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# Exploring the Benefits of Embedded and Sustained Field Placements for Pre-Service Teachers and Students through Research of the F.A.C.E Collaboration

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Exploring the Benefits of Embedded and Sustained Field Placements for  
Teaching Candidates and Students through Research of the F.A.C.E Collaboration

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**Honors Research Project**

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Exploring the Benefits of Embedded and Sustained Field Placements for Pre-Service  
Teachers and Students through Research of the F.A.C.E Collaboration

Marie Corrigan  
Honors Research Project  
April 2015

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**Introduction:**

Throughout my honors research project, I investigated the following question: How does the implementation of pre-service teaching mentors benefit pre-service teachers, classroom teachers, and students in the classroom? To answer this question, I will be focusing on the Fostering A Collaborative Education program, F.A.C.E., which is a partnership between The University of Akron and Barberton High School in which teaching candidates serve as mentors to tenth and eleventh grade students throughout a long-term field experience. This paper is organized into three different sections: research supporting the benefits of long-term mentoring and field experiences; observations and interviews of teaching candidates and teachers at Barberton High School; and my personal experiences as a teaching candidate at The University of Akron.

I had the opportunity to meet Hal Foster, the co-founder of the F.A.C.E. program, when I took his honors colloquium class, *Fixing Our Schools*, during my sophomore year at The University of Akron. Throughout this class I became fascinated with his program between the University and Barberton schools as an effort to improve America's schools. I made three visits to Barberton to explore the program and learn more about how it worked. I was amazed by how successfully it had been implemented, and how beneficial the results were for both the Barberton students and the teaching candidates. In the summer before my junior year at Akron, Hal asked me to work as a Student Assistant for the program. I was thrilled and accepted the position knowing I would be able to become more involved and learn even more about how the program worked. I worked at Barberton with the program on Monday and Wednesday afternoons throughout the year. During my time as Student Assistant, I was asked to collaborate schedules,

fill in with student groups if teaching candidates were absent, create a brochure, and design a brochure insert to highlight the research done by Summit Education Initiative. Throughout my time working at Barberton and observing the teaching candidates conduct their lessons, I began to wish that I would have the opportunity to have a long-term field placement as these AYA English and Social Studies students had. This is what sparked my interest in completing a research project on the benefits of long-term teaching placements and exploring the possibility of creating a similar program for other fields of education.

In order to have a better understanding of the F.A.C.E. program, it is important to look into the history of the program. The F.A.C.E. program was created by Hal Foster, a Distinguished Professor at The University of Akron, and Paulette Urycki, an English teacher at a local high school at the time, as a way to meet the needs of these students falling through the cracks in schools. This collaboration began in 1997 in Akron Public Schools. Paulette Urycki at Central Hower High School and Hal Foster at the University of Akron collaborated together to create an advanced curriculum plan for at-risk students. The mentoring program was to be implemented into Paulette's high school English classroom with Hal's teaching candidates serving as semester long mentors. The professor's students who were majoring in AYA English put together the lesson plans to deliver to the high school students. The professor and his students held their class by going to the high school and teaching the at-risk students' English class every day. The AYA English students reported to teach a specified class period with the same students every day. This resulted in every student receiving countless hours of one-on-one time with a mentor and in turn the English teaching candidates gained hours of instruction time in a classroom setting with students. At-risk youth were given more one-to-one attention, and due to having the professor on-

site, students received high quality instruction. These students were given a greater chance to succeed when they were given an advanced curriculum, and had someone by their side throughout the process encouraging and supporting them to complete advanced course work. The program subsequently moved to Barberton High School where it has now expanded to include social studies. AYA social studies students joined the program in Spring 2013 under the guidance of Dr. Brad Maguth, a professor at the University of Akron, and Rob Walker, the cooperating social studies teacher at Barberton High School. The program has continued to develop and grow more successful throughout the years. The program gained national distinction when it was awarded the AT&T Aspire Grant in 2013, which provided funds to purchase computers for student use and to add a STEM component.

The way the high school students and pre-service teachers have responded to this program is incredible. Research done by the Summit Education Initiative will be discussed later in this paper to examine how students have positively responded to this program. The students involved in the F.A.C.E. Collaboration are given the chance to show that they are capable of completing advanced level work and are amazed by what they are able to accomplish.

Many factors come into play in order for this program to work. A university professor needs to be willing to organize the curriculum and put in the extra time to develop the program. A high school teacher needs to be willing to give up their typical role in the classroom and oversee university students teach their class. The classroom teacher must become a mentor to the university students to give them insight and feedback to create the most beneficial lesson plans for the students. University students need to be willing to work cooperatively with each other to create and deliver successful lessons to the class. The teacher candidates must also work to de-

velop relationships with their students and get to know each student at a deeper level. The program must be long term in order to reach its full potential. Bonds must be formed over time, so that there is mutual respect between the high school students and the university students.

The program's history can be further explored by reading Hal Foster's book, *America's Unseen Kids*, which was published in 2008. In the appendix, a copy of the F.A.C.E. program brochure that I created during my time as a student assistant alongside Paulette Urycki is included to provide a greater background of the program. A copy of the research done by Dr. Matthew Deevers of the Summit Education Initiative can also be found in the appendix of this paper. Matthew Deever's research was conducted to measure the effects of the collaboration on the emotional, social, and academic growth of the Barberton students.

The goals of the F.A.C.E. collaboration guide the actions of the program throughout each year. One goal of the collaboration is to train the teaching candidates to become strong and prepared educators. Another goal of the program is to prepare the high school students for college and to be socially, emotionally, and academically strong students. The third goal of the program is to provide academically at-risk high school students and the teaching candidates with an advanced curriculum. The basic principles that are the driving forces behind the program include providing on-site instruction to college students and high school students with a fully present staff daily. A second principle is that teacher candidates are seen as decision makers in the classroom and are responsible for making curriculum decisions that affect student learning. Long-term relationships forming throughout the program between the teacher candidates and the high school students are a key principle in the F.A.C.E. collaboration and are a major reason why the



program has been successful. The final principle of the program is continual reflection to make changes and improve over time.

“When a teacher sets and reinforces high expectations for students, students will raise their own expectations” (Foster and Nosol, 11). By providing at-risk students with an advanced curriculum, the classroom teacher and teaching candidates enable students to achieve to a higher standard than they previously believed possible. This program sets the bar high for students who may fall through the cracks as a way to improve their education and prepare them for college. The teaching candidates prove that they truly believe that these students can achieve to these high standards and in effect the students at Barberton start to work harder to reach these expectations. Students in the project also reported that they held school in a higher esteem when compared to students who were not involved (Summit Education Initiative). This idea is also successful due to the meaningful relationships formed between the teaching candidates and high school students. The students know that they have a mentor who cares about them and wants them to succeed. Once this relationship is developed the students are more likely to work hard to complete the work and put forth effort in order to meet the expectations of an adult who cares for them (Foster & Nosol, 11).

### **Section One: Research Supporting the Benefits of Long-Term Field Experiences and Mentoring**

Schools and researchers argue over which design of teacher preparation programs prove to be the most beneficial in cultivating new professional educators. In many of the research articles, including the article by Huling and McIntyre, I found support of the motives and strategies used in creating and implementing the F.A.C.E program between Akron and Barberton Schools.

Through research done by McIntyre, Lampley & Johnson, and Moore, Leeann, and Mary Beth Sampson, this program is meeting many of the requirements that prove beneficial for the students and for the future teaching candidates.

### **S.E.I. Research on the F.A.C.E. Collaboration**

In the past two years, data has been collected to understand the impacts of the F.A.C.E. collaboration and mentoring for the students of Barberton High School. Summit Education Initiative (SEI) gave every tenth grade student a MyVIEW © survey during each quarter of the 2013-2014 school year. Only one class of the four classes given the survey was involved in the F.A.C.E. program at Barberton. S.E.I. gave the students the MyVIEW © survey as a way to measure the effects of the collaboration on the emotional, social, and academic growth of the Barberton students. “The MyVIEW © student survey is designed to measure students’ attitudes, motivations, perceptions, and aspirations. MyVIEW © enables schools to expand their understanding of students beyond purely academic measures” (Summit Education Initiative, 2013). The MyVIEW © survey measures nine factors of student development including academic press, adult support, positive peer relationships, sense of safety, mastery orientation, self-efficacy, college-going identity, future-self, and school value. The results of these surveys showed significant improvement in many factors measured by the survey for students involved in the F.A.C.E. program when compared to other tenth grade students in the building who were not involved in the project. In the survey results, students in the partnership signified increases in academic support, academic press, peer connections, and sense of safety. Students in the project also reported that they held school in a higher esteem when compared to students who were not involved (Summit Education Initiative).

### **Summit Education Initiative Description of Factors of Student Development**

Academic Support: “Adults in this school push me to be my best” (Summit Education Initiative).

Academic Press: “Adults in this school care that I am learning” (Summit Education Initiative).

Peer Connections: “I look forward to seeing my classmates in school” (Summit Education Initiative).

Sense of Safety: “I feel comfortable in school. School is a place where I feel safe” (Summit Education Initiative).

The data collected over the 2013-2014 school year shows that students in the partnership were two and a half times more likely to earn a higher GPA in the second quarter compared to the first quarter than other students at Barberton. The results of this survey indicate that the students felt as if they were being pushed to higher expectations and that they felt they had increased support from adults who cared that they succeed in school. They shared a sense of increased belonging and felt increasingly that school was a place in which they felt safe and comfortable (Summit Education Initiative).

### **Benefits of Mentoring**

Mentoring has proven to be an extremely successful strategy in reaching students, especially students who fall in the at-risk category. Lampley and Johnson (2010) conducted a research study of the effects of mentoring on at-risk middle school students involved in the LISTEN program in a Tennessee middle school. Their research study focused on students who were at risk to fail academically and the study lasted for two years. In school systems with many at-risk students, it can be very challenging for one classroom teacher to provide enough support to meet the individual needs of each student in their classes. This research shows that at-risk

students need additional support in order to have a greater opportunity to succeed in school (Lampley and Johnson, 64-65). Mentoring can prove as a solution to this problem because it provides these students with an adult who cares about their success and can provide them with the additional support they need for any problems they may encounter.

Prior to their study, Johnson and Lampley found research stating that using mentoring as an intervention strategy could help students achieve higher grade point averages, create goals for themselves, and provide a boost in their self confidence (65). “Effective mentoring programs steered teenagers away from trouble, gave extra encouragement to students, and provided a role model for more positive types of behaviors” (Lampley and Johnson, 65). In this study, Johnson and Lampley collected data over 54 students involved in the mentoring programs’ grade point averages, discipline referrals, and attendance at school. After the two year study, 51 of the 54 students showed an increase in GPA after participating in the mentoring program and developing a meaningful relationship with a supportive adult. Fifty-one of 54 students also showed a decrease in discipline referrals after participating in mentoring and 52 of the 54 students showed an increase in attendance at school. The study focused on the development of personal relationships developing between a supportive adult and at-risk student. The data collected throughout the study supports that forming mentoring relationships has a positive effect on success of at-risk students (Lampley and Johnson, 68). This study supports three of the goals of the F.A.C.E. program’s development of meaningful relationships between the teaching candidates and high school students including improving student attendance, increasing effort and caring about school, and decreasing of behavior issues within the school. The teaching candidates are able to

provide the academically at-risk students at Barberton with a supportive adult who cares about their achievement as in the LISTEN program in the study.

### **Benefits of Long-Term Field Placements**

Many theorists are strong supporters of the constructivist theory when it comes to the idea of prosperous teacher preparation programs including John Dewey, Vygotsky, and Jean Piaget. They believe that teachers are also students and must construct their own learning through experiences. John Dewey was one of the first theorists to believe in this approach to field experience.

“The rationale for field experience in teacher preparation is grounded in the work of John Dewey (1904; 1938) who spearheaded the progressive movement in the 1930s and emphasized learner-centered instruction. He was a strong advocate for the experiential training of teachers. Dewey viewed the teacher as learner, and thus the need for that learner to be provided experiences for constructing his or her own learning” (Huling, 2).

Students given the opportunity to participate in the semester long F.A.C.E. program are given many authentic learning experiences to construct their own ideas and practices of teaching. They are able to learn through doing and form their own ideas of how to implement methods and activities successfully through experience.

Another field-based teacher preparation program similar to the F.A.C.E. collaboration was launched in Texas. The University of Texas at Arlington and Arlington Independent school district partner together to provide teaching candidates with intensive year-long preparation in a school setting. Teaching candidates spend their first semester as an intern and second semester as

a resident at the school. They go to the local school five days a week all year long instead of attending any college courses during their senior year to provide them with more authentic experiences teaching in a classroom setting. As a result, these teaching candidates are able to connect the theory and strategies that they have learned through coursework and learn how to implement methods in a true classroom environment (Wilmore, 59). The founders of the CREST program in Texas spoke to area principals questioning how effectively they believed the program prepared the teaching candidates for finding a teaching job and becoming an educator. Principals responded that participants responded more specifically and confidently in a teaching interview. The principals also appreciated the increased exposure the teaching candidates had over the full year of working with classroom management and curriculum development (Wilmore, 61). “Principals perceptions verify the importance and credibility of field-based preparation” (Wilmore, 61). In the F.A.C.E. program, the teaching candidates also have that extra semester of increased exposure and opportunities to work in a classroom setting to apply theory to practice. This experience will help to prepare them to answer professionally and confidently in their future job search.

McIntyre (1983) found that research shows that early field experiences are extremely important and beneficial for pre-service teachers. Early field experience are those that come before your final student teaching experience. The first reason he found that starting field experience early is to reassure teaching candidates that they have chosen the right profession and it gives them the chance to decide if they actually enjoy and have a passion for working with children. Another reason early field experience is beneficial is to allow universities to gauge a teaching candidate’s potential as an educator throughout their field achievements. Early field experience provides students with the opportunity to implement the instructional strategies and methodology

in a classroom setting before they move on to student teaching. This field preparation gives teacher candidates a background of what it is truly like to be an educator and work with children (McIntyre, 28). “Perhaps field study’s greatest promise lies in the development of preservice programs linking methods courses with field work. This development would open possibilities for integrating theory and practice and for increasing preservice students’ opportunities for reflection on teaching” (McIntyre, 28). Students in the F.A.C.E. program who participated in interviews for my research mentioned many of the same benefits of participating in a long-term field placement. Many of them said that the most beneficial aspect of the program is that they could finally tie the knowledge and methods from coursework and implement strategies in a real classroom full of students, as noted in McIntyre’s research.

In the beginning years of developing teacher preparation programs, students took college courses on campus during their early college years and completed student teaching at the end of their senior year. Many education researchers believe that teachers today need “more rigorous preparation and more authentic experiences to enable them to cope with the increasing complexity, challenges, and diversity of current schools and classrooms” (Huling, 3). There are many high demands on today’s teachers and in order for new teachers to be successful they need a quality, and beneficial preparation program. “Today, quality teacher preparation programs provide candidates with a wide variety of early field experiences in a variety of settings to lay the foundation for and to supplement the capstone or culminating field experience of student teaching” (Huling, 2). Huling (2000) found that principals believed that students with increased amount of field experience were more prepared for the realities of teaching which allowed them to work as a teacher would after having a few years of experience under their belts. A study done in Texas in

1998 by Fleener, examined the differences between teacher candidates on the same campus trained in a field-based program and a traditional campus program. The study collected data from almost 2,000 education students. The study results found that 12% of the students trained in the traditional approach had left the teaching profession, while only 4% of the students who were prepared with field-based study had left teaching after their first couple years (Huling, 5). This study is evidence that student teachers who had more opportunities to practice in the field prior to graduating were better prepared for the realities of becoming an educator.

“The past two decades have been times of heightened emphasis on changing structures between universities and public schools towards collaboration as a means of improving education and preparation of pre-service teachers” (Moore and Sampson, 3). Partnerships like the F.A.C.E. collaboration between Barberton and The University of Akron follows the idea that working together creates a stronger learning environment for students and pre-service teachers. In their article, Moore and Sampson argue that there are three different types of collaboration: cooperative, symbiotic, and organic. Cooperative collaborations are formed for a short time period and benefits are received from one of the collaborators to the other. In symbiotic collaborations both partners work together, but outcomes do not tend to change for either party. In organic collaborations, both partners are striving towards the same goal and produce change for each collaborator (Moore and Sampson, 5). In order for a collaboration to be successful, Moore and Sampson say that the partnership should work to reach organic collaboration status. Two organizations, each having their own agenda, policies, and goals, must come together and compromise to work together as a team in order to form a successful collaboration between a university and local school. In an organic collaboration both partners are working together to accomplish mutu-



al goals and both partners are affected as a result of the program (Moore and Sampson, 5). Sharing mutual goals for the program ensures that both groups in the partnership are working together to accomplish a common goal. Rules should also be set into place to ensure that the program remains running smoothly (Moore and Sampson 5-6). I would classify the F.A.C.E. program as an organic collaboration because the students, the mentor teachers, and the teacher candidates from the University of Akron and Barberton High School work together to achieve a common goal.

All of the research and data collected about beneficial teacher preparation programs and mentoring backs the ideas and foundation of the F.A.C.E. program. This research supports why the F.A.C.E. program has grown and helped to prepare countless pre-service teachers for their experience as a teaching candidate and as an educator in the future. Looking at our findings, I believe it would be wise to expand a similar program into all age levels and subjects of education in order to provide all teaching candidates with a substantial amount of exposure working in schools and with students prior to student teaching. These early field experiences lay the foundation necessary for a teacher to construct their own ideas as a learner to achieve at their highest ability as a teacher candidate and as a future educator. Additional and continued research of the F.A.C.E collaboration is necessary to determine further impacts of the program.

## **Section Two: Observations and Interviews with Teaching Candidates and Barberton Teachers**

### **Observations**

I have been observing the F.A.C.E. program periodically over the past two years. I have generally reflected over my observations of my experiences with the F.A.C.E. Collaboration dur-

ing the past three years to use as a source of research for this project. I was there once or twice a week during the 2013-2014 school year working as a Student Assistant. I was also at Barberton to observe and conduct interviews about once every week or two during the fall semester of 2014 to collect research for my honors research project. I completed interviews with cooperating mentor teachers, Heather Weeks and Melissa Nelson, a one-on-one interview with an AYA English teaching candidate, and an interview with a panel of AYA Social Studies candidates. The teaching candidates would like to remain anonymous throughout this research project, but have allowed me to use their interview responses.

Through observation of the F.A.C.E. program at Barberton, I have been able to witness the transition from nervous students as the teacher candidates start the program to confident, engaging teachers prepared to student teach in time for the end of the semester celebration. I have seen this transition take place for almost every pre-service teacher that I have seen in the program throughout the past three semesters. The initial thought of having the responsibility for an entire classroom full of students can be overwhelming, but this program helps “break-in” teaching candidates for the realities of teaching before they have their actual student teaching experience. During this program, teaching candidates can also lean on the cooperating teachers and their group members for support when they need help developing lessons or working with a student. Through these interviews the cooperating teachers, and the AYA teaching candidates shared the benefits of their experiences and any hardships or complications they faced. There will be a copy of the questions that were asked during the interviews with the cooperating teachers and a copy of the questions used with the teaching candidates attached at the end.

### **Teacher Interviews**

**“Why did you want your classroom to be included in the F.A.C.E. program?”**

Melissa Nelson was new to the F.A.C.E. program last semester after the previous cooperating teacher left for maternity leave. Hal Foster and Paulette Urycki worked to convince Ms. Nelson of the benefits of the program in the hopes that she would include her classroom in the upcoming semester. Ms. Nelson said that persuasion was the main factor in having her classroom involved in the program because she had not known much about the program until she attended a visitation day. After visitation day and conversations with Hal, Paulette, and Heather Weeks, the tenth grade collaboration teacher, Ms. Nelson came to the conclusion that she would join the program because she thought that it would be something to benefit her students. She was most concerned with joining because she did not know what the teaching candidates would need from her as a cooperating teacher. However, throughout her first semester she has learned that the teaching candidates receive most of the necessary guidance from Hal and are mainly self-sufficient in her classroom and preparing lessons, calming that initial hesitation. Heather was a part of this program long before it made its way to Barberton High School. As a teacher candidate at The University of Akron, Heather had been a part of the F.A.C.E. program at Central Hower, so she already knew the value of the program. She was eager to have her classroom included in the collaboration because she knew her students would benefit from the additional support. Robert Walker, the cooperating social studies teacher at Barberton, did not initially want his classroom included in the collaboration. His principal has asked him if he would be willing to join the program and partner with Dr. Brad Maguth and his from The University of Akron to extend the collaboration to include social studies. However, Mr. Walker noted that he was team teaching with Mrs. Weeks at the time and thought it would be a good idea to give the program a chance. After

joining the collaboration, he decided he really enjoyed being a part of the team and did not want to leave the program.

**“Do you believe having pre-service teachers planning and conducting lessons for the semester has benefitted your students? How so?”**

Ms. Nelson responded that having many mentor teachers within the classroom has given students the opportunity to have someone to make a connection with personally. She believed this especially benefits the “reluctant learners by having mentors so students and mentors can work one-on-one helping to develop relationships allowing more students to open up.” Having many mentor teachers has given each of her students their own person to go to for extra support. She said her students think the mentor teachers are older than they are, so the teaching candidates still have the students’ respect. Heather said that the program benefits the students because the pre-service teachers have been able to develop more interactive lessons that spark her students interests keeping them more engaged in the lessons. As they develop relationships with the teaching candidates, they become better listeners and want to learn. Mr. Walker also believed that having teaching candidate planning and conducting lessons is beneficial to the students because it allows time for more hands-on activities, small group work, and even one-on-one mentoring time. He explained, “with the guidance of both Dr. Maguth and I we are making sure that the students are still receiving the instruction and curriculum that is required by our course of study.” He said that by having an increased number of teachers in the classroom, the students are exposed to many different perspectives and teaching styles.

**“What are the benefits to the teacher who allows pre-service teachers in the classroom?”**

Ms. Nelson said that she was able to learn new teaching methods from the teaching candidates. She was able to find some new ideas to incorporate into her lessons from the teaching candidates using videos, etc. It provides teachers with “a new, fresh look at some different teaching strategies.” Heather believed that her students benefit from the constant support they are provided from mentors. By having multiple teaching candidates in the classroom, “there are more opportunities for my high school students to participate in small group work, and one-on-one instruction.” There is also greater opportunity for re-teaching topics students may have struggled with and providing the students with interactive lessons. Mr. Walker has also been able to learn new strategies, ideas, and methods to teach his own lessons from the teaching candidates. He explained, “I am able to sit back and watch a variety of different people teach and see what works well and what struggles they have.”

**“Have you experienced any difficulties or conflicts working with the mentor teachers?”**

Ms. Nelson said that there really had not been any significant difficulties working with the mentor teachers so far. She said there had been some personality conflicts between teaching candidates during planning periods, but that the conflict never extended into the classroom so the students were unaware of any issues. She noted this is the same issue that arises in any form of collaborative teaching whether it is pre-service teachers or licensed educators working together. Heather said that over the years she has had a few challenges working with the mentor teachers. She explained that the biggest issue is when pre-service teachers cannot work in a group or with other educators. Some mentor teachers are stubborn and do not always think to put the students first in the situation of a disagreement with another mentor. She also said that “pre-service teachers are used to teaching to a simulated audience which is not reality,” so it takes them a while to

adjust to an actual classroom audience. The final challenge she has faced is that pre-service teachers do not fully understand the state mandates and state testing because it is not addressed fully in college curriculums because it changes so frequently. For mentor teachers these mandates are not a focus as they are for licensed educators. Mr. Walker also believed that occasionally the teaching candidates have not always thought to put the students first. He said that some of the teaching candidates that he has worked with have been stubborn when discussing methods and strategies of teaching their lessons. Mr. Walker noted,

“I have no problem with the candidates experimenting with teaching ideas and styles and I believe this is important because it helps them to discover their style, but when a strategy or style does not work then it needs to be changed and sometimes the candidates want to blame the students and they are stubborn and will not change.”

He believed that teachers should adapt to meet the needs of each of their students, not the other way around.

**Would you encourage other classroom teachers to participate in a collaboration similar to this one? Why or why not?**

Ms. Nelson said that she would definitely encourage other educators to participate in a similar program. She said it is great for the high school level students. Having multiple teachers in the classroom allows for more one-on-one time with students, which is especially beneficial for essay writing. She also was able to learn many new methods from the mentor teachers to incorporate into her own lessons. Mrs. Weeks said that she would encourage a classroom teacher to participate if they are willing to have the right attitude when working with the teaching candi-

date. She noted, "In order for the collaboration to be beneficial, the teacher needs to welcome the pre-service teachers with open communication and support." Mr. Walker also would recommend joining the program to another teacher. He said that it has given him the opportunity to continue to grow and learn as an educator. Mr. Walker continued to explain by saying, "I think all teachers get in a rut and continue to go back to the things they have always done in their teaching. Working with this collaboration has helped me to continue to change and adapt."

**Do you believe the pre-service teachers that have worked in this program are more prepared for student teaching as a result of the collaboration?**

Melissa said that the program helps the mentors because it allows them to make the decision before student teaching if they actually like teaching. They are thrown in and allowed to experience teaching, which is the best way to learn. By allowing them to learn if they are doing things correctly now and learning the right way to handle different situations, it prepares them for when they will be teaching on their own. There are many benefits including learning how to be flexible when things do not go as planned and what strategies will work with the specific group dynamics of a class. They learn how to present lessons, grade papers, and how to group the class during activities. They are able to share their ideas with others and learn from their failures in the collaborations, so that they can be successful during student teaching. Heather said that she absolutely believes that pre-service teachers are more prepared for student teaching after this program. "The biggest difference is the ability to make relationships and establish rapport with the students". They are more prepared for the realities of planning and grading. They no longer have the unrealistic high expectations that all work turned in will be perfect and understand the type of work that will be turned in. They also have the ability to learn how to teach and

re-teach lessons. Mr. Walker believed that students were definitely more prepared as a result of participating in the F.A.C.E Collaboration and having the chance to have an earlier embedded field experience during their college career. He said it gives the teaching candidate the opportunity to see all of the duties that are required of a teacher besides lesson planning and delivering lessons. Rob stated, "I believe the earlier we get teaching candidates in front of students and working in actual classrooms the more they will learn and the earlier they will realize if this is what they really want to do for the rest of their lives."

### **Teaching Candidates:**

#### **"What have you learned from this field experience?"**

The panel of university students said they have learned the most from this field experience. They said they learned how important it is to be prepared for your lessons because the students count on you. They finally got to incorporate many of the strategies and methods they have learned throughout their education classes at Akron into an actual classroom setting. It has given us the opportunity to learn how to think on our feet and learn how to revise lessons on the fly. The AYA English student said she has learned how to develop personal relationships with her students. She has also learned how to adapt lesson plans to students needs based on prior assessments and IEPs. Like the teaching candidates on the panel, this teaching candidate agrees that this experience has taught her the importance of flexibility and that it is okay that things do not always go as planned.

#### **"What do you believe are some of the benefits of conducting your field service hours in this program?"**



The students on the panel said that their comfort level in front of a class has increased dramatically as a result of having this experience. They have had the chance to be in front of the class multiple times which gave them a huge boost in their confidence teaching. They are more prepared for failures that happen when they try new strategies and they know how to revise and bounce back from these failures. They said that having a safety net of peers who were also in the collaboration to lean on was a huge benefit. The group could bounce ideas off of one another, discuss, and revise as a way to improve their own lessons. The panel said that they finally had the chance to apply what they had learned and implement strategies in the field with actual students instead of planning for hypothetical situations. The AYA English student said that this program gives you “the chance to find your voice in the classroom.” Instead of simply watching and observing other teachers teach their classes, she finally had the chance to implement lessons on her own. She was also grateful to have other teaching candidates in the program to lean on for support.

**“ How have your relationships with the students within your class changed as a result of the amount of time you have spent teaching them?”**

The panel said that it was amazing how much their students have opened up since they started working with them at the beginning of the semester. They said they were amazed by how much the relationship changes over time as you get to know the students on a personal level. The panel said once they were able to gain the students’ trust, the students began to open up and come to them with problems. Once these relationships formed the students were more receptive to their teaching. The panel said once the students let you in, they notice and appreciate when you are there which creates a positive classroom environment. The AYA English student agrees that her

relationships have changed drastically as a result of the extended time she spent with them. She said her personal reading group has really opened up to her and they have all developed a strong bond throughout the experience. She has had the opportunity to get to know many students on a personal level which has led to the students opening up to her. Some have even talked to her about possible college majors in their futures. She said once you have developed personal relationships with your students, they are more likely to work hard during your lessons. They want to do good work for you and there are fewer behavior issues once they trust and respect you.

**“ Do you prefer spending an extended amount of time teaching one group of students or would you have rather taught multiple groups of students at different schools in order to fulfill your field hours required for class?”**

The panel said that they would prefer to spend an extended period of time with one group of students. They said in previous short-term experiences, they had not had the chance to develop relationships with the students. There was not enough time to get invested in the students or have the chance to get to know them on a personal level. They said that fifteen field hours is not nearly enough time to have good rapport with a group of students or to have continual positive interactions. At Barberton, they were required to be there two days a week and an additional 50 field hours on top of the two days. Many students went above and beyond the required hours. The AYA English student said that she felt that her previous field experiences had been useless when compared to this experience. She had never had the chance to get to know the students she had been working with before. She would much rather have an extended period of time to spend with a small group of students, so that she has the chance to develop relationships with them. She said the students truly appreciate when you know their names and interests and are more receptive to you when you have a personal relationship with them.

**“ Do you feel more prepared to student teach as a result of working in the collaboration at Barberton? How so?”**

The panel believed that they are more prepared to student teach because of their time spent in the collaboration. They have had the chance to implement their own curriculum and see how it goes. They believe that this “is a good stepping stone for student teaching because they have a safety net of peers to fall back on for support.” They have been given the opportunity to fail from their cooperating teacher, so that they can learn from these failures. They said they learned more from these failures than from their successes. They also have learned their strengths and weaknesses, so they know what they need to work on student teaching. The panel said they are much more comfortable teaching in front of class which will help when they move into student teaching. The AYA English student said that this program has benefitted her tremendously and that she feels much more comfortable and prepared to student teach as a result. She finally had the chance to implement lesson plans and learn how to adapt and revise lessons. She will also use her ability to develop relationships with her students as she continues her path towards student teaching.

**“Do you feel that the extra time and effort required to teach at Barberton almost every day is worth it?”**

The panel said that working in this program is very time consuming because of the required hours and all the time they spent planning. However, they all agree that the extra effort and time are definitely worth it. One said this is what teaching is actually like and this has prepared us for that reality. They also said they enjoy going to the school every day and spending time with the students. They genuinely wanted to spend the time and be there. The AYA English student agrees that this program was very time consuming, but said that every minute was worth

it. She was very involved in activities at the university and her classes, but found herself putting her lesson plans before homework. She said the time she spent reflecting, planning, and trying to figure out how to get each student on the same page was completely worth it because it ultimately benefits the students.

**“What are some of the difficulties that you have experienced throughout your time in the program? Would you change anything about your experience at Barberton?”**

The panel said that throughout their experiences there have been a few challenges that they have had to face. One problem that they saw was that within the AYA Social Studies classroom there were 22 mentor teachers. They said this was far too many mentor teachers because it caused the students to expect them to hold their hand through everything. Frequently a problem would arise where one teaching candidate was teaching a lesson and another candidate would be disruptive because they were talking to a student during the lesson. They said that although they agree that this is a great stepping stone to student teaching, that it is not realistic because you will not have 20 other teachers in your room to lean on in reality. The AYA English student said that the only problems that she saw were within the group of pre-service teachers. She said that sometime they faced group dynamic problems in which mentor teachers shared differing opinions. However, these issues between mentor teachers smoothed themselves out throughout the semester as the mentor teachers began to work cooperatively with one another.

### **Section 3: My Personal Experience as a Teaching Candidate**

In this section, I provide an overview of my own field experiences while earning a degree from the College of Education at The University of Akron. My experience was very similar to any other student going to earn a Bachelor in Middle Childhood Education with concentrations

in math and science. Below, I explain how these experiences prepared and did not prepare me for the realities of student teaching and an actual career as a middle school teacher. I explore my opportunities to develop relationships with students, descriptions of my responsibilities throughout each field experience, and my practice in developing and delivering lessons to students.

After my first week of student teaching, saying I was overwhelmed would be an understatement. I had only spent a limited number of hours within a school building prior to my student teaching experience. I did not realize exactly how much work these teachers put in on and off the clock to prepare for each and every school day. Realizing that in a few short weeks, it would be my responsibility to prepare and teach lessons to my new class full of students every day had me feeling an extreme amount of stress. I had only taught a handful of lessons to students I barely knew throughout the past four years I spent earning my degree in education. Another word I could have used to describe myself three weeks ago would be unprepared. I was supposed to be able to prepare differentiated lessons to meet the needs of each fourth grader in my classroom, and I was not sure I would be able to do it. I was never given the opportunity to get to know my students in my previous field experiences because they had been very short-term. Making lessons in my prior classes for hypothetical students was not nearly the same as hand-crafting lessons based on the actual students with whom I would develop real relationships. In my classes at The University of Akron, I was given all of the tools necessary to become a successful teacher. However, I was not given the chance to apply and learn how to use all of these tools in an actual classroom, which I believe may be even more important.

Below, I have included a table to provide an explanation of each of my field experiences that I have previously completed during my past four years of earning my Bachelors of Science in Education.

**Table 1: My Field Experience Log**

School	Grade	Duties	Duration
St. Vincent St. Mary	10th	Observation	3 visits
Woodridge Elementary	4th/5th	Observation	10 hours
Summit Academy	1st	Small group	10 hours
Springfield Middle School	7th	Mentoring	10 (1 hour) visits and visitation day at Akron
S.T.E.A.M. School	5th	Observation/2 lessons with 3 co-teachers	6 (90 minute) visits over the course of 3 weeks
East High School	7th	Taught 3 lessons with 2 co-teachers	5 (90 minute) visits over the course of 6 weeks
Schumaker Elementary	4th	Mentored/Tutored a student alongside a co-teacher in language arts	7 (90 minute visits) after school over the course of 4 weeks
Barberton Middle School	7th	Observation / Taught 3 lessons on my own to 5 students	15 hours over the course of 6 weeks
Rootstown Elementary	4th grade	Teaching Candidate/ Took over math and science for entire day	M-F for entire school day over course of entire spring semester

The vast majority of my field experience hours were spent spread out through a wide variety of school districts with hundreds of different students. After I completed my set amount of hours for each class, I was moved into a new building for the next allotted number of hours in each of my classes for the next semester. I probably would barely recognize, let alone remember the names, of the students I worked with throughout my hours for each class. I highly doubt any

of these students would remember my face or name either. I had never spent more than seven days in any given classroom I worked in. Seven days was not enough time to get to know a student on more than a superficial level. At the very least, weeks or months are needed to understand a student on a deeper level and to develop a meaningful relationship with this student. I never spent enough time in a classroom to complete the important steps in understanding and developing relationships with my students. I believe that these are the number one most important steps needed in order to develop a successful classroom, which benefits each and every student and teaching candidate in the best possible way.

Understanding a student helps you to be aware of how they would learn in the most successful way. Knowing a student helps a teacher to craft lessons and learning experiences to fit each child's individual needs. In order to do this, I needed to know my students' backgrounds, interests, learning styles, attitudes, and past experiences. In my field work, I did not even know all of my students' names, so I definitely did not have enough time to learn all of these other important pieces of information about each of my students. My lesson plans were created in order to meet the needs of generic middle school students because I was uninformed on the needs of the actual students I was working with. A lot of the lessons I taught failed because I made them without any basic knowledge of the students who would be receiving my lessons. For example, I taught a lesson about simple machines to an eighth grade classroom assuming that the students already had a basic knowledge of each type of simple machine from their previous grades based on the standards of what should be taught in each grade. The students had no idea what a simple machine was. My first lesson for the unit was created without the understanding of my students' prior knowledge, and it failed miserably. It wasted a class period because I had to backtrack the

next day to give my students the background knowledge necessary to complete the lesson. I could have created a much more successful unit if I was aware of my students' prior knowledge and learning styles before I formed the unit. This taught me how important it was to understand the students before creating and presenting a lesson. However, in the way my short-term field experiences were set up, it was impossible to get to know the students before creating the lessons, so I was forced to continue in this "guess and see how it goes" style of creating lessons. While observing at the Barberton program, I was able to see how the teaching candidates in the program were able to create lesson plans based on what they knew about their students. In the beginning of their time in the F.A.C.E. program, the teaching candidates were as unsure as I was in creating lesson to meet the needs of the Barberton students. However, unlike me, they were allowed to stay with the same students throughout an entire semester giving them the time necessary to learn about each student. They could grow as a teacher throughout the 16 weeks and were able to create successful lessons by the end of the semester based on their understanding of the students.

Developing a meaningful relationship with each student is another critical step in creating a successful learning environment. Throughout the development of these relationships, students and teachers are able to develop a mutual respect and understanding for one another. This was another missing piece throughout my field experiences due to the lack of long-term placements in any given school. I would have to point to someone instead of calling them by name. This was just one example of how undeveloped my relationships would be in these short lived experiences. Respect was a major issue due to not having relationships with the students. Respect from students and from the teacher needs to be earned over time. To these students I was just another



teaching candidate from Akron who would leave after my 10 or so hours were completed. They had no reason to respect me other than that their teacher had told them to do so. Students are more likely to remain focused and work on the task at hand if it is presented to them by someone they respect.

Another major benefit of being able to develop relationships with your students is that they are able to come to the conclusion that you truly care about them. The students learn that you want them to succeed and that you will work your hardest to help them achieve their goals. Students want to know that you believe in them and want to see them do well. Knowing that you care motivates students to work harder on the assignments that you assign to them to complete. Your belief in them can inspire them to do the very best that they can do because they know you have high standards for them. It takes time for the students to truly believe that you care; definitely more time than seven days or less. I could tell that students were not putting their best effort forth on the assignments I assigned. I was not their homeroom teacher, so they thought they could get away with poor work. They also barely knew me, so they did not really care what I thought of their work. As much as I tried to convey that I cared that they mastered the specific concept we were covering, it was not enough for me to convince them in the short time I had. In one of my experiences, I felt like I had the chance to reach a student in a small way and helped him learn how to find the area of a rectangle even after he insisted that he would not be able to on his own. By pushing him to show effort and letting him know that I believed he could master this concept; he was able to solve the problem eventually on his own. This small step made me look forward to helping this student grow further and continue developing the relationship. However, I only was in this classroom one more day before the field experience was over, so I was

never able to progress into a greater understanding of this student. I also could not continue to hold this student accountable in moving forward and progressing from the last time I worked with him.

I did have two opportunities to work in a one-on-one environment with a student for an extended period of time. One experience was to work with one student twice a week after school for four straight weeks. In the second experience, I worked with a girl during her study hall once a week for ten weeks. This was the one exception in which I spent more than seven days in a school. In both experiences, I was able to learn some of their interests, learning, styles, and prior knowledge assessment throughout this extended period. I was able to develop somewhat of a strong relationship with them because of the extended time I was able to work with each of these students. I was also able to hold them accountable for the assignments we had worked on together during previous weeks. The seventh grade girl I worked with for ten weeks told me how helpful it had been to work with me all semester during our last visit. She said that working with me had helped her to believe in herself and apply this to earn the math grade she was capable of. It made me realize how beneficial the extra time spent with a student and developing a bond truly was and I wished that I would have had more time to continue working with each of these students to see them progress even further. I wish that I could have had a long-term experience with a whole class to have the experience and understand the impacts of developing relationships and understanding each student in a class over time.

### **Long-Term Field Placements versus My Personal Field Placement Experiences**

Throughout my time observing and working as a student assistant for the F.A.C.E. program, I have seen so many meaningful relationships develop between teaching candidates and

the Barberton students. The two groups begin to understand and learn from one another as a relationship develops. By the end, it is amazing to see how different the interactions are between the two groups and how the level of student participation and effort greatly increases. The teacher candidates begin to truly care for the students and the students acknowledge that. They know the candidates will hold them accountable which creates a greater desire to turn in high-quality work. I wish that I would have had the opportunity to see many of the relationships I started to develop with many different students through as they were able to at Barberton. I have been able to meet and learn from students of all different backgrounds and learning levels throughout my many field experiences. I appreciate that I had the opportunity to work with so many different students throughout the past four years, but it would have been even more meaningful to create lasting relationships with a smaller number of students.

My responsibilities as a teaching candidate in classrooms have varied widely throughout my student teaching experience. For the vast majority of my first two years in the College of Education, my main duty while in schools was to simply observe in the classrooms and keep a log of what I saw. I then had to tie the information from the log into various papers about how my observations aligned with theory and facts I had learned in the required textbooks and class lectures. This helped to sharpen my observation skills and pay attention to little details of the ongoing activities within a classroom. This also made me realize how differently children actually behaved in real-life situations than the textbook descriptions had portrayed. All of the students did not fit the cookie cutter stereotypes many of the textbooks provided. I was very anxious to start working with the students during this phase of my field experiences, but I am glad that I had to the chance to learn by simply watching the student and teacher interactions. Throughout these

observation experiences, I had a few opportunities to work within small group settings. I helped students who may be struggling with certain topics or helped a group work through a worksheet of some sort. I also had the chance to work in some one-on-one situations, but this was typically to perform some sort of diagnostic test such as DIBELS.

In my final year of my time in the College of Education, I was placed in slightly longer-term field experiences in a whole class setting. I was placed in a different school for each set of required hours for each of my classes. In one of these field experiences, I was required to teach three lessons to a whole group setting for Ed Implementation. This was my first time having to teach a lesson to an entire class and I remember being very nervous. I worked in a special education classroom, so my whole class was only composed of eight students. I had a great experience finally getting up to teach a lesson in front of the classroom to more than a couple students at a time. This was my only field experience in which I taught to a whole class on my own without the help of other teaching candidates. In my next experience, I worked in a seventh grade math classroom for five visits that were about 90 minutes long each along with two other teaching candidates. We were required to plan three lessons together in which each of us would take one turn being the lead teacher in one of the lessons and then serve as a background guide in the other two lessons. In my third experience, I worked in science classrooms twice a week for three weeks with three other teaching candidates. We spent the first half of each visit in a fifth grade classroom and the second half in a fourth grade classroom. I taught one lesson in each fourth and fifth grade alongside one other teaching candidate. These experiences helped to teach me to collaborate with other teachers in planning and presenting lessons, which was very beneficial. However, it also let me lean on other teachers, when in reality; I would be the only teacher in the

room once I was in my own classroom. All in all, I had only taught eight whole class lessons throughout my experiences in which more than half of those I had other teaching candidates to help me through. I feel that it would have been more beneficial to use some of the excessive observation hours we are given during the beginning of the phases to add more whole class teaching experiences to every phase of the education curriculum.

The final area of my experience that I wanted to focus on was preparation and delivering of lessons. My student teaching mentor was shocked when I told her how many lessons I had taught and not necessarily in a good way. This was an area in which I felt that the education program did not give us enough exposure to or practice with before student teaching. In student teaching, we were expected to fully take over planning and teaching lessons for the entire day with barely any background to go on. We made plenty of hypothetical lesson plans throughout my classes, but were not able to apply these lessons in actual classrooms.

Throughout my education classes, I had made plenty of lesson plans for different grade levels and subjects. We learned all of the important components of making lesson plans and what should be included for it to be successful. I was only able to actually teach six of the lessons I had made. Throughout the six that I actually taught, I was able to learn which part of the lessons would go well and which activities that did not really work. That was one of the problems with making all of these hypothetical lesson plans; we never knew which plans were actually good ones and which ones would fail. When I was actually able to teach the lessons, I learned to be flexible when an activity did not work out. Flexibility was a key skill to have while teaching because a lot of the time things do not go as planned. I thought that it would have been beneficial to see what would have gone well or not in many of the other lessons I created. Another problem

was that these lesson plans were not made for actual students during the majority of the time. This led to making lessons for students who were all at the same ability level, which is not realistic. It was not stressed enough to make lessons differentiated based on varying abilities or based on a student's IEP or 504 plan which would be the reality of teaching. Differentiation was another area in which I lacked because I was used to making lesson plans based on a typical generic student. I would have learned the importance of differentiation if I would have focused on making lesson plans for a real class that I had spent time with and understood. The lesson plans would also have been much more beneficial and well planned if I knew that they would have actually been taught eventually. I was taught the skill of lesson planning throughout my education, but was never truly given the chance to practice applying it to make my lessons effective before student teaching.

### **Summary**

Through the examination of the F.A.C.E. Collaboration, conducting interviews with teaching candidates and cooperating teachers, and exploring the research articles supporting embedded and sustained field experiences and mentoring, I explained benefits and reasons that every student in The University of Akron's education program should have the opportunity to complete a long term field experience. Throughout this paper, I do not want to make it seem that I was completely unprepared for student teaching because this is not the case. I did have opportunities to work with students and develop a few relationships throughout my field experience. I also learned many of the basic tools and strategies of successful teachers throughout my courses over the past four years. However, I think having at least one long-term field experience, such as the one put into place at Barberton, before student teaching would have greatly improved my

learning experience as a teaching candidate. After finding the research to highlight the benefits and long-term field experiences and observing the F.A.C.E. program, I believe that a long-term field placement is a crucial component of a teacher candidates' preparation as an educator. The teaching candidates I interviewed at Barberton all said that they felt that having a long-term experience was extremely effective in preparing them for their next semester of student teaching. Throughout a long-term experience, I would have had the opportunity to understand a classroom full of students and develop meaningful relationships in a full class setting. I would have been able to create many lessons based on an actual group of students and differentiate activities based on each student's ability level or IEP/504 plans. I would have been able to teach many more full class lessons on my own based off of lessons that I had personally created. In a long-term experience, I would have been able to apply all of the tools and strategies I had learned throughout my courses. I think that a long-term field experience needs to be put into place as a requirement throughout teacher preparation programs in all areas of licensure as it already has been for AYA Language Arts and AYA Social Studies. This long-term experience would serve as a perfect stepping stone or foundation for each teaching candidate, so that they are not overwhelmed when they enter those first couple weeks of student teaching. The F.A.C.E. program at Barberton has proven to be beneficial in preparing teaching candidates, as well as the youth pre-service teachers work with, and this should be taken into account when planning the coursework for every teaching candidate.

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## Appendix

### **Possible Interview Questions**

#### **For Pre-service teachers**

1. What have you learned from this field experience?
2. What do you believe are some of the benefits of conducting your field service hours in this program?
3. How have your relationships with the students within your class changed as a result of the amount of time you have spent teaching them?
4. Do you prefer spending an extended amount of time teaching one group of students or would you have rather taught multiple groups of students at different schools in order to fulfill your field hours required for class?
5. Do you feel more prepared to student teach as a result of working in the collaboration at Barberton? How so?
6. Do you feel that the extra time and effort required to teach at Barberton almost every day is worth it?
7. What are some of the difficulties that you have experienced throughout your time in the program? Would you change anything about your experience at Barberton?

#### **For the Barberton classroom teachers**

1. Why did you want your classroom to be included in the Barberton program?
2. Do you believe having pre-service teachers planning and conducting lessons for the semester has benefitted your students? How so?
3. What are the benefits of a teacher who allows pre-service teachers into their classroom?
4. Have you experienced any difficulties or conflicts while working with the mentor teachers?
5. Would you encourage other classroom teachers to participate in this collaboration? Why or why not?

6. Do you believe the pre-service teachers that have worked in this program are more prepared for student teaching as a result of this collaboration?

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## THE COLLABORATION

University teacher-candidates become the primary teachers of high school and middle school students. The teacher-candidates are responsible for planning, instructing, and assessing lessons as part of an advanced and problem-based curriculum.

Collaborative groups of college and middle/high school students work together to establish rapport, and to individualize instruction. Supervisors include on site university instructors and classroom teachers.

The program began in 1997 in Akron Public Schools. The program subsequently moved to Barberton High School where it has expanded the curriculum to include Social Studies and STEM.

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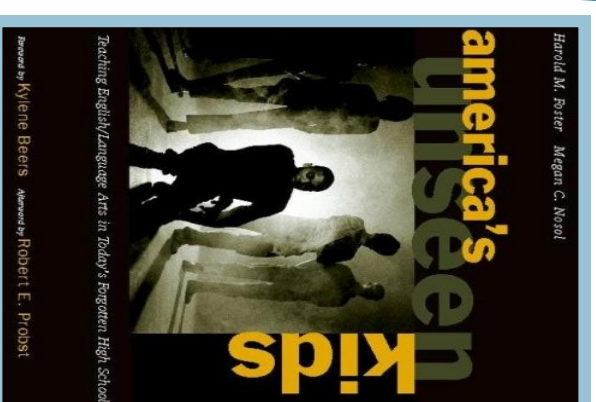
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# Putting

# A

# F.A.C.E.

# On



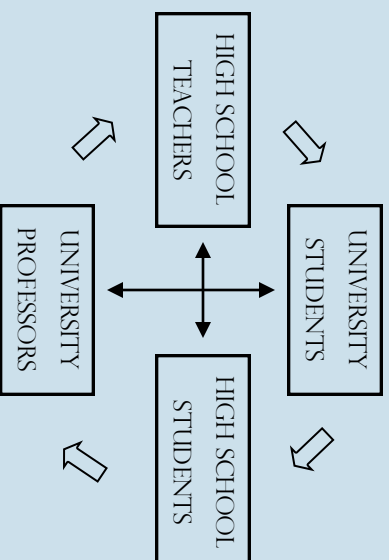
# GOALS

1. CREATE “STRONG” TEACHERS.
2. CREATE “STRONG” HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE COLLEGE READY.
3. PROVIDE A “STRONG” ADVANCED CURRICULUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS.

**Meets the standards of CAEP**  
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)  
Standard Two: Clinical Partnerships and Practice  
“...effective partnerships and high-quality clinical practice are central to preparation...”

## BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. ON SITE INSTRUCTION AND STAFF.
2. COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-TEACHERS AS DECISION MAKERS.
3. LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.
4. ADVANCED CURRICULUM.
5. REFLECTION.



## CURRICULUM

### HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

- LANGUAGE ARTS
- SOCIAL STUDIES
- STEM



### RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE COLLABORATION

- Essential gains in students' college and career readiness
- Major improvements in GPAs

(Data available from Summit Education Initiative)

[www.seisummit.org](http://www.seisummit.org)

## Measuring the Impact of an Embedded School-University Partnership

Prepared for Barberton City Schools by

Summit Education Initiative

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### *About the project*

The school-university partnership project is designed to increase opportunities for both high school students and university pre-service teachers. High school students benefit from exposure to rigorous learning experiences, increased expectations and increased support. University students benefit from a more sustained, consistent placement experience a semester before beginning their student teaching. This research study is designed to determine the effects of the project on high school students' social-emotional development and academic achievement.

### *Research Questions*

- Will students report more positive attitudes toward teachers, their peers and the school itself?
- Will students report higher personal motivation during the project?
- Will students report increases in sense of self and aspirations for the future?
- Will the project have positive effects on student academic achievement?

### *Research Measures*

#### *School Climate*

- Academic Press (Adults in this school push me to be my best)
- Academic Support (Adults in this school care that I am learning)
- Peer Connections (I look forward to seeing my classmates at school)
- Sense of Safety (I feel comfortable in school; School is a place where I feel safe)

#### *Personal Motivation*

- Mastery Orientation (It is important to me that I learn as much as I can this year)
- Self-Efficacy (I can learn almost anything in school if I work at it)

#### *Sense of Self and Aspirations*

- Future Self (I know what my interests are for the future; I know what I plan to be in the future)
- College-Going Identity (I plan to go to college or some advanced training after high school)
- School Value (Doing well in school will help me have the kind of life I want later)

#### *Academic Achievement*

- Second Quarter Grade Point Average (after controlling for Quarter 1 GPA)
- GPA improvement from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2

### **Research Results**

#### *Students in the partnership classes felt more connected with school*

Students in the university partnership classes reported increases in **academic press, academic support, peer connections** and **sense of safety**. Effects were most pronounced during the project period. From a personal motivation perspective, students in the partnership group placed a significantly higher value on the importance of school than other students throughout the project.

#### *Students in the partnership classes had better academic achievement*

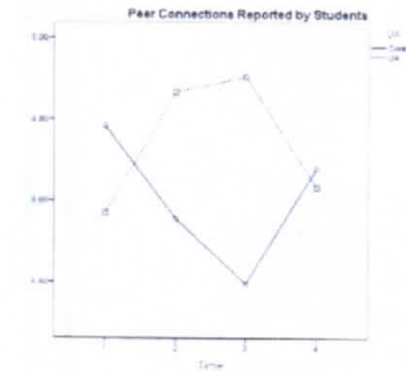
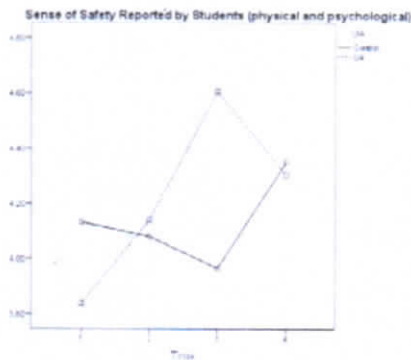
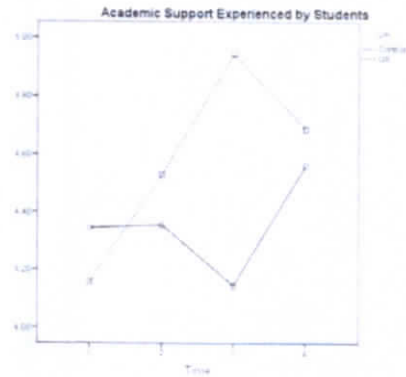
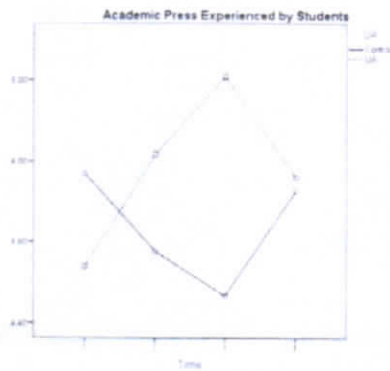
On average, students' GPAs declined from first quarter to second quarter by 0.2 quality points (about 5%). Students in the UA partnership were significantly less likely to experience any declines in GPA. In fact, **students in the partnership were 2 ½ times more likely to earn higher GPAs in the second quarter than other students** (Exp (B)=2.58,  $p < .01$ ).

Comparison of Groups at Each Survey Administration (shaded boxes represent statistically significant differences at that point in time)

Time	Group	Academic Press*	Academic Support*	Sense of Safety*	Peer Connections*	Mastery	Self-Efficacy	College Identity	Future Self	School Value
1	Control	4.77	4.34	4.13	4.78	4.92	4.85	5.21	4.93	5.17
	UA	4.54	4.16	3.84	4.57	4.89	4.73	5.15	4.83	5.27
2	Control	4.58	4.35	4.08	4.55	4.63	4.72	5.05	4.99	4.93
	UA	4.82	4.53	4.14	4.87	4.94	5.07	5.47	5.02	5.35
3	Control	4.47	4.14	3.97	4.39	4.69	4.81	5.09	4.97	4.97
	UA	5.01	4.94	4.60	4.90	5.04	5.10	5.35	5.25	5.37
4	Control	4.73	4.56	4.34	4.69	4.82	4.84	5.13	4.97	5.07
	UA	4.76	4.69	4.30	4.63	4.80	5.04	5.31	5.30	5.27

\* Significant interaction effect for these variables; students in the UA group started off lower and ended up higher.

Changes in academic press, support, peer connections and sense of safety (note: Time 3 was the end of the fall project).



Academic achievement outcomes associated with the project

	GPA Change*	
	Declined	Improved
Control	72.1%	27.9%
UA	50.0%	50.0%

\*Students in the partnership group were 2 1/2 times more likely to earn higher GPAs in second quarter, compared with all other students.

