

FHSU TEACHING RESIDENCY

Department of Teacher Education

IMMERSIVE PROGRAM



Students spend two full years in the field as practitioners, while completing a comprehensive and totally immersed program of teacher education courses. The Program pulls together interdisciplinary student teams, guided by expert faculty to create unique, high-impact learning experiences in real-world situations. Classes combine the most current academic thought with full-time practical application in the field.

CLINICAL ROTATIONS



Students complete a newly redesigned program founded upon a clinical rotation of courses in the school setting (based upon the medical model), rotating through specialist experiences in: special education, classroom management, student assessment, curriculum planning, differentiated instruction, instructional technology, and meeting the needs of diverse students.

TEAM-BASED INSTRUCTION



The highest quality education is delivered, not by individuals, but by teams (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, etc.) where there is good communication and team management. Rather than a focus on individual student performance, the emphasis is placed on good team communication and problem-solving, which develops students' professional dispositions and "soft skills" as much as their academic capabilities.



DISTRICT BENEFITS

- Capable, motivated, and consistent pool of candidates for Para-professional positions.
- Consistent source of well trained and motivated future teachers, already immersed in school culture.
- Better long-term retention of new teachers.
- Candidates specially trained in best educational methods for rural or urban students.
- Teacher preparation program tailored to meet the unique needs of each district.



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LEARNING COMMUNITY COHORTS

Students join small cohorts - 15-30 first-year students - when entering the program, to benefit from a learning community of teaching residents, all from rural backgrounds.

Students take several classes with the learning community, building collaborative relationships and benefiting from the group's collective support, intelligence, and experience.

Students who are away from home and friends for the first time live on the same floor and participate in activities together throughout the year.

Cohorts provide ready-made study groups and support networks for students as they work, either on campus, or virtually, providing motivation and a sense of "family."

Students in learning communities have much higher GPA's, and report much higher levels of satisfaction and success while at FHSU.

Cohorts have one faculty mentor – from the university and in the field.



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THE RURAL TEACHING RESIDENCY

The Rural Teaching Residency is uniquely tailored to the needs of the participating schools and develops the skills and dispositions required of teachers in a rural school setting.

The program is specifically designed to prepare highly qualified teachers for careers in today's rural schools. These schools rely increasingly on a culture of inquiry and strong collaboration of grade-level, school-wide, and district-wide teams to meet the needs of all learners.

The program focuses on site-based action research and involves many forms of collaboration: between residents and their mentors, between special and general educators, between school-site faculty and administrative staff, between the Department of Teacher Education and the partner districts, and between the individual districts.



RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

For rural school districts, there is a need not only for preparing and credentialing new teachers, but also for reforming how those teachers are prepared to meet the challenges facing rural schools.

Among those challenges are issues of poverty and geographic isolation faced by rural districts that look to hire teachers with direct experience of the living and teaching conditions in a small remote community.

The Rural Teacher Residency prepares candidates to teach multiple subjects, mixed-aged classes, and students with special needs or English language learners.

The Program is designed to improve the preparation of new teachers, to address the needs of rural schools, and to improve the achievement of all students.

THE URBAN TEACHING RESIDENCY

The Urban Teaching Residency is uniquely tailored to the needs of the participating schools and develops the skills and dispositions required of teachers in urban school settings.

The program is specifically designed to prepare highly qualified teachers for careers in today's urban schools. This includes preparation in meeting the needs of a diverse population of students, reducing various performance gaps in student achievement, developing an environment of high expectation, and dealing with challenging incidents of classroom management.

The program focuses on site-based action research and involves many forms of collaboration: between residents and their mentors, between cohort members, between school-site faculty and administrative staff, and between the Department of Teacher Education and the partner districts.

Urban teaching is a distinct cultural approach and, as such, requires a unique preparation program.



TEAM-BASED LEARNING

Team-Based Learning is an instructional approach that promotes student interaction and engagement with each other and the content. TBL is designed to provide students with both conceptual and procedural knowledge. TBL is grounded in active learning and the application of concepts to problem-solving, rather than passive learning through traditional lectures. TBL embodies a structured approach to collaborative learning. TBL involves:

1. Permanent Teams (Groups) - Students are placed into permanent groups for the duration of the program.
2. Accountability - Students are held highly accountable to both individual and team work.
3. Feedback – Students receive frequent and timely feedback; feedback is provided in the moment of the learning activity.
4. Critical Assignment Design - Students are pushed to be critical thinkers, effective problem-solvers and good collaborators. Assignments should create opportunities for students to link course concepts to the bigger picture (problems, case studies, and experiences from the field etc.).

URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



In urban areas, 50% of new teachers leave by year three because they arrive ill equipped for the unique challenges of the urban classroom.

Traditionally educated teachers lack the classroom management skills, leadership experience, and diversity awareness needed to meet the needs of the students in their cities.

Urban teachers have to cope with overcrowded classes, limited materials and resources, non-traditional family structures, school safety concerns, and high poverty rates.

The Program is designed to provide unique coursework embedded in extensive real-world experience that will better prepare teachers to make meaningful and lasting positive impact on student learning in the urban setting.



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THE POWER OF A RESIDENCY

Nationwide, roughly 50% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years (just 3 years in urban areas), right when they hit their stride. But for graduates of teacher residency programs, the retention rate beyond 3 years is 85%.

It's hard for new teachers to get the practical skills they need, whether through traditional schools of education or more recent alternative routes to teacher certification. For decades, there have been complaints that schools of education have low admissions standards, too much focus on theory, and not enough classroom practice.

Alternative certification programs are far more selective than traditional education schools – the theory seems to be that their graduates' superior academic qualifications will make up for their lack of training. While traditional teacher education programs require more practice teaching hours, many don't provide much actual classroom guidance to student teachers or focus on the skills needed to succeed in isolated rural classrooms or high-poverty urban classrooms.

One thing is clear: virtually all teachers get better over the first 5 years of teaching as they acquire more experience. And it's common knowledge that first-year teachers often struggle, with their students' learning suffering as a result. Most teacher-training programs don't teach “soft skills” and suitable personal dispositions, apparently assuming they're instinctive. But for most people, they're not.

Fort Hays State University's Department of Teacher Education vision is to implement a teacher residency model that combines the very best of the traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs. A degree program founded upon the most current educational theory, but culminating in a two-year residency program will cement the practical application and development of “real world” skills, an approach founded upon the medical model.

Teaching, like medicine, is one of those things that you can only really learn by doing. Reading pedagogical theory has its place, but it won't help control a class of 30 unruly 8th-graders, and it may not help figure out why half the class didn't absorb the material taught yesterday.

Doctors spend years working under the supervision of more senior practitioners before they're licensed to practice on their own, but most new teachers undergo a "sink or swim" experience. Classroom management is one of the major reasons for first-year teacher burnout and attrition.

Our teaching residents will work with a mentor teacher, receive intensive in-class coaching, and gradually assume more responsibility as the program goes on. By the time they're done, they will have not only acquired pedagogical theory and content-area knowledge, they will also be able to maintain control of a classroom, manage student behavior and achieve positive impact on student learning.

DISTRICT COMMITMENT

Partner with FHSU Department of Teacher Education to identify and select suitable candidates, based upon pre-determined dispositions and skills.

Agree to hire residents as part-time paraprofessionals, permanent substitutes or teacher aides for a minimum of 2 years.

Guarantee residents a salaried position of no less than .50 and no more than .75 time throughout the two-year residency. (Residents do not qualify for benefits program)

Allow candidate to spend non-working time completing action-based research and/or completion of integrated coursework on-site.

Partner with FHSU Department of Teacher Education to identify and select a suitable mentor, based upon pre-determined dispositions and skills.

Provide access to a rotation of active clinical experiences and practitioners including: Special Education Teachers, Curriculum and Instruction Designers & Coaches, School Administrators, IT Professionals, and Lead Teachers.

Provide regular feedback to the Department of Teacher Education and residents regarding their professional strengths and weaknesses as well as their progress in the program.

Provide successful residents with an additional two years of mentoring post-graduation if ultimately hired by the district.

Partner with FHSU Department of Teacher Education if residents need to be removed from the program.