Learning To Teach:
Practice-Based Opportunities in Teacher Education

A Collaboration Between The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL) and Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center

THE BRIEF

Learning to teach is not easy. Novice teachers need high quality opportunities to practice if they are to learn to be effective. Educator preparation programs and local districts can work collaboratively to incorporate the critical features of deliberate practice within and across coursework and field experiences that align with what they will likely encounter as a beginning teacher. This Special Issues brief provides examples of how programs can work with local districts to fully incorporate effective, deliberate opportunities to practice.

PROGRAM QUALITY INDICATORS

The *quality* of practice opportunities is as important as the *quantity* of practice opportunities provided, especially for beginning teachers. Thus, teacher educators should embed practice-based opportunities within both campus-based coursework and field experiences that are tightly aligned with skills and practices taught. Three overarching features are fundamental to program design and solidify the effectiveness of practice-based opportunities:

Focus — The degree to which opportunities to practice are targeted to the critical content and pedagogy outlined in the teacher standards and those agreed upon to establish through-lines in instructional expectations.

Duration — The length of time that candidates are offered to extend learning and develop mastery of the critical content and pedagogical approaches necessary to be learner ready from day one.

Coherence — The extent to which common expectations of instructional practice are reinforced and advanced throughout and across coursework and field experiences, and the extent to which coursework and field experiences are aligned and scope and sequence are considered.

CONSIDERATIONS AT ALL LEVELS

State Education Agencies (SEAs)

- Strengthen accountability and evidence requirements around partnerships and candidate competency
- Reform policy and program approval processes
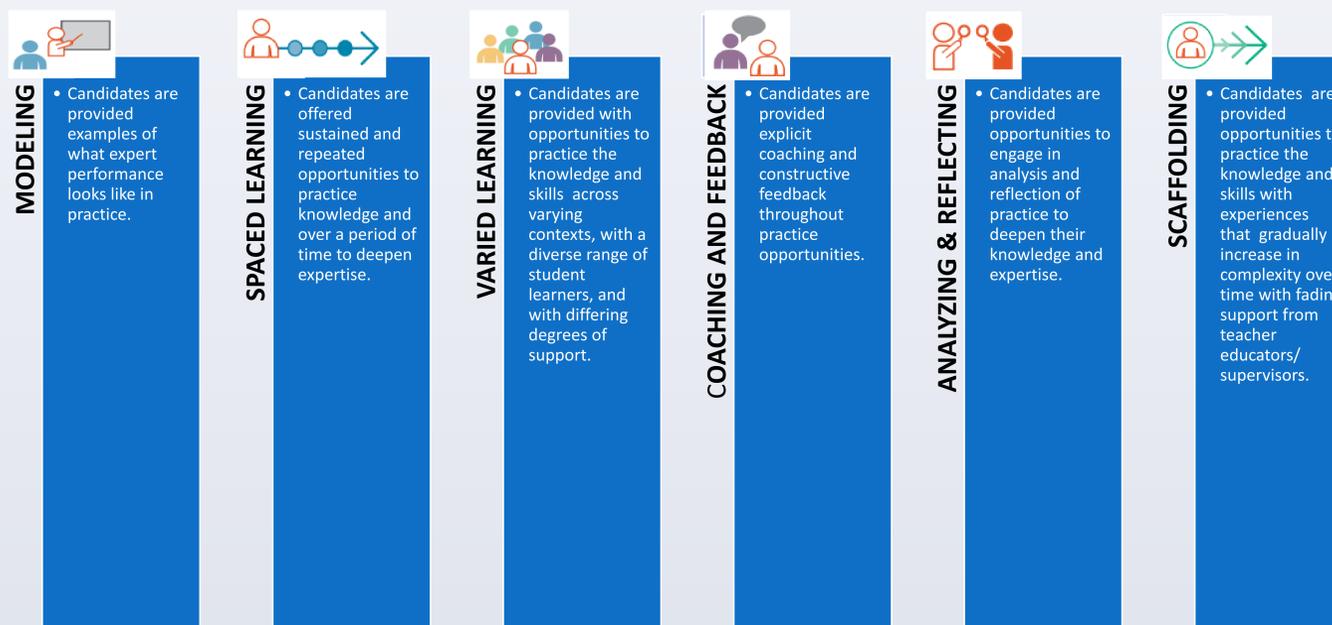
Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)

- Strengthen coursework and field-based experiences as well as observation protocols
- Engage in partnerships

Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

- Offer and reinforce high-quality field placements
- Engage in partnerships

PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Practice-based opportunities are those that afford candidates opportunities to integrate both content and pedagogy acquired through coursework into instruction (Ericsson, 2014). Building on the science of effective practice, EPPs and teacher educators would do well to fully incorporate the following features into all practice-based opportunities:

MODELING — Candidates are provided examples of what expert performance looks like in practice.

SPACED LEARNING — Candidates are offered sustained and repeated opportunities to practice knowledge and over a period of time to deepen expertise.

VARIED LEARNING — Candidates are provided with opportunities to practice the knowledge and skills across varying contexts, with a diverse range of student learners, and with differing degrees of support.

COACHING AND FEEDBACK — Candidates are provided explicit coaching and constructive feedback throughout practice opportunities.

ANALYZING & REFLECTING — Candidates are provided opportunities to engage in analysis and reflection of practice to deepen their knowledge and expertise.

SCAFFOLDING — Candidates are provided opportunities to practice the knowledge and skills with experiences that gradually increase in complexity over time with fading support from teacher educators/ supervisors.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

By integrating pedagogical approaches that incorporate the features of deliberate practice described above, teacher educators can support candidates in developing candidate readiness or preparedness for delivering effective instruction. Provided below are practical examples of current preparation program efforts to integrate some of the 8 features of practice-based opportunities in *campus-based coursework* and *field experiences*.

- Microteaching
- Case-Based Instruction
- Virtual Simulations and Lab-like Experiences
- Coursework-aligned, Field-based experiences
- Video Analysis
- Tutoring
- Lesson Study
- Coaching

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE | Laboratory Experiences
(virtual simulations and lab-like experiences)

Where: University of Michigan's TeachingWorks Center

Who: Dr. Deborah Lowenberg Ball, Professor and Director of TeachingWorks, and Nicole Garcia, Director of the Elementary Mathematics Laboratory

What: The Elementary Mathematics Laboratory (EML) is a multilayered professional development experience taught by Dr. Deborah Lowenberg Ball, a professor at the University of Michigan and the director of TeachingWorks, and facilitated in collaboration with Ms. Nicole Garcia. EML partners with local school districts to enroll students in the upper elementary grades in the program. Practicing teachers, curriculum leaders, district administrators, teacher educators, and researchers around the world come to observe and reflect on problems of mathematical practice and instruction.

For more information on this example, download the full Practical Example overview (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Laboratory_Experiences.pdf).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE | Lesson Study

Where: University of Washington

Who: Dr. Carly Roberts, Assistant Professor

What: Lesson study's collaborative planning and observation and analysis process can be used as a mechanism to support candidates in transferring knowledge and skills acquired in coursework into classroom practice.

For more information on this example, download the full Practical Example overview (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Lesson_Study.pdf).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE | Video Analysis

Where: University of Virginia

Who: Dr. Adria Hoffman, Field Placement Coordinator

What: MyTeachingPartner-Preservice (MTP) is a professional development system developed in collaboration with colleagues (e.g., Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami, & Lun, 2011) and is designed to support teachers through video analysis and individualized coaching. Preservice teachers record themselves teaching and are provided high-quality feedback and a structure for how to reflect, revise, and monitor changes to instruction based on feedback.

For more information on this example, download the full Practical Example overview (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Video_Analysis.pdf).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE | Coursework-Aligned, Field-Based Practice Opportunities

Where: State University of New York (SUNY), Buffalo State

Who: Dr. Lawrence Maheady, Professor and Horace Mann Endowed Chair

What: The Responsive Educator Program includes a series of highly structured, developmentally sequenced clinical experiences that begin during candidates' first year and continue throughout the program. Preservice candidates gradually assume more instructional responsibilities by teaching individuals, small groups, and entire classes in predominantly high-need schools.

For more information on this example, download the full Practical Example overview (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Scaffold_Field_Experiences.pdf).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE | Structured Tutoring

Where: Southern Methodist University

Who: Dr. Stephanie Al Otaiba, Centennial Chair in Teaching and Learning

What: Structured tutoring is a practice-based approach that teacher educators can tightly align with coursework by providing candidates the opportunity to apply content and instructional practices directly acquired through coursework within a supervised, authentic environment.

For more information on this example, download the full Practical Example overview (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Structured_Tutoring.pdf).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE | Bug-in-Ear Coaching

Where: University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Who: Dr. Marcia Rock, Associate Professor

What: Drawing on the research on the relationship between immediate feedback and effective instruction, bug-in-ear (BIE) coaching provides candidates real-time support in improving with instruction and behavior management strategies during the act of teaching.

For more information on this example, download the full Practical Example overview (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Bug-in-ear_Coaching.pdf).

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE | Virtual Simulation

Where: University of Central Florida

Who: Dr. Lisa Dieker, Professor and Lockheed Martin Eminent Scholar; Developer of TeachLivE™

What: TeachLivE™, an avatar-based learning platform, affords teachers an opportunity to practice teaching content and positive behavior strategies within a virtual environment. In this mixed-reality environment, teacher educators have the ability to personalize a candidate's instructional experience to specific content based on the candidate's learning needs. Teacher educators can adjust the number of students when the candidate is teaching, the students' characteristics, and the instructional content area being taught. The platform addresses a wide range of content areas, grade levels, and situations, from instruction in middle school science to addressing a crisis prevention situation, or providing instruction to a small group of preschool students with autism.

For more information on this example, download the full Practical Example overview (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Virtual_Simulation.pdf).

THE RUBRIC

To supplement the *Learning to Teach* brief, the CEEDAR Center also developed a framework to guide a systematic process for crafting high-quality, practice-based preparation. Used in its entirety, the framework can support teacher educators in reflecting, analyzing, and strengthening the overall quality of deliberate practice-based opportunities offered to teacher candidates throughout their coursework and field experiences.

Step 1: Identify critical skills and pedagogy

- Guiding Question: What skills do teachers need to be classroom ready from day 1 in their preparation?
- CEEDAR resources: Innovation Configurations (ICs) and Course Enhancement Modules (CEMs)
- Table 1: Identifying evidence-based practices (EBPs) and high-leverage practices (HLPs) (see below)

Program	Evidence-Based Practices	High-Leverage Practices

Step 2: Assess and Consider Program Quality

- Guiding Question: To what extent are focus, duration, and coherence reflected throughout a program?
- Table 2: Program Assessment Rubric (see below)

Quality Indicators			
	Low Quality	Medium Quality	High Quality
Instructions: To what extent are practice-based approaches, as defined by the three essential features outlined in this table, reflected across the duration of a student's preparation experience?	There is no evidence that the approach is integrated within and across coursework and field experiences. Further examination of course syllabi may be warranted.	There is some evidence that the approach is integrated within and across coursework and field experiences. Further examination of course syllabi may be warranted.	There is strong evidence that the approach is fully integrated across coursework and field experiences. Further examination of course syllabi may not be warranted.
Approach / Questions to Consider			

Step 3: Analyze practice-based opportunities

- Guiding Question: Are expectations of content and pedagogical knowledge reinforced in practice-based opportunities that integrate the essential features of high-quality practice experiences?
- Table 3: Integration Level of Essential Features (see below)

Course/Field Experience	Essential Features						Integration Level			
	Modeling	Spaced	Varied	Coaching	Analysis	Scaffolding	There is no evidence of practice-based opportunities within this course/field experience.	This course/field experience includes practice-based opportunities that include 1-2 essential features.	This course/field experience includes practice-based opportunities that include 3-4 essential features.	This course/field experience includes practice-based opportunities that fully integrate 5-6 of the essential features.
Classroom & Behavior Management 101: Virtual Classroom Experience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓

Step 4: Action Plan to Strengthen Efforts

- Guiding Question: How can we prioritize and integrate features into our coursework and field experience?
- Table 4: Action planning to enhance opportunities (see below)

COURSE-BASED				
	Action Plan for Implementation (Identify course(s) and/or resources for implementation)			
Example	Course(s)	Steps to Planning and Implementation	Timeline	Responsible Party
Microteaching Novice teachers plan a lesson and teach it in front of their peers.				

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