

Co-Teaching is Attitude of Sharing the Classroom and Students at SWOSU

01.05.2015

These cooperating teachers and their respective teaching candidates recently participated in a “Pairs” training, designed to build collaboration and communication skills as part of “Co-Teaching Model for Mentoring Teacher Candidates,” which was implemented at SWOSU during the 2014 spring semester and will continue during the upcoming 2015 spring semester on the Weatherford campus.

The Southwestern Oklahoma State University Department of Education embarked on a new exercise in field experiences by implementing a “Co-Teaching Model for Mentoring Teacher Candidates” during the 2014 spring semester on the Weatherford campus.

Through professional development, five faculty members became certified trainers in the model, based on work of Dr. Marilyn Friend. Friend’s research at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota aims to improve teacher preparation and Pre-K-12th grade student achievement.

Weatherford Public Schools initially collaborated with SWOSU in order to pilot the model. Since then, 13 additional districts have joined the initiative which will continue during the upcoming 2015 spring semester.

Participation in the model requires a two-hour “Essentials” training for each cooperating teacher and teacher candidate in order to establish an overview of the program. This is followed by a two-hour “Pairs” training designed to build collaboration and communication skills among the teams of cooperating teachers and respective candidates. The co-teaching partnership formed within the trainings promotes the attitude that co-teachers share all aspects of teaching, including the physical space of the classroom; the planning, organizing and delivering of instruction; and assessment for all students.

Bruce Belanger, coordinator of field experiences in the SWOSU Department of Education, said initial feedback from cooperating teachers indicates that instruction provided to students within the co-teaching model is better than the traditional model of student teaching and that they would choose to co-teach again. Teacher candidates have also given the new model high marks, indicating they would co-teach again and encourage others to participate in this model.

Belanger said potential benefits to PK-12 students include increased individual attention and additional assistance for students with high needs.

Area schools partnering with SWOSU in this new model include Arapaho-Butler, Burns Flat-Dill City, Clinton, Cordell, Duke, Hydro-Eakly, Hobart, Merritt, Sayre, Thomas-Fay-Custer, Weatherford and Yukon.

For more information about the co-teaching model for mentoring teacher candidates, contact Belanger at bruce.belanger@swosu.edu or 580.774.3146.