



Teacher Residency in South Dakota

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
The University of South Dakota Teacher Residency Model	4
A Residency Program in a Rural Context	6
Building Sustainable Partnerships	8
Stakeholder Perspectives	9
National Impact	11
Impact on Student Achievement	12
Conclusion	13
References	14
About the Authors	16

Executive Summary

Over the past few decades, the teaching profession has been criticized for producing teachers who are not prepared to successfully teach upon entering the workforce (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Jacob, 2007; Larabee, 2004; Papay, West, Fullerton, & Kane, 2012). Zeichner (2010) equates this critique to the transitional divide between university programs and field-based experience. To address the concern of developing better-prepared teachers, in 2010, the NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning developed the *Transforming Teaching Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers* (NCATE, 2010) as a way to increase the level to which teacher educators are prepared. The authors of the document suggested “to prepare effective teachers for the 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm which emphasizes academic preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences” (p. ii). The authors also suggested that education programs must shift to programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice. Furthermore, the authors argued that this approach would lead to a more robust practice that allows teacher candidates to connect practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge. From this framework, many teacher preparations programs examined ways to move from the traditional clinical methods of preparing teacher educators to methods featuring extended clinical experiences. One sure model that emerged is the Yearlong Teacher Residency (YTR) model. It is worth noting that there were various forms of Teacher Residency programs developed before the Blue Ribbon Panel, notably the Boston Teacher Residency (Solomon, 2009), a school-based residency program. The other is the Hunter College Urban Teacher Residency program, a university-based residency program.

Regardless of the model, the YTR model is designed to replace the traditional one-term student teaching experience, providing teacher candidates with a more robust yearlong student teaching experience. The model also allows for more mentoring and greater oversight of candidates during this yearlong experience. Researchers (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Ronfeldt, 2015) found that teachers who graduate from programs in which they have more oversight in their student teaching are more effective in raising the achievement scores of students than those teachers with less oversight in their student teaching experience. The Learning Policy Institute (Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond, 2016) proposes that by employing this model, the field is preparing new and more effective educators. They show that there are currently more than 20 residency programs across the country. These programs mainly center on a strong partnership

between a higher education-based education program and a school district. However, not all programs are based on this model. Some programs are strictly higher education-based and some programs are school district-based. The University of South Dakota University School of Education University-based Teacher Residency (USDTR) model is one of the few university-based teacher residency models. The uniqueness of this university model is that it is based on a co-teaching framework and serves rural school districts in the state and region.

Introduction

The University of South Dakota Teacher Residency (USDTR) model has been in continuous development since 2009. It is the outgrowth of the university's desire for teacher preparation redesign and renewal coupled with support from the Bush Foundation's Teacher Effectiveness Initiative.

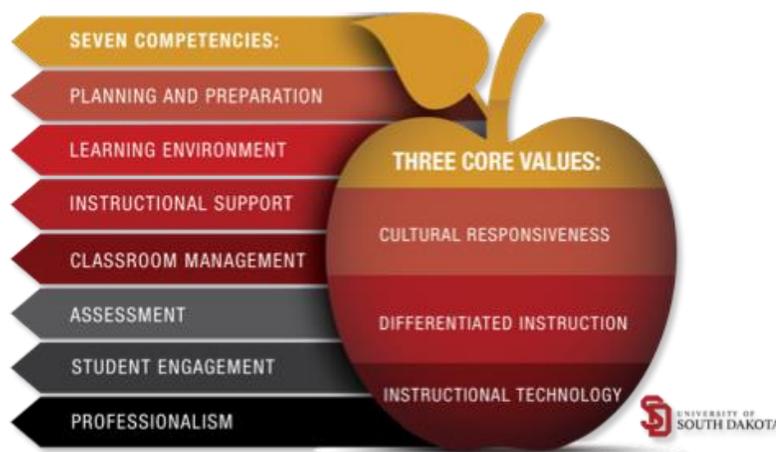
According to the initial memorandum of understanding agreed upon in 2009 by the Bush Foundation and the University of South Dakota (USD), USD "proposed to implement a dramatically redesigned teacher preparation program that will develop and guarantee the effectiveness of 200 teachers per year by 2020." The six years of ongoing redesign efforts have resulted in the *USD Teacher Residency Model*. The USDTR model utilizes a sequential, developmental, and integrative four-year curriculum comprised of intentional field-experiences and culminating in our signature true yearlong residential student teaching experience.

Changing how candidates are prepared during their student teaching experience requires more than simply changing the duration and nature of student teaching alone. True transformation begins with a shift in the mindset of those who are a part of the model. Developing a common language and common vision for moving forward, coupled with a keen sense of identity, was important in order to initiate redesign and to sustain renewal.

In our efforts to create a common language and a common vision, faculty spent the better part of two years looking at curriculum through a backward design lens (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). Starting with the professional outcomes and expectations of candidates during their residency year, we worked concertedly to create a curriculum – inclusive of both coursework and fieldwork – that is intentionally developmental, sequential, and integrative. In doing so, we identified a guiding vision, three core values forming the foundation of all that we do, and seven competencies deemed essential by our profession around which our coursework and fieldwork revolve. The vision, core values, and competencies are a part of our common language complementing our common vision.

Vision: USD's Teacher Education program will prepare candidates who can effectively teach all children in multiple cultural contexts, seeking to improve the lives of all children in schools.

We continue in the curriculum renewal process by cross-walking the values and competencies with our coursework. We have identified key courses and experiences that will help students develop into competent professionals. The planned and repeated appearance – sequencing – of concepts and courses leads to competency over time. Lastly, we are continuing to plan and deliver a curriculum that is integrative of theory and practice, a curriculum that does not see these as separate entities occurring at separate and distinct phases and intervals in the curriculum.



The University of South Dakota Teacher Residency Model

The USDTR model is founded upon the core values of cultural responsiveness, differentiation, and instructional technology. These foundational values become the lens through which seven competencies, derived from InTASC and other professional standards, are introduced, developed, and assessed. Candidates develop and refine their teaching through the yearlong residency, supported by the mentor teacher via co-teaching, and by the Residency Instructor through coaching, thus sharing the responsibility of preparing the next generation of teachers among all stakeholders. Traditional models place the responsibility squarely on teacher preparation programs that placed essentially *finished products* out in schools for a final semester of student teaching. In the USDTR model, the School of Education and partner schools share in the responsibility of preparing candidates who are equipped to face the challenges of teaching in today's schools. In doing this, the education program can effectively prepare candidates for the schools that must be, rather than the schools as they currently are (Darling–Hammond, Pacheco, Michelli, LePage, Hammerness & Youngs, 2005).

Teaching is a task of great complexity. In the USDTR model, candidates learn content through carefully sequenced coursework connected to the core values of the program. Experiences are carefully scaffolded to build on candidates' levels of readiness. Unlike many residential programs, USD is a four-year undergraduate program that features a sequential, developmental, and

integrative program culminating in a yearlong residency in lieu of the more traditional semester of student teaching.

Effective teacher education programs are based on three key elements: the content of teacher education, the learning process, and the learning context (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). The content component encompasses what is taught and how it is connected to practice. The learning process refers to the candidates' development of knowledge, skills, and tools of practice. Finally, the learning context refers to the way enactment is situated in contexts that promote the development of expert practice. In the USDTR model, candidates learn content through carefully sequenced coursework connected to the core values of the program.

One criticism of teacher education is that candidates are prepared for schools as they are, rather than for the schools of the future – schools as they must be to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population (Easton-Brooks, 2013, 2015). To prepare candidates for schools as they must be, the program is built around core values and competencies that align with standards for teacher preparation (i.e., CAEP; InTASC) and the teacher education literature.

The yearlong residency is the culmination of the program. Effective teaching requires more than the ability to implement strategies or deliver content: effective teachers “think pedagogically, reason through dilemmas, investigate problems, and analyze student learning to develop appropriate curriculum for a diverse group of learners” (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, et al., 2005, p. 392). These critical skills are developed over time and through authentic teaching experiences. To provide adequate time for situated learning to occur, candidates are placed in a K-12 classroom for the entire school year. Through the implementation of a gradual release model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) and co-teaching, candidates incrementally assume more responsibility for teaching as they hone their skills before

It has been my privilege to participate in the USD residency program. I highly recommend the program as best practice in future professional development. Everyone involved benefits. The candidates participate in everything from classroom set up, open house, building a classroom community, and an infinite number of details that can best be observed in the moment. The candidates also have the advantage when interviewing for jobs as they have already experienced one year in the classroom. The connection and relationships with parents, educators and support staff are invaluable. The candidate benefits by having increased individualization and access to support. The classroom teacher benefits by having an additional teacher in the classroom for student instruction and interaction. The residency program is the most effective path to prepare future teachers.

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taking full responsibility for instruction and student learning. They receive coaching and support from their mentor teachers, but also from a Residency Instructor (RI). Residency Instructors are USD clinical faculty who teach the coursework that occurs during the year, bridging the gap between university and school-based learning. Additionally, the Residency Instructors serve as instructional coaches, providing added supports as needed by individual candidates.

The USDTR model is rapidly becoming the model for the state as we are one of the only true residency programs in a traditional 4-year undergraduate model of education. In fact, South Dakota has now adopted yearlong residency as the norm for teacher preparation in the state. As other programs nationally adopt the yearlong model, USD is considered a leader in the field. With its unique inclusion of rural districts, USD has developed a model that can be replicated by other institutions. In the fall of 2016, USD will be placing more than 100 teacher candidates in schools representing 22 districts.

A Residency Program in a Rural Context

The need for highly-qualified effective teachers -- those who can serve all students in diverse cultural contexts -- is well documented. Much of the national focus is on low-performing urban schools. Students in low-performing schools tend to have the least experienced and least prepared teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Urban schools are typically situated in under-resourced communities and serve large numbers of students living in poverty.

These challenges are not limited to urban schools, however. Although much smaller in size, rural districts and schools also serve high percentages of students from low-income families. Rural schools are plagued by high drop-out rates (25%; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010), and levels of adult education in the community are low (17%; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers is a common problem. Although some teacher candidates aspire to return to their own rural communities to reside and teach, more seek employment in larger districts in urban areas where pay is higher and amenities such as affordable housing are common.

The state of South Dakota is a rural state with the largest concentration of residents in the Rapid City (far west) and Sioux Falls (far east) areas. Current estimates place the population of Rapid City at 67,956 (15.1% poverty rate) residents while Sioux Falls, the largest city in the state, has 153,888 residents (US Census Bureau, 2016). School districts that are not located in these population centers

face enormous challenges such as rapid teacher and administrator turnover, high rates of student poverty, and low student achievement. Current population (2015) for the state is estimated to be 858,469, averaging about 10 people per square mile (US Census Bureau, 2016). With such sparse numbers, school districts are very small in terms of the number of school buildings and students, but serve large geographic areas. Half of the state's districts have fewer than 300 total students and 12 have fewer than 100. The 9 Native American reservations in South Dakota are located in the most rural parts of the state. Native American children are served by public schools, as well as private parochial, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Tribal schools.



Economic disparity is evident between the more and less populated centers of the state. Lincoln County, located near Sioux Falls on the eastern edge of the state, has a childhood poverty rate well below the state average at only 4.5%, with 15% of school-aged children qualifying for free or reduced lunch. In stark contrast, Todd and Oglala-Lakota (formerly Shannon) Counties have the highest poverty rates in the state. In Oglala-Lakota County, 100% of school-aged children are on free or reduced lunch with an overall poverty rate of 52.6%. Poverty rates in Todd County are at 46.7 percent with 100% of school children on free or reduced lunch (South Dakota Department of Education, 2016). These two counties rank among the highest in the nation in terms of poverty rates. Rural school districts face challenges of funding inequities, insufficient local tax bases, inadequate technology infrastructures, and limited purchasing power (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2016) that are not present in urban contexts.

Building Sustainable Partnerships

Current trends in teacher preparation feature Professional Development Schools (PDS) in which university faculty teach courses on site in partner schools, facilitating embedded clinical

The USD Yearlong Residency Program was an amazing opportunity to learn and grow throughout the transition from college to the professional world. In addition to providing the necessary credentials and experience, the yearlong residency also prepares teachers for life after college in a number of areas. From a preparation standpoint, teachers cannot be more properly educated and prepared when taking over their own classroom. In addition to mental preparation, the USD School of Education also helps teachers prepare for potential interviews and graduate opportunities. From a knowledge standpoint, graduates of this program are filled with information that empower them to make great decisions in the professional discourse of teaching at any level. In terms of relationships, the instructors who guide this program do so with passion and a level of intimacy displaying a genuine concern for each teacher and their placement. Overall, I would highly recommend this program for any individual aspiring to work in a school setting. The program prepares teacher for the challenges they will endure while providing a lifelong resource of support.

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experiences where candidates can first observe and then enact the pedagogies and instructional strategies they learn in class. A key feature of the PDS model is that university faculty and K-12 faculty partner in teacher preparation by utilizing integrative approaches (Darling-Hammond, Pacheco, et al 2005). For example, a university professor might teach a class on reading instruction at a local elementary school after which the candidates would disperse to various classrooms to observe veteran teachers using a particular method or have the opportunity to enact the method with a select group of students.

This model is highly effective, but impractical in rural areas. Schools in rural areas tend to be small and cannot accommodate large numbers of candidates visiting at the same time (class size at USD

currently averages 35). Additionally, very few schools are located in close proximity to campus making the model difficult to implement for students who may not have transportation.

To address the challenge, the USDTR model relies on the Residency Instructors (RI) to bridge the gap between university and districts. USD's RIs are veteran teachers of K-12 classrooms who are employed as clinical faculty. The RIs build relationships with candidates, mentor teachers, and partner schools as they observe candidates in the field, serve as liaisons between K-12 and the university, and are responsible for teaching much of the coursework during the residency year.

Rural-serving universities are faced with the challenge of forming sustainable partnerships with multiple districts, many of which are located some distance from the campus. To accommodate the approximately 100 teacher candidates in the Fall 2016 cohort, USD placed candidates in 22 unique districts, with up to a 4 hour drive time for Residency Instructors to conduct observations and coaching, and candidates to attend monthly class sessions on campus. Many of these districts face similar challenges to those

located in the urban core: under-resourced communities, high numbers of students living in poverty, underprepared and inexperienced teachers, high teacher turnover, and low levels of parental education. Additionally, academic achievement in these high-needs, low-performing schools places students at risk for graduation and limits their opportunities for college and career.



Strong K-12 partnerships require the building of personal relationships. As the Residency Instructors regularly visit schools for candidate observations, they check with mentors and administrators to determine district needs and concerns, and are able to share relevant information with program faculty at the university.

Stakeholder Perspectives

Teacher candidates are very pleased with the experiences during the yearlong placement. Many schools integrate teacher candidates into the school as staff members before school starts. They are expected to be at all staff meetings, work to prepare classrooms, as well as any other responsibilities their cooperating teachers might have in preparing for the school year.

As Linda Foos, Wagner Superintendent states, *“University of South Dakota’s yearlong residency is an amazing way for student teachers to prepare for their career. Student teachers become part of our staff and are with us from the beginning of the year to end- new teaching induction, in-service, parent/teacher conferences, learning the culture of our school, classroom management, and the list goes on.”*

Many residency teacher candidates believe the yearlong residency gives them an advantage in practicing instructional strategies and assessments because they are in the classroom an entire year rather than only a semester. The candidates become involved in district initiatives and goals from the beginning of the school year to the end.

Rob Sylliaasen, former Superintendent/Elementary Principal at Viborg-Hurley, comments, *"The residency has changed student teaching. No longer are the student teachers expected to observe for several weeks and gradually take over the class. You (candidates) are working from day 1 to the last day of school. That is the real thing. They (candidates) are not going to get a better preparation for their first year of teaching than what USD is providing."*

In addition to the positive impact yearlong residency has on training new teachers, it also is having an impact on classroom climate as well as student achievement. Through co-teaching practices, the mentor teacher and teacher candidate work together in strategizing best instructional practices in addition to supporting one another if disruptions occur. The Viborg-Hurley School District has seen less student behavior concerns because of the residency co-teaching model. Mr. Sylliaasen comments, *"I see less students coming to my office which allows me to get into classrooms more often."*

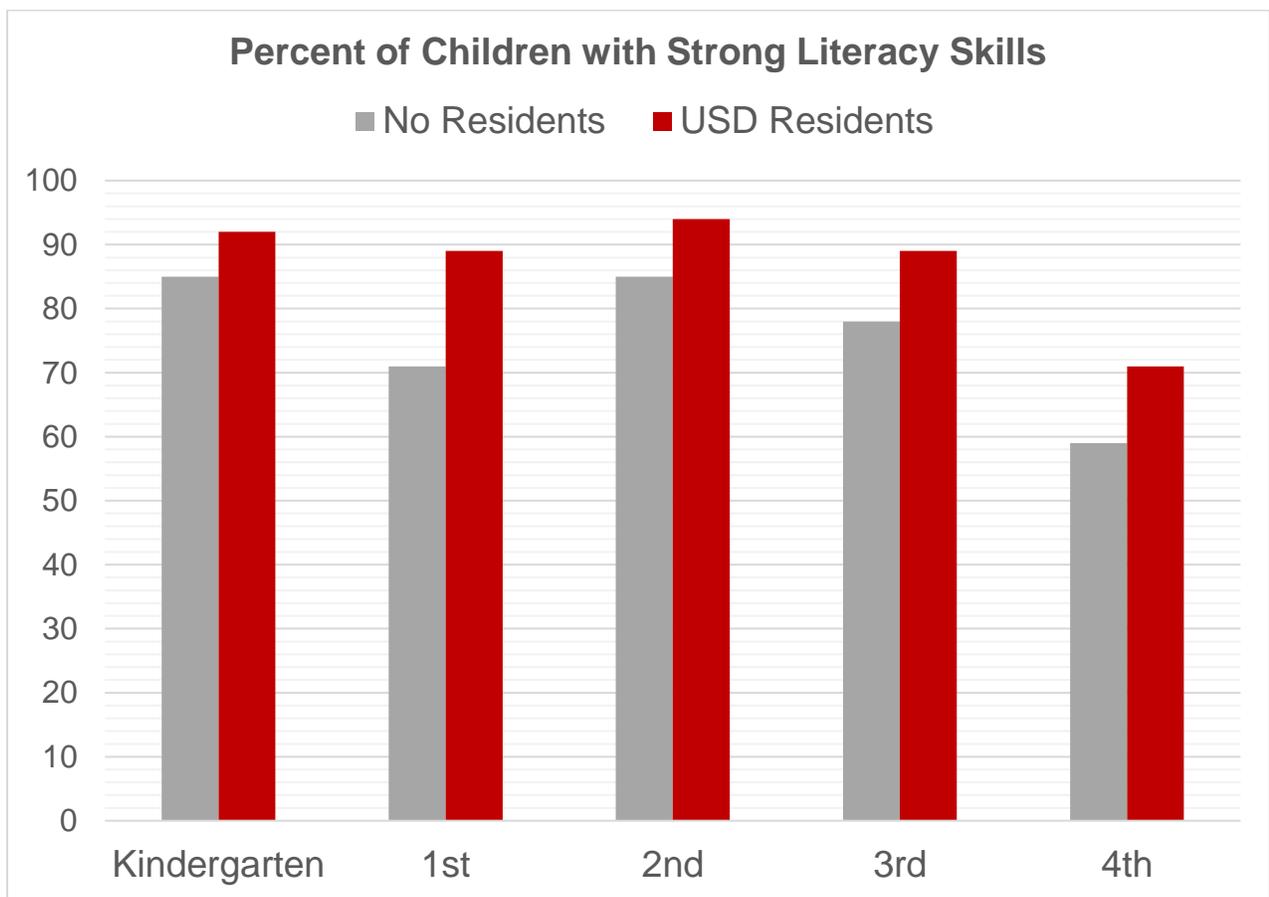
Darla Hamm, principal at St. Agnes in Vermillion also believes the residency model has positively impacted student learning in the classroom. She states that because 2 educators are in the classroom, the class ratio is lowered and teachers can do more individualized and small group instruction. Darla says, *"I don't see it as a challenge to have a student teacher. Actually, there are only benefits to having student teachers from USD. It has been a great experience for the student teachers, the teachers, the students, and the school as a whole."*

Further evidence of the quality of the USD teacher-preparation program is provided through follow-up supervisory surveys that are administered at the end of our graduates' first year of teaching. Graduates' supervisors, primarily principals and assistant principals, rate the various elements of the teacher-preparation program based on direct classroom observations.

Supervisor Ratings of USD Graduates	
Values	Percentage Favorable
Instructional Practice	87%
Learning Environment	85%
Diverse Learners	93%
Professionalism	91%

Impact on Student Achievement

The vision of USD's Teacher Residency Model is to prepare candidates who can effectively teach all children in multiple cultural contexts, and in doing so, improve the lives of all children in schools. The latest research coming out of the Center for Educational Research (CER) at the University of South Dakota indicates that the USD Residency Model is making positive impacts on K-12 student achievement. As a result of close working relationships with school district partners, USD was able to investigate the impact the program has on literacy skills. The CER at USD analyzed data gathered over a 4-year period in elementary classrooms and found that students in grades K-4 had significantly higher literacy skills when there was a USD yearlong residency candidate in the classroom (7%-18% higher than in classrooms without a candidate).



Conclusion

The University of South Dakota's Teacher Residency Model is proving successful in fulfilling its vision of preparing candidates to meet the needs of all students in the multiple cultural contexts of South Dakota and the surrounding region. Coursework and clinical experiences are sequenced, developmental, and integrative, providing candidates with a solid grounding in the core values and competencies of the program. In the yearlong residency, candidates put these principles into practice alongside a veteran teacher who serves as their mentor with the added support of the university instructors. Through the yearlong residency experience, candidates become part of the community in which they teach and are able to design and implement quality instruction that leads to improved student achievement in South Dakota and beyond.

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Mark Baron serves as a full professor of Educational Leadership, Associate Dean, and Director of the Center for Educational Research at the School of Education, University of South Dakota. His primary research interests are educational assessment, research design, and school improvement.

Donald Easton-Brooks is the Dean of the School of Education at the University of South Dakota. He had conducted extensive research using advanced quantitative statistics to examine the impact of educational policy, teacher quality, and social factors on students from diverse communities. Dr. Easton-Brooks widely published work has been cited nationally and internationally. His work on educational policy has been cited in letters to senators, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and educational initiatives in Africa, Australia, Europe, and New Zealand. He has consulted with local, state, and national agencies on issues related to urban education and teacher quality.

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The Center for Educational Research at the University of South Dakota conducts and disseminates timely, rigorous research toward the mission of inspiring and leading through excellence. Working with USD faculty, state leaders, and funding organizations, the Center provides methodological expertise, data analytic support, and coordination of multi-site initiatives. The Center serves as the outlet for research on USD's innovative Teacher Residency Model and supports interdisciplinary research with the goal of improving learning outcomes from early childhood to adulthood.