

Reasons to Redesign: Teacher Education for a Brighter Tomorrow

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Abstract : To review our program and determine the best redesign options, department members gathered feedback and input through focus groups, analysis of data, and a review of the current research to ensure that the changes proposed were not based solely on the state's new professional standards. In designing course assignments and assessments, we listened to a variety of constituents, including students, other institutions of higher learning, MDE webinars, host teachers, literacy clinic personnel, and other disciplinary experts. As a result, we are designing a program that is more inclusive of a variety of field experiences for growth. We have determined ways to improve our program by connecting academic disciplinary knowledge, educational psychology, and community building both inside and outside the classroom for professional learning communities. The state's release of new professional standards led my department members to question what is working and what needs improvement in our program. One aspect of our program that continues to be supported by research and data analysis is the function of supervised field experiences with meaningful feedback. We seek to expand in this area. Other data indicate that we have strengths in modeling a variety of approaches such as cooperative learning, discussions, literacy strategies, and workshops. In the new program, field assignments will be connected to multiple courses, and efforts to scaffold student learning to guide them toward best evidence-based practices will be continuous. Despite running a program that meets multiple sets of standards, there are areas of need that we directly address in our redesign proposal. Technology is ever-changing, so it's inevitable that improving digital skills is a focus. In addition, scaffolding procedures for English Language Learners (ELL) or other students who struggle is imperative. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has been an integral part of our curriculum, but the research indicates that more self-reflection and a deeper understanding of culturally relevant practices would help the program improve. Connections with professional learning communities will be expanded, as will leadership components, so that teacher candidates understand their role in changing the face of education. A pilot program will run in academic year 22/23, and additional data will be collected each semester through evaluations and continued program review.

Keywords : DEI, field experiences, program redesign, teacher preparation

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