

IMSEP Math and Science Methods Summit August 14, 2009

Concurrent Sessions (2): Essential Features of a Teacher Preparation Program

The following is a combined summary of the 2 sessions (notes from Cherin Lee and the ethnographer assigned to these sessions, as well as the post-it chart papers produced at the sessions)

The small groups selected from the following segments of teacher preparation:

Foundational
Instruction and Assessment
Clinical Experiences

Foundational

We need to reorganize the basics – “rethinking” is needed

- Rethink the “foundation” ideas – are they relevant? (eg. do we need Schools and American Society?)
- The relevant (current) issues are: cultural awareness
gender and learning awareness
needs of English language learners (ELL)

This means we need:

- an understanding of the context of teaching
- a deep understanding of students and the nature of learning
- the basics of learning theories – some history of aspects of learning theories and what we have learned from them to assess the relevancy of the theories in today’s educational system.
- more differentiating lessons and teaching styles
- the (current) context of American Education

Need both vertical and horizontal articulation – teachers have less freedom now (than they had prior to 21st century educational initiatives – e.g. the Iowa Core) and need to be prepared for making the connections at grade level/in subject area as well as across the educational system.

Need more field experiences (see clinical experiences)

Instruction and Assessment

The culture of teaching has changed – teaching and content are not separate, they need to be integrated

Consider

An experiential course doing relevant science (though the word “research” was not used)
Cross-curricular applications and integration

What should be included:

Technology – should be integrated

- it should be used in teacher preparation classes

Experiences as learners should be relevant – include application and integration

Concept of pedagogy

Start with big ideas

Use discovery - create a sense of discovery in preservice teachers

Get and use resources

Assessment in teacher preparation courses

Ask the correct questions – and teach our students to ask questions

Assess higher level thinking skills

Use authentic assessment

Use formative assessment

Clinical Experiences

Field experience is not ‘extra’ – it is embedded in the program

Levels of Clinical experiences:

1. Intro to education (observe, some assisting, etc.) – this needs to precede any methods courses because preservice teachers need to experience the classroom before they take methods (range was given: 6-45 hrs.)

2 and 3. Should be tied to “methods” courses (recommendations varied from 24 - 80 hrs per level) - alternative would be 7-8 week block

4. Student Teaching OR consider a 5th year internship

Things to include in clinical experiences:

- Reflective videotaping

We need:

- Professional development for cooperating teachers

Things to be considered:

Differences in post-secondary institutions (private/public, large/small, etc.)

The vision needs to reflect the logistics (eg. students’ schedules)

Make methods (and other courses) more embedded in K-12 classrooms

Overall comments:

Post-secondary teacher preparation needs to reflect where the teachers are going – into K-12 schools (now/future) – this means certain features like the Iowa Core, including 21st Century skills, need to be integrated into and embedded in the teacher preparation program.

Certain things are dictated (by legislation) – therefore “we” (those of us in Teacher preparation) need to influence policy. We need to work with legislators to rationalize the foundations.