

“How Can I Help?”
Secondary Education Classrooms
as Sites for Service and Learning

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Introduction

Teacher education necessitates rich, generative experiences for up-and-coming teachers in working classrooms. Written by two English Education faculty members, this article discusses our efforts to revise the clinical, field-based components of our courses so to more commonly yield such experiences. Specifically, we aimed to infuse field-work with more rigor and build better coordination between the work of the university students, herein referred to as teacher candidates, and the needs of collaborating classroom teachers. To this end, we took two key steps. First, we designed service-learning assignments that ask candidates to contribute in secondary classrooms in needed and specific ways. Second, we fostered more informed relationships with the collaborating teachers working with the teacher candidates. In the narrative below, we review these steps, primarily by analyzing documents we used when communicating with the teacher candidates and the cooperating teachers. We ultimately investigate the genesis of our initiative to improve our clinical program, the planning strategies used, and accounts of how the work has unfolded.

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We share an analysis of how the clinical aspects of our courses have evolved with two purposes in mind. First, we hope to foster transparency among teacher educators about how change occurs in teacher education programs. We make ourselves vulnerable by talking about the weaknesses in our previous pedagogy and how they were revised because we hold the belief that such vulnerability is educative. Second, in reviewing the most up-to-date version of our teaching, we present what we have experienced as a generative clinical model in teacher education. It illustrates our commitment to ensuring growth and support for teacher candidates and practicing teachers.

Guiding Concerns

In developing our clinical model, we hoped to address some larger, contextual dilemmas impacting classroom teachers and teacher candidates.

Teacher Concerns

A national trend has emerged towards scapegoating K-12 teachers for the under-performance of our country's schools (Kumashiro, 2012). Disproportionate blame is placed on teachers in the United States for the low standing of their students on international tests of reading, math, and science. As professors of education and former secondary school teachers, we recognize the lack of balance and basic fairness when elected officials and pundits press for policies like removing teachers who cannot meet unrealistic performance standards or posting in media outlets teacher performance “grades” determined by dubious measurements.

As teachers are both overly pressured and critiqued for their inability to make change as well as often ill-supported to develop as professionals, they are hampered in their ability to implement critical teaching techniques such as learner-centered instruction (Paris & Combs, 2006), differentiated instruction and backwards design (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). In these models of curriculum enactment, students actively direct and participate in instruction that is aligned with high goals and that takes into account student differences. Instead of teaching in these ways, teachers are pressured to spend bloated amounts of time preparing for standardized tests and meeting pre-determined standards in surface ways—processes that too often ignore teacher and student knowledge (Lipman, 2007).

Given these pressures, teachers are inclined to leave their placements shortly after assuming the role of lead teacher. Typical of public schools in large urban centers, the ones in which we most often place teacher candidates face tremendous challenges of educating high-need

populations without teachers who stay in the field long enough to fully develop their pedagogical skills. A study by the Research Alliance for New York City schools, for example, found that “27 percent of middle school teachers left their school within one year of having entered; 55 percent left within three years; and 66 percent left within five years” (Marinell & Coca, 2013).

And yet, we recognized that in some respects our original approach to clinical fieldwork was another form of “piling on” to already besieged teachers. We were counting on middle and high school faculty to open their classrooms, model excellent teaching practices for our teacher candidates, and to do so as a professional courtesy. Like many government officials and community leaders, we were asking teachers to do more but offering little in return. The need to rectify this has been at the heart of our revised approach to fieldwork.

Teacher Candidate Concerns

Echoing arguments surrounding teacher assessment and accountability, public policy makers and educational leaders debate the qualities of ideal teacher education programs. University-based certification programs, similar to the one in which we work, have been criticized as ineffective in preparing teacher candidates for the demands of the classroom and remote from practice, and in turn, policy makers have enacted alternative routes that generally expect beginning teachers to complete few preparatory experiences and learn on-the-job (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teach for America offers a well-known alternative route, and members of this program become teachers of their own classrooms after a summer training program. The authors of this article are familiar with and concerned about both models; we entered the field through alternative certification programs and now teach in a university-based certification program.

Specifically, our past and current experiences have shaped our belief that teacher preparation programs tend to either underestimate the value of experiential clinical experiences that ask candidates to impact students or overestimate candidates’ readiness to make meaningful contributions to teaching and student learning in K-12 classrooms. University-based models can underestimate the importance of engaged clinical work when they do not fully utilize field experiences as vehicles for teacher development and defer in-depth clinical work, namely that occurring during student teaching, until program’s end. Teacher candidates in such programs enter student teaching without having had substantial supervised practice. Emphasis is on “learning about instructional methods and less about learning to enact such practices fluidly” (Grossman,

Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009, p. 275), distancing candidates from the expectation that they impact students.

In comparison, alternative certification programs face the problem of expecting new teachers to immediately perform as expert teachers without thorough preparation and predominantly learn about teaching while teaching. Here, the expectations of how they can impact students as beginning teachers is too high. Alternative certification routes are critiqued for “insufficient clinical experiences prior to becoming the teacher of record” and, concerning their education course work, an “abbreviated curriculum that leaves too few opportunities to learn how to teach diverse learners” (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008, p. 2). New teachers are either asked to learn too little or too much through their own teaching, and preparatory clinical experiences are lacking across the board.

Shaping Teacher Candidates through Clinical Experiences

Schools of education have attempted to rectify problems with the clinical components of their programs by creating more extensive clinical training in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2000). We aim to follow this trajectory and create opportunities for teacher candidates to be meaningfully involved in classroom life in a way that is appropriate for their positions as teachers-in-training. As informed by our own teaching experiences, we concur that “the move from discussing what one might do as a teacher to actually taking on the role of the teacher is a critical one, allowing novices to assume the role and persona of the teacher while receiving feedback on their early efforts to enact a practice” (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009, p. 283). When our candidates are afforded meaningful opportunities to assume “the role of the teacher” in the presence of other cooperating teachers or mentors who offer feedback both during and after the lessons, their confidence and teaching skills grow.

Furthermore, we are encouraged by accounts of the importance of fieldwork, and specifically service-learning, in pre-service teacher education. When teacher candidates complete service-learning projects, they seek to be of service to cooperating teachers and their students while making use of and sharpening their pedagogical knowledge. A review of literature on service-learning in teacher education speaks of the role that service projects can play to socialize teachers in the key ethical and civic components of the field, prepare them to adapt instruction so that it meets the needs of students with varying interests and abilities, and create opportunities for them to commit to the profession and advocate for their students (Root, 1997). These findings draws from studies of teacher candidates completing service work in a variety of settings includ-

ing human service agencies, a children's museum, a residential center for adolescents, and schools. Another study, focused on preservice teachers' experiences as writing tutors in a local community center, highlights how service-learning contexts can create spaces for teacher candidates to experience tensions between the candidates' assumed goals and students' needs (Kelley, Hart, & King, 2007). If these tensions are "untangled" during reflective exercises, teacher candidates can learn to negotiate their goals while meeting students' needs—negotiations that are similar to those they will be expected to make once they become professional teachers (p. 106). These findings spotlight ways that clinical, service-learning assignments prepare teacher candidates for the career of teaching.

Revising Fieldwork in One Teacher Education Program

Our program resides in a school of education within a large public university located in a major urban center. Many of our candidates are undergraduates pursuing a BA in English with a concentration in secondary education and initial certification in grades 7-12. The other candidates are graduate students who have already earned bachelor degrees in English and are now seeking an MA in English education and initial certification in English for grades 7-12. Like the city it serves, our student body is highly diverse in regards to race, ethnicity, and age, as well as the level of financial and family support students receive for college and graduate level studies. Within this diverse body are a series of teacher candidates who enroll in our program after being educated in the city's public schools, and they eventually assume teaching positions in the very same system.

Given the struggles the urban teachers face and the likelihood of beginning teachers leaving their positions after just a few years of teaching, a central goal of our program is to prepare candidates for sustained, outstanding service in urban schools. We believe that high-quality preservice field experiences are crucial for ensuring that candidates stay for extended tenures in urban public school classrooms. We also recognize that the quality of field experiences is largely dependent on the time and effort of cooperating teachers who in addition to their already enormous job demands are now facing federal and state mandates to improve student performance on Common Core aligned standardized tests. It is clear that we cannot ask more of these teachers without offering them anything in return.

The efforts we will describe herein to revise clinical, field-based components of our courses can be viewed as small, but potentially important steps in offering concrete, professionalized support to cooperating

teachers and providing teacher candidates with the kind of pre-service experiences that will in turn enable them to thrive in urban classrooms. Our clinical model asks teacher candidates to practice the methods discussed in their course work while addressing specific needs and interests of the classroom teachers, rather than simply observing, helping out in random ways, or bearing full responsibility for the classroom. Specifically, since 2009, we have focused on two major changes: (1) centering service-learning projects in fieldwork experiences that require the candidates to be of real service to the cooperating teachers and students and (2) fostering informed dialogue between the university faculty and the cooperating teachers. Drawing from course syllabi, email exchanges with cooperating teachers, and other texts used to support our revised clinical program, we review how these changes have unfolded below. We describe initiatives that we jointly pursued as well as the work of an individual course instructor, Shira Epstein—one of the authors of this article—who implemented service-learning projects during a teaching methods course.

Service-Learning Projects

As of Spring 2011, service-learning projects were enacted in four courses in our English education program: Teaching of Reading; Teaching of Writing; English Methods; Curriculum Development. In each of these courses that we teach, teacher candidates provide authentic services to classroom teachers and students. For example, in the Teaching of Reading class the candidates assess students' reading skills, strategies, and habits by facilitating a series of reading assessments (e.g., running record, think-aloud protocol). They then communicate these findings to the teacher and work with the student to address areas of need, evidenced by the reading assessments. The assignments ask the candidates to use their developing teaching skills to be of service to classroom teachers and students.

Our visions for these service-learning projects were meaningfully informed by many conversations with our colleagues. For example, we leaned on feedback from one colleague, outside of the English education program, who participates in a number of K-12 school-based professional development programs for pre-service and in-service teachers. We gained his insight on nearby schools that would likely be willing to work closely with us to develop service-learning projects for teacher candidates. Our colleagues in the English education program cheered us on more generally, acknowledging the problems with the previous structure that too often resulted in the candidates observing, not enacting, instruction. Finally, we participated in on-campus professional development sessions on service-learning. These were provided for university-faculty members

from all disciplines. Overall, once we publicly articulated our commitment to enacting robust service-learning projects with our candidates, prior to student teaching, we were met with support and encouragement.

With this support, we were able to significantly enhance the nature of fieldwork in the English education program. The clinical experience centered in the English Methods class spotlights how our expectations for candidates changed over time. In 2008, prior to the start of the revision process, the candidates' fieldwork was described in their syllabus as follows:

In this class, you are asked to complete 30 hours of fieldwork in a middle or high school English classroom. A variety of class discussions will be based around this experience and you will be asked to tell the story of your fieldwork experience in an observation journal. The fieldwork summary sheet (attached to this document) outlines the key experiences that you are required to seek out during your time in the secondary classroom.

While it was beneficial that teacher candidates were asked to learn in schools, not just university classrooms, this assignment was quite lacking. Namely, the project did not offer any specific guidelines of how they were to get involved with classroom life. The "fieldwork summary sheet" listed the following experiences as required—"observe student(s) in a class," "work with individual students," "whole group instruction," "interview teacher(s)," and "observe an exemplary teacher's class"—and the guidelines ended there. Candidates were left to figure out on their own what their work with students should entail. Theoretically, they might have collaborated with the classroom teacher or brainstormed with the course instructor, but no structures were set up to ensure this happened.

In 2009 and 2010, the fieldwork component of the class was sharpened to include a service-learning project, where the candidates would make concrete contributions to class instruction, that would be documented through specific "check-ins." Through the check-ins, the candidates were required to share their developing ideas about their contributions in the fieldwork placement with the course instructor, signified as the "me" in the text. The directions for the three check-ins were as follows:

- First impressions: Write a letter to me that answers the following questions: What do you believe are the interests and/or needs of the teacher in your placement? What do you believe are the interests and/or needs of some of the students? Where do you think you fit into classroom life?
- Class-based needs and your contribution: Make an appointment to meet with me during my office hours to address the following questions:

Describe what your contribution to the teacher/students will be. How does this contribution respond to a need in the classroom? How are you prepared for this role? Be sure to have at least one conversation with the classroom teacher when determining what your contribution will be.

- **Decision-making analysis:** Think of a decision that you made within the context of your work in the classroom. Write a short script illustrating a dialogue between you and your cooperating teacher. I do not expect the dialogue to have necessarily happened—it can be a dialogue that you imagine could happen or one you would like to happen. It should address the following questions: What options did you have and what decision did you make? How did your resulting actions positively impact you, your partnering teacher, and/or the students? What were the limitations involved?

Through these check-ins, the course instructor was informed about the candidates' learning and how their service work was evolving. The check-ins were positioned as formative assessments; following each check-in the instructor responded to the candidate about possible next steps in their service work and professional development in general. The assignments not only ensured that teacher candidates were given more guidance for their fieldwork, they also better ensured that the candidates would have a substantial influence, and were of service, in the classroom. Particularly during the second check-in, the candidates defended how the service project would address a clear need in the classroom. Finally, in the third check-in, they were asked to contemplate uncertainties in teaching and the need for teachers to manage dilemmas that have no clear right answers (Lampert, 1985). They were asked to articulate a textured view of teaching and learning that cannot be captured without full engagement in schools.

This trajectory of presenting more rigor and structure for the fieldwork experience in the English Methods class continued into Fall 2012, when the expectations became higher and even more specific. In Spring 2012, we discussed the key experiences we believed teacher candidates needed before becoming teachers of record in their own classrooms. We identified the importance of two types of experiences: (1) experiences where candidates are gaining the attention of the whole class and offering directions or instruction through mini-lessons or “lecturettes” and (2) experiences guiding students' individually and in small groups. We determined that we needed to better ensure that the teacher candidates in our program knew how to operate in both ways and assess the student learning that was promoted through both their input as well as through the student inquiry.

Additionally, we discussed the value of asking the candidates to

show these skills in reference to particular areas of English language arts instruction—reading, writing, speaking/listening, and media analysis—that are flagged as central in both the newly adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (2010) as well as the standards offered by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2009). While language is identified as another focus skill in the CCSS, along with reading, writing, and speaking/listening, we worked as a program to determine that two other courses, focusing more specifically on language acquisition and use of academic language, would address the CCSS's expectations around language, and the methods course would address the Common Core's focus on reading, writing, and speaking/listening.

In turn, we crafted an assignment that asked candidates to share teacher input and guide student activity in reading, writing, speaking/listening, and media literacy. We also crafted a separate expectation for assessment through which candidates had to assess student learning in one of these skill areas. It was presented in the Fall 2012 syllabus of the English Methods class as follows:

Working as an active contributor in a functioning classroom can give you an insightful view of classroom life. The service-learning requirement in this class asks you to be reflective and responsive in reference to five different areas of instruction: reading, writing, speaking/listening, media literacy, and assessment. At five different times during the semester, you will submit a written paper that details your thinking about this area of instruction in your fieldwork placement and how you contributed to it.

The assignment description then continued to present the expectation that when enacting reading, writing, speaking/listening, and media literacy instruction, the candidates should at times be presenting their guidance to the whole class and at other times be working individually or in small groups with students. The assignment description also presented a series of focus questions to answer in assignments called service-learning reflections.

For each reflection, answer the following questions: In what ways did I contribute to the reading, writing, speaking/listening, media literacy, or assessment occurring in the classroom? Be as specific as possible when describing your contribution. In what ways was my contribution successful? In what ways might it have been better? Attach any supporting documents (i.e., instructional tools) used in the classroom to illustrate your contribution.

While these focus questions have changed in more recent semesters and now prompt candidates to think about specific strategies and principles

(e.g., the extent to which the contribution validates students’ personal and cultural knowledge), this assignment was a great improvement to previous clinical assignments. In this most recent version of the service-learning assignment, candidates were asked to contribute in multiple skill areas of English language arts and write reflection papers on each contribution. Then, the course instructor offered detailed written feedback in response to each reflection, often presenting ideas that the candidates could utilize in a subsequent contribution.

To support the candidates to effectively contribute in reading, writing, speaking/listening, media literacy, and assessment the course instructor designed the syllabus around these areas, allotting multiple class sessions to each. In class, she modeled and explored ways to promote student learning and then discussed how particular strategies could be integrated into their field placements. Candidates submitted sample instructional tools (e.g., worksheets, Power point presentations) for feedback from the course instructor prior to their enacted contribution. Furthermore, the candidates were assigned to classroom teachers in groups of two or three, and they collaborated to design instruction appropriate for their shared context.

We aimed to provide a helpful structure that would enable the candidates to enact a range of different methods while still leaving details about the candidates’ work unstated so that the candidates and classroom teachers could determine the particular nature of the fieldwork. For example, in the reading category, candidates might design a reader response worksheet, conduct a read aloud, lead a discussion where students compare two texts with similar themes, or utilize another strategy introduced during class time—all in reference to whatever text was being utilized in their fieldwork site. The candidates and teachers would discuss what activities would benefit the students, and the candidates would plan and enact instruction accordingly. The candidates’ work was defined, better ensuring that they would work in multiple, concrete ways, yet they were still responsible for responding to the teachers’ needs and interests.

The work had come a long way. By increasing the details of the assignments, raising our expectations of what the candidates would do, yet leaving many particulars to be determined by the teacher in conversation with the candidate, we increased the likelihood that the teachers received real support. We hoped to build the understanding that the teachers were not simply opening their classrooms as a professional courtesy but were gaining somewhat of a well-prepared assistant. And, as the candidates utilized specific methods they had learned in their course work, the teachers might be able to expand their professional repertoire by drawing on these methods themselves in the future. The

candidates also benefited, as they were asked to teach and reflect more, practicing the ideas they were studying in class. Indeed, the most recent service-learning assignment asked them to contribute in five specific ways, and this was just a minimum. Their in-classroom work was to be meaningful and frequent yet they had time between each of their contributions to reflect and plan—an important experience for novice teachers who are first building their teaching skills.

Informed Relationship with Teachers

While we saw great benefit in the course changes outlined above, we were still vexed by what we saw as too large of a gap between our vision of fieldwork, specifically in regard to the candidates' service-learning projects, and the needs and interests of the teachers. Contributing to the gap was the fact that a central office in the School of Education was generally responsible for placing candidates in their fieldwork placements, lifting the requirement from the course instructors to ever meet and speak with the cooperating teachers. To rectify this, in Spring 2012, we deliberated with other faculty on how to develop deeper partnerships with teachers.

Continuing with the spotlight on the English Methods class, we here outline a number of steps the instructor of this course took to communicate with classroom teachers who would ultimately welcome and work with teacher candidates. First, the instructor reviewed candidates' check-in reflection papers from a prior semester and made a list of the teachers, originally paired with candidates through the School of Education central office, who supported the candidates to do particularly involved, meaningful work. After further narrowing the list based on geographic proximity to the college and other faculty members' feedback on the schools, the instructor contacted a series of these teachers over email. A segment of the letter read as follows:

This upcoming fall, I will be teaching an undergraduate class entitled English Methods for the Secondary School classroom that entails a 30-hour fieldwork component. I hope that some of our candidates can again work with you for their fieldwork. Also, this year, I would like to talk with you before the school year begins so that we can develop a shared understanding of what the candidates could do when they are working with you...Based on what we hear from the candidates, they are already learning and contributing in real ways. Now, we want to ensure that their learning is as well-coordinated as possible by aligning their university course work with their fieldwork experiences. We believe this will enhance their experiences as well as yours.

This signified a first step in inviting the teachers to come to the table

with us and talk about what the candidates might do in their classrooms. It was essential in humanizing the entire fieldwork process. Until then, the teachers were little more than names on lists for us and people to contact when teacher-candidates reported something “wrong” with their placement. Inviting them to meet, so to plan and confer about the fieldwork experience, signified an important effort to recognize their interests and agency in this process.

Most teacher meetings were held in the month of June, and the course instructor traveled to their schools to discuss possible plans for the teacher candidates in the fall. The instructor and classroom teachers reviewed excerpts from a draft of the course syllabus including a description of the service-learning assignment. Overall, the teachers were enthusiastic about scaffolding opportunities for the candidates to enact instruction and assessment in reference to reading, writing, speaking/listening, and media literacy. Specifically, they were happy to be learning about these expectations before they met the candidates and planned their curriculum for the upcoming year.

Alongside their enthusiasm, the teachers also shared some ideas of how the service-learning expectations could be shaped so that the assignments would more realistically unfold in their classrooms. Two teachers said that the candidates should be asked to think about specific procedures related to each of the instructional areas. For example, when envisioning and planning for reading, teacher candidates should ask themselves, “Who will read first—the teacher or a specific student? Or, will the reading period open with ‘popcorn reading’?” When planning for a writing assignment, they should ask, “Will there be a required heading? Will there be an assigned number of paragraphs?” Teacher candidates might enter their first jobs prepared to design a set of guided reading questions or an essay writing task and less prepared to think through these types of details. The classroom teachers made valuable insights so to ensure that the teacher candidates thought specifically about how instruction unfolds.

Another classroom teacher raised an interesting point about the timing of the candidates’ contributions. She pondered out loud about the possibility of her class being deeply involved in a writing project during the weeks when the university-based methods class was studying reading, or another area of English language arts instruction. She affirmed the possibility of the candidates contributing to one instructional area in their fieldwork before or after they were to study the possibilities for literacy development in that area in their university course work.

Responding to these insights, the course instructor reflected on the assignment descriptions as well as her notes on how she intended

to teach the class. In response to the teachers' interests in procedures, she marked places in the syllabus where she would review and prompt conversation about some procedural options in regards to reading, writing, speaking/listening, and media literacy. In response to the teachers' concern about the timing of the assignments, she created an allowance for candidates who want to contribute in ways that are divergent from the university course content being covered at that time. She inserted the following text into the syllabus:

Ideally, your service in your fieldwork placement will be aligned to the area of instruction we are focusing on in class. For example, following our focus on reading instruction, you will contribute to the reading instruction in your fieldwork placement. In some cases, it might most benefit the classroom teacher and students if you contribute in reference to another area. Continuing the example from above, we might be focusing on reading instruction in class, but you might contribute to the writing instruction in your fieldwork placement. If this is the case, please inform me over email prior to your submission of the service-learning reflection.

This decision was informed by a number of factors. First, the instructor was driven by a belief that learning is cyclical and that it may be generative for the candidates to experience one type of instruction in the field and then study it in their university course at a later date or vice versa. Second, she felt it essential that the thoughts and interests of the teachers were integrated into the course design. Third, she recognized that in making the assignment more detailed and robust, she risked the possibility that the classroom teachers would see this as another prescriptive requirement, mirroring many other prescriptive directives classroom teachers face. She wished to avoid this possibility and in turn allowed the candidates some flexibility in terms of their contributions.

The course instructor also introduced a feedback loop that entailed the instructor contacting the classroom teacher every few weeks over email. Specifically, the instructor would update the teacher on what new skills and activities the teacher candidates were completing in their course work and prompt the teacher to share insights about the candidates' learning in their field placement. The teachers were not required to use any one format or feedback sheet to share updates about the candidates, as the course instructor did not want this communication to feel unnecessarily arduous. Therefore, in response to the emails, teachers generally shared at least one anecdote about each candidate with whom they were working, presenting the candidates' struggles and strengths. The course instructor was then able to address many of these informal observations in the university-based course by praising

the candidates for work well done and either speaking with them one-on-one, or when appropriate, organizing class discussions and activities on emerging struggles.

Additionally, the course instructor scheduled exit interviews with all of the cooperating teachers at the close of the semester to gather their insights and reflect on how the service-learning projects should be revised for the future. In the interviews, the instructor prompted the teachers to reflect on how they gave feedback to the teacher candidates. Specifically, she asked, “How would you share ideas/exemplars, give feedback to the candidates, and coach them on their teaching? What worked about your feedback loop and what would you change?” While ideally, the instructor and the teacher might have discussed ways to share feedback with candidates prior to the start of the semester, this question supported needed discussion on how the cooperating teachers communicated with the candidates.

The interviews also focused on the types of teaching the candidates were asked to do. Questions like “This semester, the candidates were asked to contribute to classroom instruction in reading, writing, speaking/listening, media literacy, and assessment. What would you keep the same about this structure and how would you change it?” and “What high-leverage practices do you think the candidates should be prepared to use in their field placements?” fostered dialogue about how English language arts teachers should be prepared to teach. In response, teachers commented on strategies that they enjoyed learning from the candidates and are now using on their own (e.g., facilitating note-taking from videos), as well as other ideas potentially valuable for the candidates to learn (e.g., knowing how to orally respond to students without talking too much). The teachers’ insights informed our continuous revision of the clinical component of our program. For example, instead of candidates writing one separate reflection paper on how they assessed student learning during one contribution, they currently conclude each service-learning reflection with a discussion on how they assessed student learning for that contribution. A summary of the course instructors’ exchanges with the cooperating teachers is presented in Figure 1.

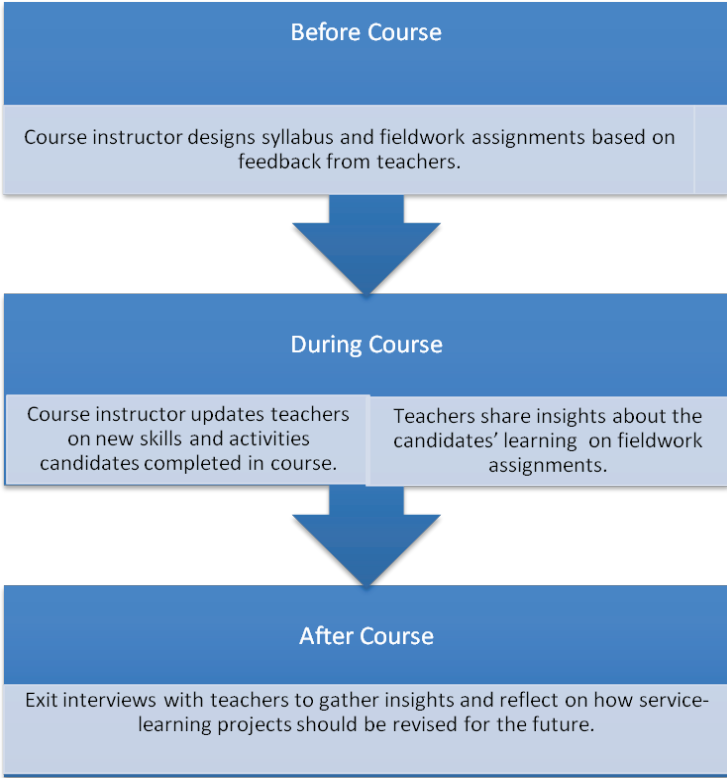
In crafting opportunities for dialogue with school-based faculty, the course instructor continued to counter dilemmas facing classroom teachers and teacher candidates. First, she sought to interrupt an unethical trend to place more demands on teachers without recognizing the knowledge they have to share. With the English Methods class, she asked them to play a part in shaping the service-learning assignments so that their knowledge and needs could be better integrated. Yet, she did not go so far as to ask them to develop the service-learning expecta-

tions as a whole—a task that might be too burdensome. Second, as a result of teacher feedback, she was able to sharpen the university-based instruction, improving the candidates’ teacher education by associating it with the real needs of teachers.

Reflections

We believe that our program’s initiation and on-going implementation of a service-learning approach to field-based experiences is significant in a number of ways. Teacher candidates move beyond simply watching teacher educators or classroom teachers model pedagogy and enact pedagogies themselves. We offer multiple opportunities for these critical learning experiences while also ensuring that the teaching opportunities are discrete in number and that the candidates can reflect on each one and subsequently receive feedback. Indeed, this feedback comes from

Figure 1



both university faculty and practicing teachers—a move that treats academic knowledge and knowledge of expert teachers with equal respect (Zeichner, 2010). Contrast this to certification programs that expect new teachers to quickly teach every period, every day—a situation through which they would struggle to reflect and grow to proficient teachers—or only teach during one culminating student teaching experience.

As for the classroom teachers, when teacher candidates construct their service-learning contributions, they essentially ask practicing teachers “How can I help (with reading/writing/speaking and listening/media literacy)?” In turn, the classroom teacher benefits as she can shape the candidates’ work so that it meets the needs of her students. Relatedly, her students receive targeted assistance, often working directly with the candidates who have particular pedagogical ideas to put to use. The presence of more adults in classrooms can benefit students but it does not guarantee it. Their value is only ensured if the adults in the classroom come prepared to help in specific and needed ways. It was this preparation that we aimed to offer the candidates through their course work. For example, we have worked to ensure that candidates develop the skills and knowledge necessary to conduct one-to-one reading and writing conferences in secondary English classrooms, assess the individual needs of students as readers and writers, and offer targeted instruction at the “point of need.”

Given the strengths of our revised clinical model, we naturally continue to confront obstacles. For example, despite conversations with the classroom teachers, we are concerned about the extent to which we are sharing authority. Fieldwork and student-teaching are still largely arrangements where university-based professionals, rather than the teachers themselves, determine how and for what purposes teacher-candidates and their host teachers will spend time together in a classroom. Even in the context of reenvisioning our relationships with the partnering teachers, we initiated discussion with the teachers about the nature of our assignments and we composed the original drafts, which largely went unchanged.

There are many ways to rectify this imbalance. Classroom teachers and university faculty could meet multiple times, choose class texts and design syllabi together, and co-teach the university and/or K-12 class. Or, cooperating teachers could be hired as clinical faculty who learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher candidates in the field and integrate their insights into campus-based teaching. Joint appointments in a secondary school and school of education could present monetary and professional status incentives to qualified individuals as well as expand their opportunities for publication and other forms

of scholarship. Participation on faculty committees, and other university-based organizations may imbue teachers with the sense that their impact as educators goes beyond their schools and classrooms. Without such arrangements, there is a lasting question of how to ensure that the classroom teachers are being involved as fully as possible, without them feeling overburdened. We are working on creating systems that allow for more professionalized collaboration between the classroom teachers and the university faculty.

We are also interested in more formally analyzing how the candidates' reflect on their work in the secondary classrooms. Based on a preliminary review of the candidates' work, we know that through the service-learning expectation, the candidates uniformly make authentic contributions related to reading, writing, speaking/listening, and media literacy, as opposed to simply observing or helping out in random ways. They routinely draw on the students' prior learning, related to the specific unit of instruction unfolding, and design lessons and activities that can build the students' literacy skills and content-knowledge. Some candidates also use the service-learning assignment as a means to exercise their skills in differentiated instruction and culturally relevant pedagogy.

We are eager to see how these candidates perform differently in student teaching as a result of these engaged fieldwork assignments. University based supervisors observe our teaching candidates four times during the student teaching semester and complete an observation form based on three of the four domains—Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, and Instruction—in the Danielson Framework for Teachers (2013). We would be interested in conducting a content analysis of the observation forms comparing candidates in the School of Education who had attended courses linked to the enhanced field-work experiences and those who had attended non-linked methods and curriculum courses. At present, based on the analysis of our clinical approach delineated in this paper, we know we have taken important steps to make their teacher preparation experience more robust and ensure that they are able to provide real support for classroom teachers.

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