



Course-Based Clinics

Reading, Writing, and Math

Program Purpose

Change is long overdue. Most colleges and universities continue to operate as they have for nearly two centuries, following the release of the Yale Report of 1828, offering the same models of instruction and assessment as we did in the earliest stages of developing teacher preparation programs. Urgency in reforming teacher education is clearly needed. Colorado Christian University (CCU) will provide exemplary preparation to teacher candidates through rigorous and authentic clinical practice teaching experiences in varied contexts with diverse K-12 students.

Funding

In December of 2021, CCU's School of Education was awarded a three-year Daniels Fund Grant in collaboration with [Best in the World Teachers](#). A portion of this funding is designated to develop and pilot a Clinic-Based model of instruction for reading, writing, and mathematics methods courses.

The Problem

Across the nation, all state-approved teacher preparation programs are required to provide Teacher Candidates (TCs) with clinical practice/real-world experiences aligned to state standards and "Best Practices" (USDoe, 2021). However, recent surveys of teacher graduates indicate most teacher preparation programs may not be providing TCs with the knowledge and practice opportunities to effectively teach foundational reading skills ([Walsh et al., 2006](#)). The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ, 2018) reports a mere 39% of 820 elementary teacher preparation programs reviewed provide TCs with information regarding the "5 Components of Reading", a term coined by the National Reading Panel in the year, 2000. In 2019, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) estimated 65% of the country's 4th graders read below proficient levels (NAEP, 2019), additional evidence of the lack of effective reading instruction. A 2019 NAEP survey revealed that 59% of the country's 4th graders were below proficient in mathematics.

The Clinic Model

The Clinic Model provides extensive supervised field experiences for Teacher Candidates. Specifically, our model includes four field experiences punctuated across the four undergraduate years of study, summing to 800+ hours in K-12 classrooms. In addition, in each of the methods courses (reading, mathematics, and writing), students learn pedagogy simultaneous with application in K-6 classrooms. The Clinic Model ensures Teacher Candidates become highly effective teachers as they enter the field of education as a professional. The use of immersive technology (e.g., Mursion) is also used to extend applied teaching practice in the environment of a virtual classroom.

The Clinic Model increases the efficacy of Teacher Candidate preparation in their pre-service program. The model provides rigorous clinical practice and real-world experience. In each of the subject areas, a rigorous, prescriptive classroom-based model is designed to provide elementary teacher candidates with opportunities to practice, then master research-based pedagogy in teaching foundational skills. Teacher Candidates learn to use diagnostic assessments to plan instruction and are provided with deliberate, guided practice and highly structured and monitored activities to improve performance of the students with whom they are working.

Positives of a Clinic Model

- **Requires rigorous practice**
- **Delivers real world experience**
- **Supports mastery of research-based pedagogy in foundational skills**
- **Offers highly structured and monitored activities**
- **Uses data to guide instructional decisions**