Learning to Teach

A Framework for Crafting High-Quality, Practice-Based Preparation

CEEDAR CENTER

IDEAs that Work
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Overview

This framework is a tool for teacher educators to use when considering the quality of practice-based opportunities provided to teacher candidates within individual coursework and across the breadth of a preparation program. This document is intended to supplement the 2016 Special Issues Brief titled ***Learning to Teach: Practice-Based Preparation in Teacher Education***, to which a framework is offered to identify necessary action steps for crafting high-quality, practice-based preparation in educator preparation coursework and field experience.

Contents of This Guide

This document is designed to provide facilitation guidance to teacher educators engaged in deliberate reflection and planning related to the structuring of effective, practice-based opportunities for candidates throughout coursework and field experiences.

Audience

This framework and facilitation guide is intended for use by educator preparation program (EPP) faculty, including teacher educators, collaborating P–12 partners (e.g., principals, cooperating teachers), and university supervisors. The information and considerations presented will be especially useful for EPP faculty engaged in transforming EPPs and course syllabi.

Purpose

Candidates are more likely to be effective and to stay in the profession when their preparation experiences are connected to classroom practice (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Ronfeldt, 2012). Therefore, there has been considerable pressure and effort to strengthen candidate clinical experiences so that they happen early and often within candidates' preparation. This framework is designed to guide teacher educators in integrating practice-based opportunities—inclusive of the essential features—into existing coursework and field experiences.

Facilitation Instructions

The Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) offers a wide variety of free, easily accessible online resources to support EPPs in strengthening programs such that candidates are learner ready upon entry into the field. Used comprehensively, these resources can help program faculty target and focus their efforts so that teachers are more adequately prepared for the realities of the classroom.

This document can be used to facilitate a decision-making process among faculty around improving the quality of coursework and field experiences that students encounter during their preparation programs. The CEEDAR Center has identified critical resources and steps for engaging in this process. The intent is to direct faculty to these resources and provide a systematic mechanism, grounded in research, for analyzing and improving existing efforts. Used in its entirety, this framework can support EPP faculty in reflecting, analyzing, and improving upon the overall quality of the deliberate, practice-based opportunities being offered to teacher candidates throughout their coursework and field experiences.

STEP 1 Identifying Critical Content and Pedagogy

Deliberate practice is a highly structured activity designed with a specific purpose in mind whereby candidates are offered experiences within both coursework and field experiences that are explicitly aligned to the teacher standards—what all teachers should know and be able to do. This means that skills learned in classrooms—for example, evidence-based instructional practice—are then practiced.

Therefore, an essential and initial step toward strengthening and/or developing practice-based opportunities within preparation coursework and field experiences is to identify the critical content and pedagogy that teachers need to be learner ready from day one.

Identifying and establishing consistent expectations of instructional practices lies at the core of creating high-quality, deliberate, practice-based opportunities. Of course, these instructional practices will, to some degree, vary according to academic content and student populations; however, the selection of essential knowledge and practices that are supported by evidence and address identified district needs creates a solid foundation for what to teach within coursework and what opportunities that candidates should be provided to practice.

There are a number of sources that identify evidence-based practices, all of which are supported by varying degrees of evidence and are designed for teaching specific academic content to diverse student populations. ***Evidence-based practices*** are content specific, developmentally appropriate, and subgroup specific. The CEEDAR Center has developed literacy synthesis and corresponding innovation configurations (ICs), which, combined, summarize the research base and the essential components within the evidence-based practice. CEEDAR has completed these across 15 areas that are designed to promote the implementation of evidence-based instructional practices in teacher preparation activities. Furthermore, the ICs are designed to evaluate current teacher preparation and professional development by determining the extent to which evidence-based practices are taught, observed, and applied within teacher preparation coursework and field experiences and in professional learning. These ICs can be accessed free of charge at http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/.

Although the ICs are designed primarily to determine the extent to which preparation coursework and field experiences ensure that candidates are able to apply the practices with fidelity, the CEEDAR Center has also created a repository of resources that can be used or adapted when designing coursework, field experiences, or professional learning events. These resources, called *Course Enhancement Modules* (*CEMs*), are directly aligned to the evidence-based practices and essential components within the ICs and are useful tools to guide faculty and professional development providers in designing strong courses and field experiences. These resources can be accessed free of charge at http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/.

Content Innovation Configuration

- Scientifically Based Reading
- Classroom Organization and Behavior Management
- Evidence-Based Writing Instruction
- Evidence-Based Math Instruction
- Universal Design for Learning
- Leadership
- Technology
- Inclusive Service
- Significant Disabilities
- Sensory Impairments
- Culturally Responsive Instruction
- Secondary Transition
- Linking Assessment and Instruction

Following are additional resources for identifying evidence-based practices, which can be used in this step of the process.

- What Works Clearinghouse: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
- Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guides: http://ies.ed.gov/
- Best Evidence Encyclopedia: http://www.bestevidence.org/

- The IRIS Center, Evidence-Based Practice Summaries: http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ebp_summaries/
- University of Missouri Evidence-Based Intervention Network: http://ebi.missouri.edu/

Finally, there are practices—often described as ***high-leverage practices***—that are also grounded in evidence and are designed such that the capacity to implement with fidelity is developed in ALL teachers, regardless of content, grade, or student population taught. Frequently, high-leverage practices are used to teach evidence-based practices. Examples of high-leverage practices are available at TeachingWorks: http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices.

High-quality, practice-based opportunities can be developed and implemented only when common expectations of instructional practices are shared across programs and faculty and from preservice to inservice. Identifying common expectations requires inclusive and thoughtful dialogue, paired with strong facilitation, to ensure that a consensus on instructional practice expectations is reached. Without this consensus, high-quality, practice-based expectations defined in the brief and within this facilitation rubric cannot be achieved.

CEEDAR, in partnerships with states and EPPs, has developed facilitation processes to reach common consensuses in instructional practice expectations among stakeholders. Requests for this type of support may be made to http://www.ceedar.org. However, prior to engaging in the subsequent steps outlined in this framework, program faculty should identify the practices (evidence-based and/or high-leverage) that are aligned to local district needs and integral to candidate success. In the process of identifying these practices, candidates require frequent, repetitive, and scaffolded, practice-based opportunities in which the instructional practices are infused across all coursework and field experiences to the extent appropriate. Table 1 can be used to identify the instructional practices common across all programs.

Table 1: Evidence-Based/High-Leverage Instructional Practices

Program	Evidence-Based Practices	High-Leverage Practices

STEP 2 Assessment and Consideration of Program's Existing and Desired Approach to Creating High-Quality, Practice-Based Opportunities

Once the critical content and pedagogy that teachers need to know have been identified, the next step in the process involves assessing and considering the program's existing and desired approach to creating high-quality, practice-based opportunities. This goes beyond individual faculty assessment and moves into an entire program level because modification in one or two courses, and/or by one or two faculty, will not reach the level of desired—and needed—coordination to acquire the focus, coherence, and duration necessary to ensure ample, practice-based opportunities.

As indicated in the brief, three overarching features are fundamental to program design and to solidify the effectiveness of practice-based opportunities:

- **Focus** is 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** is 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** is 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.

To complete Step 2, program faculty will use the program assessment rubric in Table 2 to assess the degree to which the three overarching features are (or are not) integral to the program. This step requires a review of the entire program and cannot be based on one or two courses alone. Program faculty will begin by:

- Using the guiding questions to determine a quality indicator that is aligned to the program's approach.
- Identifying cases in which low- or medium-quality indicators for one or more of the three approaches may indicate a need for further examination and review of course syllabi to provide deeper analysis and reflection. If initial findings are valid, program faculty can proceed to Step 3. This analysis can be supported by the CEEDAR Center ICs by determining the extent to which evidence-based practices are addressed and the level of implementation that candidates are expected to employ.

Table 2: Program Assessment

Use the rubric and guiding questions presented in this table to consider the breadth of practice-based opportunities offered to candidates across their teacher preparation experience in the program.

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**			
Focus **Description:** Critical knowledge and skills essential to effective teaching are targeted across practice-based opportunities, coursework, and field experiences.	■ Have the teacher education faculty identified critical content and pedagogical practices as reflected in teacher standards, and have they reached a consensus on common expectations of instructional practice? ■ Are there demonstrated through-lines in instructional expectations across coursework and field experiences that are scaffolded to build upon content knowledge and skill level? ■ Are the expectations of practice grounded in evidence, and do they reflect practices for a broad range of students (e.g., typically developing learners, students with disabilities, English learners)? ■ Do the identified content and pedagogical practices support candidate capacity to operate effectively within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework?			

Quality Indicators (continued)				
		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**			
Duration **Description**: Candidates are offered sufficient opportunities to deepen their knowledge and to hone their practice across the program.	■ Has sufficient time been built into each course to offer candidates the opportunities they need to apply what they have learned? ■ Has sufficient time been built into the program—including in coursework and field experiences—to offer candidates the opportunities they need to apply what they have learned?			
Coherence **Description:** High-quality and highly structured, practice-based opportunities are coordinated across the program.	■ To what extent are opportunities to practice aligned with and coordinated across the breadth of the program, thus maintaining the through-line of expectations in content and pedagogical knowledge? ■ To what extent does the program's expectations of practice (content and pedagogical knowledge) align to local district needs and to expectations of practice in field-based settings (e.g., aligned observation rubrics, training for cooperating teachers)?			

STEP 3 Analysis of Practice-Based Opportunities

Step 3 involves engaging in analysis of individual, practice-based opportunities provided to candidates within a specific course or related to a certain content area. This activity reflects implementation levels similar to those found in the CEEDAR Center's ICs for course syllabi (http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/), which can be used to identify gaps in coursework and field-experience syllabi and expectations. This step builds upon the previous steps and aids in assessing the manner in which the expectations of content and pedagogical knowledge are reinforced in practice-based opportunities that integrate the essential features of high-quality practice experiences:

- Modeling
- Spaced learning
- Varied learning opportunities
- Coaching and feedback
- Analyzing and reflecting
- Scaffolding

To complete Step 3, program faculty will use the guiding questions to assess course syllabi, including the assignments and assessments, to determine the extent to which the essential features of high-quality, practice-based opportunities are implemented. Table 3 is a tool designed to support program faculty to complete this step.

Please keep in mind the results recorded in Table 2 so that any gaps noted in focus, duration, and coherence are considered within each course and field experience.

Table 3: Analysis of Practice-Based Opportunities

Essential Features of High-Quality, Practice-Based Opportunities		Questions for Consideration
Modeling (M)	Demonstration of how to design, enact, and evaluate instruction is provided to candidates through multiples means (e.g., faculty or peer demonstration, videos).	■ To what extent do teacher educators model effective strategies and routines for teacher candidates? ■ What opportunities are candidates provided to observe and analyze expert teachers participating in curriculum planning, teaching, collaborative data analysis, and analysis of instruction?
Spaced Learning (SP)	Candidates are provided sustained and repeated opportunities to practice knowledge and skills acquired in coursework. Opportunities are scaffolded to deepen knowledge and skills over time.	■ To what extent are practice-based opportunities provided immediately after knowledge and skills have been acquired? ■ To what extent does the program offer multiple, practice-based opportunities to practice skills? How well are these practice-based opportunities scaffolded to deepen expertise over time?
Varied Learning Opportunities (V)	Candidates are provided practice-based opportunities in which they are expected to employ strategies in varying contexts, with a diverse range of students, and under different leadership support.	■ To what extent are candidates offered practice-based opportunities that vary in context (e.g. service delivery models, school demographics), student populations, and under different leadership support?
Coaching and Feedback (C)	Practice-based opportunities integrate explicit coaching and feedback for candidates regarding their practice and provide them with the means for improvement.	■ Have coaching and feedback been established as an expectation within practice-based opportunities across coursework and field experiences? ■ Has training been provided for personnel who are expected to provide coaching and feedback? ■ Have processes been established (e.g., feedback guidance and protocols) for use within practice-based opportunities? ■ Do candidates gain practice in providing coaching and feedback within coursework and field experiences?
Analyzing and Reflecting (A)	Practice-based opportunities establish expectations and processes for candidates to analyze and reflect upon their practice, their impact on student learning, and any necessary modifications.	■ Is there a structure in place for engaging candidates in analysis and reflection and for adapting and modifying practice accordingly? ■ Are candidates provided opportunities to collaboratively analyze student learning data and to use these findings to revise processes, curriculum, and instruction? ■ Is there a structure in place to prompt and target candidate reflection on specific elements of evidence-based or high-leverage instructional practices?
Scaffolding (S)	Candidates are provided with guidance and supports for improving practice, both of which are incrementally removed to promote independence and foster the development of expertise over time.	■ Are candidates provided with more supports in the initial stages of their program, and are supports gradually removed as candidates progress and expertise is cultivated? ■ Is the program designed to gradually increase candidates' exposure to complex content, context, and student populations?

Instructions: In your review of coursework and field experience expectations, indicate to what extent specific coursework and field experiences integrate the essential features within practice-based opportunities by checking the essential features present as described on the preceding page; then select the integration level.

	Essential Features						Integration Level			
Course/Field Experience	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 Strengthening Efforts: Enhancing Practice-Based Opportunities in Coursework and Field Experiences

The final step in this process involves prioritizing the features of high-quality, practice-based opportunities that can be enhanced in coursework and/or field experiences. Teacher educators can use the quality indicators (Step 2) and implementation levels (Step 3) to select from a number of examples of practice-based opportunities that can be integrated into a specific course(s) or program. Although the listing of practice-based opportunities is not all-inclusive, it can serve as a starting point for teacher educators.

To complete Step 4, program faculty should review the practice-based opportunity examples across coursework and field experiences and identify which are appropriate for inclusion within course and field experience requirements. The program faculty should identify the examples that are most appropriate and that align with findings in Steps 1, 2, and 3 of this guide.

Once potential practice-based opportunities have been identified, program faculty can use Table 4 to create an action plan for individual courses and for the program as a whole.

Table 4: Enhancing Practice-Based Opportunities

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.				

Example	Action Plan for Implementation (continued) Identify course(s) and/or resources for implementation			
	Course(s)	Steps to Planning and Implementation	Timeline	Responsible Party
Case-Based Instruction Candidates analyze cases of instruction across various contexts as a method for advancing their conceptual understanding of new pedagogical content as well as their ability to analyze instruction and student learning in real-life teaching situations (Kagan, 1993).				
Virtual Simulation Candidates practice in virtual environments prior to teaching students in the classroom environment.				
Laboratory-Like Experiences Groups of teacher candidates closely observe content, student learners, and instruction from a remote viewing room, with opportunities to debrief before and after each session.				

FIELD-BASED				
	Action Plan for Implementation Identify course(s) and/or resources for implementation			
Example	Course(s)	Steps to Planning and Implementation	Timeline	Responsible Party
Coursework-Aligned, Field-Based Practice Opportunities Field-based placements that are closely aligned with program coursework. Candidates are provided opportunities to practice the knowledge and skills they acquired through coursework in authentic settings.				
Video Analysis Practice in which teachers' instructional experiences are captured on video and used as a tool for teacher educators to engage candidates in observation, analysis, and discussion concerning effective practice.				
Tutoring A structured opportunity to practice, such as teaching one on one, that allows candidates to practice teaching using newly acquired knowledge and skills within a controlled environment.				

Example	Action Plan for Implementation (continued) Identify course(s) and/or resources for implementation			
	Course(s)	Steps to Planning and Implementation	Timeline	Responsible Party
Lesson Study A collaborative, practice-based approach that involves teams of novice teachers in collaboratively (a) analyzing student data, academic standards, and curriculum; (b) planning a lesson based on that analysis; (c) implementing the instruction with assigned students; (d) analyzing the instruction and its impact on student learning; and (e) debriefing about the lesson and discussing next steps.				
Coaching A practice used within EPPs during field experiences wherein candidates are provided with coaching and feedback to improve their skill implementation.				

References

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Ronfeldt, M., & Reininger, M. (2012). More or better student teaching? *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(8), 1091–1106.

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