Education Faculty Publications

2015

Best Practices in Field Experience and Supervision

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Best Practices in Field Experience and Supervision

Top Ten Tips that have been Developed, Tested, and Tried in a University Environment

Susquehanna University, Department of Education

21ˢᵗ Century Teacher Preparation Programming

extensive time in the field throughout the entire program

fieldwork with course work

extensive and intensely supervised clinical work

full academic year of student teaching

newly emerging pedagogies—such as close analyses of learning and teaching, case methods, performance assessments, and **action research**
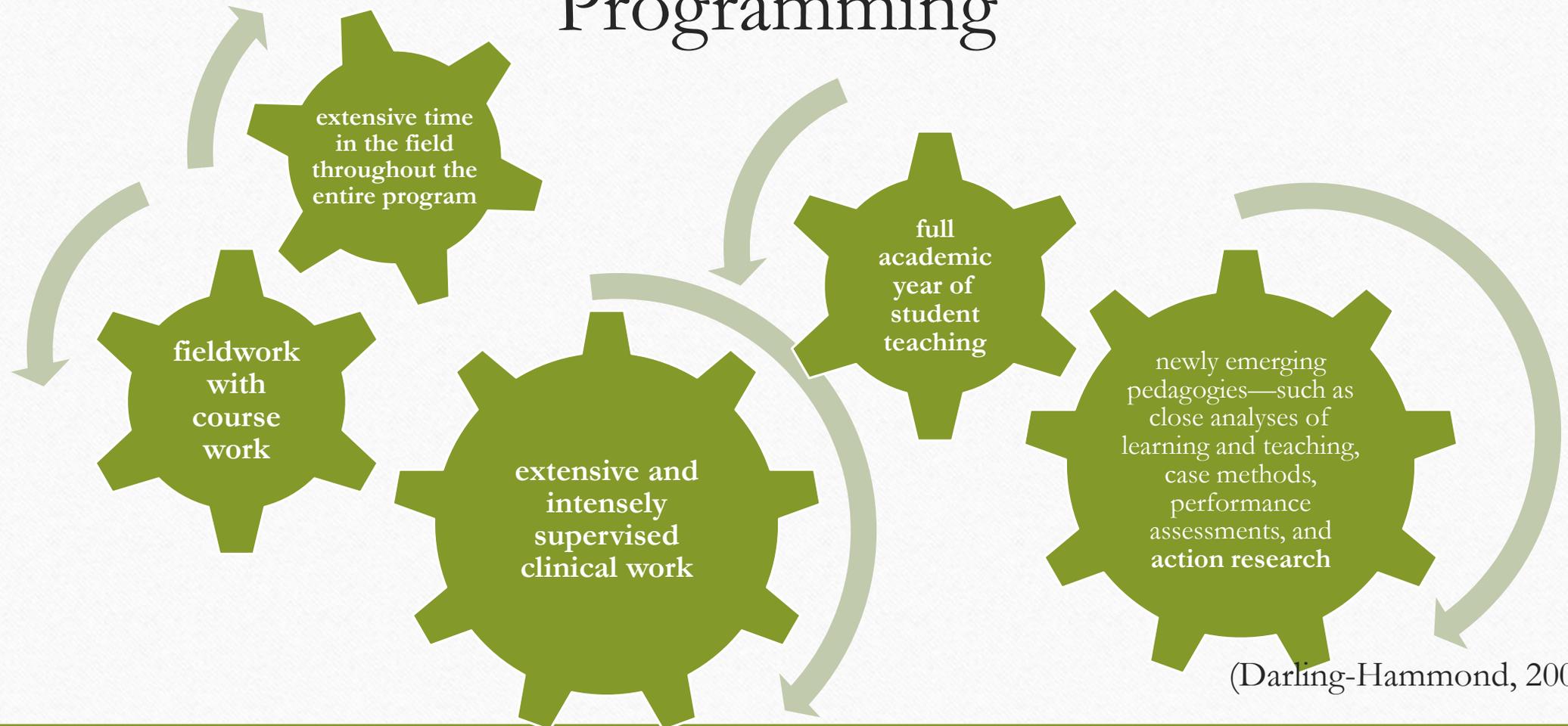
(Darling-Hammond, 2006)

Developing Pre-Service Educators' Identity

- "It is possible to become an expert practitioner by actually doing the job, by performing the skills, but true professional teaching involved another dimension, an intellectual dimension" (Mayer, 1999,p. 8).

- Reflective practice that promotes one's identity as an educator (Walkington, 2005)

  - Building upon and challenging previous experiences and beliefs

  - Learning through research in action

  - Ultimately promotes flexibility, lifelong learner, and confidence

Our Philosophy of Student Teaching

- Collaborative learning experience with CONTINOUS input by all stakeholders (future teachers, cooperating teachers, university faculty, and other stakeholders in the school community) to blend theory and practice

- Our commitments to developing high-quality, reflective, and professional future teachers:

  - *To teaming and collaboration*

  - *To have university faculty on-site weekly in the schools*

  - *To a performance/standards-based model for teacher preparation*

  - *To inclusionary practice*

2015-16 Demographics

- 19 Student Teachers in the Early Childhood Program

- 10 Student Teachers in the Secondary Program

- 40 Cooperating Teachers

- Placed in partnering schools in Snyder, Union, and Northumberland Counties.

  - Commutes to student teaching locations are typically less than 15 miles.

    - Many student teachers are placed within walking distance of campus.

  - For student teachers wishing to work in an urban environment, there are placements available in the Philadelphia metro area.

Senior Year Practicum & Student Teaching Experiences

Early Childhood Education

- <u>Fall semester:</u> minimum of 30 practicum hours in their preschool student teaching placement and 45 hours in their elementary student teaching placement
  - **Corresponding** *Senior Methods Block* of coursework

- <u>Spring semester:</u> 5 weeks in their preschool placement and 10 weeks in their elementary placement

Secondary Education

- <u>Fall semester:</u> minimum of 40 practicum hours in their student teaching placement
  - Corresponding *Senior Methods Block* of coursework

- <u>Spring semester:</u> 15 week student teaching experience

Current Student Experiences and Reflections

- Sarah Bush, '16- Early Childhood Education
- Erin McGinty, '16- Early Childhood Education

The Susquehanna University Education Department's

Top Ten Tips for Effective Supervision

#1: Student Teacher Checklist

- Student Teachers Receive the Checklist in their Fall Practicum

- They have to have it completed by the end of the semester

- It includes items such as "Know the School Schedule, Emergency Procedures…."

#2: Practicum Folder & Activities Log

Note: We have our Student Teachers working in their student teaching placements all year.

- Student Teachers have to have a Practicum Folder that is with them in their school placements during the fall and turned in at the end of the semester
  - Components include reflections, activity logs, weekly goals, evaluations, time sheet, student teacher checklist
  - Each Practicum Folder receives a grade and feedback form at the end of the semester. It is also transferred to the student teacher's supervisor
- Student Teachers begin keeping an activities log in their fall practicum experience in order to record all the activities that they start doing within their classroom spaces prior to starting to teach.
  - It is a way to help them move from Observing to Doing
  - Activities could include checking in homework, completing a read aloud, running a math small group, taking the lunch count, supporting recess duty, conducting morning meeting

#3: On Line Discussion Groups

- One on-line discussion group is set up in the Fall semester. Student Teachers are required to talk about their practicum experiences and their self study question weekly as well as respond to other teachers.

- Another on-line discussion group is set up during the Spring semester. Student Teachers are required to post a response to a chapter from Kozol's *Letters to a Young Teacher* each week and respond to other's posts.

Example of Discussion Group

- POST: This week I was in my practicum everyday but Thursday. I really enjoyed getting to spend the whole week with the kids. My self study is all about emotion, obviously 3 and 4 year olds go through so many emotions during the day. They can be so happy for one second and then the next minute they are hysterical but they will not tell you why. This is something I may struggle with while trying to gather data. I am also looking at student emotion and I notice that these students are so emotional but more often than not they have serious struggle verbalizing what is wrong. I feel like maybe my data wont be as strong if I can not figure out a strategy to crack that code. I also see how the students emotions effect the teachers. There is one particular student in our class who has a lot of energy. When he comes in feeling very energetic and crazy it really makes the teachers frustrated. It makes it harder for them to do they're job and I think that feel like they have to give the class less attention because he is so crazy. But, I saw my teacher do something very interesting this week. The little boy who is energetic was having trouble sitting in circle. So she brought him on her lap to sit with him. Then she started to bounce him on her lap just like you would do a baby. This was interesting to me because when she started bouncing him he automatically was able to sit still and pay attention. She explained to me that he was moving around while bouncing up and down even though she was doing the movement. So technically he was sitting still and she wasn't. This is something I should take into account, she also asked me to come up with a behavior plan for him for when I am lead teacher. I am thinking about having a reward system for him. Like if you fill this jar up with pom poms then he gets a reward of some kind. I think these children because of their home lives are not motivated as much so therefore I think it is important that we show them rewards when necessary. I am hoping that when he sees how fun the rewards can be, he will be able to calm himself down a little better.

- RESPONSE: It is so great that you have been able to spend so much time in your placements! Preschool is definitely an interesting age group to work with and I have taken a lot of time adjusting to it, so it is great that you have been able to be there so often. You definitely describe their emotions well. I turn my back for one second and all of a sudden their emotions could change rapidly. It is great that you were able to observe your cooperating teacher's technique for calming that student down. It definitely sounds like it was a thought provoking experience for you. How exciting that she asked you to develop a behavior plan for him! That sounds like it will be an incredible experience for you and it will definitely be something to showcase in your portfolio. I look forward to hearing how it goes!

#4: Student Teacher Binder Components

- In the Spring Semester Student Teachers are required to have a binder with them at all times in their classrooms.

- Binder elements include lesson plans, evaluations, lesson plan reflections, daily reflections, and self study data

#5: Professionalism Components

- Initial Contact with their Cooperating Teachers
- Introductory Letter that will go to Parents
- Suggestion to be in school on the first day of their academic calendar and encouragement to be at Open Houses and Parent Teacher Conferences
- Permission needed in order to take pictures, etc.
- Professionalism Handbook given
- Exit Interview at school sites

#6: Senior Seminar

- Biweekly Student Teaching Seminars throughout the semester and each seminar has a focus topic.

- Seminars include warm ups focused on teaching, announcements, goal setting, and the focus discussion.

- Focus themes include Career Development, Portfolio Creation, Self-Study Research, Expert Educator Night, and Interviewing

#7: Electronic Database, Including Video Review/Self-Reflections

- Student Teachers are required to upload one exemplary lesson plan into an electronic portfolio as well as their student assessment reflection

- Eventually we would like to have all of our student teachers make their student teaching portfolios available electronically.

- Video/Video Reflections

Example of Video Reflection

- Were all of your students engaged? If so, cite evidence from the video. If not, how do you know they were not engaged?

- During the beginning activity, it was clear that the students were mostly engaged. I made it a point to spread out the questions, give strategies and tasks if one were to finish early, and try to give special attention to each student. The boys were all mostly on task based on the goals we set at the beginning of our time. There were three points, I could see the attention getting away from us – when Tanner was quickly making a face at Reece and when Reece and Tanner finished up early and the boys pushed their papers across the table and finally, when Reece and Tanner began chatting on their reading phones at the end of the reading time.

#8: Weekly Check Ins and Goals

- Every Supervisor is required to check in weekly with the student teachers within their classroom environment

- Student Teachers are also required to send check ins to their supervisors on Sunday afternoons about what they are teaching during the week as well as anything else they would like the supervisor to be aware of

- Student Teachers start setting proactive goals once a week in the fall semester and check in with those goals to reflect on if the goals were met before setting new goals. This continues in the spring seminar class.

#9: Self Study Research

- Develop a researchable question about their own practice in the fall as part of *Pedagogy & Classroom Management* course

- Submit a literature review

- Collect and analyze at least three types of data

- Prepare and present final report to peers at the end of the spring semester

- Eligible seniors can meet additional criteria (e.g., public presentation) to quality for departmental honors

#10 – Supervision by SU Teaching Faculty

- Full-time university faculty who have taught methods and other core courses take on the bulk of Student Teacher supervision

- Where additional personnel are required, many have previously taught in and are familiar with Student Teachers, preparatory coursework, and collaborating school districts

We'd love some feedback, or to hear about some of your best practices!

- Room for Improvement??
  - Cooperating teachers are provided with a manual, overview to key assignments and lesson planning templates but … need for improved communication with cooperating teachers about specific coursework and programmatic goals
  - Improving electronic database to hold student lesson plan samples and evidence of effective teaching practices
- Your "Best Practices"??

Questions?

Thank you for attending our presentation and for your feedback, as well!

If you have any questions feel free to contact us!

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