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# Impact of a Faculty Learning Community on Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration in Teacher Education

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# CEEDAR Center Partnership: Improving Educational Outcomes for SWDs

**Florida Blueprint Goal:**

- Provide guidance to IHEs to revise teacher prep programs to increase teachers' knowledge and skills for teaching SWDs

**UWF Goals:**

- Develop collaborative curriculum enhancement model

- Use the model to integrate UDL into teacher prep programs

# Context: UWF Demographics

- Gen and Special Ed housed in one department
  - Year 1:
    - Elementary and dual licensure programs
  - Year 2:
    - Secondary programs

- Considerations
  - Recent departmental leadership changes
  - Lead instructors assigned to each course
  - No systematic process for:
    - cross-course collaboration
    - collaborative curriculum enhancement

# Identifying and Reducing Barriers

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1. Accreditation fatigue ➡ Use faculty-led vs. imposed process

2. Program ownership vs. course ownership ➡ Facilitate shared responsibility using "critical-friend" approach

3. Faculty time constraints ➡ Create resources/supports

4. Faculty feel unprepared to teach UDL ➡ Provide UDL PD using mediated learning

5. Concern with overloading course with new content ➡ Facilitate understanding between UDL and course content

# UWF Collaborative Curriculum Enhancement Model
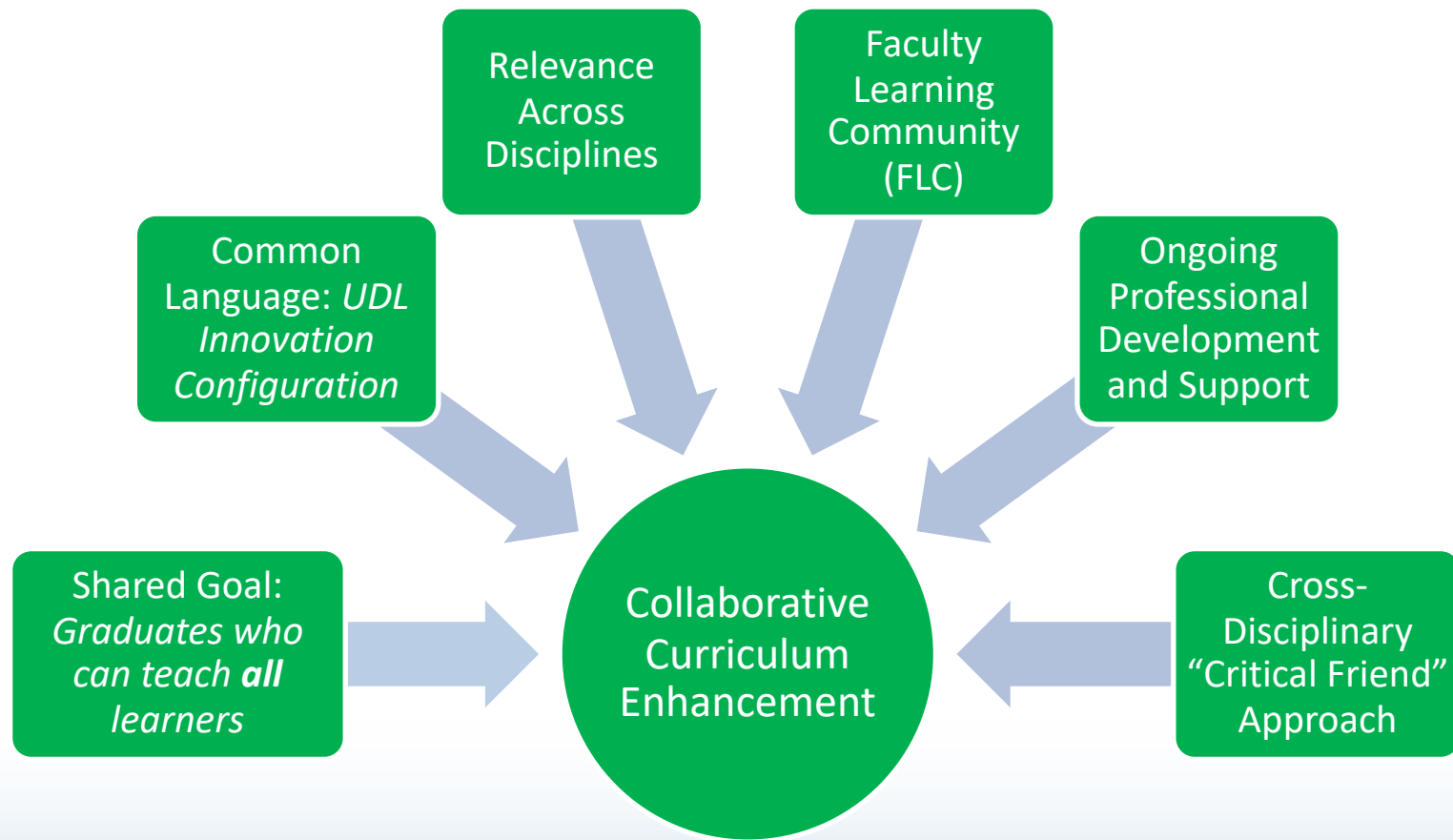
| Teacher Education Courses | UDL Innovation Configuration Essential Components | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 |
| **Applied Foundations of Education  (EDF 3234)** | L 1 | L 1 | L 1 | | | | | | |
| **ESOL Principles & Practices  (TSL 4080)** | L 2 | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 | | | | |
| Empowering Teachers to Teach ESOL Students  (TSL 4081) | L 2 | L 2 | L 1 | | L 2 | L 1 | L 2 | | |
| **Methods of Inclusion and Collaboration  (EEX 3070)** | L 2 | | L 2 | | | | L 2 | L 1 | |
| Educational Assessment  (EDE 4421, EEX 4221c) | | L 1 | | | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 | |
| Educational Management  (EDE 4302, EEX 4261) | | | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 | | | L 1 |
| Teaching Science in the Elementary School  (SCE 4310) | | L 2 | L 2 | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 | | L 1 |
| Social Studies for Elementary Teachers  (SSE 4113) | L 2 | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 | | L 2 | | L 1 |
| **Literacy Instruction for the Emergent Learner  (LAE 3314)** | L2 | L1 | L1 | | | L1 | | L2 | L1 |
| Literacy Instruction for the Intermediate Learner (RED 3310) | L2 | L2 | L1 | | L2 | L1 | L2 | L2 | L1 |
| Assessment & Differentiated Instruction in Reading  (RED 4542c) | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| Teaching Math in the Elementary School  (MAE 4310) | | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 | | L 2 | L 2 | |
| **Field Experience I  (EDE 3942, EEX 4832)** | L 2 | L 2 | L 2 | L 2 | L 3 | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 |
| Field Experience II  (EDE 4944, EEX 4833) | L 3 | L 3 | L 3 | | L 3 | L 2 | L 3 | L 3 | L 3 |
| Senior Seminar (EDG 4936) | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | |
| Student Teaching  (EDG 4940) | L 3 | L 3 | L 3 | | L 3 | L 3 | L 3 | L 3 | L 3 |

| Teacher Education – Secondary Courses | UDL Innovation Configuration Essential Components | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 |
| Applied Foundations (EDF 3234) | L1 | L1 | L1 | | | | | | |
| ESOL Principles & Practices (TSL 4080) | L 2 | L 2 | L 2 | | L 2 | | | | |
| Teaching Social Studies in Middle/Secondary (SSE 4324) | L1 | L2 | L2 | | L2 | | L1 | | |
| Teaching Math in Middle/Secondary (MAE 4320) | L1 | L2 | L2 | | L2 | | L1 | | |
| Teaching Science in Middle/Secondary (SCE 4320) | L1 | L2 | L2 | | L2 | | L1 | | |
| Teaching Language Arts in Middle/Secondary (LAE 3324) | L1 | L2 | L2 | | L2 | | L1 | | |
| K-12 Reading Instruction (EDG 3323) | L2 | L2 | L2 | L1 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 |
| Instruction, Management, Assessment – Secondary (ESE 4322) | L1 | L1 | L1 | | | L2 | L1 | | |
| Secondary Practicum (ESE 4940) | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | | L3 | | L3 |

# Problem Statement

About 80% of SWDs receive majority of instruction in Gen Ed (NCES, 2016)

Gen Ed Ts require better prep for teaching diverse student populations (Blanton, Boveda, Munoz & Pugach, 2017)

Preservice T Prep programs have attempted to collaborate to address this need with limited success (Brownell, Ross, Colon & McCallum, 2005)

# Addressing the Challenge

UDL provides comprehensive framework for meeting learning needs of all learners (Vitelli, 2015)

– UDL not seen as discipline specific by our faculty

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) shown to increase collaboration among faculty (Ward & Sylvester, 2012)

– UWF used FLC to increase collaboration across general and special education

– CEEDAR Innovation Configuration provided a common language across disciplines

# Faculty Perceptions of a FLC

Case Study

Research questions:

- What are faculty perceptions of the collaborative curriculum enhancement model?

- What are the impacts of a cross-disciplinary FLC on teacher education faculty?

# Participants and Data Sources

- Participants:
  - 8 out of 11 faculty from the FLC participated in the focus group.

- Focus group:
  - Facilitated by an outside interviewer
  - Open-ended survey and semi-structured interview (think-write-talk)
  - Audiotaped and transcribed by outside personnel

# Data Analysis (constant comparative analysis)

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| Round 1 | Research team worked independently in pairs to review and code data |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Round 2 | One member from each pair worked together to review and develop consensus codes |
| Round 3 | Consensus codes reviewed by research team, disagreements discussed, and consensus reached |
| Round 4 | Research team identified theme categories, subthemes and supporting excerpts |
| Round 5 | External auditor reviewed codes and provided feedback |
| Round 6 | Research team refined themes, sub-themes and supporting text based on feedback from external auditor |
| Round 7 | Member checking was conducted after completion of the written case |

# Theme 1: Empowered Participation
(Recruiting Faculty Interest)

- Non-threatening, voluntary

- Goal-oriented

- Credibility and trust

*I think it was the way they approached participants or volunteers so to speak. It was non threatening. It was not, "You have to join." It was, "Who wants to volunteer?" People felt like they wanted to be there.*

# Theme 2: Valued Process
(Maintaining Faculty Engagement)

- Usefulness

- Collaborative process

- Supportive conditions

*The best approach is collaborative with continuous support and consultation. When faculty make decisions about how to implement information into their own courses, it is more effective, more motivating, and better quality.*

# Theme 3: Improved Knowledge/Climate (Impact on Faculty)

- Pedagogical reflections
- Gained knowledge
- Cooperative power
- Improved climate for collaboration

*There is a positive impact on the faculty who participated in this project insofar as they came away with a greater sense of collaboration and common goals.*

# Group Discussion

- What are your ideas for engaging faculty in collaborative, cross-disciplinary curriculum reform?

- How can reform efforts be sustained and scaled up?

# Questions?

# References

Blanton, L. P., Boveda, M., Munoz, L. R., & Pugach, M. C. (2017). The affordances and constraints of special education initial teacher licensure policy for teacher preparation. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 40*(1), 77-91.

Brownell, M. T., Ross, D. D., Colón, E. P., & McCallum, C. L. (2005). Critical features of special education teacher preparation: A comparison with general teacher education. *The Journal of Special Education, 38*(4), 242-252.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Digest of Education Statistics, 2015 (NCES 2016-014), Chapter 2.

Vitelli, E. M. (2015). Universal design for learning: Are we teaching it to preservice general education teachers? *Journal of Special Education Technology, 30*(3), 166-178.

Ward, H. C. & Selvester, P. M. (2012). Faculty learning communities: Improving teaching in higher education. *Educational Studies, 38*(1), 111-121.

# Resources



- UWF UDL Resource Site
  - https://sites.google.com/a/uwf.edu/uwf-udl-faculty-learning-community/