



Interdisciplinary Speaking: Evaluating the Impacts of Collaboration between English Language Arts and Social Studies Methods Courses on Preservice Teachers

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The Vermilionville Education Enrichment Partnership (VEEP)

The Context of the Collaboration

- Academic service learning partnership between Vermilionville, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL Lafayette), and the Lafayette Parish School System (LPSS)
- First iteration occurred in Fall 2012
- Elementary and secondary students and their teachers from high-needs schools

The Vermilionville Education Enrichment Partnership (VEEP)

The Context of the Collaboration

- Preservice elementary and secondary school teachers in social studies and English/language arts (ELA) methods courses
- Development and implementation of, and reflection on, immersive cross-curricular lessons
- Other ongoing study: preservice teachers' self-efficacy and VEEP participation

Preservice Teacher Participants

How many individuals have been involved in this cross-disciplinary collaboration?

Fall 2017: first collaboration between secondary ELA and social studies methods courses

Semester	Number of Preservice Secondary Teachers		
	ELA	Social Studies	Total
Fall 2017	17	13	30
Spring 2018	3	2	5
Fall 2018	9	19	28
TOTAL	29	34	63

Why Collaborate?

Reasons for Interdisciplinary Joining of Forces

- Need for inquiry-based, collaborative experiences in teacher preparation
- More support in learning how to engage students and empower them in their own learning
- Increased exposure to interdisciplinary lesson planning, implementation, and reflection
- First-hand experience with addressing cross-discipline standards and objectives

Why Collaborate?

Reasons for Interdisciplinary Joining of Forces

- Incorporating writing, literacy, and text-based evidence across the curriculum
- Increased reliance on writing-as-assessment in K-12 education
- Independent teacher planning often not open and/or exposed to new ideas, methods, techniques, and best practices to achieve learning objectives
- Building professional competencies
- Improve VEEP lessons

Research Questions

A Closer Look at the Collaboration

1. How does participating in cross-disciplinary collaborations influence preservice teachers' perceptions of their efficacy?
2. How do preservice teachers integrate aspects of their own and others' content areas in their teaching, including planning and implementation?
3. How does modeling of co-teaching by the ELA and social studies methods instructors impact preservice teachers' pedagogical thinking?

Methods: the TSES

How well do you believe you can teach?

- 24-item long form of the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001)
- Completed before and after VEEP Day
- Respondents rate themselves on a 9-point Likert-type scale, with 1 = *Nothing*, 3 = *Very Little*, 5 = *Some Influence*, 7 = *Quite a Bit*, and 9 = *A Great Deal*, about how much they believe they can do about a series of teaching activities

Methods: the TSES

How well do you believe you can teach?

- Sample items:
 - How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?
 - How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?
 - How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?
 - How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
 - **How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?**

Note: the results for this item from the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 participants showed the greatest pre/post change. A paired-sample t test for differences resulted in $p < .001$.

Methods: VEEP Day Survey

What were your experiences?

- 11-item open-ended survey, administered by Vermilionville staff and completed at the conclusion of VEEP Day
- Sample items:
 - Reflecting on your lesson, what would you have done differently today?
 - Do you feel more confident about your teaching abilities after the program?
 - Do you have any suggestions about how the program can run more smoothly?
 - How do you think this will help you once you're in a classroom environment?

Methods: Document Analysis

How well were the lessons planned?

- Analysis by the UL Lafayette faculty of the completed lesson plans (including strategies for pre- and post-visit activities)
- Rubric used for assessment of multiple dimensions, including:
 - ELA and cross-curricular/social studies standards
 - Learning objectives
 - Sequence and strategies
 - Assessment plan
 - Differentiation, flexibility, and responsiveness
 - Materials and resources, and student handouts

Methods: Document Analysis

How well were you able to collaborate?

- Analysis by the UL Lafayette faculty of completed self and group reports/ratings of project contributions
- Individual reflections addressing:
 - What went well?
 - What were you able to improve in the teaching of the lesson multiple times?
 - What would you change in the future?

Methods: Focus Group

Sharing Opinions about the Experience

- Focus groups are conducted the next class meeting after VEEP day to discuss:
 - Decision-making processes during planning and implementation
 - Collaboration with their peers in their own course and with the other methods course
 - Reflection on the VEEP Day experience as a whole
 - Suggestions for improving the program and its collaborative aspects in the future

What's Next?

Preliminary Findings and Future Work

- Collaboration anecdotally a success, based on lesson plans, survey data, informal observations of planning and implementation, and TSES data from two semesters
- Need more structured questions in focus group about interdisciplinary collaboration (IRB approval recently granted)
- Continue to explore the potential impacts that these kinds of collaborations may have on both traditional and non-traditional contexts

Selected References

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Thank You for Attending Today's Presentation

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