


Chapter 3

Innovations in Alternate Route Teacher Preparation: Hybrid Models and Reflective Practice for TESOL Educators

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ABSTRACT

The Traditional alternate route teachers attend in-person, evening courses while teaching full-time in P-12 schools. Without student teaching, they acquire skills while juggling teaching, family, and other responsibilities. The shift to hybrid and virtual models helps programs support teachers better through reflection, video technology, and surveys. These innovations aim to improve teacher preparation, enhance support systems, and ensure alternate route teachers succeed in K-12 school classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

There are four major areas we will cover in this chapter. First, there is the challenge of being an alternate route teacher. The alternate route teacher must balance coursework with teaching full time in a P-12 school, completing complex coursework while meeting rigorous school district and state evaluation system requirements.

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Second, the shift from face-to-face to virtual options in modalities like hybrid models is on the rise, allowing alternate route candidates to meet the needs of their school demands and coursework within a more flexible schedule. Third, the integration of reflection in alternate route coursework ensures that the demands of the hybrid course are met proficiently and provides the teacher with the guidance necessary to continually improve. Lastly, future innovation in programmatic design, like the hybrid model for TESOL alternate route teachers, will continue to reshape the alternate route experience. The chapter will offer 4 recommendations for doing that at the university or college level.

This chapter begins with a review of how Alternate Route programs have evolved over time. Next, we focus on the transition of our University's TESOL Alternate Route Program from traditional face-to-face to a Hybrid model that includes support through in-person mentoring and the use of video observations to provide instructional feedback. The goal of this programmatic shift is to increase opportunities for TESOL Alternate Route teachers to utilize reflective practices by interacting in a community of practice (Device-Rozental & Clark, 2024), resulting in increased outcomes for public school students. With this innovative approach, our curriculum has been revised to include opportunities for reflection, the inclusion of a Hybrid delivery system, and a mentoring component. In the future, we will use post-surveys and focus groups to encourage teacher candidates to work alongside faculty to assess outcomes that focus on developing a quality TESOL teacher preparation program. Our final goal is to support novice English language teachers to maintain a work-life balance while equipping them with strategies to support their multilingual students.

ALTERNATE ROUTE TEACHING BACKGROUND

There is something to be said for a calm, well-prepared teacher standing at the classroom door, welcoming students. Even with the most novice of teachers, 30 seconds is all it takes for a student to sense whether the teacher is prepared and ready to lead them into the learning environment. Alternate Route teachers, who become teachers of record with no formal training prior to employment, often describe their experience as “being thrown into the deep end” of the educational pool without preparation.

Alternate Route teachers are teacher candidates for certification who have not been exposed to traditional student teaching clinical experiences and begin their professional journeys behind teachers who have had four years of instruction and practice in a traditional education preparation program (Cañal III, et. al., 2024). Therefore, innovation is required to provide the alternate route candidate with a rapidly delivered, multifaceted support system that includes mentorship, access to

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