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Title of the Session: Making Accountability Measures Useful: The Successes of On-Demand Modules in Clinical Experiences

Type of Session: Multiple Paper Format

Session Organizer:

Valerie Howell

Management Research Analyst

Arizona State University / Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College / Sanford Inspire Program

vkhowell@asu.edu

West Campus, FAB S261 MC 3053, PO BOX 37100, Phoenix, AZ 85069

Fax: 602.543.5594

Tel: 602.543.8525.

Additional Presenters:

Dr. Ryen Borden

Executive Director

Arizona State University / Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College / Sanford Inspire Program

Ryen.Borden@asu.edu

West Campus, FAB S264 MC 3053, PO BOX 37100, Phoenix, AZ 85069

Fax: 602.543.5594

Tel: 623.332.9310

Subject Descriptors: Strand 7: Accountability Surrounding Clinical Practice and Assessment

Teacher Educator Standards: Standard 3: Scholarship, Standard 4: Professional Development

Summary for Conference Program: Accountability truly becomes useful when the systems of assessment help to inform support. This details the successes of tailoring support of teacher candidates in their clinical experience via On-Demand Modules to their individual areas of refinement.

ATE Participation and Professional Role: Management Research Analyst, member

Abstract of Presentation

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Reference to ATE Standards: This presentation references Standards 1, 3, and 4.

Specifically, it references **Standard 1: Teaching** as it highlights the practice of a teacher preparation program guiding its future teachers through a reflection process in order to make their accountability measures play an active role in their continued development as professional educators. It also relates to **Standard 3: Scholarship** in that it details a hallmark innovation within a college of education to model for its graduates the process of “continually asking question to deepen [their] existing knowledge,” (standard 3). By doing so, future teachers in our program are systematically assessing their own progress towards data-driven goals they helped establish. Additionally, this presentation relates to **Standard 4: Professional Development**, as it surrounds the importance of making accountability measures work for the individual to reflect and refine their current practice by proactively creating a personalized professional development

program and completing differentiated interventions. The work discussed in this presentation engages teacher candidates in the constant cycle of collecting data, reflecting upon it and actively seeking out professional development to improve practice.

Relationship to Conference Theme/Strands: This presentation is related to **Conference Strand 7: Accountability Surrounding Clinical Practice and Assessment**. We know that accountability is important, however, accountability without tailored support becomes punitive rather than useful. This presentation details how one college of education is helping its future teachers bridge this practice to make the accountability measures established in the program work for them in tailoring their development. It highlights one intervention, On-Demand Modules, and the positive results that have come from modeling this process for our pre-service teachers in their year-long clinical experience.

Content of Presentation:

Issue Statement

Calls for increasing accountability measures are being heard by colleges of education from all stakeholders. While preparing excellent teachers has always been the mission of teacher preparation programs, the reality is that the ways in which they are being held accountable has become high stakes due to changes in both federal and state policies. The question of how effectiveness is measured has become increasingly important in the wake of the White House's plans to grade teacher preparation programs in order to assure "all children in America with the opportunity to get a world-class education," (The White House, 2014). Although the details of this plan have yet to be released, evaluating the "effectiveness" of teacher preparation program graduates is at the core. In the end, programs like ours at a Research One institution continue to innovate to meet these changing measures and make the measures work for our future teachers because we know that students of effective, inspirational teachers are passionate learners who want to be successful both in the classroom and in life.

While previously "effective" future teachers have been measured by coursework and observations as they move through the teacher preparation program, we know that this is not the evaluation process our graduates will face upon entering the field. In order to assure that future teachers leaving our program are truly classroom ready, as a teachers college we have begun to emulate the evaluation process many districts currently employ in our own college of education. Because many districts now utilize multiple measures including parent, peer, student, self and climate surveys along with principal or administrator observations, our college is following suit.

Literature Review

Not only do we require each of our teacher candidates to complete a year of student teaching internship in their junior year, we also require them to complete a year-long co-teaching residency as well. In this "senior year residency," students are sharing the classroom with their mentor teachers, helping plan lessons and taking over delivery of instruction as a partner teacher. In addition, each teacher candidate in our program undergoes three performance assessments each semester of their year-long student internship and year-long co-teaching experience. These are based on observations of a lesson that is scored by a trained evaluator using a rubric that includes 8 indicators. For each performance assessment a pre-observation conference, observation, and post-observation conference is included and they are designed to mimic the evaluation structure used by many of our in-service partner districts.

In addition to the typical measures of coursework and observations in their residency, our program has moved to also utilize student surveys as yet another data point to model the multi-measure evaluation plans our graduates will face once they enter the classroom. In addition, future work in the program will revolve around the addition of a teacher candidate self-

assessment to add just another point of data in the never-ending pursuit of assuring the development of “effective” teachers ready to inspire their students. This is not only useful to teacher candidates and program administrators; it is a timely response to the move to incorporate multiple perspectives into the teacher preparation evaluation model. In fact, the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation approved new standards for accreditation in fall 2013. Among these is the requirement that teacher preparation programs measure the effectiveness of pre-service teachers through multiple methods [*including student surveys*], (CAEP, 2013).

Differentiated Support

In addition to changing the ways in which we hold teacher candidates accountable in their clinical experience courses, we have also started making differentiated professional development a hallmark piece of the experience as well. Unfortunately, many teacher preparation programs rely upon “one-size-fits-all” PD programs, rather than tailored and individually targeted support. Research on customized PD continues to show that teachers feel a high sense of agency when adopting customized mobile learning programs (Pachler, Backmair, and Cook, 2009) because they can control the time, place, content and pace of the experience. Rather than reading a mandated book on a topic that may or may not address a real need the teacher candidate is having in the classroom, differentiated “just enough, just-in-time, just-for-me” mobile learning can “create a personalized tailored learning journey,” (Kearney, Schuck, Burden & Aubsson, 2012) which “lead to a strong sense of ownership of one’s learning,” (Traxler, 2007).

In contrast to the accountability measures colleges of education traditionally used and the ways in which they traditionally offered support, our large southwestern state university is taking the lead in providing teacher candidates with information about their practice from various stakeholders and helping them to then seek out individualized professional development related to those measures. Not only do they receive their performance assessment results, they have a pre and post conference with their site coordinator to identify areas of strength and refinement and they now receive their students’ feedback via the student survey results. From this, they reflect on a plan to use the results. In this way, the results of the accountability measures are 1) helping to prepare them for the way they will be evaluated in the workplace and 2) active in the creation of an action plan to refine their practice, much like they will be expected to upon entering the field.

Methods

Once teacher candidates complete a performance assessment, they also have a post-conference with their site coordinator to discuss areas of strength and areas of refinement. A similar conversation occurs upon receiving their student survey results as well. From this, teacher candidates reflect and troubleshoot solutions and site coordinators offer interventions to support areas of refinement. One of these interventions is On-Demand Modules. On-Demand Modules are 60-minute micro-courses that develop teachers’ knowledge, skills, and mindsets around specific elements of inspirational teaching.

Each module begins with a foundation of research-based background knowledge and then teacher candidates are introduced to the module resource, a tool or strategy they can immediately implement in the classroom. They then have the opportunity to practice using the resource through in-module scenarios or case studies. Finally, an assessment is given to ensure mastery of the content delivered throughout the module, providing feedback when gaps appear. Teacher candidates can then print out a certificate upon successfully completing the On-Demand Module to show site coordinators they have followed up on their plans’ “next steps” and have made their accountability measures (PA and student survey results) central to the development of their practice.

Results

The result of using accountability measures to tailor professional development has resulted in powerful qualitative feedback from both site coordinators and their teacher candidates. Below is the story of one site coordinator and her teacher candidates.

As summer break approached, site coordinator X's 14 teacher candidates were becoming proficient in many new teaching areas. However, an assessment revealed they had one significant gap in their skills: they needed to give more specific academic feedback. With limited time left in the school year, site coordinator X needed a focused solution. "The fastest way to build background knowledge was to use the *Delivering Effective Feedback On-Demand Module*."

"It was the only place I could find the information I needed," site coordinator X said. After her teacher candidates completed the module on their own, they collaborated to share their insights and discuss best practices. "The classrooms were so different after my teacher candidates improved their academic feedback. With good academic feedback, the teacher candidates were able to have one-on-one positive academic contact with each student."

Another story of the results of utilizing On-Demand Modules as a tailored professional development intervention is highlighted in the piece below.

Site coordinator Z, a former TAP Master Teacher, knew what it took to impact students. When she started training future teachers, site coordinator Z trusted several resources to enhance the experience of her teacher candidates. One of those resources, On-Demand Modules, provided site coordinator Z's teacher candidates with valuable insights. Teacher candidates felt "positive and engaged," while gaining essential knowledge to motivate their students. One teacher candidate said he "enjoyed my experience with the On-Demand Module. In my opinion, it perfectly blended a real-world scenario with relevant and active user engagement. The user interface was intuitive and friendly and the module length was just right. I look forward to logging back in!" Site coordinator Z noted that the resources "are great because they're something that my teacher candidates can come back to."

Participant Outcomes:

- Learn importance of using accountability measures to tailor support
- Learn about the success of one institution's drive to do so
- Brainstorm/discuss/troubleshoot continued barriers to tailoring support

References

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