

What are some areas in which our university students need improvements?

Content Knowledge:

Questioning skills-probing questions that produce discovery

**Grammar skills are unacceptable at times

Difficulty teaching writing and reading.

Basic knowledge sometimes isn't there. (Specifically, unable to teach or measure to the nearest inch)
Suggestion is to identify these earlier on and allow them to choose another major.

Need to know an abundance of teaching strategies~unable to find the strategy that best fits the content~only knew one way in which the content could be taught.

*Needs to know the common core standards~Are they being taught these standards?

***Unable to bring in outside resources. Teaching only with materials provided by mentor. Think outside of the box and find ways to enhance instruction of lesson.

PowerPoint's are way overused. Students need to find creative ways in which to present content. Student need to add "the meat" to a lesson. Provide ample knowledge in which to teach the content.

Alternative Teaching-student needs to be aware of the "what ifs" in education. What if the technology doesn't work? What if the students are not responding to a lesson? The teacher needs to be able to provide another method for delivering the lesson. (think on their feet!)

How to differentiate instruction so that all students are actively engaged.

Research based strategies which can be applied to all content areas.

Middle Grades

Middle School teachers should have knowledge of how to teach reading.

Middle School teachers should have content knowledge in both content areas.

Middle Grades Social Studies covers the entire world and an in depth analysis of Georgia. Students need to study ahead of time in their specific area prior to teaching in the classroom.

Professionalism

*Appropriate dress for work; dress code should be addressed. Female students should be aware of plunging necklines, skirt length, strapless tops and skin-tight pants. Male students should continue with

the shirt/tie in the middle grades/secondary grades. PE should continue with the dress code of VSU attire.

Have an understanding of what comments are deemed inappropriate for students. (hygiene, weight, academic ability, etc.) This should be left up to the mentor teacher if situation deems contacting family, student, etc.

****Being prepared with materials, copies needed prior to beginning of lesson. Lesson plans should be turned in as per mentor request.

Confidentiality-Do not discuss other teachers in your school to anyone. If a problem occurs, please discuss it with your mentor and follow the chain of command. Also, do not discuss students and their families with anyone.

Have a professional rapport with other faculty and parents.

Ability needed to carry on a conversation with others. (eye contact)

Students should not show favoritism.

Comments to the students should be presented in a positive way. (shut up/yelling is not appropriate)

Facebook postings need to be professional. Do not post picture of students or "friend" them.

***Recognizing the fine line between being approachable as a teacher and being too friendly and trying to fit in with students as a peer. Be the teacher and not the friend role.

After solo time, do not play games on cell phone or text. (Middle grades-about a month after soloing, the students "check out" and are not productive)

Regarding parental meetings~be aware of what you as a student can say to parents regarding student progress and individual students.

Classroom Management

Getting control of the class

*****Positive reinforcement

Refrain from yelling at the students to gain control. Do not call them out in front of the class.

Pacing of lesson (experience will assist with this)

Time management (experience will assist with this)

****Follow through with expectations. Be consistent with consequences.

Demonstrate withitness

Gain students attention prior to beginning lesson.

Take advice from the mentor regarding classroom management and apply it!

Basic understanding of classroom management and how to handle certain situations and students. De-escalate problems prior if at all possible.

SP ED-How to teach appropriate behaviors (develop a FBA)

Be able to manage small groups vs. large groups.

Other

SPED modifications-differentiation not lecture)

Parental conference knowledge is needed

Take the initiative to help an individual student, organize materials for upcoming lessons, grade and file papers without being told to do so. (once initially shown how to do so)

Some students think they know it all, don't come willing to learn!

Needs to be organized. Have organizational skills that help the student stay organized as the semester proceeds.

Students need to be able to multi-task; must be able to teach more than one thing at a time. Reading groups while keeping independent work going for remainder of class.

***Data Analysis/Data-driven instruction-ST know they need to formatively assess, they do assess to some degree but not sure if they really know how to use the results. (form groups, prepare remediated or advanced lessons)

They must be kind-hearted, have an exciting attitude, love of children and a SMILE!

Students must have knowledge of school and programs in which they are placed. (I.e. study island, learning focus, etc.)

Accept the mentor's expectations and strive to maintain.

More time in the schools prior to student teaching.

More feedback should be given to the mentee

Characteristics of a Great Mentor

Welcoming attitude; makes student feel welcomed and at home!

Organized

Patient

**Good Communicator

Open and understanding

Able to provide constructive criticism

Professional

Willing to host a student teacher for the right reasons

**Flexible

Knowledge of university requirements

Good role model

Willing to admit your mistakes as a teacher

Compassion

Experience

Enthusiastic

Motivator

Love of children

Classroom as a community

Honest

Positive reinforcement

*Let go of control~relinquish power to allow student to grow as a future teacher

Nurture the talent of the university student

Share teaching tools/ideas/resources

Must be a classroom disciplinarian

Able to allow the student teacher to be an equal along with the mentor

Involve student teacher in all areas of teaching

Knowledge of current practice

Be available “after hours” for the student

Must have leadership skills

Plans well as a teacher and show student how to accomplish this goal

Must express confidentiality with university students

What do our mentors need from the university in order to make them more effective?

Orientation with the mentor, mentees and university supervisor PRIOR to arrival of students.
(Not one on one, but in a group)

Technical support for mentors

Support from college supervisor throughout semester. More interaction with university support staff.

Scheduled/documented time for meeting regularly with mentees

Clear expectations/communication from beginning to the end

Establish ground rules of professionalism. (cell phone use)

University faculty needs to understand the “real world” of teaching and adjust requirements to fit the needs of the P-12 students.

More practicum time for mentees! More experience in the classroom is needed.

Clarification on expectations after solo teaching, (Middle grades complete solo teaching way too early in the semester.)

Clear roles and expectations for mentor teacher.

The mentor teacher should assume the major role in deciding various factors. (when plans are due, the assumption of duties by the mentee, the overall calendar should be determined by the mentor teacher keeping the P-12 students in mind)

*****Mentors receive additional training in which they receive PLU credit or a free university class when they host a mentee/student teacher.

Personality of mentees should be considered when placing students with mentors. Should try to find the "right match."

Careful consideration in placing students in classrooms is needed. Some mentor teachers should not receive university students.

Notice of personal concerns should be shared with the mentor (5 week plan, university students that are not on track or considered a risk.) Also background information should be shared with the mentor. (i.e. repeating student teacher) (We did talk about the self-fulfilling prophecy on this one)

More training needed for mentor teachers. Mentor teachers need to be all trained in order to receive mentees. Professional Day would be a great time in which to do this.

Continue with more direct communication

****Lesson plans (ECE) is not appropriate at all. Please address this issue as the current lesson plan format is not a good one. (25 pages for a written plan is not realistic) The students are spending too much time in preparing the design of the lesson and then not having the time to really gather materials, thoughts, etc. Mentors do not have the time to read these plans. The mentees seemed very frustrated and over-whelmed.

University observation instrument is confusing. We need training on this assessment form in order to be consistent among teachers.

Training on communication skills for the mentor to have those awkward talks with the mentee.

Mentees should be well trained on Learning Focus Strategies. (LFS)

Mentor teachers need to all provide planned meetings for the mentee in which strengths and weaknesses are discussed. (not just casual conversation only~ These are good some of the time, but mentee needs to have adequate feedback after each lesson)

For practicum students, it would be nice to know the exact courses that the university students are enrolled in for each semester.

Release time during the school day from the administration to allow mentors and mentees time to plan, reflect and collaborate with university supervisors/instructors. (Twice a week would be great!)

Mentor Training

How should mentor training be delivered?

A go-to meeting (preferably at the university)

Webinar

University should deliver training to all mentor teachers each semester

Face to face meeting in which Q/A can occur

At Jennet Hall prior to the beginning of each semester

When should the training be presented?

Twice a year (before each semester) with support throughout the semester

Day before pre-planning as a group

Who should deliver the training?

University staff

Jamie Bird

Collaboration among university and mentor teachers as we move forward with the training process.

Ms. Fuller-(observation instrument was helpful)

Who should receive this training?

All mentors who have a student teacher in their classroom. (The mentors must be willing for the right reasons. Not just to get a break. University students should NOT be placed in a teacher's classroom who is not up to par hoping that the student will make the teacher do better!)

Principal and Academic coach. (the contact person for each individual school) This way they will know expectations too.

What should be included in this training?

Expectations of student teacher and mentor

Communication strategies on giving constructive feedback. How to address various issues that arise. (Exactly how much does the university want to know?)

Observation Instrument overview. All mentors need the "cheat guide" to assist them in preparing observation remarks.

**Clearly define all programs defining expectations for each practicum, student teaching, etc. Mentors need to know where in the program the student is and what the requirements and expectations are for the student.

Explain characteristics of a good mentor.

Handbook overview

Overview of chain of command

Quick preview of semester, the big picture.

Clear definition of what the student teacher is to do and NOT to do

A mini overview of what we have done and discussed during this workshop!

Immediate concerns:

ECE/SPED-Lesson Plan format is too long. This needs to be addressed prior to the beginning of fall semester. (Please!)

SPED-Current dual degree is not optimal for the students. Fear is that the university student is not receiving the adequate support/experience as the two full semesters of student teaching would provide. (as previously done)

SPED placements would be better if the sped teacher and the regular ed teacher were partners. This would allow the mentee to at least have the same class of students. (Sometimes this is not an option as some teachers do not want to mentor)

MSRD-Students are not being exposed to adequate knowledge in BOTH content areas.

MSRD-re-evaluate the schedules of MAT students so they are able to spend the entire day at school. The schedule now is too frustrating for the students and the mentor teachers as well.

MSRD-Work load for MAT students during student teaching is not good. They should only have to concentrate on student teaching.

MSRD-solo time needs to be adjusted so that the students do not have a month at the end to do nothing. They take advantage of this time. It would be better use of their time to have them doing something constructive during this month. (do realize CRCT is happening, but something else needs to be done)

General-university students do not get enough classroom time prior to student teaching. They need to be identified earlier in the program if they are not suited for teaching!