

# Systematic Alignment of Dual Teacher Preparation

Kelly Anderson

JaneDiane Smith

Jacob Olsen

Bob Algozzine

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

## Abstract

Given the rapid growth of diversity in schools across the country, teacher educators are turning to innovative ways to redesign their programs. In this article, we describe efforts of a dual licensure program in which undergraduate teachers-in-training acquired knowledge and skills in core content, as well as evidence-based pedagogy and discipline specific proficiencies in both special education and elementary education. A primary goal was to ensure that graduates entered teaching with the tools to effectively respond to diverse learners within urban and rural school districts. Systematic alignment of program foundations across coursework, clinical experiences, and evaluation was intentional. School partners provided insights into the extent to which graduates possessed the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching in inclusive settings. Outcome data suggest that graduates 'perform' similarly to discipline-specific peers and bring strong collaborative skills in efforts to meet the needs of students in disabilities in all classrooms.

*Keywords:* dual teacher preparation, general education, special education, co-teaching, inclusive practices

In 2009, our Department of Special Education and Child Development initiated the Collaborative Preservice Project: Preparing Excellent Professionals (CPPEP). Initiation of the Collaborative Preservice Project was in direct response to recommendations by community partners and recent teacher education graduates from across multiple disciplines (e.g., Elementary Education, Middle Grades, and Secondary Education) suggesting a significant need to incorporate more content specific to the instruction of diverse students, including those with disabilities, into coursework. The primary goal of our project was to increase the number of highly qualified teachers prepared to teach students with disabilities in urban and rural general education classroom settings across the state and nationally. The development of the integrated dual program option expands the existing special education initial licensure options at our university. The newly added program provides undergraduate students (referred to as scholars in our program) the option of acquiring knowledge and skills in core content areas, as well as evidence-based pedagogy and discipline specific proficiencies in both Special Education and Elementary Education (e.g., Common Core, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support [PBIS]). Unique aspects of our dual preparation program include (a) a K-6 focus, (b) progression in cohorts from acceptance into the program to graduation, (c) peer mentoring by another dual major scholar who provides support and encouragement as scholars advance through coursework, (d) development of teacher leadership skills during the second year of the program by becoming a mentor to newly admitted dual scholars, (e) faculty

mentoring and support via mid-semester progress monitoring each year, and (f) an intensive 7½-week student teaching experience in an elementary General Education classroom followed by a 7½-week student teaching experience in an elementary Special Education classroom.

## Conceptual and Historical Framework

Most traditional special education preparation programs offer little direct connection to the general education content, assessment, and proficiency standards. Instead, a majority of special education preservice programs continue to train candidates by categorical content, evaluation measures, and separate professional standards. As a result, novice teachers exiting traditional special education preparation programs find themselves employed in collaborative teaching arrangements where they experience notable fragmentation between their preservice training and the expectations and demands of their daily roles and responsibilities (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, 2011; Ford, Pugach, & Otis-Wilborn, 2001; Fullerton, Ruben, McBride, & Bert, 2011; Hardman, 2009; Mason-Williams, 2015; Stayton & McCollum, 2002).

Similarly, most general education preparation programs offer content, assessment, and proficiency standards specific to disciplines (e.g., Elementary Education, Middle School Education) with limited or no connection to teaching students with disabilities within natural classroom environments either required or infused into their specified plan of studies. Even in teacher preparation programs with purposefully infused content specific to students with disabilities

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and required clinical field experiences in inclusive settings, general education candidates view themselves as poorly prepared to teach students with learning and behavior problems (Fullerton et al., 2011; McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008).

This *separate* approach to preparation of special education and general education teachers is particularly problematic given that an increasing number of students with disabilities are receiving the majority of their academic instruction within general education classrooms. For example, according to the *30th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), more than half (53.7%) of all students with disabilities served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) were educated 80% or more of the school days within general education classrooms. For many of these students, the goals and objectives on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were being met through inclusive models of instruction, such as co-teaching. Research has suggested that preparation programs inadequately prepare special education teachers in co-teaching arrangements to teach content, as well as support their general education peers, with differentiating instruction for students with disabilities and other diverse learners (Billingsley, Griffin, Smith, Kamman, & Israel, 2009; Mastropieri et al., 2005; McLeskey, Waldron, Spooner, & Algozzine, 2014). A significant challenge for teacher preparation programs is to address this clear and apparent gap between research and the realities of classroom practice (Blanton, Pugach, & Boveda, 2014; Childre, 2014; Goldrick, Sindelar, Zabala, & Hirsch, 2014; Mason-Williams, 2015).

Implications are that we, in K-12 teacher preparation programs, no longer can solely rely on traditional segregated structures of general and special education to *effectively* teach new teachers to be successful in natural inclusive classroom settings. Instead, teacher educators are being challenged to rethink how to best align professional standards and core competencies to real teaching practice for special education teachers and the students with whom they serve in inclusive classroom settings. For some preparation programs, a response to this gap between existing teacher education structures and the changing landscape of schools and classroom practices has caused faculty to rethink *isolated discipline specific* training and instead construct *collaborative teacher preparation programs* commonly referred to in the literature as *unified*, *blended*, or *merged* initiatives (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, 2011; Bondy & Ross, 2005; Miller & Stayton, 1998; Young, 2011). Blanton and Pugach (2011) have provided a typology of three models offering teacher educators a conceptual framework to be used when redesigning teacher preparation programs: (a) *discrete* programs, (b) *integrated* programs, and (c) *merged* programs. These collaborative partnerships in preparation typically result in dual certification and are intended to produce highly qualified graduates who can effectively teach diverse K-12 student populations in inclusive learning environments (Cook & Boe, 2007; Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003; Ford et al., 2001; Fullerton et al., 2011; Stayton & McCollum, 2002).

## Putting Theory into Practice

We are an urban research university that maintains a commitment to addressing the cultural, economic, educa-

tional, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater region. Our undergraduate students reflect the diversity of our region, coming from urban and rural backgrounds with many first-generation graduates returning “home” to rural districts to teach in schools they attended and graduated from before becoming teachers. Sixty percent of the top 10 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) employing our teacher education graduates are rural school systems across the state (Office of Institutional Research, 2014). Similar to national trends, our urban and rural K-12 student populations across the state are characterized by poverty, low achievement, disabilities, and cultural and linguistic diversity (Childre, 2014).

Until 2009, the options for preparation in special education undergraduate programs at our university reflected those of many traditional structures of teacher preparation across the state: K-12 initial licensure in special education—adapted curriculum (moderate to severe disabilities) or general curriculum (mild disabilities) respectively. Several urban and rural school districts currently implement some form of inclusive instruction as a means of responding to the broad range of diverse students’ academic, linguistic, behavioral, and social needs. Similar to national trends, many of our special education program graduates are hired for teaching positions in which they are expected to participate in collaborative co-teaching with general education teachers in natural learning environments, particularly in rural districts. For those novice teachers returning to teach in their rural communities, the risk of being placed in co-teaching arrangements, but without the much needed support, professional development, and resources, can be overwhelming.

## Program Development

Construction of the integrated dual licensure program involved extensive collaboration by Elementary Education and Special Education faculty over a 2-year period. Initial work by faculty involved a year-long review of professional standards and practices resulting in a 125-credit hr plan of study. The overarching core content areas within the rigorous plan of study emerged into three primary program foundations: (a) *Collaboration/Inclusive Practices*, (b) *Instructional Responsiveness*, and (c) *Inclusive Leadership*. Given the importance of closely aligning clinical field experiences with university coursework (Alter & Coggshall, 2009), the second phase of program development by faculty focused on identifying high quality school placements to be used for clinical experiences, particularly student teaching. Working in collaboration with community partners (e.g., a regional consultant for the state Department of Public Instruction Exceptional Children’s Program, a Human Resources Director from a rural school district, and two principals representing urban and rural school districts), faculty worked to define *high quality* clinical experiences by utilizing the three primary program foundation areas to align with best practices being implemented within regional school districts (e.g., co-teaching, Response to Intervention [RtI], Professional Learning Communities [PLCs], and/or PBIS). As a result of this work, the *Clinical Site Checklist* instrument is used each year to identify high quality student teaching experiences, allowing scholars to effectively apply their knowledge and skills from both disciplines at school sites where best practices are being successfully implemented.

The final phase of structural development involved the alignment of evaluation measures to the core content of our dual program. A critical decision was made by program faculty and community partners to continue alignment of evaluation instruments with the three primary program foundations (*Collaboration/Inclusive Practices, Instructional Responsiveness, and Inclusive Leadership*). By doing so, data gathered upon admission to the program, at graduation, and as employed teachers would tell us whether or not scholars from the dual program were indeed successfully and effectively applying their knowledge and skills from both disciplines into their teaching practices.

### Scholars

Scholars entering the dual teacher preparation program are predominately Caucasian and female. Of the 85 scholars who entered the dual teacher preparation program, 36 (42%) came from rural towns surrounding the university as well as across the country (see Table 1). Consistent with their rural

backgrounds, 21 out of 42 scholars (50%) participated in student teaching experiences in rural settings. Graduates of the dual teacher preparation program also apply for and accept teaching positions in rural settings. To date, 17 out of 30 graduates (57%) currently teach students in rural settings.

### Progress Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation data are collected on scholars beginning with application to the program, continuing with professional GPA and Praxis scores throughout coursework, and ending with student teaching exit surveys. Graduates of the program also are followed 1 to 2 years into employment. The following is a description of the evaluation process used to monitor the progress of the scholars in our program. Brief descriptions of the measures and results also are provided. All measures are available upon request.

**Entrance into the Dual Program.** Scholars accepted into the program complete an application process. As a result of feedback from the Community Partners Advisory Board

**Table 1.**

#### *Demographics for Dual Majors at Program Entrance*

Major	Characteristic	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5
Dual		9	24	15	20	17
	Ethnicity					
	Caucasian	8	21	14	16	14
	Black				1	
	Hispanic		2			2
	Asian	1				
	Other			1		
	Not Specified		1		3	1
	Gender					
	Male		1		1	
	Female	9	23	15	19	17
	Exceptionality					
	Disability		2		2	1
	Giftedness		1			
	Rural Background	4	13	8	9	2

(CPAB) described previously, we added an essay to the application asking interested scholars to respond to four writing prompts: (a) How do you perceive training in special education impacting your teaching in an elementary classroom? (b) How do you perceive training in elementary education impacting your teaching in a special education classroom? (c) What is your rationale for applying to the Dual Program? and (d) If not admitted into the Dual Program, how will you adjust your professional career path? In response to these questions, scholars have chosen to self-disclose exceptionalities. Of the 85 scholars admitted into the program, a total of six scholars (7%) have reported exceptionalities (see Table 1). Five have self-disclosed learning disabilities (e.g., attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, learning disability in reading), and one has self-identified as gifted.

Once admitted to the program, data are collected on the scholar's (a) overall GPA as they begin the program and (b) scores from Praxis I, SAT, or ACT testing. Across the five cohorts, the mean overall GPA at the time of admission to the program is 3.51 ( $SD = 0.36$ ). Mean scores for scholars on the Praxis 1, SAT, or ACT are 527.79 ( $SD = 12.25$ ), 1177.50 ( $SD = 83.52$ ), and 25.00 ( $SD = 1.41$ ), respectively. Random samples of scholars from the special education and elementary general education discrete programs are selected annually for the purposes of serving as comparison groups. Data (i.e., overall GPAs, Praxis I, SAT, or ACT scores) are collected on these scholars as they progress throughout their respective programs.

During their first semester in the dual program, scholars are asked to complete a *Survey of Dual Major Undergraduates in Special Education and Elementary Education*. This three-question survey is intended to capture their perspective with respect to why they chose to participate in the dual licensure preparation program. Two open ended questions ask scholars to describe their rationale for choosing the dual major and what skills or information they expect to learn (i.e., Why did you choose the dual major instead of special education or elementary education only? What skills or information do you expect to learn specifically within the dual major that you believe will benefit you in your teaching career?). A third question in multiple choice format asks them to identify the type(s) of position(s) for which they expect to apply upon graduation (i.e., elementary classroom teacher, elementary inclusive classroom teacher, special education resource classroom teacher, special education inclusive classroom teacher, other). A similar survey is administered to scholars in discipline specific programs.

Yearly analysis of data across five cohorts has indicated consistency in themes among dual scholars. Dual major scholars indicated a strong interest in and/or passion for both special education and elementary education and a desire to be prepared to be a better teacher to all students. Dual scholars expected to learn knowledge and skills from both disciplines in order to effectively teach diverse learners. Upon graduation, dual scholars anticipated applying for a variety of teaching positions including elementary, inclusive, and resource classrooms. Counterparts in discipline specific programs have expressed different, yet consistent, themes over the past 5 years. Scholars enrolled in traditional programs wanted to teach those populations (i.e., elementary students or students

with disabilities). Scholars selecting the elementary education program frequently indicated that they do not want to teach children with special needs. These same scholars expect to learn strategies and skills specific to their discipline (e.g., effective teaching, lessoning planning, classroom management, teaching children with disabilities). Scholars in the discipline specific programs anticipated applying for positions in elementary classrooms or special education classrooms.

**Progression through the Dual Program.** As scholars progress through the dual licensure preparation program, data in the form of mid-progress monitoring are collected each semester. During mid-progress monitoring, project staff members conduct individual informal conferences with each dual scholar to discuss classes, grades, successes, and challenges. This is an opportunity for project staff to provide individualized support. Feedback from these conferences suggests dual scholars value the cohort model and appreciate the advising and mentoring they receive throughout the program.

In addition, all scholars are asked to participate in a yearly focus group as they near the completion of the sophomore and junior years. The intent is to collect scholar perspectives' for the purposes of continuous improvement and to help inform any necessary revisions to the program. The project evaluator conducts the yearly focus groups so that scholars can express responses to the specific questions anonymously. Project staff developed the protocol for the 30-min focus group which includes several questions related to the (a) supports available as they complete the program (e.g., What aspects of advising, seminar, and/or mentoring have been the most helpful to you?), (b) challenges or redundancies within the program (e.g., What difference or challenges, if any, do you perceive while working with and taking classes in your program?), and (c) aspects of the program that can be improved (e.g., What aspects do you think can be improved about your program? Think about your need in course work as well as clinical and university experiences). Data are analyzed yearly and results have indicated that scholars feel supported by (a) the cohort model, (b) the dual induction seminar, (c) project faculty/staff, and (d) peer mentors. They expressed both benefits and challenges with respect to cohort size, individual peer mentors, and faculty knowledge and understanding related to the requirements of the dual program.

As described previously, the *Clinical Site Checklist* provides faculty with an objective, reliable, and systematic approach to identifying high quality clinical placements. As scholars progress through the dual program, data are continuously collected using this instrument. Data have been collected at 41 unique sites. Twenty-three (56%) of the schools are rated as *Target* sites while the remaining 18 schools are considered *Acceptable*. The geographic locations of these schools include rural, urban, and suburban settings.

**Completion of the Dual Program.** As scholars exit the program, data are collected on the overall and professional GPAs and Praxis II scores. Across two cohorts, both the overall and professional GPAs are high ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 0.18$ ,  $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.15$ , respectively). Average scores for scholars completing the program on Praxis II are as follows: ELED 5015 ( $M = 178.44$ ,  $SD = 8.24$ ), SPED 5511 ( $M = 173.61$ ,  $SD = 8.16$ ) and SPED 5543 ( $M = 176.52$ ,  $SD = 6.93$ ). These data are collected for the comparison samples as appropriate.

As scholars in the dual and discipline specific programs complete student teaching, we also collect data from College of Education assessment measures, such as the *Student Teaching Assessment Rubric (STAR)*. University supervisors are responsible for completing the STAR. Analyses of data from the first two cohorts revealed that the dual scholars score at or higher than the comparison students in discipline specific programs. Key items on which dual scholars scored significantly higher than their peers included the following: (a) makes content relevant and accessible to all learners, (b) establishes criteria and provides assessment feedback, (c) develops plans that are aligned with state and district curriculum, (d) monitors and adjusts lesson plans (to meet and enhance student progress towards goals), (e) collaborates and plans with other professionals, (f) develops higher order thinking skills in students, (g) exhibits leadership and collaboration in professional settings, and (h) communicates with families.

Dual candidates are asked to complete the *Exit Survey of Dual Major Undergraduates in Special Education and Elementary Education* as they near completion of their student teaching responsibilities. This instrument was intended to capture the perspective of undergraduate scholars completing the dual major as they respond to two open ended questions which ask about their choice to complete the dual major and the skills or information they learned (e.g., Do you believe your choice to complete the dual major instead of special education only or elementary education only was a good choice? What skills or information did you learn specifically within the dual major that will benefit you in your teaching career?). Four questions in multiple choice format ask the scholar to respond to the type of teaching position(s) they have or for which they will apply, rate the value of their clinical experiences, identify the types of mentoring experiences they received, and rate the value of those experiences. A similar survey is administered to scholars in discipline specific programs.

Of the two cohorts who have completed the program, scholars indicated unanimous support in that their decision to pursue the dual program was a good choice. Explanations included being able to learn both the special education strategies and the general education content and feeling well-rounded and prepared to teach in a variety of settings. Differentiation, teaching strategies, and co-teaching are skills that scholars reported learning in the dual program. As they completed student teaching, scholars once again anticipated applying for a variety of positions. The majority rated various forms of mentoring and clinical experiences as valuable. Six of the 7 scholars (86%) who student taught in Cohort One were placed in rural settings as well as 10 out of the 23 scholars (43%) in Cohort Two. Forty-two percent (5 of 12) of the scholars in Cohort Three are currently completing student teaching placements in rural communities.

Exit Surveys (i.e., *Cooperating Teacher Evaluation of Dual Student Teacher*, *Principal Evaluation of Dual Student Teacher*, *Dual Student Teacher Self-Reflection*) are completed by the special education and general education cooperating teachers, principals, and the dual scholars. These measures were developed to tell us whether or not scholars from the dual program were, indeed, successfully and effectively applying their knowledge, skills, and content from both disciplines into their student teaching practices. On their surveys, the

cooperating teachers are asked to respond to a five-point Likert scale to rate the dual scholar's ability to implement evidence-based practices and professional standards (e.g., Implement co-teaching best practices, demonstrated the ability to differentiate instruction). The dual scholars completed a similar survey asking them to self-reflect on their ability to implement teaching strategies and content learned in their program (e.g., Understood the multi-tier systems of academic support [RtI] process, implemented evidence-based reading instruction). A third exit survey is completed by principals to capture their perspective of the dual scholar student teaching experience. Principals are asked to rate the dual scholar's participation and involvement in co-teaching practices as well as their application of knowledge and skills (e.g., Observed and/or participated in IEP meetings; demonstrated the knowledge and skills to understand the administrator's level of involvement in pre-referral, eligibility determination, and/or the IEP process). Data from all three exit surveys across two cohorts indicated that cooperating teachers, dual scholars, and principals strongly agree or agree that the dual scholars consistently demonstrated the ability to implement evidence-based practices and professional standards related to *Collaboration/Inclusive Practices*, *Instructional Responsiveness*, and *Inclusive Leadership*. Cooperating teachers were unanimous in indicating their willingness to host a dual scholar for a student teaching placement in the future. These sentiments were particularly evident in feedback provided by a cooperating general education teacher in a rural school setting when she said the dual student teacher "was comprehensively effective. Her meticulous planning was evident, as was her ability to adjust to unforeseen changes. She was very fluid in her adaptation of instruction and she applied suggestions and new ideas very effectively." Similarly, the cooperating special education teacher described the same student, who comes from a rural background, as "a model candidate, effective teacher, excellent social skills, a joy to have." We ask principals if any aspect of the scholar's performance impressed them as compared with other student teachers. All principals (100%) responded positively to this question. For example, the principal of a rural school who worked with two dual student teachers, both from rural backgrounds, said, "The knowledge base of dual student teachers allows for natural personalization of learning as they are able to more clearly and more quickly identify ways to differentiate." In addition, they are asked to rank the dual scholars in comparison to other student teachers. Principals rated the dual scholars in the Top 2% (47%), Top 10% (26%), Top 25% (16%), and average (11%). Responses from principals and cooperating teachers from rural settings are clearly represented in these responses as 86% of the scholars in Cohort One and 43% of the scholars in Cohort Two completed their student teaching in rural classrooms.

**Employment after the Dual Program.** One year after graduation, dual scholars are asked to complete the *Follow-Up Survey of Dual Major Completers in Special Education and Elementary Education*. This measure is intended to capture the perspective of recent graduates and includes 10 items in various formats asking about current employment, influence of the dual major, rating the usefulness of dual major in relationship to their current position, and describe mentoring since graduation and the value of those mentoring experiences

(e.g., What is your current position? Do you believe that graduating with a dual major and teaching license in both special education-general curriculum and elementary education has influenced the type(s) of teaching position you have been offered? Influenced the success you have had in your teaching career?). Data collected from the first cohort of graduates indicated employment in a variety of positions (e.g., elementary teacher, special education resource teacher, elementary inclusive teacher, special education inclusive teacher). Graduates indicated that the dual program was valuable and they used the knowledge and skills from both fields in their current position. One dual program graduate from a rural background currently teaching in a rural setting indicated that “having the dual licensure has helped me to work with students in both the inclusion and resource settings.” They also reported that the dual degree was an asset in obtaining a job. Seventeen of the 30 graduates (57%) are currently teaching in rural schools.

We developed the *Principal Evaluation of the Dual Program Graduate* to capture principals’ professional perspective of the dual graduate as they complete their first year of employment. The survey is similar in content and format to the exit surveys already described. Again, principals strongly agree or agree that dual graduates demonstrate the ability to implement evidence-based practices and professional standards related to *Collaboration/Inclusive Practices, Instructional Responsiveness, and Inclusive Leadership*. When asked if any aspect of the scholar’s performance impressed them as compared with other first year teachers, 75% of the principals responded positively. A principal in a rural school who hired a dual program graduate described the graduate as having “amazing knowledge of both regular and special education” and added that this knowledge is “critical in today’s school environments.” Principals ranked the dual graduates in the top 2% or 10% in comparison to other first year teachers. Responses from principals from rural settings are clearly represented as 71% of the scholars in Cohort One currently teach in rural settings.

## Lessons Learned

From analysis of our assessment data, we know the dual scholars ‘perform’ similar to their other preparation program peers (i.e., Elementary Education and Special Education majors). Given there are no significant discrepancies between the dual scholars and their peers’ performance scores on overall and professional GPAs and Praxis II scores, project staff determined a need to solicit feedback from school partners. Gathering performance feedback from principals and cooperating teachers (General Education and Special Education) involved in student teaching supervision provided information on the extent to which dual scholars were indeed demonstrating the knowledge and skills acquired during their preparation program with proficiency.

Overall, the outcome and employment data suggest that the Collaborative Preservice Program has been effective in terms of teaching specific core professional standards and evidence-based practices. College of Education (COE) data confirm that, upon completion of the program, scholars have acquired solid foundations of knowledge and skills in Special and General Education, K-6. Furthermore, COE assessment measures, such as the STAR, suggest that dual scholars’ performance meets and/or exceeds that of their peers in other majors (Elementary and Special Education). Feedback from school partners confirm that dual scholars acquire and demonstrate knowledge and skills across the three primary foundations of the dual program (*Collaborative/Inclusive Practices, Instructional Responsiveness, and Inclusive Leadership*) during their student teaching experiences. Graduates of the program report they value and use their knowledge and skills in both disciplines. Preliminary data from employers (principals) tells us our graduates are sustaining the knowledge and skills acquired in the dual preparation training while implementing practices daily as career teachers.

## Conclusion

Given the rapid growth of diversity in student enrollment in K-12 classrooms, many teacher educators are rethinking traditional teacher preparation structures and turning to more collaborative teacher preparation programs. There are several essential components to be considered in order for these dual teacher preparation initiatives to be effective. First, investment of time in the identification of evidence-based strategies and professional standards to be addressed through the dual program is critical to the development of coursework and the selection of clinical field placements necessary for scholars to sharpen their knowledge and skills in real classroom contexts. These evidence-based strategies and professional standards need to mirror the best practices being implemented within the urban and rural school districts in which graduating scholars will be employed. This alignment cannot fully be determined without active participation by community partners in the program development process. By working in collaboration with community experts, teacher educators are more likely to make notable changes to their preparation programs that will best prepare scholars for the challenges of teaching diverse students in urban and rural school settings. Finally, it is imperative to continuously evaluate the quality and content of the dual licensure preparation program relative to local contextual fit. Data gathered from principals and expert teachers involved with the supervision of dual scholars can provide invaluable insights into program effectiveness in terms of whether or not graduates possess the knowledge and skills necessary for them to tackle the challenges of teaching in a variety of inclusive classroom settings.

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