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New Hampshire Preschool Development Grant: Sharing Best Practices

A Report of Pre-Service Professional Development: Field Experiences

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PDG B–5 Sharing Best Practices: Field Experiences

Activity 1: Expand and Improve the Quality of Practicum Field Sites and the Cooperating Teachers who supervise the Practicum Students

The Transforming the Workforce report includes multiple recommendations with many pages of specific detail describing necessary improvements in both bachelor (sic) degree programs and ongoing professional learning for early educators¹. Of particular interest in this context is the body of research that recommends increasing time for and sophistication of what is usually called student teaching to move closer to clinical models such as those used in nursing and other health professions. Calls for improving teacher education have long included recommendations to better integrate theory and practice through earlier and more intensive field practice for students with more faculty time in the field².

There are two important reasons for us to evaluate our field-based expectations for students in New Hampshire - increasing the skill level competency of students through meaningful field experiences (i.e., application of theory with children) and shared guidelines will facilitate seamless transfer and articulations (associate to bachelor's).

It is essential to identify what **indicators of quality are for field experiences and practicums**. We propose the following:

1. Qualifications of cooperating teachers
2. Selection criteria for sites (e.g. QRIS levels)
3. Guidelines provided to the cooperating teachers (i.e. clear articulating their role)
4. Expectations for students (e.g. as evidenced by outcomes provided to the operating teachers and items on evaluation forms)

Process

- Compare the materials provided by participating institutions and prepare a crosswalk on what currently exists.
- Pose questions to prompt our reflection on current practice and discussion on what we could do to improve the experiences.
- Establish a plan for approving shared guidelines.

Quality Indicators

Below is a summary of the information sent by IHEs and conversations with representatives broken out into the four categories identified as quality indicators.

¹ Lutton, 2018, p. 4

² NCATE 2010; Lutton, p. 5

Table A.1. Early Childhood Education Degrees

	UNH	PSU	GSC	NHTI	MCC	LRCC	RVCC	GBCC
Qualifications of Cooperating Teacher	Yes (must be experienced* and certified)	None provided	None provided	None provided	None provided	None provided	None provided	Yes (AS or higher in ECE)
Appropriate practices at the site	Yes	Yes	None provided	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guidelines provided to Cooperating Teacher (CT)	Yes, including courses available for CTs to take around supervision	Yes	None provided	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Expectations for Students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

NOTE: * = At graduate school, minimum 3 years of experience required

NOTE: This research took place over the summer of 2019, when many IHE faculty/staff were off or had a reduced schedule. The following colleges did not provide information: White Mountains Community College, Southern New Hampshire University, Rivier College, Nashua Community College, Colby-Sawyer College

Questions for Discussion and Framework for Shared Guidelines

1. Can we clearly articulate shared expectations for field experiences and practicums?
 - a. Define the different experiences – the intent of each
 - b. Identify student outcomes
2. Are there different expectations regarding placement - birth- 8 range, certification, or non-certification program?
3. What is the ideal early childhood field experience and practicum site?
4. Could we define common standards for an ideal site?
 - a. A credentialed teacher in child care for host sites?
 - b. A minimum score on the QRIS be a requirement (when it rolls out) for host sites? (funding offered for these programs - Quality funds)
5. Might we create a master list of child care and pre-school programs that meet the standards and are willing to host students (outside of lab schools)?
6. Can experiences be scaffolded – progressing from associate programs to bachelor’s?
7. What are the best practices to use for coaching and modeling with supervisors? (How to meet students where they are, ex. doing this at their worksites, or in poorer quality sites.)
8. How can we involve and educate administrators and directors at the centers about quality and participation in QRIS?

Continuing Collaboration for this Project

Shared document tools are available to store documents and work on preparing guidelines. The Zoom application is available for collaborative sessions.

Proposal

1. Set up permissions and protocols for access to shared document folders.
2. Continue to collect documentation from institutions not represented.
3. Establish a work plan for addressing the questions raised in the research phase.
4. Set a schedule for Zoom Collaborative sessions (Community of Practice – CoP).
5. Determine a timeframe for the completion of shared guidelines for field experiences.
6. Identify co-facilitators for the process.

Sources Cited

Lutton, Alison. "Apprenticeship as a Degree Attainment Strategy for the Early Childhood Workforce." Philadelphia Hospital and Health Care District 1199C Training & Fund. September 2018.