

ENGAGING PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO SUPPORT DIVERSE LEARNERS IN NEED OF INTERVENTION

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Abstract

Today's teachers serve an increasingly diverse student population and must be equipped to participate in Response to Intervention (RTI) processes in order to improve the performance of learners who experience academic challenges. This manuscript describes the efforts of two faculty members from a teacher education program, one a special educator and the other a bilingual educator, who collaboratively implemented a project designed to expose teacher candidates to the realities of professional collaboration within an RTI framework. Teacher candidates selected, in consultation with their clinical teacher, a target student who could benefit from supplemental instruction in reading. They then worked with their peers in the design, implementation and evaluation of those interventions. The authors share the project description along with data gathered from teacher candidates to inform our understanding of the strengths and challenges of the project.

Keywords: teacher preparation, response to intervention, collaboration, field experiences

Today's teachers serve an increasingly diverse student population and must be equipped to participate in Response-to-Intervention (RTI) as recommended in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004). RTI was designed "to improve the academic performance of struggling students with and without disabilities and to provide practitioners with a more valid means of disability identification" (Fuchs, Fuchs & Vaughn, 2014, p. 13). As RTI emphasizes effective instruction and prevention of academic difficulties, the process has also been identified as having the potential to increase student achievement and decrease inappropriate referrals of diverse students for special education services (Hoover, Klingner, Baca & Patton, 2008; Ortiz et al., 2011).

RTI employs a multi-level system of supports in which screening and progress monitoring data is used to make decisions regarding the need for and impact of supplementary interventions for students who do not make expected progress (McInerney & Elledge, 2013; Vaughn & Bos, 2015). Effective implementation of RTI is dependent upon the successful preparation of teachers who will be responsible for student assessment, intervention, progress monitoring and decision-making processes (Barrio & Combes, 2015; Hurlbut & Tunks, 2016). To date, there has been limited emphasis on the preparation of teacher candidates to implement RTI (Danielson, Doolittle & Bradley, 2007; Harvey, Yssel & Jones, 2015) and little guidance is available to teacher educators charged with ensuring that their graduates are prepared to effectively engage in RTI activities. Hawkins, Kroeger, Musti-Rao, Barnett, and Ward (2008) have suggested that preparation efforts should include a focus on teaming and problem-solving, data-based decision making, and the use of culturally appropriate practice. Given the interdisciplinary nature of RTI practices in schools, collaboration and consultation skills are often cited as critical to successful implementation (Barrio & Combes, 2015; Hawkins et al., 2008). Yet, teacher candidates are typically

prepared in discipline-specific silos with general education, special education, and bilingual education teacher candidates having limited interaction during their preservice experience. In addition to ensuring opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration (Robertson, García, & Rodriguez, 2016), field experiences have been identified as necessary to the acquisition of skills associated with RTI (Harvey et al., 2015; Hawkins et al., 2008).

The Collaborative Problem-Solving Project (CPSP) was designed to enhance the preparation of general education, bilingual education and special education preservice teachers. Following a process similar to that described by Robertson et al. (2016), these teacher candidates were charged with developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating interventions for elementary-age students who were experiencing academic difficulties in reading. Two faculty members from a teacher education program, one a special educator and the other a bilingual educator, collaboratively implemented the project with the intention of providing these teacher candidates with an experience that would mirror what would be expected of them in future practice. We share this project description in an attempt to illustrate one preparation program's effort to design a process for exposing teacher candidates to the realities of professional collaboration within an RTI framework.

Context

The CPSP was implemented at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi during a field-based semester in which teacher candidates enroll in Planning, Teaching, Assessment and Technology, a course in which each teacher candidate spends two full days a week with a clinical teacher on a public-school campus. A university site professor serves as the course instructor. In collaboration with the campus administrator, campus-based clinical teachers are identified. Each member of the school-university partnership has a set of roles and responsibilities which support student success and achievement of the partnership's goals and objectives.

Clinical teachers and site professors work with and mentor the teacher candidates in lesson plan development, assessment, technology integration and instruction. Teacher candidates and site professors keep the same hours as clinical teachers. The site professor maintains a classroom at the partner school to ensure opportunities are provided to collaborate with campus personnel and to observe teacher candidates, as well as meeting with them throughout the semester in a seminar-type setting.

In addition to being an active participant in the field-based classroom, teacher candidates are required to teach six formally observed lessons. Using a university developed instrument, the clinical teacher evaluates two lessons and the university site professor evaluates two lessons. Within 48 hours of the lesson, the teacher candidate conferences with both the site professor and clinical teacher, to review the evaluation results, identify strengths and weaknesses, and with the use of goal specific feedback establish plans to improve the subsequent lesson in both content and pedagogy (Tejeda-Delgado & Johnson, 2016).

Teacher Candidates must also complete a portfolio which includes pre-selected artifacts that respond to the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility Competencies established for all teachers in the Texas Educator Standards. For example, "the teacher understands student diversity and knows how to plan experiences and design assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students learning" (Texas Education Agency, 2017, p.7).

These teacher candidates were completing their field-basing at an urban elementary school in the Texas Coastal Bend. The school district served approximately 39,000 students in 2015 (Texas Education Agency, 2015). The campus population included students in kindergarten through fifth grade with 69.5 % being Hispanic, 25.5 % being White, 2.8 % being African American, and 1.2 % identifying as representing two or more races. Forty-eight percent of students were classified as economically disadvantaged, 3.4 % were identified as English language learners, and 12.8 % received special education services; the school reported a 26.9 % mobility rate for the 2014-2015 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

Participating Faculty and Students

Dr. Carmen Tejeda-Delgado (author) served as the university site professor and instructor of record for Planning, Teaching, Assessment and Technology. Dr. Phyllis Robertson (author) had no university designated responsibilities for the course, although she assisted in the planning and conduct of all project activities.

The participating teacher candidates included 17 female undergraduates, mostly in their twenties. Five identified their ethnicity as Hispanic with the remainder identifying as White. Twelve of the teacher candidates were pursuing early childhood-grade six (EC-6) elementary certification with a reading concentration, four were pursuing bilingual EC-6 certification, and one was seeking an all-level (EC-age 21) generic special education certificate.

Project Activities

Teacher candidates were introduced to the CPSP approximately four weeks after beginning their field placements. Faculty determined that the students needed several weeks to become familiar with the elementary campus, their clinical teachers and the students with whom they were working prior to undertaking the CPSP. Each teacher candidate was required to design and implement a six-week reading intervention for one student in their field-based classroom. Activities were structured to support teacher candidates in:

- systematically gathering relevant student information for use in problem solving and instructional planning;
- establishing a baseline level of performance and developing a short-term objective;
- developing, implementing and monitoring academic interventions in response to the student's individual needs; and
- using communication strategies effectively during the collaborative process.

Teacher candidates attended seminars specifically focused on CPSP implementation. Due to the demanding nature of their schedules, faculty made a concerted effort to ensure the limited meeting time available was used efficiently and effectively.

Seminar One: Introduction

Due to time constraints, seminar one was divided into two parts, each lasting approximately two hours.

Part One, CPSP Overview. During the initial seminar part one, teacher candidates were provided with an overview of the CPSP project along with an explanation of the procedures that would be utilized. Additionally, faculty reviewed the critical components of RTI in providing a multi-tiered system of supports and discussed the importance of collaborative problem solving in the RTI process. In preparation for part two, teacher candidates were advised to work with their clinical teachers to identify a target student who was in need of additional reading support, prepare a brief description of the specific area(s) of concern, and gather data to assist in the development of an intervention plan (e.g., a description of strengths/needs, sociocultural information about the student and family, results of formal and informal assessment, language assessment information if the student was an English learner, etc.).

Part Two, Preparation for Intervention Planning. One week later, teacher candidates met with faculty a second time. The focus of the seminar was on preparing teacher candidates to establish a baseline level of performance and write a short-term objective. Baseline was defined as the target student's level of performance prior to intervention and was used to establish the short-term objective. Case studies were utilized to support students in identifying how assessment information was used to establish a baseline and teacher candidates worked in groups to write short-term objectives that included a condition, a behavior, and a criterion (Vaughn & Bos, 2015). At this seminar, teacher candidates were also introduced to the Intervention Planning Form that would be used to guide their work with the target student (see Figure 1).

Target Student Pseudonym: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

Age: _____

Tutor: _____

1. Concern

What is the student expected to do that he/she is not doing now?

When and in what circumstances is the student's learning compromised?

2. Baseline Level of Performance (must include name of measure and score; e.g. Level 12 on the DRA)

3. Measurable Intervention Goal- Must include a condition, a behavior and a criterion; establishes level of performance required for team to determine that intervention has been successful (e.g. Following a six-week intervention using the Partner Reading Strategy, the student will read a DRA Level 12 passage with 42 words correct per minute).

4. Plan for Instruction

Methods/strategies for intervention:

Methods to be used:

Language(s) of instruction:

Considerations for making the intervention culturally responsive:

5. Motivational and Behavioral Features of Instruction

Student interests:

How will background knowledge be activated?

Behavior supports if needed):

6. Progress Monitoring (plan to conduct some form assessment at least once per week)

What measure(s) will you use?

How often will the measure used to establish the goal be administered (see item 2)?

What other data will you collect?

Figure 1. Intervention Planning Form. Adapted from: Hoover, 2009; Vaughn & Roberts, 2008; Klingner, Baca & Roberts, 2008; Telzrow, 2000.

Seminar Two: Intervention Planning in Problem-Solving Teams

One week later, teacher candidates gathered in teams of three to five (loosely organized by grade level) to conduct problem-solving meetings on each of their identified target students. The purpose of these meetings was to review available data, identify and define the source of difficulty, and generate possible interventions. Next, team members were charged with evaluating the potential interventions suggested and selecting the best choice(s). In selecting interventions, teacher candidates were advised to consider whether the proposed intervention: (a) addressed the primary area of concern; (b) was responsive to the student's individual learning characteristics including sociocultural and linguistic background; and (c) could reasonably be expected to produce the desired outcomes. Lastly, they were asked to develop a plan for monitoring the student's progress during the intervention period.

Faculty acted as facilitators during team meetings and were available to answer questions and clarify expectations. Teacher candidates were reminded to complete and submit intervention plans for faculty review within the next seven days. During the intervening week, faculty specifically designated two, four-hour blocks of time during which they were available to assist students in completing their plans on a drop-in basis. Faculty later met and reviewed the plans submitted by each teacher candidate. Feedback was provided and revisions were made prior to plan implementation.

Seminar Three: Mid-Point Review

Three weeks after submitting intervention plans, teacher candidates and faculty met to discuss progress to-date. Initially, faculty led a whole group discussion focused on how implementation was proceeding, asking teacher candidates to share success stories and identify areas of challenge. Then teacher candidates met once again in their problem-solving teams. Each teacher candidate was given time to discuss her impressions of the target student, progress toward meeting the short-term objective, progress monitoring results, etc. Then the group brainstormed ways to strengthen each intervention as appropriate. Subsequently, teacher candidates were required to complete and submit a Mid-Point Review Form (see Figure 2). This provided a second opportunity for participating faculty to provide individual feedback to each teacher candidate.

Seminar Four: The Final Meeting

Following six-weeks of CPSP implementation, teacher candidates met one last time in problem-solving teams to debrief the experience. Each teacher candidate was asked to:

- Discuss the impact of the project on your target student.
- What went well?
- What was most challenging?
- Discuss the impact of the project on your developing understanding of teaching.
- What was helpful?
- What else did you feel you needed?
- Discuss how you felt about collaborating with your peers throughout the semester.

Target Student Pseudonym: _____	Date: _____
Grade: _____	Age: _____
	Tutor: _____
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you establish your baseline? 2. What was your student's goal(s)? 3. How have you been teaching toward this goal(s)? 4. How is the student responding to the intervention? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What seems to be working well? -What are continuing concerns? 5. How might the intervention be modified or improved to meet the student's needs? 	
<i>Figure 2. Mid-Point Review Form</i>	

Reflections and Lessons Learned

Throughout implementation of the CPSP, participating faculty members met frequently to reflect on the experience and to consider responses of the teacher candidates. Although not intended as a research report, we did utilize several sources of data gathered from teacher candidates to inform our understanding of the strengths and challenges of the project. We also recorded field notes regarding our interactions during one-on-one meetings with teacher candidates who dropped in for additional support (Note: The project had access to this information because IRB approval had been obtained for program evaluation purposes).

We maintained copies of the intervention planning and mid-point review forms submitted by each teacher candidate along with the feedback we provided. Lastly, we also sought to capture the content of teacher candidate problem-solving team meetings. Each meeting was audio-taped and faculty engaged in open-coding in order to determine ways in which teacher candidates were engaging with one another and the activities provided.

Intervention Planning Forms/Mid-Point Reviews

Our initial review of the intervention planning forms indicated that many teacher candidates experienced difficulties with establishing baseline and writing short-term objectives, skills critical to RTI implementation (Barrio & Combes, 2015; Hurlbut & Tunks, 2016). This was further validated by field notes taken during one-on-one meetings with faculty. Identifying appropriate methods for monitoring weekly progress was also challenging for some teacher candidates who indicated they had limited access to such tools in the field-based classrooms. Several reported experiencing difficulties with selecting strategic interventions from a wide range of choices or identifying strategies to address a specific reading competency (e.g., comprehension or fluency). One teacher candidate scheduled a time to discuss her intervention plan with

participating faculty as she was concerned that her student seemed to experience equal levels of difficulty in both English and Spanish and she was unsure how to address those concerns.

The Mid-Point Review provided an opportunity for teacher candidates to examine the progress of their target student and discuss intervention implementation with their peers. The form they submitted revealed challenges with locating appropriate resources, particularly at the instructional reading levels of their students. Behavioral challenges and strategies for responding to them were mentioned, most commonly related to a lack of target student focus. Several described a need to modify the short-term-objective, usually by lowering the criterion established for success. This provided a valuable opportunity for faculty to discuss with teacher candidates the importance of modifying instruction rather than decreasing expectations.

Team Meeting Transcripts

Our review of the transcripts provided insight into teacher candidates perceptions of the CPSP process and how it influenced their professional development. While there were certainly times when teacher candidates were off topic or had difficulty focusing on the task at hand, their comments indicated that the project had a positive influence on their awareness of linguistic and cultural differences, their understanding of the importance of accurate assessment, the nature of reading intervention, and the value of collaboration (Hawkins, et al., 2008; Robertson et al., 2016). Many also reported that it was helpful in their understanding and implementation of RTI.

Linguistic and cultural differences were a frequent topic of discussion with some teacher candidates recognizing the influence of these differences on student development. One teacher candidate acknowledged the importance of native language acquisition when describing a student in a bilingual classroom who had limited Spanish skills, “a lot of teachers think that good, but that’s not . . . it’s hard for her.” Others noted the challenge associated with learning in a second language when they made comments such as “my student is the only bilingual student in the class so all she tries to speak is English. There’s not only a language barrier, there’s kind of a culture barrier. She feels uncomfortable.” One teacher candidate focused more specifically on a lack of effective communication with parents who spoke a language other than English, “She might not even have that support at home, not because they don’t want to give it to her, but because they don’t understand...”. Another described the need for effective communication with families. She reported being very concerned after attending a multidisciplinary team meeting for a student with an individualized education program, “the translator was the principal’s secretary or something. She wasn’t that good...maybe related 20 percent of what was said to her.”

Teacher candidates also posed questions to their peers regarding the nature of second language acquisition. For example, “Mine’s in fourth grade and she’s reading at a second-grade level. She’s an ESL student but I’m not really sure, how long does that affect them?” Others requested specific strategies for making English more comprehensible. In summary, one teacher candidate shared, “I didn’t realize I would be dealing with so much bilingual stuff.”

Teacher candidates were encouraged to ask their clinical teachers for current assessment data or to assess the target student themselves. A number of them mentioned the benefits of accurate assessment data and the challenges associated with obtaining it. Some were very accurate in describing their student’s baseline level of performance as determined by assessment processes. For example, “His current reading level is 1.9,” and, “One thing I found out this morning is that his vocabulary is very low...he scored better than or equal to 6%.” Others reported difficulty in obtaining accurate data from their clinical teachers, “It’s hard to talk about something when you don’t really know. I tried looking for assessments, but I just could not find any,” and “I think it’s just personal opinion [the clinical teacher’s], I don’t have any written data on him.” One teacher candidate critically reflected on the interpretation of assessment data she was provided, “I’d like to look at what he was assessed on. I’d also like to see the baseline from everybody else in the class too. Is everybody low? Maybe that just wasn’t a good assessment.”

During team meetings, teacher candidates discussed interventions associated with all five pillars of reading instruction—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (Vaughn & Bos, 2015). They also

identified strategies for increasing skills in these areas with a particular emphasis on building vocabulary and comprehension skills and looked to their teammates for ideas, “I want more strategies that she can apply...because she is really good at reading. She does wonderful. It’s just her comprehension, because some of the vocabulary, she doesn’t get.” Another teacher candidate asked, “How do you help them comprehend?” to which a peer responded, “I would have them read the story, and as they’re reading, underline important things, that you would think are important. If there’s questions, read the story, look at the questions, read the story again.”

Transcripts of their final team meetings revealed that teacher candidates valued the collaborative problem-solving process that was a critical component of the CPSP (Hawkins, et al., 2008; Robertson et al., 2016). In reflecting on this component, a teacher candidate shared,

It was really helpful to collaborate because it gave me motivation to push through the struggles and stuff and to know that you’re not alone in your struggles. I think if anything that was the most helpful part...getting to talk to peers and getting advice from somebody...

Teacher candidates also recognized the need to collaborate in their future practice, “we’re going to have to do that throughout our entire careers, and I actually used that as one of the items in my portfolio...collaborating with colleagues and stuff. It was meaningful, it had a purpose.”

Some also mentioned the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. In the following exchange, one teacher candidate disclosed, “For me, I didn’t really understand how to teach someone who is bilingual,” to which her peer replied, “Yeah, I felt like you had a lot of ideas that helped me as well. I think it was really awesome that we got to know each other and to know our students, and you helped me and I helped you...I feel like when you’re a teacher, you should also be working with other teachers, because they have ideas that you don’t.”

In addition, many teacher candidates recognized that the CPSP contributed to their understanding of RTI and the provision of interventions to students in need of academic support (Danielson et al, 2007). “I didn’t even know what ...I mean I knew what RTI was...but...it was actually put a little bit into perspective rather than reading it out of a textbook.” Another shared, “I think I understand RTI a lot better than I did before, after this project.” Yet another mentioned the influence of the project on their understanding of reading intervention, “I feel like I have more knowledge on what to do when a student is not reading, like working with a student one-on-one.” Teacher candidates also reflected on the challenges of RTI implementation,

I think the most challenging part was just creating the intervention, because we’ve learned about them, we’ve just never had to create, so I think for me, I could gauge kind of what he needed to work on, but figuring out how to help him, it’s something that takes practice...I think that ended up being the best thing about this, is actually having experience creating a plan like that and knowing everything that we needed for that plan.

Several teacher candidates addressed the importance of documenting student progress, “How much work you are going to have to put in to make sure that the curriculum that they’re getting is good enough...you are going to have to document the things that they are doing.” One teacher candidate reported that the CPSP did not help her in better understanding “an area of teaching,” but did feel that it was valuable “getting time to kind of see how the assessments work, and whether or not it was beneficial...”

Most encouraging, was the report of participating teacher candidates regarding the impact of their efforts on the target student. Despite the limited time available for implementation, several teacher candidates commented on the progress made by their target students. “He started at 23 words per minute. I wanted to get him to 40, but he got to 36. That’s pretty good.” Two students discussed accomplishing more than they had expected in a short period of time. One stated, “I think what surprised me is how much she absorbed in the short time.” Another responded, “Like you said, a short period of time...and they’re actually applying it. I thought it was good. He doesn’t get as distracted...as before.” This same group also discussed a developing recognition of previously held assumptions about struggling readers, “I think what surprised me too is that struggling readers want to be on the same level as everyone even if they can’t read at all...I guess they’re not like, ‘oh, we don’t care.’”

Final meeting transcriptions also focused on logistical concerns and personal challenges. Predictably, time was the most common barrier to implementation identified (Robertson et al., 2016). As one teacher candidate said, “trying to find time to do [the CPSP],” was a major challenge. A number also mentioned needing more time to spend with the target student. For example, “When you are tutoring a struggling reader, it seems like you need more than 30 minutes...two days a week.” Several teacher candidates suggested starting the project earlier in the semester and one felt that the project should last for an entire academic year.

Teacher candidates also reported concerns related to finding time for individual tutoring. Several clinical teachers had wanted target students to receive intervention support during the physical education (PE) period, but teacher candidates were appropriately reluctant to remove students from PE. Others shared that clinical teachers encouraged them to spend their time assisting students with finishing in-class or homework assignments rather than focusing on short-term objectives. Finally, a few teacher candidates reported wanting more direct instruction to be provided by participating faculty.

Strengths of the CPSP

As faculty, we felt that the CPSP was effective in simulating the realities of school-based practice. In particular, it provided teacher candidates with opportunities to more carefully consider the link between assessment and instruction within an RTI framework (Danielson et al, 2007; Hawkins et al., 2008). We feel confident the CPSP exposed students to real-world intervention techniques they could actually employ and understand.

An additional benefit was that the CPSP required teacher candidates to collaboratively consider how instruction should be modified for individual learners, including ELs. While many of the participants commented on the value of the experience, those not enrolled in bilingual education, seemed to benefit considerably from collaborating with peers who were preparing to be bilingual educators. It is hoped that this recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and professional dialogue carries forward into their professional practice (Hoover et al., 2008; Hoover, 2009). The mid-point and final seminars seemed to help students gain a deeper understanding of what it means to reflect on teaching practices, including interventions, and their impact on student success. Teacher candidates appeared to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances associated with specific interventions and their capacity to influence student learning.

Challenges of Implementation

The timeline for CPSP implementation was short, and this presented a challenge for both teacher candidates and participating faculty. While we feel the project was successful in exposing teacher candidates to the RTI framework and collaborative problem-solving, additional instructional time would have enabled faculty to more thoroughly prepare the teacher candidates for the project and certainly would have been beneficial to the teacher candidates in providing interventions and evaluating their effectiveness for the target students.

As would be the case in many teacher education programs, there were not equal numbers of general educators, bilingual educators, and special educators enrolled in the field-based course. Thus, some teams were more interdisciplinary than others. While bilingual education students participated in most teams, only one special education teacher candidate participated.

Given that the CPSP was not a requirement of all sections of the field-based course, some teacher candidates felt that the assignment represented just one more thing to do during an already challenging semester. Additionally, some mentioned that this “special assignment” was not part of the original learning outcomes specified for the course and may not have taken it as seriously as others who perceived it as an integral course component.

Evidently, some general educators did not feel that the focus on RTI was critical for them. According to the special education student, her peers in general education thought the CPSP “didn’t apply to them” and told her, “if it had been important, someone would have mentioned it before now.” This clearly sheds light on the importance of early and repeated exposure to RTI (Hurlbut & Tunks, 2016).

Conclusions

We identified a significant value in our own interdisciplinary collaboration and would recommend it to our peers. The collaboration enabled each individual's unique expertise to co-exist in the same teaching/learning environment and the sharing of responsibilities resulted in a comprehensive learning experience for all involved (Robertson et al., 2016). It appeared that some students "clicked" with or gravitated more to one professor or the other depending on the situation, problem, issue or question. This seemed to foster a greater social integration among student sub-groups. This was not a negative result, but rather a positive, as teacher candidates now had two instructors they could turn to for support. They appeared to bounce from one professor to another depending on their area of need and the expertise of each individual, a clear benefit of a co-teaching model.

In reflecting on our experience, we realized that the CPSP provided an authentic assessment of our teacher candidates ability to apply concepts learned in coursework in field-based settings. While they had successfully completed numerous classes in a teacher preparation program, we learned not to assume that they could apply some of the rudimentary aspects of teaching to which they had been exposed (e.g., understanding the role and purpose of assessment and using the results to plan effective instruction and intervention). This project provided us with significant insight regarding the level of support TCs need to translate theory into classroom-based practice.

In summary, we would strongly recommend that other teacher educators consider the value of interdisciplinary projects in field-based settings, particularly when seeking to enhance teacher candidates understanding of collaborative processes within an RTI framework. That said, we recognize that universities, like public schools, often have difficulty supporting faculty engagement in these collaborations. We would also concur with others who have noted that there are significant challenges to preservice RTI preparation (Danielson, et al., 2007; Hawkins et al., 2008; Hurlbut & Tunks, 2016). Ensuring that *all* educators are prepared and recognize their RTI implementation responsibilities "requires in-depth training across education disciplines to increase the capacities of schools to bring science into classrooms" (Hawkins et al., 2008, 761.)

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