

Excelsior
Leadership in Teaching and Learning
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Article Abstracts

Reports of Research and Self-Study

Featured Articles on Teacher Preparation for Special Education and Inclusion

**You Really Have to Specify What You're Talking about When You Say "Co-teaching":
Student Teachers in "Co-taught" Classrooms**

Susan Hildenbrand

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Abstract

Co-teaching is increasingly common, and research has established that co-teaching has academic and social benefits for students (Hunt, Hirose-Hatae, Doering, Karasoff, & Goetz, 2000; Peck, Staub, Gallucci, & Schwartz, 2004). This action research study of eight student teachers explored how student teachers responded to co-teaching with a peer. Findings show that although identified as "co-taught," some teaching practices were not team-taught. Preservice teachers faced challenges in co-teaching, and a community of practice supported the praxis of preservice teachers. Suggestions for future research center on studies that inform teacher training.

Collaboration for Inclusion: Authentic Experiences in Teacher Preparation

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Michael Wischnowski

Susan Hildenbrand

Daniel Kelly

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Abstract

Teacher preparation programs rarely include courses that establish authentic partnerships between families of children with special needs and teacher candidates. The purpose of this article is to describe a current undergraduate course at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York, that effectively addresses parent partnerships in preservice education and provides experiences for teacher candidates in four areas of identified need: teamwork, co-teaching, family collaboration, and professional dispositions. The article discusses the four areas within the context of published literature. The article also describes course development, partnership development with The Advocacy Center, course evaluation, and recommendations for teacher preparation programs.

Featured Articles on Collaboration

Action Research Empowering Teacher Development: Connecting Teacher Reflection, Teaching Effectiveness, and Program Change

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Susan K. Stratton

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Abstract

A decade of graduate program change was examined using a mixed method approach, specifically focused on the impact of action research on individual teacher-scholars and programmatic development. Teacher graduates and faculty from a comprehensive college responded to surveys, focus groups, and interviews, indicating anticipated and documented effects of action research on teachers' professional development, application to classroom instruction, and collaborative and reflective practice. Findings indicate positive outcomes for engaging in action research, a sense of empowerment from completing Master's projects, and increased professionalism as a result of the research process in collaboration with public school mentors. Implications for teacher education program development and P-12 classroom instruction are discussed, especially the need for writing instruction at the graduate level and the impact of teacher empowerment through professional research.

A Regional Survey of Teacher Leadership: A Catalyst for Re-examining Leadership Preparation

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Abstract

This exploratory study emerged from the work of a regional prekindergarten-18 leadership preparation consortium that sought to create a descriptive profile of teacher leadership in the Lower Hudson Region of New York State that would inform leadership preparation practices. Two parallel surveys were distributed electronically during the 2006-2007 academic year, one to administrators and a second one to identified teacher leaders in the Lower Hudson Region of New York State. In this paper we report the results of this regional study and link our

findings to the current national literature. We highlight steps that we have taken to be more proactive in supporting educators who are teacher leaders and then discuss possible implications for other leadership preparation programs. This consortium, while organic in development, has become a unique, replicable model that represents the many voices of the educational community. Together we created a pathway to blend our voices, share best practices, and shape the scope of our regional study and evolving work together.

The Impact of Professional Development School Self-Studies at Two Urban Elementary Partnerships

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Abstract

In this paper, two urban elementary professional development school (PDS) self-studies utilizing the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) PDS self-assessment structure are described. The self-study process and findings are examined. Examples are provided of how findings from self studies can inform the way that partners proceed in improving student learning, supporting practicing teachers and preparing new teachers. Recommended strategies for using the PDS self-study to further develop K-5 partnerships are presented. Insights gained as a result of engaging in the process are discussed. This type of assessment is important and timely given the increasing emphasis on partnerships that involve meaningful collaborations between schools and institutions of higher learning.

Sharing Perspectives

Numbers Can Be Hazardous to Your Health: Using Boxplots to Monitor Collaborative Assessment Data

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Abstract

Sharing and discussing assessment data with colleagues yields valuable insights beyond what can be accomplished individually. When reviewing summary quantitative data, one must be careful to identify those distributions of data that are not normally distributed. Examples of non-normal distributions include many classroom-based assessments as well as state-mandated

teacher-licensing examination scores for candidates from any single institution. Boxplots are an efficient way of graphically representing any distribution of scores, but they are especially helpful for depicting non-normal distributions. This article explains how to construct and interpret boxplots to aid the collaborative process of monitoring the outcomes of assessments that are key indicators of program quality.

Public Exhibition of Understanding: A Perspective for Teacher Education

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Abstract

As teacher colleges look to incorporate authentic assessments of understanding into their teacher education programs, public exhibitions of understanding have increased in status and popularity (Davidson, 2009; Rennert-Ariev, 2005). In seeking to provide a rationale, theoretical basis, and case study of effective public exhibitions of understanding in action, this article looks to Niagara University, a small, private college in Western New York, and the model it has developed for use with preservice teachers. By considering the Niagara University model and its theoretical underpinnings, this article provides an implementation model for using public exhibitions as a means for incorporating authentic assessments of understanding in teacher education settings.