Clinical Practice in Education: Performance Assessment in the Third Space
Kate Eckert, MS Ed. Leadership
College of Education & College of Health Professions
IPED Conference 2019

INTRODUCTION
Field placements in education should be a byproduct of strong partnerships between the university and K-12 school districts. Effective teacher preparation cannot exist without relationships being built between educator preparation programs (EPP) and K-12 schools to provide purposeful settings for teacher candidates to learn through observation and practice of theory in action (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Time must be put into these relationships, as successful partnerships require careful preparation, outstanding experiences, and follow through (Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Birrell, 2004; Powers, 2004). There should be a mutually agreed upon shared vision based on a passion for the issues at hand, a variety of roles based on the resources of each partner, a system for measuring outcomes, and consistently be looking to improve upon those outcomes (Catelli, Costello, & Padovano, 2000; Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Lee, 2018; Tomanek, 2005).

Fieldwork in education is the essential time for teacher candidates to bridge the gap between their theoretical coursework and actual practice of teaching. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE, 2018) Clinical Practice Commission believes that clinically-based work is the foundational component upon which a candidate’s success in the classroom is built. With the student population and behaviors increasing in diversity, EPSS must design their curricula to incorporate field-based assignments, built with strong relationships to schools, to prepare candidates for complex classroom settings. Creating this coherence within an EPP can be a challenge, as it requires a pivot toward clinical practice, its cooperating teachers are currently often left in the dark regarding the specific methods and theory the teacher candidates are taught on campus. The third space provides a platform for cooperating teachers and K-12 administrators to equally collaborate with the university faculty in support of the teacher candidate growth.

Zeichner (2010) found that lack of reward, recognition, and incentive for faculty to build on these models has led to abandonment of this work by tenure-track faculty. Lee (2018) recommends that a physical presence for the third space will help to overcome inequities around candidates being unable to access university programming at their current location. His framework for partnership encourages teacher candidates to value the culture and lived realities of the students that they will one day teach.

Several studies found that purposeful field experiences and a community approach to fieldwork consisting of teacher candidates engaged in reflective work supported by a variety of mentors, in addition to programs designed in collaboration with schools, can prepare candidates in being more culturally responsive and confident educators (Curran & Murray, 2012; Jeffrey & Polleck, 2010; Gomez, Strage, Knutson-Miller, & Garcia-Nevarez, 2009; Moore, 2003; Thompson, Bakken, & Mau, 2000; Whitley & Williams, 2012; Zygmunt et al., 2018). In Professional Development School (PDS) models, coursework is viewed as being more relevant and well connected to the classroom (Capraro, Capraro, & Hefeldt, 2010) and candidates report having a greater ownership of the classroom and professional engagement (Castle, Fox, & Souder, 2006; Green 2016). Notable limitations in these studies included small data sets (Zygungt et al., 2018; Thompson, Bakken, & Mau, 2009) and self-report data (Capraro, Capraro, & Hefeldt, 2010). Walkthrough observations used to assess teacher candidate dispositions in the classroom could provide meaningful data to university faculty around insufficiencies in instruction and coursework as well as to identify teacher candidates who are in need of additional mentoring and coaching due to a low readiness to teach (Danley & Theiss, 2015).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (cont’d)
Intersecting with transformative learning theory are the concepts of place-based, community-based, or experiential education, and often including project-based learning. Through K-12 and EPP partnership, teacher candidate knowledge and learning is less siloed so as to occur in the university setting only. Rather, candidates have access to learn from the greater pool of expertise that exists in the community, thus considering and honoring the population the teacher candidate wishes to serve, breaking down hierarchical university walls, and placing candidates within the continuum of culture (Guillon & Zeichner, 2018; Powers, 2004). As Darling-Hammond (2010) explains, “No amount of coursework can, by itself, counteract the powerful experiential lessons that shape what teachers actually do.” (p. 42).

KEY LITERATURE
Zeichner (2010) serves as a critic of the disconnect that occurs between the campus-based and the practical K-12 school-based components of educator preparation programs, and instead proposes a less hierarchical model containing a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive way for universities to work with schools. The idea still commonly exists that knowledge is held at the university level rather than proactively sharing the expertise held by K-12 educators, while at the same time assuming that cooperating teachers are modeling good teaching practices. Traditional teacher preparation programs start with on-campus coursework, disconnected from practice, followed by student teaching at the conclusion of the program. By contrast, close connection between interrelated university coursework and fieldwork in partnership with K-12 school districts is a critical element of effective teacher preparation, and specifically to serving students in diverse communities (Darling-Hammond, 2006). While it has become common for most EPPs to have field experiences throughout the entirety of their programs, a disconnect still occurs between what is taught in class and the opportunities to apply that learning in their placements, even within partnering schools (Zeichner, 2010).

TENTATIVE OVERARCHING RESEARCH QUESTION
The researcher’s aim is to look at varying field placement models and how they promote understanding and improvement of teaching practices via an external performance assessment as students apply theory to practice at very different paces. How do external Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) scores align with internal performance assessment scores in different field placement models?

REFERENCES
Lee, S. (2018). Learning to teach is a social process, as student teachers adapt to the culture and lived realities. Clinical educators actually do.” (p. 42).

RESEARCH PROBLEM
At Pacific University, there are several different models of field experiences. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Full-Time programs have full-day field experiences two days a week before candidates enter full-time student teaching, whereas the MAT Part-Time/Hybrid and the General Education Undergraduate programs both require 90 hours of flexible field experience time to be scheduled directly with their cooperating teachers. Furthermore, the MAT Special Education programs have a multitude of field experience variants. Traditional education students (TRADORS) are hired to teach on a restricted license, which happens occasionally in the general education part-time program as well. Interns are also hired to teach on a restricted license, but are set up with a system of school district support including an Intern Mentor who spends the equivalent of one day per week supporting them. Traditional special education student teachers can either complete their field experience within their Instructional Assistant position or in their cooperating teacher’s classrooms prior to full-time student teaching.

KEY LITERATURE (cont’d)
AACTE (2018) considers Zeichner’s idea of a third space, an intersection of university and K-12 school learning and a rejection of the binary of theory and practice, as the lynchpin upon which a clinical infrastructure should be based. Cooperating teachers are currently often left in the dark regarding the specific methods and theory the teacher candidates are taught on campus. The third space provides a platform for cooperating teachers and K-12 administrators to equally collaborate with the university faculty in support of the teacher candidate growth.

Zeichner (2010) found that lack of reward, recognition, and incentive for faculty to build on these models has led to abandonment of this work by tenure-track faculty. Lee (2018) recommends that a physical presence for the third space will help to overcome inequities around candidates being unable to access university programming at their current location. His framework for partnership encourages teacher candidates to value the culture and lived realities of the students that they will one day teach.

Several studies found that purposeful field experiences and a community approach to fieldwork consisting of teacher candidates engaged in reflective work supported by a variety of mentors, in addition to programs designed in collaboration with schools, can prepare candidates in being more culturally responsive and confident educators (Curran & Murray, 2012; Jeffrey & Polleck, 2010; Gomez, Strage, Knutson-Miller, & Garcia-Nevarez, 2009; Moore, 2003; Thompson, Bakken, & Mau, 2000; Whitley & Williams, 2012; Zygmunt et al., 2018). In Professional Development School (PDS) models, coursework is viewed as being more relevant and well connected to the classroom (Capraro, Capraro, & Hefeldt, 2010) and candidates report having a greater ownership of the classroom and professional engagement (Castle, Fox, & Souder, 2006; Green 2016). Notable limitations in these studies included small data sets (Zygungt et al., 2018; Thompson, Bakken, & Mau, 2009) and self-report data (Capraro, Capraro, & Hefeldt, 2010). Walkthrough observations used to assess teacher candidate dispositions in the classroom could provide meaningful data to university faculty around insufficiencies in instruction and coursework as well as to identify teacher candidates who are in need of additional mentoring and coaching due to a low readiness to teach (Danley & Theiss, 2015).

CONTACT INFORMATION
Kate Eckert
keckert@pacificu.edu
609-605-2029
@k8shelby
Berglund 113
2043 College Way
Forest Grove, OR 97116