

MSUNER CO-TEACHING INITIATIVE: OVERVIEW

Rationale

It is widely recognized that the experience of student teaching in the United States has undergone few fundamental changes in the past century. Students are assigned to work with a cooperating teacher, are expected to simulate the experience of being the teacher in charge of the classroom, and are evaluated based on the observation of lessons and materials.

Recent research, particularly out of St. Cloud University, supports a shifting of focus away from a “simulation” or “trial period” model to one in which the master teacher and apprentice work together and share responsibilities in the classroom. While this happens naturally in some coop/student teacher relationships already, few university-based teacher preparation programs have established a consistent structure that requires instead of simply hopes for this kind of relationship.

The purpose of the MSUNER Co-Teaching Initiative is to determine the efficacy and benefits of making a program-wide paradigm shift from a more traditional student teaching model to one in which co-teaching is at the core of the coop-student teacher relationship.

Background

Student teaching was selected by MSU as a target area for continuous improvement by the Teacher Education Program Assessment Coordinators/Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, via the Continuous Improvement in Teacher Education (CITE) Committee. Faculty and staff in CEHS and other University colleges spent time in CITE meetings in the 2011-2012 academic year discussing ways in which the student teaching experience can be improved. Relatedly, student teaching was the central topic of the MSUNER Operations Committee in the 2011-2012 academic year.

One of the outcomes of discussions and group work by both committees was a desire to increase the role of co-teaching in the student experience. Committee members felt that co-teaching could address some of the other external concerns that exist in the current education climate, such as accreditation expectations, increase of co-teaching in schools (particularly with regards to inclusion), new teacher assessment system in NJ, critiques of university-based teacher preparation (from policy makers, funders, think tanks), and the emphasis on data that shows increases in student achievement. A draft pilot structure was formulated by the Center of Pedagogy and brought to both the MSUNER joint committee meeting and the Teacher Education Policy Committee meeting for consideration in September 2012. Both committees were given an opportunity to provide feedback, resulting in some modifications of the pilot structure.

Additional sources of information: student feedback on their student teaching experiences (positive and negative); 2010 NCATE Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel; cooperating teacher feedback.

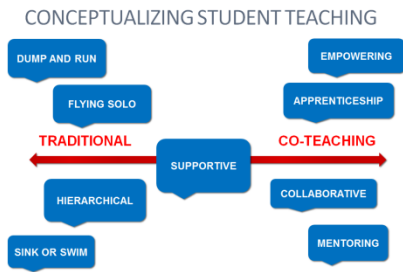
BHAG

A BHAG is a “Big Hairy Audacious Goal” – a term introduced by Jerry Porras and James Collins in the book *Built to Last*. BHAGS are action-oriented, clear (who, what, where, by when), compelling (people “get it” right away) and bold (bordering on hubris). The proposed BHAG that drives this pilot program is:

Under the auspices of the MSUNER, the Center of Pedagogy will create a co-teaching student internship program that increases P-12 student achievement and the co-teachers’ skills so significantly that it becomes a national model for 21st century student teaching.

The Model

1. Where we are and where we want to head



2. Definition of Co-Teaching

Two teachers (cooperating teacher and student teacher) working together in a classroom with groups of students; sharing the physical space, the planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction

The Critical Factor:

Both teachers are actively involved and engaged in all aspects of instruction.

- **Specific strategies for planning and implementation**
- **Coop/Student Teacher construct differs from colleague/colleague construct**
- **Requires professional development for both cooperating teacher and student**
- **Evolves over time—students slowly assume more responsibilities**

Source:

Mentoring Teacher Candidates Through Co-Teaching, St. Cloud State University, MN, 2012

Time Frame – Cohort 1

2013

January 29 th	Teacher interest application sent out
February 11 th	Teacher interest application due date
Week of February 15 th	Mandatory meeting for selected districts Participating teachers selected
February 28 th	Mandatory meeting for selected teachers
Week of March 4 th	Students selected and matched to cooperating teachers
April 25 th	Meeting of coops and students
May	Online module for coops begins
May	Online module for students begins
June 28 th	MSUNER Summer Conference PD session for coops
August 27 th	Mandatory PD session for coops and students
1 st day teachers report	Co-teaching internship begins: Fieldwork/Clinical I semester
End of October	Check-in conducted with all participants
December 13 th	End of Fieldwork/Clinical I
December	Survey of participants (how experience going thus far, support needed, Qs)

2014

January	Mandatory PD event for students/coops (exact date TBD)
January	Co-teaching Internship begins (exact start date TBD)
May	Co-teaching Internship ends

Cooperating Teacher Responsibilities

We believe that cooperating teachers who participate in the Co-Teaching Initiative will gain many benefits along the way, from professional growth to personal growth to rethinking ideas about what it means to teach and learn. The kinds of teachers who will be interested in this pilot are those who see themselves as life-long learners *and* who have the ability to invest the time and energy into working with a pre-service teacher from spring 2013 through spring 2014. Committing to the pilot means committing to go above and beyond the already high expectations of MSU cooperating teachers. Participating teachers will receive 30 professional development hours upon completion of the Co-teaching Initiative.

Specific events/requirements include:

In-Person Professional Development Events

- 2 after-school meetings (March and April 2013)
- Summer Conference (June 28th, 2013)
- PD event for the Fieldwork/Clinical I semester (August 27th)
- PD event for the Student Teaching/Clinical II semester (January 2014, release time from school day)

Online Learning Module – Spring 2013

- Online only
- 4-week time span
- Approximately 2 hours/week of reading/online response time
- Content will focus on examining the research on co-teaching, models that have been used, etc.

Co-Planning Time

In order for co-teaching to happen, co-planning must happen first. Cooperating teachers must be able to establish a dedicated time before, after, or during the school day at twice a week when co-planning will take place in person.

Ongoing pilot feedback and evaluation

As a pilot, Teacher Education Program staff/faculty will be seeking regular feedback from all participants in order to make adjustments as needed and to consider how to modify the program for subsequent cohorts.

This includes:

- Willingness to share data on student learning (no student identifiers)
- Willingness to provide critical, honest feedback about how the pilot is going
- Communicating in a reasonable time frame with program staff/faculty
- Classroom visitations to co-teaching partners (information not to be used for cooperating teacher evaluation)