

Director's Note

Each summer when preparing the Fall issue of *Field Notes*, I take pleasure in gathering samples to highlight collaborative initiatives that support and extend our Teacher Education Program. Since newsletter space is limited, the selection process can be challenging, but the task always serves as a reminder of the synergy created by partners as they work year round to promote teacher and student growth.

A clear example is the lead article - an analysis of last year's student teacher perception evaluations provided by Tonya Merritt who is a UK graduate and mentor of our teacher candidates. As I reviewed Tonya's report, I was heartened to see that, overwhelmingly, candidates valued the pedagogical knowledge and skill of their mentors, as well as the opportunities to learn from them about the wide-ranging responsibilities associated with teaching. Similarly, I was inspired by Jana Walters' commentary on her very positive experience mentoring one of our MIC candidates. It was nice to learn that our candidates nourish those with whom they work as they also are nourished by their mentors and students. Other pieces in this issue also show the generative and interlinked nature of collaborative initiatives that pull together various constituent groups including students who attend partner schools.

I feel renewed reflecting on these and the many other initiatives that help us sustain a strong program and grateful for the many university and school-based partners who are involved. I hope you, too, will feel enriched as you read about the programs we have highlighted in the newsletter this time around. I know I have overlooked many interesting and important endeavors, so I need to rely on you, our readers, to share examples of collaborative work that may be off my radar. Please send your stories, reports, resource ideas, and/or photos to the email address listed below. We will be honored to post them on our website and consider them for inclusion in a future *Field Notes* issue.

With appreciation for your time, energy and dedication to teacher education,

Sharon

Sharon.Brennan@uky.edu

Apply, Reflect, Refine, Repeat: Analysis of the 2014-2015 Student Teacher Perception Evaluations

By Tonya Merritt

*Reading Specialist & Building Assessment Coordinator
Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Fayette County*

Knowledge, compassion, intentionality, determination, patience, creativity, collaboration, and more commingle in great teachers. Such a wide range of skills, competencies, and dispositions cannot be mastered in the lecture hall; they have to be cultivated. The University of Kentucky's Teacher Education Program (TEP) achieves this by providing students a foundation in content knowledge and theory as well as a series of progressively more authentic and applied opportunities to observe and practice their craft that culminates in the student teaching experience. Students who completed student teaching through the Teacher Education Program at the University of Kentucky during the 2014-15 school year found the overall program to be extremely beneficial in preparing them for their professional role.

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MIC Math teacher candidate Zeke Edwards assists one of his students with a lesson at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Fayette County. Read more about mentoring and collaborative initiatives inside.

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During the Fall 2014 semester, 87.08% of students rated the overall value of the TEP as good or excellent. This figure rose to 96.63% in Spring 2015. In their comments, students expressed appreciation for the quality and dedication of their instructors, the opportunity to work closely with their peers, the emphasis on data analysis and reflection, the opportunity to work with a variety of schools and grade levels, and the practical aspects of the program. One student noted "The TEP helped me develop the mindset of an educator before ever entering the classroom." Several students specifically mentioned the value of the classroom management course and their methods courses in preparing them to be successful in their own classrooms. Many concurred with a student who remarked, "All of my professors in my pre-practicum and practicum semesters were very knowledgeable and provided me with valuable insight to be used later in my profession. [My professor] did a great job presenting the material and giving me countless ideas and strategies that I can incorporate into my classroom." The opportunities candidates had in their classes to study teaching as a craft, learn the theory and strategies associated with effective pedagogy, and practice the skills they would use in their classrooms allowed these pre-service educators to develop a rich sense of the teacher's role in fostering student learning.

Feedback regarding less effective elements of the TEP was more individualized. Several students offered examples of assignments, courses, or instructors that were not beneficial to them personally or that overlapped content they encountered elsewhere in the program. Others identified personal content knowledge gaps that were not addressed in their course of studies. A few noted frustration regarding the KTIP transition. The most common and actionable suggestions focused on improving structural supports to explain OTIS and program requirements (including PRAXIS and applying for certification) in a more concrete, consistent, and user-friendly manner. Despite some frustrations, most students found the TEP provided them a strong foundation for professional success.

While most appreciated the pedagogical knowledge and the opportunities to rehearse creating and presenting lessons in their courses, students overwhelmingly valued student teaching, particularly solo teaching, as the greatest preparation for their future roles. 92.57% rated their student teaching experience as excellent or good in Fall 2014 and 98.65% in Spring 2015. As one student put it, "It's one thing to be given a scenario and respond/create a lesson accordingly, but it's so much more beneficial to build relationships with

KTIP Training 2015-2016 University of Kentucky Service Region

Please register online:

<http://education.uky.edu/OFE/content/ktip-registration>

**An online homework assignment
must be completed ahead of time
for entrance to the training.**

Training sessions begin at 8:30 to end before 5:00
and are scheduled at various locations.

these kids to know what will make a truly successful lesson. Getting to see what educators do in the classroom, in the school, at meetings, etc. was a great experience."

Many of the students remarked about the opportunity student teaching gave them to get a look "behind the scenes" at what it takes to make a classroom and a school run smoothly. Besides teaching classes, they had worked cafeteria duty, car pick-up lines, attended ARCs and parent conferences, assisted with extra-curricular activities and after school tutoring, worked with curriculum planning PLCs, attended professional development sessions, and completed a variety of forms. As one student commented, "We gained an all-around experience. It wasn't just being in the classroom from 8-3; we were there as hands-on help in a leadership role and learned about the many other things that happen outside of school hours."

Several students expressed some trepidation about assuming the teaching role when they entered the program. One student wrote, "Before starting practicum, I was very unsure and uneasy at the thought of being in control and teaching a group of students, but now I can say confidently that I feel prepared and ready to have a classroom on my own." The authenticity of the student teaching experience paired with the support of cooperating teachers and university supervisors provided the developing educators with continuous feedback that strengthened their confidence and honed their skills. One student described it as "like having an open note test." The co-teach model and the gradual release of responsibility for planning and instruction allowed the student teachers time to implement suggestions as they developed their competencies. "There was a perfect mix of having the teacher teach, me learning, and then me teaching and reflecting. I became much more comfortable the more I taught and planned, seeing what worked and what didn't."

Additionally, the opportunity to work in diverse settings provided student teachers with exposure to various models for effective teaching. "Working with different teachers really helped me realize that every teacher has a different approach to the job. There isn't a right or a wrong way to teach. There are so many ways to be a great teacher."

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**Field Notes is published twice a year by the Office of
Clinical Practices and School Partnerships.**

Teaching Toward Greatness: A Collaborative Endeavor

By Dr. Leslie David Burns

Associate Professor of Literacy and Program Chair of English Education
University of Kentucky

On Friday, March 15, faculty members, university colleagues, and public school partners met at the University of Kentucky's Boone Center for a summit entitled: "Teaching Toward a Touch of Greatness: An Opportunity to Advance Secondary Teacher Education at the University of Kentucky." As part of the group's discussion, I was asked to explain how an "MIC Diploma" benefits our graduates and schools that hire them.

Our students graduate fully ready to teach as professionals. They learn how to teach through their studies of the best and most advanced scientific research available about successful learning and continuous supervised teaching in our partner schools. Based on this solid foundation, MIC students graduate with a fluent understanding about not just "what" to teach, but how to teach and why to teach in certain ways, for certain students, at certain times, and for certain reasons. They acquire high levels of content knowledge and learn to use methods strategically to help their students learn at maximum levels. They become highly skilled in the uses of education technology, classroom management,

methods for teaching diverse learners, using human psychology to enhance learning, and using historical and current knowledge about how both schools and teachers function for success in today's society. All of those things are essential, positive skills for all teachers to acquire. But MIC students graduate from the University of Kentucky able to do more. Our graduates do not leave us simply ready to teach English, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics. They graduate knowing how to use those subjects as powerful vehicles to teach students and serve as true professionals who build them. MIC students graduate ready to act as Teacher Leaders.

What does the UK College of Education do? We make great Teacher Leaders. It is our privilege to serve Kentucky in this way and a proud thrill to learn that so many members of our UK family are building a better future for us all. Please thank all of them, and thanks to all of you who help our graduates become good people, the highest quality teachers, and some of the strongest professional educators in the state.

PD Opportunity: EPSB Mandated Co-Teaching Training for Student Teacher Supervisors

If you are interested in mentoring student teachers in your classroom, you are invited to attend a face-to-face training session hosted by the University of Kentucky. Attendance will fulfill Part B of the co-teaching training requirement outlined in 16 KAR 5:040 Admission, Placement, and Supervision in Student Teaching. Refreshments will be served.



Wednesday, September 16, 2015
Southern Middle School
4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Contact Martin Mills
for information or registration:
859-257-1857 martin.mills@uky.edu

("Apply, Reflect, Refine, Repeat..." cont'd)

The consensus among the respondents was that the opportunity to have a "dress rehearsal" period where they could practice their craft for an authentic audience was invaluable in shaping their teaching personae. "I feel that my time in the classroom helped me form my own teaching style, allowing me to refine myself so that I could establish my own style when I am hired into my own classroom."

Interestingly, in addition to solidifying the student teachers' perceptions of themselves as teachers, many noted the power of having others validate their role as educators. One student responded, "I was respected by the other staff members in the building as a colleague, and I felt proud of my accomplishments." Another, commenting on the relationship with the cooperating teacher, said: "I truly felt like we were working together instead of him being my superior. We were a team." Many of the student teachers also developed an appreciation for what it means to be perceived as a teacher by students and parents. As one student noted, "I think the most valuable lessons I learned from student teaching, like being

a positive role model, forming positive relationships with students, and being consistent when reinforcing behaviors and calling home to parents, etc., I learned because my CTs were realistic teachers and genuinely wanted to better the lives of their students."

Most of the feedback to improve the student teaching experience focused on the logistics of juggling student teaching, assignments, uploading items to OTIS, applying for graduation and certification, and applying for jobs. Several of the student teachers indicated that they felt overwhelmed at times during the semester. Some, particularly those whose placements were not local, mentioned minor issues regarding communication of expectations between the university, the student teacher, and the cooperating teacher. However, these issues did not diminish the overwhelmingly positive response most pre-service teachers had to the student teaching experience. "I found the entire process helpful. It forces you to see both the good and the bad of the teaching profession; you really know what you will be up against and you're tested during the experience."

The Value of Supervising Teacher Candidates

By Jana Walters
Cooperating Teacher

Henry Clay High School, Fayette County

As a teacher I think of my classroom like a gardener plans and tends to her plants. I have been a cautious gardener: protecting each of my seedlings from the elements, providing each with the opportunity to grow. Some do not thrive and those are the ones I remember most. I was hesitant to introduce an apprentice into this fragile environment when asked to mentor a student teacher for the semester. Would he interrupt the flow? Would my students fail to adequately progress? The answers are “Yes, in a good way,” and “No!”

Matthew Mason, an MIC student, entered my classroom with a foraging spirit. He immediately recognized his roles as both a planter and a pruner. He asked me questions; he asked students questions. He corrected the students; he corrected me (supremely humbling). I loved this about him. He fearlessly integrated himself into a complex heap of questions and comments.

A gardener must know the optimal planting conditions for each type of plant. Matthew primed our students with a generous decision to personally purchase a class set of the

book *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green. This was a book they LIKED. “What?” you say. “Fourteen year-olds liked a book?” Matthew knew that these budding readers needed a strong fertilizer to grow, which happened to be in the form of a high-interest young adult novel. As teachers, we know high school book rooms do not necessarily keep up with the latest in teenagers’ interests. Matthew realized quickly that our literacy 101 students, a class dedicated to struggling readers and writers, thirsted for reading and discussion that was clever, interesting, and relatable.

If educators and gardeners readily opened their spaces to insightful and energetic newcomers, we would probably see an uptick in success and production. I was an apprentice myself, and I know for the first time in five years what it takes to be a new teacher. Matthew Mason will go on to plant his own classes, and he will feel a pang of defeat when sometimes students do not respond to best planned lessons. But without a doubt, I am confident he will continue to be as giving and nurturing as he was with my kids, who certainly are better off having been taught by Mr. Mason.

Resources for Teacher Mentors

Mentor Support Center: <http://www.teachers.net>

Chatboards in category-specific chats such as “beginning teachers” and “subject areas”

The New Teacher Center, University of California-Santa Cruz: <http://www.newteachercenter.org>

Resources for mentors and beginning teachers, including a newsletter and other full-text resources

Questia: <http://www.questia.com>

On-line library of print resources on mentoring, including books and journal articles



Amanda Staggs and her cooperating teacher demonstrate co-teaching during a science lesson at Woodford County Middle School.



Dr. Sharon Brennan and cooperating teacher By'Shey McDonald presented a co-teaching training session at Southern Middle School last September.

Enhancing Student and Teacher Learning through Summer Camp Experiences

Kudos to university and school based partners who spearheaded summer camp programs for middle school students this year. During the month of June, two partner-generated camps were held focusing on literacy and STEM subjects. Rising middle school students from William Wells Brown Elementary school participated in summer camp at Lexington Traditional Magnet Middle School to hone their literacy and math skills under the mentorship of school and university-based partners – including teacher candidates – all of whom volunteered their time, energy, and expertise. UK professors Regina Dawson and Kim White, and Fayette County Schools' reading specialist Anita Bostrom led the mentor team, assisted by Hadiyah Bukhari, Stephanie George, Shannon Harover, and Sarah Congleton.

Back on campus, the STEM Education Department hosted *SeeBlue* STEM Camp in collaboration with the College of Engineering and school-based partners. Led by UK professor, Dr. Margaret Mohr-Schroeder, and Dr. Craig Schroeder, a school partner at Henry Clay High School, this week-long program provided middle school students with a variety of positive, authentic learning experiences in STEM fields. Students worked with UK professors and school-based faculty as well as teacher candidates, graduate students, and high school students from the STEAM Academy.



Dr. Craig Schroeder and SeeBlue STEM Camp students.

MIC Alums Lead the Way

*By Dr. Leslie David Burns
Associate Professor of Literacy and
Program Chair of English Education
University of Kentucky*

On Friday, May 18, 2015, Fayette County Public Schools announced the names of teachers selected in each content area who were nominated by their department chairs and peers as most qualified to lead its district-wide Curriculum Design & Development Teams for High School. The MIC Secondary English Education Program is very pleased and excited to report that, out of 26 teachers nominated and selected throughout Fayette County to represent their peers, over 65% of all representatives are either MIC graduates, current members of our program faculty, and/or cooperating teachers who mentor our student teachers regularly.

This group will be responsible for producing a viable district-wide curriculum for English language arts across all schools, and members were cited for their expertise and leadership. That's a very uplifting and inspirational thing to hear for all of us in UK's College of Education. Our graduates do not simply move on to become "first year teachers" or mere novices in their field. They graduate knowing the importance of joining our local communities, they know how to give back and provide service, and they are quickly and widely recognized as leaders. Of the total members selected for FCPS's Curriculum Design & Development Team for High School English Language Arts, 42% of the committee is composed of MIC Secondary English Education graduates. Twenty-seven percent graduated within the past five years. To be recognized and nominated for such important and vital work so early in their careers, our students clearly demonstrate high quality, commitment to excellence, and outstanding professional engagement and service.

Congratulations to the following teachers and all of their colleagues engaging in this important work:

Jenny Adams (Class of '14)
Courtney Boulanger (Class of '10)
Dawn Brown (Cooperating Teacher)
Colleen Burns (Class of '09)
Sidney Durham (Class of '05)
Shawn Hinds (Cooperating Teacher)
Heather Holland (Class of '07)
Amanda Holt (Class of '13)
Laura Kinner (Class of '04)
Kari Long (Cooperating Teacher)
Chris McCurry (Class of '11)
Matt Middleton (Class of '07)
Danielle Saxton (Class of '13)
Nathan Spalding (Class of '13)
Catherine Vannatter (UK English Education Program
Faculty Member and Cooperating Teacher)
Jana Walters (Class of '10)

Collaborative Connection: Sharing Ideas

One way to sustain the collaborative connection between university and school-based partners is to share ideas about teaching and learning.

- In your experience, what works to promote quality teaching and foster student learning? What doesn't work?
- What changes have you made; what challenges have you experienced that colleagues might find interesting or helpful?

Send thoughts, ideas, and suggestions to mary.henderson@uky.edu.

We welcome your contributions!

Tuition Waiver Program for Cooperating and Resource Teachers

State universities provide cooperating teachers a tuition waiver for 3-6 credits depending on duration of their student teaching supervision.

Resource teachers can also claim a tuition waiver for up to 6 credits for each KTIP intern supervision they complete.

To redeem your waiver at UK, you must:

- use your credits within one calendar year of completing the assignment,
- gain admission to the university and be a student in good standing,
- complete a tuition waiver form prior to each semester enrolled, and
- submit the waiver form to the Associate Dean's office prior to the first day of classes for each semester of enrollment.

Visit <http://education.uky.edu/ADeanRI/students/sb77-tuition-waiver> for contact information and an application to redeem your waiver at UK.

To learn about using your tuition waiver at other Kentucky universities, visit <http://www.epsb.ky.gov/internships/tuitionwaiver.asp>.

Upcoming Events

June 30	Last day to apply for December 2015 undergraduate degree (online in MyUK)
August 17	University-based supervisors' meeting - 9:00 a.m. in 122 TEB
August 18	Student Teaching Orientation - Taylor Ed. Auditorium
August 19	First day of student teaching*
September 7	Labor Day
September 16	Cooperating Teacher / University Supervisor Training--Southern MS
September 20	Last day to apply for a December 2015 graduate degree (online in MyUK)
October 19	Dual placement students begin 2nd half placements*
November 13 8:00am - 12:30pm	Professional Seminar for all 2015-2016 student teachers - UK Singletary Center
November 30	Last day to apply for a May 2016 undergraduate degree (online in MyUK)
December 18	Last day of finals week

**For most programs. Check with program coordinator for your start date.*