social work department, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the recreation, sport and tourism management department.



The *Student Achievement* cornerstone endeavors to improve student achievement at our partner schools through the first three goals as well as by providing a wide array of services to support the holistic development of students physically, socially, emotionally, and academically. The JPDS reflects the College of Education’s conceptual framework by adopting an “educating the whole child” approach. In order to address this goal, various areas within the University have become involved in this mission including USF’s College of Nursing and Allied Health, the Social Work department, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Recreation, Sport and Tourism Management department.

Project Initiatives

Within each cornerstone, numerous initiatives have been undertaken over the past five years enhancing the partnership, strengthening the teacher education programs, and improving student achievement at partner schools.

Professional Development:

- JPDSP sponsored urban education and culturally responsive teaching workshops
- JPDSP sponsored collaborative workshops facilitated by the College Arts & Sciences
- JPDSP sponsored attendance at state & national conferences
- JPDSP sponsored reciprocal staff development seminars
- JPDSP sponsored classroom technology enhancement professional development sessions
- JPDSP sponsored local service agency field trips for JPDSP members



Teacher Candidate Preparation:

- Innovative field experiences with enhanced supplementary professional development opportunities
- Curriculum and technology alignment between partners
- Collaboration with Arts & Sciences for the addition of teacher specific courses
- Collaboration with Joliet Junior college to enhance field experience opportunities and articulation

Action Research:

- Introductory Action Research Workshops
- University faculty on-going support for established partner school projects
- Monetary support for action research projects
- Dissemination of results including poster presentation of research projects at state and national conferences

Student Achievement:

- State required physicals, immunization, and sports physicals provided annually
- Social Work internships at partner schools
- Assessment and diagnostic academic services provided to partner schools
- Onsite, content specific learning experiences provided to partner schools



Project Outcomes and Impact

Teacher Candidate Preparation: The JPDSP has transformed the teacher education programs' curriculum and has effected changes in the dispositional attitude of the teacher candidates towards urban high needs schools. The partnership with Joliet schools via the JPDSP has enabled candidates to have high quality experiences working with K-8 students from diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups. Partner schools, A.O. Marshall, Farragut, Parks, and Dirksen, serve communities with a high number of low income families, the majority of whom are African American or Hispanic. The candidates who complete field experiences at partner schools have excellent opportunities to learn how to draw from their students' cultural knowledge to enhance student learning, and to practice strategies to help English Language Learners be successful.

Field experiences at the JPDSP schools include a yearlong internship, where the teacher candidates are immersed in the school culture. The JPDSP internship involves the use of the co-teaching model, thus providing additional support in the classroom and affording the students additional individual attention and differentiated instruction. In order to provide necessary planning time for co-teaching, the JPDSP supplies a “rotating” substitute teacher who takes over the class while the in-service teacher and the teacher candidate plan together. There is one Field Experience Supervisor for each partner school who is responsible for all of the teacher candidates at that school. The Field Experience Supervisors have developed a keen understanding of the school’s culture, are onsite daily, and are a familiar face in the halls and classrooms of the school. The supervisors know all of the in-service teachers and get to know each of the candidates enabling them to:

- Provide valuable input for the teacher candidate placements,
- Coach the teacher candidates for the entire year, and
- Supplement the field experience with seminars aimed specifically at issues found in urban high need schools.

While not all teacher candidates complete formal field experiences at JPDSP partner schools, efforts are made for as many teacher candidates as possible to experience the partnership during one of their field experiences. In addition, all undergraduate elementary and special education candidates interact with JPDSP students during classes which involve teacher candidate and student interaction. Currently, the college requires three courses (EDUC 375 Methods of Teaching Math in the Elementary School, EDUC 385 Methods of Teaching Social Studies and Science in the Elementary School, and EDUC 373 Diagnostic Techniques of Teaching Literacy) that permit candidates to teach lessons for JPDSP students. Moreover, professional development opportunities and materials provided by JPDSP are made available to all teacher candidates regardless of their placement.

Dr. Catherine Nelson (2007), an assistant professor in the College of Education, recently completed a research study on the JPDSP as part of her dissertation. Her research provides pertinent information towards the outcomes associated with our PDS partnership and strengthens the general body of PDS outcome information. She focused her research on teacher candidates’ confidence levels as well as their disposition towards teaching in urban high-need schools. Her research results indicate that candidates in JPDSP schools felt more confident that their field experience prepared them for teaching in urban, high need schools.

In addition, these candidates not only indicated a higher disposition towards teaching in these schools, but also actively sought a position in these schools. Supporting these findings is the documented hiring of over 65 new teachers from USF by the Joliet Public Schools District 86 in the past five years.

The following quote from one of the teacher candidates who did their intermediate and advanced field experiences at a JPDSP partner school eloquently sums up the heart and soul of the partnership:



“Everyone always asks what is the difference between a traditional school and a PDS, and I would have to say it is the support that I receive from all those involved. The JPDSP has challenged me to figure out the kind of teacher I want to be not only professionally but emotionally. Each day in my classroom, with my cooperating teacher, I was given the opportunity to see how fulfilling it is to teach students in an urban setting. The professional development opportunities I have had helped me to better understand my students

cultural and economic issues and how to help the students to succeed in school and in life. All four cornerstones: professional development, student achievement, action research and teacher candidate performance really help in the development of the teacher candidates and the elementary students."

-Stacy Hogan

Student Achievement: The JPDSP has also stimulated changes at the partner schools. Farragut Elementary was removed from the State Watch List within one year of the partnership and all of the partners have shown continued growth in student achievement levels over the past five years as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 - District and Partner schools' Student Achievement Levels (ISAT scores)

LEA	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
District 86 (partnership est. 2004)	51.0%	53.5%	56.4%	66.7%	70.1%	72.2%
A.O. Marshall Elementary (partnership est. 2005)	N/A	53.7%	59.3%	62.2%	70.1%	66.2%
Dirksen Jr. High School (partnership est. 2007)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	69.5%	82.0%
Farragut Elementary (partnership est. 2004)	52.3%	57.5%	62.2%	71.1%	68.1%	66.7%
Parks Cultural Studies Academy (partnership est. 2008)*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*School established in 2008, ISAT scores currently embedded in A.O. Marshall scores

In fact, in 2006, A.O. Marshall and Farragut elementary schools were named ISBE Spotlight Schools (50% or more of students on free or reduced lunch, 60% or more meeting or exceeding established standards). The benefits of the JPDSP clearly established, all of the partner schools include the JPDSP in their school improvement plans and the JPDSP is seen as a viable resource as the schools address the issues they face. The JPDSP has provided much needed curriculum and additional resources to the partners. For example, Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) materials were given to close to 100 teachers and COE faculty conducted over 15 workshops for in-service teachers and teacher candidates on the use of the these materials.

As noted earlier, other areas of the university also contributed to the JPDSP efforts. The JPDSP utilizes the College of Nursing's Health & Wellness Center by offering state required physicals and immunizations to children enrolled in partner schools. Since 2006, first day exclusion of students who have not had state mandated physicals has been significantly reduced. Only one student was reported as being excluded in the 2007 academic year and none were excluded in the 2008 and 2009 academic years. Additionally, sports physicals are provided free of charge to those students who otherwise would be excluded from participating in the school sports programs due to lack of access to affordable exams.

Other colleges and departments at USF play a role in the JPDSP as well. Two science content courses have been developed by the College of Arts and Sciences, Life Science for Educators and Physical Science for Educators, and feature the university students visiting the partner schools to teach concepts from these classes to the elementary students. The Recreation, Sport and Tourism Management (RSTM) department also offers a course in recreation administration in which college students research, develop, and conduct recreational programs to supplement the

physical education instruction at the partner schools which has evolved into an annual Camp Fitness program. The RSTM along with the visual arts department also hosted on the USF campus an “Eat Healthy, Move More” poster contest. Students from all of the Joliet Public Schools District 86 grade schools were challenged to design a poster addressing the theme “Nutrition & Wellness” to promote a healthy lifestyle. 48 contestant finalists’ posters were on display at the university campus, and the six winners chosen received scholarships to USF’s visual arts summer camp.

Various initiatives of the JPDSP have fostered the belief in students and parents at these partner schools that a college education is important and attainable. The College of Education conducts the senior level Diagnostic Techniques of Teaching Reading course on both partner and university campuses with selected at risk students from Farragut and A.O. Marshall elementary schools. As part of the course work, the USF teacher candidates wrote a report, summarizing the assessment results, the reading strategy individually selected for each student, and the outcome of working with the individual students. This information was communicated to the classroom teachers who were able to monitor the students’ progress. This cooperative learning environment is one example of a successful program used to increase student achievement giving the elementary students involved the opportunity to internalize the importance of learning, and was made possible through the joint efforts of the JPDSP partners working together as a team. In fact, partner members reported often overhearing the elementary students say that it was time for them to go to their “college class.”

USF often hosts students from the partner schools on campus, for opportunities including 1) attendance and participation in a campus visit by President Barack Obama (then an Illinois Senator), 2) involvement in Earth Day activities sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, 3) Twenty-First Century Program’s forensic science session, 4) tours of the campus and snacks in the university cafeteria thus giving them an opportunity to begin envisioning themselves in a college setting, 5) Christmas door decoration judging and annual Christmas tree lighting, and 6) Halloween trick or treating in the corridors of the USF Tower Hall.

In addition, the partner schools invite USF employees and students for events on their campuses, such as 1) USF basketball players playing three-on-three basketball with Dirksen Jr. High School students as part of the culminating activity of a March Madness inter-disciplinary unit, 2) USF teacher candidates, faculty, and administration reading at family reading nights at the elementary partners campuses, 3) USF teacher candidates volunteering at family game nights at Dirksen junior high school, and 4) USF teacher candidates delivering gifts to the homes of families of students at district sponsored community events. All of this is being done to develop relationships with the school students and to pass on the dream of obtaining a college education.

Action Research: In-service teachers, teacher candidates, and university faculty have participated in inquiry-based studies that connect student learning and teacher development. Faculty members from the university have presented workshops on the action research process and then have collaboratively worked with teacher-researcher teams to facilitate problem identification, data collection, and data analysis. The data has then been used to modify curriculum and instruction within the classroom. Fifteen action research workshops have been conducted for interested teachers, and ten action research projects involving twenty in-service teachers and six COE faculty members have been completed. The results from these projects have been disseminated to all of the JPDSP partners through annual poster presentations, published in educational journals, and been the topic of presentations at both state and national level conferences. Action research continues with two projects currently underway, a joint mathematics instruction initiative between an in-service teacher and a COE faculty member involving both teacher candidates and junior high school students.

Professional Development: JPDSP has evolved into a true learning community where everyone learns, one that has presented workshops conducted by teacher candidates for in-service teachers and COE faculty, by COE faculty for in-

service teachers and teacher candidates, and by in-service teachers for teacher candidates and COE faculty. Over the past five years the JPDSP has:

1. Conducted more than 75 professional development workshops for more than 150 in-service teachers, teacher candidates, and COE faculty on subjects such as English as a second language, basic reading inventory, homelessness and poverty issues, co-teaching and inclusion, Smart Boards in the classroom, response to intervention, gang awareness, science misconceptions, and astronomy and the classroom.
2. Organized 20 collaborative Summer Workshops on Arts & Sciences for in-service teachers.
3. Expanded the Professional Development Libraries for each partner campus with the addition of over 600 new books and educational resources.
4. Purchased SmartBoards for classrooms in the partner schools and university classrooms to ensure leading-edge technology is incorporated in the both the teacher education programs as well as in the partners' classrooms.
5. Supplied more than 30 new laptops to the COE education classrooms to explore new software for use in schools.
6. Purchased software packages and licenses, including Inspiration, Kidspiration, and Comic Life, to enhance the teacher education programs.
7. Sent more than 35 presenters (in-service teachers, teacher candidates, and university faculty and administration) to state & national conferences over the past five years, and
8. Taken field trips annually to local service agency (homeless shelters, etc.) which are attended by teacher candidates and university faculty.

Lessons Learned

It is amazing to observe how far the JPDSP has come in the past eight years. Initially, there was a single leadership team, but as partners were added the JPDSP reorganized. Now there are five University and school based leadership teams as well as a steering committee to keep the JPDSP moving forward. The JPDSP is fully integrated into the day to day operations of the partner schools and the College of Education. The JPDSP has strengthened ties within and across all of the partners and all are sharing resources and goals, the result being improved learning for all members, teacher candidates and students. And the JPDSP has come full circle with several teacher candidates from the early years of the partnership now serving as cooperating teachers for teacher candidate in their own classrooms.

The JPDSP experience has produced candidates with improved dispositions toward and confidence in working in urban high-need schools. This outcome has resulted in a significant increase in the number of highly qualified teachers in District 86. In addition, COE has seen a significant increase in teacher candidates selecting the JPDSP field experience as their preference as well as interest expressed by our secondary teacher candidates, so much so that there have not been enough placement positions to accommodate the requests.

The successes of the JPDSP were recently extolled by several of our partner administrators:

“The JPDSP has had significant impact on student achievement that might otherwise not have been possible.”

-Carol Sossong, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Joliet Public Schools District 86

"Our partnership has grown tremendously over the past [six] years and I cannot imagine a building without it. Farragut was the original school involved when we started this process [formation of the JPDSP]. Since our involvement Farragut has seen tremendous growth in student achievement. Our partnership with the University of St. Francis has been a large part of our growth. One of the greatest benefits of our partnership is hiring our teacher candidates into full time teaching positions. As a principal, the benefit of hiring one of our teacher candidates is you know exactly what you are getting. You are not relying on paper documents. The candidate has been in your building for at least a year and sometimes a year and a half. In my experience though, the fact that the teacher knows and understands the culture of your building from day one is without a doubt the greatest asset of hiring our candidates. Over the past [six] years I have been able to hire eight candidates for my building. Unfortunately, I have not had enough openings to hire many of our outstanding candidates but I did do everything I could to find them a position. I attend job fairs for our district and I have seen a difference in the quality of teacher candidates from those who have been involved in a professional development school."

-Wes Russell, Principal, Farragut Elementary School

"The partnership with USF [JPDSP] is one of the best parts of my job! Everyone is a winner! The partnership between USF and District 86 has brought about wonderful changes for our students, staff, and the teacher candidates. The students have benefited from having extra staff in the classroom to help them learn and explore their knowledge base. In addition all of the students have been able to visit the USF campus and see what college is like. The staff and teacher candidates have both learned from each other and because of this partnership many of our staff members have gone back to USF for graduate classes. Over the past few years I have been very impressed with the quality of students from USF. I have been able to employ several of the students in my building and also refer several others to other District 86 schools where they were hired on the spot."

-Linda Scott, Principal, A.O. Marshall (formerly) and Parks Cultural Studies Academy (currently)

"Without any doubt, this partnership [JPDSP] was and continues to be an integral piece to Dirksen's successes this past year, as indicated by the ISAT scores. Both staff and students at Dirksen reap the benefits from having the university clinical students in our classrooms. The Dirksen school community looks forward to a great future with USF as a Professional Development School partner!"

-Kimberly Pfoutz, Principal, Dirksen Junior High School

Carol Sossong, perhaps, sums it up best, "Joliet Public Schools have been involved in numerous partnerships to varying degrees, but I can honestly say that the JPDSP has been and is a truly comprehensive partnership between our institutions that has led to numerous benefits for our students and teachers."

Project Sustainability

Due to the numerous benefits realized by all partners, the partnership continues to thrive today. The most important benefit, of course, is the impact on student achievement. As noted above, JPDSP utilizes a co-teaching model for field experiences and internships. Co-teaching is a research-based strategy that has been demonstrated to be effective in increasing students' academic achievement. The strategy involves two or more educators collaborating to: 1) coordinate their work to achieve a common goal(s) to which they both agree, 2) take on equally the various roles of teaching and learning, 3) take on equally the tasks and responsibilities of a traditional classroom teacher, and 4) maintain strong communication strategies with each other including joint planning periods, a shared trust, reflective

monitoring of the progress of the team's efforts, and holding each other and themselves accountable for successes as well as areas in need of strengthening (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008).

Using this model with teacher candidates, lessons are collaboratively planned and taught by the teacher candidate and mentor teacher, providing more opportunity for differentiated instruction and individual attention. A recent study validated the co-teaching model as applied to the student teaching experience. The four year study found that students who were co-taught (with a teacher candidate and mentor teacher) statistically outperformed a single teacher or a teacher candidate and cooperating teacher using the traditional model of student teaching (Heck, Bacharach, & Dahlberg, 2007). By utilizing the co-teaching model, the partnership not only enhances the achievement of students, but also better prepares the next generation of teachers.

While the partnership is thriving, many challenges still exist, starting with the high stakes testing and accountability promoted by NCLB with little funding available to support these mandates. The current recession is placing a squeeze on both the University and District 86 budgets as everyone tightens their belts. The budget constraints impact the ongoing sustainability of all of the JPDSP initiatives; however, the steering committee has prioritized the initiatives to ensure the continuance of as much as possible through the respective institutional budgets. Opportunities exist to expand the partnership to additional schools, but expansion is currently not possible due to a lack of resources and external funding.

As we move into the ninth year of the partnership, the JPDSP has also been faced with administrative changes at the partnering institutions. It is well documented that this type of change can have a significant impact on a PDS in terms of maintaining continuity of the PDS programs. Another challenging area is ensuring that communications remain open among all members of the partnership to celebrate successes and address concerns. Thus far, the new administrators have embraced the JPDSP and its initiatives, mostly due to the perceived benefits and the development of an infrastructure that emphasizes continuous communication amongst all members of the partnership.

The future of the JPDSP is already beginning to take shape as plans are made to address the following initiatives:

1. Establishing an English as a second language teacher education program endorsement
2. Restructuring teacher education programs to further integrate the response to intervention initiative
3. Examining the feasibility of establishing an early childhood teacher education program
4. Redesign of the beginning field experience program to enhance and expose all potential teacher candidates to the immense possibilities of a teaching career at high need schools
5. Development of high school partnerships with corresponding enhancements of the secondary teacher education programs.

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Guest Column: What's Driving Education Change in Illinois?, by Linda L. Tomlinson, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent, School Support Services for All Schools, Illinois State Board of Education

Race to the Top is certainly raising national attention to educational opportunities for children today. Illinois' ranking of fifth in the first round of Race to the Top applications speaks well of initiatives underway in Illinois and our state's continuing efforts to improve educational opportunities for all children. However, Illinois began making changes long before Race to the Top support was even a possibility. While funding from Race to the Top could have helped Illinois move faster to make changes, it is not what is driving change. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), through its mission and goals, is driving change to support having "highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders in every school." With over 860 school Illinois districts, change is not an easy task. Inequities exist in our school systems that we must find ways to eliminate.

To ensure that Illinois has effective teachers and school leaders in all schools we must: 1) emphasize preparation of the most effective teachers and leaders possible, 2) provide adequate supports through induction, mentoring and professional development for the continuing growth of teachers and leaders, and 3) evaluate teachers and leaders to ensure that we retain the best and remove those who are unsuccessful. Superintendent Koch keeps the Agency focused on the children and what is needed to help improve learning. Some decisions have been more helpful than others in improving learning, but all have been made for the right reasons. Initiatives that do not support the Agency's mission and goals do not move forward. If initiatives do support what is best for children in Illinois we do our best to make them successful.

So, how does Illinois prepare teachers and leaders who understand and promote student growth? Through initiatives such as the American Diploma Project and adoption of new Learning Standards for K-12 students, Illinois began making changes long before Race to the Top. In August 2010, the Illinois State Board of Education adopted common core content standards for student learning. Illinois also received a federal grant of over nine million dollars to develop a longitudinal data system (LDS) that will track students' academic transcripts, as well as link teacher to student data. This new system is imperative to the development of additional systems for linking teacher and leader effectiveness back to preparation programs and to be able to collect data related to student growth.

In efforts to ensure that Illinois prepares the best principals to lead schools to success, ISBE has been working collaboratively with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to redefine principal preparation. New programs will focus on preparing principals to be instructional leaders able to drive instruction in their schools and ensure that teachers have the support systems they need to enhance student growth in learning. Emphasis will be placed on preparing principals who understand that hiring and retaining the best teachers is instrumental to the learning success of their school.

The Agency found that there are gaps in learning at all levels. The learning needs for special education and English Language Learners are not always being met. Additionally, we found that reading scores declined as students progressed through high school and that we were not addressing these issues in educator preparation programs. A group of stakeholders were brought together to review and redesign the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the Language Arts Standards for All Teachers and the Technology Standards for All Teachers. The group reviewed current standards and research, as well as standards from other states, in order to rewrite the standards with a focus on the individual child and differentiated instruction.

In looking for what is best for students and understanding that it is essential to have teachers and administrators at all levels who have basic skills and content knowledge, ISBE considered how state tests were being used as one measure

of the competency of those seeking certificates and endorsements. Rules were rewritten and approved to limit the number of times an individual could take any certification test to a maximum of five times. This change has been established with the expectation that candidates should understand the importance of being prepared to take a test and seek remediation if one fails a test prior to retesting. Additionally, concerns were raised about how successful an educator might be if that teacher or administrator could take a test multiple times without passing. Multiple testing raises questions as to whether an educator has mastered the content or, perhaps, simply passed by chance.

All teachers and administrators should possess a minimum level of knowledge and skills to demonstrate adequate competency. Today's schools depend on using data to inform instruction. Teachers and administrators must know and be able to interpret and use data to drive instruction. Therefore, excellent math skills are essential for all educators and it is imperative that every educator have requisite skills in reading, writing, and grammar to be able to work effectively with students, parents, and community members. The Illinois State Board of Education reset the passing scores for the state basic skills test in March to demonstrate increased competency in basic skills, along with new rules that will permit individuals to bank passing scores to underscore the importance of having educators who meet a higher level of knowledge related to mathematics, grammar, reading, and writing.

As part of its continuing efforts to upgrade the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders, ISBE worked with stakeholders this past winter to pass legislation that will lead to a new evaluation system for teachers and principals. In the future teachers and principals will be required to be evaluated on both performance and student growth. In addition a new rating system will be implemented to rate teachers and leaders as "unsatisfactory," "needs improvement," "proficient," or "excellent." Combining this new rating system with the Longitudinal Data System being developed will enable the effectiveness of teachers and leaders to be linked back to their preparation programs.

When ISBE and IBHE began their reviews of principal preparation, they soon realized that the State Teacher Certification Board also needed to carefully review and monitor preparation programs. Rules were changed to enable the Certification Board to receive annual report data from all preparation programs and provide the Certification Board with authority to act on programs that they deem to have areas of concern. At its April 2010 meeting, Board members were provided information on the first annual review of all educator preparation programs. Staff reviewed and provided areas of concern to the Board on more than 900 programs. Rules are now in place and the Board may take action which could result in programs being discontinued or put on probation. This new review process encourages preparation programs to review their own data on a regular basis and to make changes as needed to support program growth.

ISBE is also working with stakeholders on other initiatives. A group of educators finalized a "Code of Ethics for Educators." The "Code of Ethics for Educators" will guide higher education institutions in their decisions about dispositions required for their candidates and assist future educators to understand the professionalism expected of all educators. Research supports that in-depth content knowledge is critical for effective teaching. Rules have been approved to help ensure that teachers have more depth of understanding in their content areas. For example, future teachers at the high school level will be required to have upper division level course work in their content areas; course work less than a "C" grade will not count toward program requirements and endorsements. Endorsements in the sciences and social sciences will require additional course work to add additional designations in specific areas.

These initiatives are some of the changes that the Agency has undertaken. In its efforts to improve educational opportunities for all of Illinois children, ISBE will continue to work with stakeholders to update and review requirements. During the 2010-2011 school year, additional stakeholders were asked to review elementary and middle grade teacher requirements. Once these groups have completed their review, other groups will begin to work with content area standards for secondary teachers. The Agency is focused on what is best for students and how to assure

that all students have access to the “best” teachers and leaders. The one way to ensure that each student has access to the “best” teachers and school leaders is to prepare and certify the best teachers and school leaders, keeping in mind that it is all about the children which drives the changes ISBE supports.