

## Chapter 21

# Integrated Methods Block: Transforming Elementary Teacher Preparation Through the Integration of Content Methods and Early Clinical Experiences

**Kate Popejoy**

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA*

**Amy J. Good**

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA*

**Tracy Rock**

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA*

**Jean Payne Vintinner**

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA*

### ABSTRACT

*At a large, urban university, the clinically based preparation of undergraduate elementary education teacher candidates has been transformed. Following the Blue Ribbon Panel Report (NCATE, 2010), faculty created a more intense, integrated, and rigorous clinical experience for teacher candidates, which required more engagement, monitoring, and collaboration among methods faculty and PDS PK-6 schools, while immersing the candidates in a more realistic setting. This chapter describes how (a) methods curricula were reconfigured to include integrated clinical assignments, (b) opportunities were created for candidates to experience extended time in clinical classrooms, (c) university faculty liaisons were present at each PDS clinical school to provide on-site support, feedback, seminar instruction, accountability, and increased communication between the university and the school, (d) new evaluation instruments were implemented to gather and report teacher candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and (e) technology was utilized, allowing teacher candidates opportunity to present and reflect on experiences.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7305-0.ch021

## **INTRODUCTION**

At our large, urban, southeastern United States university of over 25,000 students, our undergraduate elementary teacher education program has recently improved how we deliver, monitor, evaluate, oversee and staff the clinically-based preparation of teacher candidates in the second semester of a four semester program. Elementary education teacher candidates now take the majority of their core methods courses in the second semester of the program. For many years, we as elementary education faculty had expressed a desire to create a more *integrated* and intense *early* clinical experience during the methods courses to provide a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for continued growth and development of our teacher candidates.

In our program, our elementary undergraduate teacher education candidates take part in a year-long internship during the final two semesters of the program. During the first semester of the year-long internship, students spend a minimum of one day per week in an assigned classroom while completing coursework on campus. During the second semester of the internship, students complete full-time student teaching in the same classroom. Based on program evaluation data collected from graduates and school-based partners and employers, the year-long internship is effective in providing sustained and meaningful clinical based experience; however, the data revealed that teacher candidate success could be enhanced with more systematic, coordinated and intense *early* clinical experiences, *prior* to the year-long internship. Based on these program evaluation data, faculty desire to enhance our candidates' existing early clinical experiences, the opportunity provided by our state to 're-vision' our program, and the call to action from the field of teacher education, we began the work of transforming our early clinical experiences.

Though we carefully examined and reconstituted our entire undergraduate elementary certification program, in this chapter we focus on how we restructured the early clinical experience of our teacher candidates during the core methods courses in the second semester. Following the Blue Ribbon Panel Report (NCATE, 2010), we felt compelled to create an early clinical experience that was more intense, integrated, rigorous, and meaningful for teacher candidates and that required more engagement, monitoring, and collaboration among methods faculty and PK-6 schools. In this article, we will describe how we accomplished the following goals:

1. Reconfigured methods curricula to include integrated clinical assignments across methods courses.
2. Created opportunities for students to experience extended time in clinical classrooms.
3. Organized university faculty liaisons at each clinical school to provide on-site support, feedback, seminar instruction, accountability, and increased communication between the university and the school.
4. Developed new evaluation instruments used by university and clinical faculty to gather and report teacher candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions during the clinical experience.
5. Utilized technology to allow teacher candidates to present, seek connections, and reflect on their clinical work.

## **BACKGROUND**

Across the United States, teacher education programs are called to action to transform the preparation of teachers through improved school-based clinical experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2005; National

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/integrated-methods-block/215577](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/integrated-methods-block/215577)

## Related Content

---

### Evidence-Based Transition Practices: Implications for Local and Global Curriculum

James L. Soldner, Dimity Peter, Shahrzad Sajadi and Maria Paiewonsky (2019). *Global Perspectives on Inclusive Teacher Education* (pp. 98-119).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/evidence-based-transition-practices/222677](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/evidence-based-transition-practices/222677)

### Are You the New Dishwasher?

Denise Nicole Lara and Delia M. Carrizales (2022). *Teacher Reflections on Transitioning From K-12 to Higher Education Classrooms* (pp. 234-249).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/are-you-the-new-dishwasher/301952](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/are-you-the-new-dishwasher/301952)

### The Role of Administrators in Recruiting, Retaining, and Respecting Early Childhood Educators: Creating a Culture Where Teachers Feel Valued

Vicki L. Luther (2020). *Professional and Ethical Consideration for Early Childhood Leaders* (pp. 71-91).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-role-of-administrators-in-recruiting-retaining-and-respecting-early-childhood-educators/256286](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-role-of-administrators-in-recruiting-retaining-and-respecting-early-childhood-educators/256286)

### Building Urban Pre-Service Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills through Digital Poetry Collaborations

Jody Polleck and Jason Wirtz (2014). *Literacy Enrichment and Technology Integration in Pre-Service Teacher Education* (pp. 37-56).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/building-urban-pre-service-teachers-pedagogical-knowledge-and-skills-through-digital-poetry-collaborations/91899](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/building-urban-pre-service-teachers-pedagogical-knowledge-and-skills-through-digital-poetry-collaborations/91899)

### Technology-Enhanced Classroom to Enhance Critical Thinking Skills: Teachers' Perspectives

Alice Omariba (2019). *Handbook of Research on Promoting Higher-Order Skills and Global Competencies in Life and Work* (pp. 225-244).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-enhanced-classroom-to-enhance-critical-thinking-skills/208601](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-enhanced-classroom-to-enhance-critical-thinking-skills/208601)