

FROM THE FIELD

Perspectives on Strong Partnerships

Aligning Coursework to Clinical Preparation at California State University, Sacramento

California State University, Sacramento and its partner, the Sacramento City School District, are working to create alignment between their coursework and clinical practice opportunities by identifying and prioritizing a specific set of skills candidates need in order to be effective teachers starting on their first day on the job. Through structured, intentional curriculum development, Sacramento State determined where those skills appear in coursework and the points in the school year when teaching candidates should practice them in the classroom. A program supervisor helps candidates plan lessons with these skills in mind, and the supervisor observes the candidates as they practice those skills with students. The program has also worked with cooperating teachers to ensure they too model these same priority skills and give their candidates feedback on their skill development.

To ensure feedback to candidates is meaningful and actionable, Sacramento State created an observation tool which evaluates candidates on a Beginning / Developing / Maturing / Integrating scale, and the program gives observers specific things to look-for in order to track a candidate's development.

"Creating an observation rubric that is aligned to our focal guide has been transformative for our program, in that it creates a coherent observation and feedback experience for our candidates," said Susan Baker, a professor at Sacramento State College of Education. "Our three teacher educator groups—supervisors, cooperating teachers, and university faculty—will have professional learning experiences focused on how to observe and give feedback, including the difference between descriptive versus evaluative feedback and what constitutes actionable feedback, using the same

observation tool. This also will allow us to collect focused, coherent data on the feedback offered to candidates, and is an exciting step forward for our team."

California State University, Monterey Bay and Partnership Development

When CSU Monterey Bay began its strategic consulting relationship with the National Center for Teacher Residencies in 2017, the program had already crossed the first hurdle to building a sustainable clinically-oriented program—it had identified strong school district partners that were trying to develop strong pipelines for new teaching talent. The program brought together three school district partners: Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, Salinas Union High School District, and Salinas City Elementary School District. The partners worked together early on to identify a set of prioritized skills that their teacher candidates would focus on, strengthen, and master during their clinical teaching opportunities. In aligning these prioritized skills to school district needs, CSU Monterey Bay noted they shared "a common vision to positively impact student outcomes and develop the best teachers."

Through its work with NCTR, CSU Monterey Bay aligned its prioritized skills on coursework and experiential classroom clinical practice. The program built an observation framework to help mentors and program staff give targeted feedback to teacher candidates. This feedback was built into the program's plan for a candidate's gradual release into full-time teaching.

In a recent partnership survey, CSU Monterey Bay found "all members within the partnership are committed to the work that needs to be done to strengthen the program. We have formed a team that is working more cohesively together."