

**Focus Group Meeting with Newberry College Students
October 4, 2010**

MAJOR THEMES

- Meaningful tasks
- More teaching
- Connection to course content
- Quality mentor teachers
- Early placement (in semester)

What parts of your current field experiences have been most meaningful?

- Some of the mentor teachers have been outstanding
- Getting into the classroom early – even though it is not very meaningful
- Some mentors give good resources and lesson ideas.

What parts have been least meaningful?

- No specific instructions when going into the classroom
- Observation – that’s all we do for hours
- Grunt work – making copies, etc.
- Mentor placement
 - Not want you there
 - Negative about students (calls kids stupid)
 - Lack of excitement for teaching
 - Unqualified (observed mentor who was being written up by principal)

What areas do we need to improve related to current field experience?

- Teacher/Class placements
 - Teachers that are excited and want to help future teachers
 - Qualified
 - Placement should be appropriate to the course you are taking
 - Get placements earlier in the semester
- More teaching opportunities
- Connect field experiences to course content and discuss
- “Too much observation”
- “Field experience is not fun”
- “Feel like it is just a hoop to jump through and not learning”

How can faculty address your concerns?

- Think about field experiences differently (outside of the box)

- Meet with mentors at once to make sure they want a teacher and are interested
- Specific guidelines for observation tasks that connect to courses

How can field experiences be more meaningful for you and local students?

- Allowed to do more
- Interact more with the students
- Get to teach more
- Cooperative teaching with the mentor teacher
- Get placements earlier in order to review content to be comfortable with it (secondary) and help with scheduling issues (music)

We are in the early stages of revising our field experiences, what specific changes would you suggest?
[After giving a brief description of our current thoughts related to the Practicum idea and essential tasks – from June Retreat]

- Liked the idea of a scheduled Practicum time (I, II, and III)
- Also would include a monthly seminar to meet and discuss with faculty about what they are doing/seeing and how to connect it to course content
- Methods classes need revision –
 - too many hours for some and not enough hours for others
 - Problem – not seeing that subject when they go to their placement
- Technology class should be taken PRIOR to methods courses
- Need field experience for technology course
- If we assign hours to the Practicum courses – arrange with registrar to prevent students from going over course load and having to pay more money or factor this “practicum fee” into tuition

Based on your knowledge of other education programs and how they participate in field experiences, are there any things you would like to see done here at Newberry College?

- Meet with mentor teacher in the fall for the internship in the spring
- Require education majors to take all CORE courses prior to fall senior year so only education methods remain and have intense practicum
 - All day Tuesday and Thursday in school setting
 - “would love to have an all day experience in the school”
- All candidates should take CPR and have a condensed format (not semester long)

**Focus Group Meeting with Newberry College School Partners
October 4, 2010**

MAJOR THEMES

- Scheduling time
- Assigning Tasks
- Less observing – More doing

What are the successes you have encountered with our current field experiences?

- Students have been prepared
- Guidelines are clear for what teachers should expect
- Communication is good
- Relationships built between candidates, mentor teachers, and classroom students
- Candidates are eager to ask questions for guidance and accept opinion of mentor teachers

What problems have you encountered?

- No shows and no calls
 - Teachers prepare for them and then they do not show or have no set schedule
- Sign-in sheets
 - Forget their sheet (needs signatures for many dates)
 - Wait until last minute to get hours (burdens teacher)
- Conflicts with athletes
 - Scheduling
 - Meeting requirements

What areas do we need to improve related to current field experience?

- Evaluations of candidates
 - Want to evaluate them
 - Prefer electronic means
- Students need to come at a time that is beneficial

How can field experiences be more meaningful for your students and Newberry College candidates?

- Come at a beneficial time
- Less observing – more doing – hands-on
- Case Study
 - 1-on-1 work with a student on a project or task
 - Provides purpose and is on-going
- Assigning specific tasks
 - Give them choices to select (an agreement between the candidate and the mentor)
 - “Teachers will really respond well to this”