

# Strengthening Preservice Teachers' Content Knowledge: Strategies from Florida's Centers of Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation

*Florida Atlantic University  
Stetson University  
St. Petersburg College  
University of Florida*

FATE, 2015

# Introductions

- Florida Atlantic University (FAU): Barbara Ridener, Gracie Diaz
- Stetson: Chris Colwell, Rajni Shankar-Brown
- St. Petersburg College: Kim Hartman, Dan Gardner, Carla Rossiter
- University of Florida (UF): Buffy Bondy, Suzy Colvin, Ester de Jong

# Centers of Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation

- Summer 2014 Request for Proposals from FLDOE: 3 years, potential for up to 5M over 3 years
- Grant requirements: 3 areas of focus, partners, external evaluator
- Content knowledge to focus on the “4 core disciplines” (our focus today)

# Strengthening Content Knowledge: FAU

- Development of content coursework for mathematics, science, and social studies for elementary majors
- Development of undergraduate reading practicum course
- Program redesign

# FAU – Continued

- Identified need: content exams, FTCE, new standards
- Collaborative content teams: Teaching & Learning, Broward County, Palm Beach County, content department/college (Science, Arts & Letters, Honors)
- Development of reading practicum from district request

# FAU: Challenges

Communication across two large districts and multiple partners, concerns regarding necessary changes from faculty, program change process

# FAU: Next Steps

- Program/Course Approval
- Revision of Content Exams
- Implications of course sequence

# Strengthening Content Knowledge: Stetson

Volusia Center for Excellence in Education (VCEE)

## 1. Core Content Modules

- Twelve modules total in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies
- Developed by four academic teams comprised of a -
  - Subject Area Expert PhD – Bethune-Cookman University and Stetson University
  - K-12 Curriculum Expert – Volusia County Schools
  - Elementary Education Pedagogical Expert - Bethune-Cookman University and Stetson University



# Stetson: Challenges

Integration of web-based applications with project implementation.

Blackboard, myPGS – Truenorthlogic, NTC Learning Zone, and TORSH Talent

# Stetson: Next Steps

Content validity alignment between student performance on VCEE core content modules and FTCE subject area exams

# St. Petersburg College: Strengthening Content Knowledge through Course Development

- Interdisciplinary team
  - COE faculty
  - Arts & Sciences faculty members
- Content courses
  - Math, MAE 4114 (Fall 2015, 3 sections, 3 campuses)
  - Science, SCE 4113 (Spring 2016)
  - Social Studies, SSE 4XXX (Fall 2016)
  - Language arts (already embedded)

# St. Petersburg College continued: Assessment

- Assessing Course Effectiveness
  - Systems
    - LMS
    - ResultsAnalyzer
    - Pulse (Business Intelligence)

# St. Petersburg College: Challenges

Ensuring sustainability, proprietary models, consistent practices

# St. Petersburg College: Next Steps

Coaching and clinical educator training; continued collaborative planning

# Strengthening Content Knowledge: UF

- Coursework: Revising existing courses and new course development for pedagogical and content knowledge
- **Interdisciplinary content institutes for rising interns and their mentor teachers**

# UF-- continued

- ID STEM/Disciplinary literacy in June 2016: Planning team, Timeline, Implementation
- ID ELA/SS/Tech in June 2016: Planning team, Timeline



# UF: Challenges

Diverse epistemologies and purposes  
among planning team members;  
politeness; pseudo-community

# UF: Next Steps

Ensuring sustainability by  
incorporating an interdisciplinary habit  
of mind and practice into the 4 content  
areas

# Questions and Comments

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