

Substantive Collaboration in a Learning To Teach System

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Historically, teacher preparation programs have generally been the domain of institutions of higher education (IHEs), with a few teacher preparation programs being offered through district internships. IHEs who offer teacher preparation programs have frequently maintained some level of interaction with the P-12 community, often through perfunctory advisory boards. However, there have been few examples where true partnerships exist between IHEs and P-12-based education establishments that lead to the conceptualization, specific design, articulation, and delivery of teacher preparation programs. In some cases the idea of close working partnerships has been an anathema to both the IHEs and those in the P-12 arena including school districts, consortia, and county offices of education. Many of these entities see themselves as having clearly mandated or defined roles that, in their thinking, precludes joint planning with educational partners. There have been notable exceptions to the distinct division of responsibility perspective, but generally preservice teacher preparation and advanced degrees have been thought to be the exclusive domain of IHEs and professional

development and new teacher support and assessment programs (e.g., Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) induction programs) have been considered the exclusive domain of education entities outside the university.

The newly developed *Learning To Teach System* for the preparation of teachers in California and the accompanying standards (referred to as the *2042 Standards* since they were derived from Senate Bill 2042 [SB 2042] passed by the California Legislature in 1998) have changed the way some California educators perceive the differentiated roles for preparing California's new educators. Many IHEs and their partners in the P-12 community seem to have embraced the notion that SB 2042 is a *system* of preparation that, to work effectively, must involve subject matter preparation of would-be teachers, preparation in pedagogical knowledge and skill, integration of those into the first years of teaching, and have that early teacher preparation build toward advanced preparation. Ongoing professional development may focus on teacher needs and involve preparation for national board certification, advanced degrees, specialist credentials, or further preparation in pedagogy. Another major emphasis is professional development programs designed to increase student performance in the academic content areas (e.g., AB 466, the mathematics and reading professional development initiative).

The new perspective of SB 2042 seems to have led many IHEs and P-12 entities to the point of being anxious to work together to implement the new *system* of preparing teachers. This is consistent with Goodlad's notion of *simultaneous renewal*. This renewal provides the teacher candidate with extensive experiences in schools where effective pedagogy is modeled. Public school faculty and faculty from higher education institutions work together, to inform and improve their own practice. This desire to work together is evidenced by the large number of individuals from both IHEs and the P-12 community who have elected to attend statewide workshops and the specific questions they ask during those sessions that have led to the conclusion about their desire to work together in the preparation of teachers. However, it is also evident that neither entity is always clear about how to proceed in forming meaningful, collaborative relationships with each other.

There are those who are fearful that if teacher educators become too cozy with their P-12 partners that they may sacrifice the integrity of their beliefs and one of the partners may dominate the other. Our experience in a substantial partnership over more than two years has fully supported the notion that through a partnership everyone gains, no entity dominates the conversation or actions, and that there are no losers and no partner need sacrifice any degree of integrity. With SB 2042 require-

ments, teacher education is no longer the sole purview of IHEs, but is clearly a partnership among subject matter preparation, preservice teacher education, and induction programs.

It appears there are some basic understandings about collaboration that everyone who wishes to form a partnership to deliver an articulated, coherent *system* of teacher preparation needs to consider. The collaborative partners need to reach agreement about a common goal or goals of their efforts to work together. The idea of a partnership between institutions of higher education and induction programs was designed to assist the transition from the previous way of doing business where there was a distinct separation between preservice teacher preparation and induction to an integrated system of preparation as called for in SB 2042. This local partnership, designed to make the philosophical and pragmatic transition to SB 2042, was named the Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team (Transition Team). When the team first met it was absolutely clear that the focus of the team was to create a system that would appear to teacher education candidates as being seamless and articulated in all aspects from subject matter preparation through at least the beginning years of teaching. It was decided early in the process that this *system* should be designed to avoid duplication of content at the various stages of teacher development. It was also decided that content presented at any stage in the preparation system would be intentionally built upon information or practice the candidate received at an earlier stage in his or her development. To build a system for teacher preparation, all of the participants recognized, as Mostert (1998) has pointed out, that by working together

...(1) important information will not be overlooked or omitted, (2) unimportant information will be ignored, (3) all parties involved in the collaboration will share the same information, (4) such sharing will enhance collaborative understanding and reduce misunderstanding, (5) the broadest initial approaches to the [building process] will be fostered, (6) duplicate efforts be reduced; (7) everyone involved will understand the function of all other collaborators, and (8) information will flow more freely among all participants. (p 19)

Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team History

Historically, previous partnerships helped to promote the successes of the Transition Team's work. Examples of these partnership efforts include: Senate Bill 1422's regional pre-meetings with P-12 and university partners, existing inter-agency professional relationships and outreach efforts.

In the spring of 2001 a representative from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) presented an overview of the implications of SB 2042 to the educational communities of Butte County and other surrounding counties in northeastern California. BTSA induction program directors attended representing all of northeastern California. In addition, multiple representatives from the California State University, Chico (CSUC) teacher preparation programs attended.

At the conclusion of this meeting, the decision was made to continue and expand the conversation. The Butte County Office of Education initiated a follow up meeting that was held at CSU Chico to discuss the implications of SB 2042. Approximately twenty educators convened on May 1, 2001, including BTSA induction program directors, teacher preparation department chairs, numerous representatives from the university, and the Butte County Office of Education. After a two hour discussion regarding the implications of the new legislation, the group decided to continue meeting with a smaller working group in order to concentrate the discussions on transitioning to the new credential system. The director of the Butte County BTSA Induction Program agreed to facilitate the meetings. The group made up of three BTSA induction program directors, the CSU Chico Chair of the Professional Studies in Education Department (PSED), and the Chair of the Department of Education became the core group of the Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team.

Mid way through our meeting cycle the team was expanded to include the Director of Personnel from Glenn County Office of Education, for linkage to credentialing and human resource issues, representatives from Simpson College, and the new director for the Tri-County BTSA Induction Program. In July 2002, the newly appointed Director of the Education Services Center at CSU Chico joined the group.

Monthly meetings ensued, typically lasting four hours each. In August 2001 the team traveled to Sacramento to attend together the two day state sponsored Title 2 meeting. As of August 2003, the team has met twenty-five times for a total of over one hundred hours. Some topics of discussion included:

- ◆ What's working at the preservice stage?
- ◆ What is the course work at the preservice level?
- ◆ What is the outcome of the induction period?
- ◆ A careful look at collecting data.
- ◆ A look at the continuum of service.

- ◆ Define the end product of our work.
- ◆ What does this system look like?
- ◆ Define steps and timeline.
- ◆ A SB 2042 Summary report.
- ◆ Relationship between the preservice and induction program standards.
- ◆ How to manage / provide professional development for the beginning educator?
- ◆ Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) and Individual Induction Plan (IIP) alignment.
- ◆ Dissemination of the Transition Team activities at Cal Council on the Education of Teachers, statewide BTSA director's meeting, and CCTC Title II conference.
- ◆ Relationship to Title 2 — No Child Left Behind.

Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team Accomplishments

The Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team began the work by verbally sharing the experiences preservice teachers would have at California State University, Chico and Simpson College, Redding. This was followed by conversations about the induction experiences that beginning teachers have during their participation in the Butte County, Tri-County, and North State respective BTSA induction programs. Discussions ensued about similarities and distinctions of work, and the relationships between preservice and induction. As the Chair of the CSU Chico Professional Studies in Education Department often mentions, it has been the "good will" of the Transition Team members that has moved the process forward. The team often enjoys working lunches together and sits on one another's advisory boards. As the Transition Team's work has continued there has been gradual development of tools that represent the relationships between agencies, the roles of the beginning educator, the university, the induction system, and the employing districts throughout the credential system.

The Transition Team began steps to align the preservice standards and the induction standards for the purpose of creating a seamless transition. This model worked well with some of the standards that flowed together, but led to difficulty when there did not seem to be a match between elements. Elements lacking a match were put aside for

the time. Currently, content experts in the northeastern California region and CSU Chico faculty are attending Transition Team meetings to share knowledge connecting the additional standard elements that were not originally matched in the process.

A second tool drafted by the team outlined the common standards between preservice and induction and the role of various stakeholders specific to the elements of the induction standards. This resource gave the team a visual representation for the initial thinking about the relationships and responsibilities between each partner, BTSA, IHEs, districts, and beginning teachers in the induction system.

A model was developed to align preservice standards and induction standards with the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* [CSTP] (CCTC & CDE, 1997). This alignment proved to be even more difficult as the preservice elements did not follow the CSTP as closely as the induction standards.

Another important product developed by the team was the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlined the roles and responsibilities of the preservice entities and the induction programs.

The process has taken time and patience. The team has not been pushed by product development, but rather the products have developed as a result of the conversations. The collaboration and collegial sharing has actually been the most important “product” of the time and effort spent. The willingness of the individuals involved and the commitment to letting the process evolve has resulted in a collaborative model between institutions of higher education and BTSA induction programs. It has allowed the team to build a learning to teach continuum for all new teachers in the northeastern part of California.

The Transition Team recognized that in building an articulated *system*, that none of the entities involved lost its unique role, identity or individualism. Respect was established early for the specialized contributions that each partner member could make to the collective effort to build a teacher preparation system. In order to maintain the identity of and respect for the separate entities there had to be a significant amount of good will and a clear intent of meeting the collective goals of the partnership. There also needed to be support and appropriate expectations expressed by administrative leadership of the IHE as well as the P-12 partner institutions. The Transition Team had the administrative support from both the IHE and county offices of education. This was evidenced by dedicated time and in-kind contributions to assist the collaboration. BTSA induction program directors attended monthly Transition Team meetings and reported the activities of those meetings to local advisory boards.

The collaborative effort has been marked by a consistently positive attitude on the part of all partners. There is a continuing willingness to work constructively toward the common goals of the Transition Team. Each of the partners has demonstrated an enthusiasm for learning from others and an understanding of the unique perspective(s) that each partner brings to the table. There has been a commitment to assisting each other fulfill their specific role in the preparation of teachers, both initial preparation and induction.

The team continues to meet to begin the development of data gathering instruments that will give feedback to all members involved in the learning to teach continuum. Our learning continues and collaboration between all the partners grows with a goal for creating a well articulated process for new teachers.

Impacts of Collaboration

A central theme of the SB 2042 mandate is that IHE faculty, school district personnel, and professional development support providers work together to establish a seamless process by which preservice teacher candidates move from teacher preparation to induction into the teaching profession. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Preparation Programs* and the *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Induction Programs* articulate the expectation of a clearly defined relationship among the three entities that are now held responsible for teacher certification. The conceptual model for this type of triune collaboration is quite easy to grasp, but implementing it in the real world of parochial educational niches, historic institutional isolationism, and economic competition may seem like trying to pick up a wet noodle using three fingers — “I can straddle the thing, but getting it to where I can pick it up is slippery at best.” The Transition Team members seem to have found a way to effectively handle the “noodle” and achieved a substantial level of collaboration worthy of note in several areas, including:

1. The team members have acknowledged the need to clearly understand each other’s former paradigm of vocabulary, processes, and legal obligations and to consider how the specific elements might translate into a new SB 2042 prototype. One of the first potential obstacles to collaboration had to do with parochial educational niches. The IHEs and BTSA induction programs have independently prepared and mentored teachers without always knowing what the other was doing. Lack of knowledge about the “other’s” working culture is common, resources are

in short supply, and time to plan and implement is often scarce. No matter how much policymakers mandate simultaneous renewal in a system of teacher preparation, renewal will only happen when those who are leaders in schools and teacher preparation institutions have the willingness and commitment to engage in dialogue and action. The Transition Team formulated an effective long-term partnership committed to a coherent system by which preservice teachers and beginning teachers could experience a continuum of professional growth experiences from the moment of introduction to educational theory through student teaching, induction, and professional development. What was originally conceived to be an ad hoc committee for the purpose of analyzing and implementing a transition plan has spawned the realization that it would be in the best interest of the preservice and induction teachers to establish a self-sustaining entity that could continue to address their preparation, certification, and professional development.

2. The Transition Team meetings have become a venue for creative thinking, collegial brainstorming, and a sort of calibration of practical solutions to the challenges presented by the realities of SB 2042 legislation. The level of collegial trust and respect for each other has fostered an atmosphere conducive to the planning and implementation of how best to meet the needs of our collective clients—preservice and inservice teachers. BTSAs induction Programs and IHE transition team members have recently expressed appreciation of the value derived from conversations that have helped fashion concept maps, drafts of forms, policies, and MOUs for members' respective programs.

3. The Transition Team has engendered a common approach to addressing the preservice and induction standards, which are the essence of the SB 2042 reform, toward the increased likelihood that preservice candidates and induction teachers within the service area of the Transition Team's institutions will have common pre-professional and professional experiences.

4. The team has begun to look at additional funding sources to support this collaborative model. The Transition Team sees the model that has been created as one instrumental to the development of a regional professional development system. In northeastern California the rural nature of most districts requires additional resources to meet the needs of the beginning teacher.

Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team Future Activities

The Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team spending the last twenty-seven months collaborating has fulfilled its two original purposes:

1. To learn about the participating teacher expectations of each organization, IHE and BTSA induction program; and
2. As a team, develop a coherent three-year preparation program for potential educators.

As the team has reached its initial goals and begun to establish new outcomes, both preservice preparation programs and the induction programs have begun the implementation of the newly approved SB 2042 programs. Even after accomplishing its initial goals, the Northeastern California SB 2042 Transition Team has decided to continue its work beyond the transition period. The continued goal of this group is to implement a coherent regional 'Learning to Teach' *system*. Given the mandate of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation and the state response to that mandate, the Transition Team has more challenges ahead.

◆ The Transition Team will: examine the curriculum sequencing during the three year preparation period and assess the professional development activities that are needed to meet the new induction standards, specifically Standards 15-20. These standards present an opportunity for institutions of higher education (IHEs) and induction programs to collaborate on professional development opportunities that will meet the needs of the teacher candidate's professional credential. Each induction program will complete a professional development needs assessment that will identify topics that may best be supported by on-line activities. The IHEs will assist in creating on-line modules for the participating teachers that will address the areas that the Induction programs will need to support the induction program standards 15-20 requirements.

◆ The Transition Team has evolved into a permanent collaborative entity, the Northeastern California Teacher Education Collaborative (NECTEC). NECTEC has been established to accomplish a variety of tasks, foremost of which will be to assist Local Educational Agencies (LEA) as they implement the new SB 2042 credentialing responsibilities. NECTEC as an organization is forging new relationships with existing agencies that are responsible for initial teacher preparation, induction, and professional development.

Collaboration has been built on strong relationships, good will, and the belief that being involved in a common project deepens understandings and knowledge across institutions. This enduring principle has crossed institutional boundaries, allowing the sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices to support the successful and seamless educational experience from preservice to induction for beginning teachers in the northeastern region of California.

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