

## Research to practice: Undergraduate research initiative

### College of Education

### Georgia Southern University

#### Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to share the implementation process and insights gained on the creation of a pilot study using year-long field placements for six Georgia Southern University student-teachers while embedding action research requirements essential to edTPA. Student-teachers centered their research project on specifics within school improvement plans (SIP) to focus attention on identified school needs and fill gaps when demands were observed.

#### Goals

The goal of the presentation is to describe the structure, courses, research and interactions used to maintain a positive field experience for our undergraduate student-teachers. We intend to share how this experience was beneficial as they prepared for their careers. There may be other considerations that the audience participants will pose to help us as we move forward toward increased implementation of this project. Their feedback will be instrumental in the decision of using more year-long field placements in the near future.

#### Intended Audience

The intended audience for this presentation is school leaders, policy makers, lead teachers and educational researchers.

#### Brief Description

Field-based experience is perceived by early career teachers to be the most valuable experience within teacher preparation programs (Guyton & McIntyre, 2010; James, Etheride, & Lyles, 2011). While some feel this experience is critical to their preparation rarely are preservice teachers using these experiences to conduct valuable research to support them in their development. We were interested in exploring the dynamics of increased student teaching placement time over a two semester period in one school rather than using multiple field placement opportunities. Additionally, we sought to embed coaching to increase student awareness of conducting research in classrooms and using research to address SIPs.

Six preservice teachers from Georgia Southern University gathered data about four feeder schools located in Bulloch County, Georgia, specifically Brooklet, Georgia. Continued movement in close proximity in using feeder schools, shared community concerns, and gaining trust within the schooling community benefitted our preservice teachers by allowing them access to data to compare trends between the schools and students. This analysis showed trends of increasing passing rates, writing across the curriculum, and improving specific math skills.

During the student teaching semester, the preservice teachers used the goals written in the school's SIP to guide instruction in their assigned classroom. The goals in each SIP were connected to everyday classroom instruction. The preservice teachers used interview data from administration, teachers and staff as background information when preparing strategies of cultural significance to use in the classroom. They saw which strategies were successful in the past and which strategies were unsuccessful. The knowledge gained in their student teaching semesters prepared them to use research in their future classrooms. The preservice teachers aimed to improve student scores and overall achievement by using the goals in the SIP and

information shared from other school stakeholders to guide instruction.

## References

Guyton, E. & McIntyre, D.J. (2010). Student teaching and school experience. In W.R. Houston (Ed).

*The handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 514-530). New York: Macmillan.

James, T.L., Etheridge, C.P. & Lyles, D. A. (2011). Student teaching delivery via clinical training sites:

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